

**Playing Favorites:
Washington's Meddling for Peace in the
Politics of Israel and the Palestinian Authority**

by

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Submitted to the Department of Political Science on September 4, 2012
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ABSTRACT

Governments often try to use their foreign policies to influence the choice of who will rule in other countries. However, scholars know strikingly little about this commonplace and consequential phenomenon, especially when it is scoped down to the use of diplomatic tools short of force. Indeed, this lacuna is especially striking in comparison to the voluminous literatures on other forms of international meddling such as military intervention or coercive diplomacy for producing policy change.

This project seeks to contribute to the nascent research program on partisan intervention by drawing on the historical record to pose tentative answers to two pertinent research questions in the context of America's Mideast policies. The first topic focuses on *occurrence*: when are sender states likely to engage in this behavior, and when are they less likely to do so? The second topic focuses on *efficacy*: when does this policy help achieve the sender state's objectives, and when does it fail?

This project seeks to answer these questions by drawing on Washington's peace process diplomacy. It uses official archives and expert interviews to supplement the existing historiographic record, documenting America's efforts to bolster perceived pro-peace leaders in Israel since 1977 and among the Palestinians since 1986. It also explores U.S. decision-making toward Iran as a shadow case for leverage over additional study variables, along with other instances of outside intervention into Israeli politics by European or Arab states.

It finds that the issue area of leadership selection intervention is unusually subject to the individualistic preferences of top leaders in the sender state. Because exceptionally blatant meddling of this sort tends to elicit a backlash, self-admitted LSI is therefore discouraged. Instead, practitioners go to great lengths to maintain alternative pretenses that prevent revelation of their true intentions. This inherently complicates the task of legislative oversight, decreases points of leverage for lobbyists or working-level bureaucrats, and magnifies these leaders' subjective interpretation of international circumstances. In short, LSI is intensely personal.

Thesis Supervisor: Stephen Van Evera
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Chapter I.

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Introduction

Contemporary diplomacy often seeks to influence the selection of who will rule on other countries, but experts know surprisingly little about this phenomenon. When do officials adopt this sort of policy? Under what circumstances are such attempts likely to succeed or fail? This lacuna is especially striking in comparison to the voluminous literatures we already have on various other forms of foreign intervention. Yet meddling aimed at leadership selection seems in many ways to be the most fascinating variety. This dissertation therefore benefits from some rather juicy, scandalous subject matter.

This project is a disciplinary hybrid. It is at once a work of political analysis and diplomatic history. Thus, it focuses on two parallel tasks: building nomothetic knowledge about how the world works and idiographic knowledge about particular case episodes. It seeks to establish natural laws that drive meddling behavior across the cases while chronicling the tale of American intervention in the politics of Israel, Palestine, and Iran. Its dual mission makes for somewhat longer reading material, but hopefully it still retains some effectiveness at both purposes while achieving some complementarities between them.

Because meddling in another political system's leadership selection is inherently controversial, officials in the sender state go to extraordinary lengths to convey a persuasive political message while masking their true intentions behind some plausible pretense. Often, this takes the form of endorsing favored policies as

a placeholder for endorsing favored politicians. However, the risk of leaks that would strip away these pretenses leads to a deliberative process in the sender state that is unusually secretive and close-held.

As a result, the events that are documented in this dissertation are remarkable in terms of how much discretion is exercised by a few top political leaders in the sender state for determining their nation's foreign policy. While other issue areas might be more prone to structural pressures from the international environment or domestic political system, this kind of meddling is almost always the domain of the president and just one or two key advisors. And their wisdom or foibles often spell the policy's eventual success or failure. These stories of political intervention are not just fascinating – they go all the way to the top.

A. Definition & Conceptualization:

For the purposes of this project, I term this subject matter “leadership selection intervention,” or LSI for short. LSI is defined as one government's efforts to bolster or change the character of another government's ruling coalition using methods short of force. The term LSI is at times used interchangeably with the descriptors “meddling” or “partisan intervention,” which are usually employed in this particular sense.

What does this complicated concept mean? In short, I use it to refer to instances in which a sender state tries to influence the choice of who will be in charge in another political system. Most often, this entails the choice of who will be the president or prime minister. Often, it also entails the selection of other cabinet

ministries, which party will have a majority in the legislature, or which other parties will be included in the ruling coalition? Sometimes it involves efforts to reinforce a sitting government that is already in power or to affect the relative balance of power within a sitting government in the target nation.

Defined as such, LSI is one subset of a broader class of behaviors for meddling or intervention in the realm of international relations. The relationship among these behaviors is best understood in reference to the 2x3 diagram on the following page (Table I), where varieties of intervention are distinguished according to two different dimensions. The first dimension entails the sender state's objective: is it seeking to influence the content of the target state's policies, the character of its government, or elements of its regime institutions? The second dimension entails the means that the sender state uses to achieve this objective: is it using force or employing means short of force, primarily applying the tools of diplomacy?

B. The Literature:

This framework yields a typology of foreign policy meddling that throws into stark relief the meager amount of attention garnered by the study of LSI to date. Nearly all of the other entries in Table I are the subject of burgeoning if not overwrought literatures in the subfield of international relations. For instance, in the top left box is an entry for coercive diplomacy, also known as "forceful persuasion," which primarily seeks to persuade another state to change its behavior by means short of force. It may at most involve a demonstrative use of military might but stops short of physically producing the intended result by one's self.

There is an enormous amount of research on this topic already, despite the fact that marginal returns to effort in this area today are arguably quite small.¹

Table I: How does LSI compare to other types of intervention in foreign affairs?

		<u>Target of Influence:</u>		
		Target State's Policies	Target State's Government	Target State's Regime Institutions
Means of Influence:	Diplomacy	Coercive Diplomacy <i>(Type I)</i>	*LSI* <i>(Type II)</i>	Regime Change by Pressure <i>(Type III)</i>
	Force	Denial by Brute Force <i>(Type IV)</i>	Paramilitary Intervention & Coups <i>(Type V)</i>	Regime Overthrow <i>(Type VI)</i>

The other areas are also the subject of extensive study to date. The bottom left box, denial by brute force, is the subject of explicit consideration by Robert

¹ Instances of the voluminous literature on coercive diplomacy include: Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (Yale University Press, 1966); Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy as an Alternative to War* (US Institute of Peace Press, 1991); Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman, *The Dynamics of Coercion: American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might* (Cambridge University Press, 2002); Robert J. Art and Patrick M. Cronin, *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy* (US Institute of Peace Press, 2003); Wallace J. Thies, "Compellence Failure or Coercive Success? The Case of NATO and Yugoslavia," *Comparative Strategy* 22, no. 3 (2003): 243–267; Phil Haun, "On Death Ground: Why Weak States Resist Great Powers, Explaining Coercion Failure in Asymmetric Interstate Conflict" (MIT Doctoral Dissertation, 2010). For a discussion of inferential limits to the literature, see Patrick C. Bratton, "When Is Coercion Successful?: And Why Can't We Agree on It?," *Naval War College Review* 58, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 99–120.

Paper in *Bombing to Win* and also the implicit subject involved with much of the literature on military force and strategic studies.² The bottom middle box covers the use of force to directly and kinetically impose a new government on the target state and is covered extensively in the literature on covert intervention.³ The bottom right box deals with the subject of regime overthrow, a topic that came back onto the research agenda with the George W. Bush administration's invasion of Iraq and endorsement of a national security strategy reliant upon the use of preventive force in 2002.⁴ Finally, the top right box covers regime change by sticks and carrots, a much less prominent subject but one that has been studied nonetheless, especially once one takes into consideration the literature on democracy promotion as well.⁵

² See, *inter alia*, Robert Anthony Pape, *Bombing to Win* (Cornell University Press, 1996); Robert J. Art and Kenneth Neal Waltz, *The Use of Force: Military Power and International Politics* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2009); Michael E. O'Hanlon, *The Science of War: Defense Budgeting, Military Technology, Logistics, and Combat Outcomes* (Princeton University Press, 2009), chap. 2: Modeling Combat and Sizing Forces.

³ Examples of prominent work in this area include: Gregory F. Treverton, *Covert Action: The Limits of Intervention in the Postwar World* (Basic Books, 1987); Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981-1987* (Simon and Schuster, 1987); Stephen Van Evera, "American Intervention in the Third World: Less Would Be Better," *Security Studies* 1, no. 1 (1991): 1-24; Peter J. Schraeder, "Paramilitary Intervention," in *Intervention into the 1990s: U.S. Foreign Policy in the Third World*, ed. Peter J. Schraeder, 2nd ed. (L. Rienner Publishers, 1992), 131-152; William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*, 2nd ed. (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2004); Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq* (Macmillan, 2007).

⁴ Christopher Hitchens, "Machiavelli in Mesopotamia," *Slate*, November 7, 2002; John M. IV Owen, "The Foreign Imposition of Domestic Institutions," *International Organization* 56, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 375-409; Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy* (Brookings Institution Press, 2003); J. D. Fearon and D. D. Laitin, "Neotrusteeship and the Problem of Weak States," *International Security* 28, no. 4 (2004): 5-43; James Steinberg, "Preventive Force in U.S. National Security Strategy," *Survival* 47, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 55-72; Kinzer, *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*; Robert Litwak, *Regime Change: U.S. Strategy Through the Prism of 9/11* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); Patricia Sullivan and Johannes Karreth, "Determinants of Success and Failure in Foreign Regime Maintenance Interventions," *APSA Papers 2010* (2010); Alexander B. Downes and Jonathan Monten, "FIRced to Be Free: Foreign-Imposed Regime Change and Democratization," *APSA Papers 2010* (2010).

⁵ For research specifically on the use of economic sanctions or inducements to achieve regime change, see elements of Richard Haass and Meghan L. O'Sullivan, *Honey and Vinegar: Incentives, Sanctions, and Foreign Policy* (Brookings Institution Press, 2000); Tim Niblock, *"Pariah States" & Sanctions in the Middle East* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002); Meghan L. O'Sullivan, *Shrewd Sanctions: Statecraft and State Sponsors of Terrorism* (Brookings Institution Press, 2003); Gary Clyde Hufbauer et al., *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered [4th Edition]* (Peterson Institute, 2007). For some prominent works from the broader literature on peaceful democracy promotion, see Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad*

Meanwhile, the subject of leadership selection intervention – or partisan intervention, if one prefers that term – is striking in its absence. Very few works have sought to explore this topic in a comparative and systematic manner. One notable exception is a 1993 book chapter by Matthew Evangelista’s in which he traces the role of American foreign policy behavior in shaping the balance of power between hardliners and moderates in the Soviet Union.⁶ Another is the Lebanon field experiment by Daniel Corstange and Nikolay Marinov in which they seek to determine the attitudes of Lebanese voters to a series of electoral interventions by hypothetical foreign powers.⁷ To the best of my knowledge, these are the only two published works in the literature thus far that attempt to evaluate generalizable hypotheses on this issue area, and, despite their considerable merits, they certainly leave room for additional work to be done. Further, Evangelista’s work seems to support the idea that public opinion pressure and foreign policy lobbies are very influential, while Nikolay and Corstange’s work emphasize the self-defeating nature of most attempts at LSI. In both regards this study contradicts the existing literature, limited though it may be.

In review, there is a great deal of research that seeks to explore the dynamics of intervention behaviors using diplomacy in international politics that seek to influence another state’s policies or regime institutions but little research on efforts

(Carnegie Endowment, 1999); Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry, and Takashi Inoguchi, *American Democracy Promotion* (Oxford University Press, 2000); Peter J. Schraeder, *Exporting Democracy* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002); James Traub, *The Freedom Agenda: Why America Must Spread Democracy (Just Not the Way George Bush Did)* (Macmillan, 2008).

⁶ Matthew Evangelista, “Internal and External Constraints on Grand Strategy,” in *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy*, ed. Richard N. Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein (Cornell University Press, 1993), 154–178.

⁷ Corstange and Marinov, “Does Taking Sides Encourage Radicalization?: The US and Iranian Messages in the 2009 Elections in Lebanon.”

that seek to change or bolster another state's government – the people who make those policies and serve in those regime institutions.

C. Importance:

The reasons for this lack of attention given to LSI until now cannot be for lack of deductive importance. The framework embodied in Table I suggests that this is an analytically fundamental form of foreign policy behavior. Further, it is only natural that sometimes officials in powerful countries decide that the most promising route for achieving their goals winds through another nation's domestic politics. Although this practice may be a violation of national sovereignty, we already know that such deviations from the principle of sovereignty are par for the course in contemporary world politics.⁸

Nor can the lack of attention given to this type of foreign policy behavior be justified on the basis of being a rare event. Leadership selection intervention is a commonplace behavior in the world today. This dissertation alone documents numerous instances of such behavior, and it is only a limited subset of the study population. Elsewhere I have provided documentation of a range of other episodes as well.⁹ Yet these are still just an irregular subset of cases, based on the author's own particular area studies and case history knowledge.

⁸ Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton University Press, 1999); David A. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations* (Cornell University Press, 2009).

⁹ Other notable examples not covered in this project listed with justifying source citations in a recent conference paper: David A. Weinberg, "Hypotheses on Leadership Selection Intervention: How Great Powers Pick Sides Abroad," *Conference Paper Presented Jointly to the International Security Sections of the American Political Science Association and the International Studies Association* (October 16, 2010). Examples include: US-Italy (1948), US-Philippines ('51), US-West Germany ('53), US-Japan (early Cold War), US-Lebanon ('58), US-Italy ('63), US-Chile ('64), South Vietnam-US ('68), US-Chile ('70), US-

Nor can ignoring LSI be justified on the basis that it does not matter for the politics of the target polity. Not all instances of LSI succeed, but some certainly do. Further, leadership contests, including but not limited to elections, are critical junctures during which a small outside impact can sometimes tip the balance in deciding who will rule. Even in regimes with flexible-term electoral institutions such as Israel, those new leaders then typically have a modicum of time in which to imprint their preferences onto institutions and policies, which often yield increasing returns to scale over time and change the capabilities, beliefs, and coalitions among relevant actors. In short, because leadership contests are critical junctures, shaping them can often leave lasting policy legacies.¹⁰

Studying leadership selection intervention also has relevance for numerous disciplines, both within and beyond political science. It straddles the intersection between international relations and comparative politics, while studying the efficacy of LSI fits well with the evaluative mindset of policy studies. In addition to these nomothetic approaches, there are significant ideographic benefits as well, making contributions to the fields of area studies a diplomatic history.

D. Research Methods:

Because existing knowledge about LSI is so rudimentary, I seek to address

Chile ('70-3), US-Greece ('74), Iran-US ('80), US-ROK ('80), US-Poland ('82-89), US-El Salvador ('84), Israel/US-Iran ('86), US-Philippines ('86), US-Haiti ('87), US-Pakistan ('88), US-Panama ('89), US-Nicaragua ('89), US-USSR (late '80s), US-Cambodia ('93), US-Haiti ('94), US-Russia ('96), Iran-Israel ('96), PA-Israel ('96), China-Taiwan ('90s), US-Turkey ('97), US-Iran ('97-'00), EU-Austria (2000), US/EU/Canada-Serbia ('2000), US-Serbia (2000s), US/EU-Ukraine ('04), Russia-Ukraine ('04), US-Ukraine ('04), US-Lebanon ('05), US-Pakistan ('07), India-Nepal ('08).

¹⁰ Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis* (Princeton University Press, 2004); Giovanni Capoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen, "The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism," *World Politics* 59, no. 3 (April 2007): 341–369.

research questions that are both fundamental and consequential in nature. Thus, I focus on explaining variation in two crucial dependent variables: occurrence and efficacy. The first research question asks why LSI occurs in some instances but not others, even in the same bilateral relationship. The second research question asks why LSI succeeds in some instances but not others, again, even in the same bilateral relationship.

Of course, these are not the only two possible research questions worth asking about LSI. For instance: what explains the sender's choice of particular intervention techniques over others? Do different tools entail different causal mechanisms or different rates of efficacy? What explains the sender's choice of LSI over other forms of intervention? Which states are more prone to conduct LSI or to be the recipients of it? However, for the sake of focusing my efforts, I choose to focus only on the questions of occurrence and efficacy raised above.

In order to devise answers to these two questions, I employ qualitative research methods, since there are considerable limitations to other techniques, such as statistical analysis. These limitations are caused by enumerative challenges that pose a high risk of systematic biases, including both false negative and false positive codings. Instead, I use a deep-dive approach to data analysis, focusing heavily on internal validity in order to ensure that my inferences about particular cases are accurate and meaningful. Examining all possible episodes on a limited number of directed country dyads helps mitigate the risk of certain selection biases, while expanding the field of focus beyond a single bilateral relationship helps address others.

Because LSI is such a taboo topic, practitioners frequently face incentives to deny their actual intentions. This makes researching LSI extraordinarily challenging both methodologically and in terms of data collection. However, good scholarship does not shy away from important questions just because they are difficult to answer. I have taken substantial efforts to overcome certain data limitations by expanding the primary source record through extensive use of archives and interview techniques. And, where the data is ambiguous, I take great pains to report the evidence as actually is, not as I wish it to be. Hopefully, I have done a fair job in this regard. Data collection stops at the end of the George W. Bush administration, in order to ensure that I am not chasing a moving target in trying to explain developments during an ongoing presidential administration.

E. The Argument:

I originally set out to test four rival theories for explaining the dynamics of leadership selection intervention, and, although I cannot speak to possible subjective biases, I tried to give each approach a fair hearing. What I found was that the agency of top officials in the sender state turns out to be extraordinarily important in the realm of leadership selection intervention. This leadership-based approach did a much, much better job at explaining the data than other approaches that emphasized national interests, bureaucratic politics, or the preferences of lobbyists and legislators for explaining foreign policy outcomes.

I attribute this outcome to the controversial nature of the subject matter. If conducted in the open, LSI would likely backfire. Thus, leaders still seek to meddle

abroad, but they do so in a manner designed to minimize the risks of exposure from leaks. They tend to avoid normal decision channels, operating on a strict need-to-know basis and issuing verbal orders instead of written directives whenever possible.

This decision-making environment inherently privileges discretionary control of foreign policy behavior by top leaders in the sender state. Because formal channels are off limits, bureaucrats cannot build winning coalitions to advocate for their policy preferences, and they are usually unable to block such efforts because presidents simply leave working-level officials in the dark about their true intentions. Occasionally bureaucrats will conduct leadership selection intervention without proper authorization from above, but such freelancing turns out to be rare and usually requires the president to be unusually detached from issue oversight.

Under such restrictive decision-making conditions, the only way officials can approve this sort of policy is if they are senior enough to dispense with formal procedure, typically limiting the pool to the president and national security advisor or secretary of state. And, because these individuals typically must not only approve but also initiate the effort, they thrust themselves into these situations on the basis of high resolve. This makes it quite difficult for Congress to block the president when he does seek to pursue LSI abroad. Members of Congress rarely notice the president's smaller scale efforts to meddle overseas, and they are often deterred from fighting the executive branch over more drastic interventions because he can signal to them his determination and willingness to pursue such a fight.

Finally, because presidents are encouraged to be so privative about their decisions to pursue LSI, they are unusually dependent upon their own foreign policy instincts and judgment. As a result, variation in LSI occurrence turns out to be somewhat independent of objective international circumstances during periods when practitioners misperceive the policy-making environment or harbor strong feelings about their personal counterparts abroad. Subsequently, the efficacy of LSI attempts also turns somewhat on the subjective perceptions by these leaders, depending upon whether or not they correctly understand political dynamics and desires within the arena of the target state.

F. Evidence for Findings:

The case histories in this project provide a broad swath of evidence about the four theories under consideration. I find that, among this data, the most persuasive evidence in favor of leadership theory at the expense of the three structure-based explanations for foreign policy behavior under consideration tends to involve episodes in which the theories offer mutually exclusive predictions, allowing us to parse between them with the data. However, in addition to this “three-cornered test,” assessing leadership theory against prominent rival explanations, it is also important to do a “two-cornered test,” comparing leadership theory against the null to demonstrate that it does a relatively sound job on its own of explaining the cases, regardless of other prominent theories of causation.

The evidence in this regard is quite remarkable. Time and time again, a recurring theme throughout all of the cases seems to be the importance of top

leaders in the sender state (in this study, usually the United States) for determining the dynamics of LSI behavior. In both cases and non-cases, the reason for occurrence or non-occurrence of LSI can usually be traced back to the characteristic actions of either the president or one of his most trusted aides. And, although efficacy is subject to less degrees of freedom than efficacy (as is explained in my theory chapter), the success or failure of attempts at LSI also seems to be heavily impacted by leadership-related variables, especially how well American officials seemed to understand the actual dynamics of competitive politics in the target state. Some of the most important dynamics for determining variation in both LSI occurrence and efficacy across the episodes seem to be: presidential passions, personal assessments about their foreign counterparts, personal distractions they may face, their style of management, and even their specific beliefs about impending leadership contests abroad.

Further, the theory stands up to a three-cornered test against the rival explanations as well, which tend to emphasize domestic or international structural forces at the expense of personal agency. In order to give all four theories a fair hearing, I consider each theory in each episode along a range of seven different observable implications in order to be meticulous and rigorous about considering explanations other than the agency of top leaders in the sender state. Consistently, however, the leadership-based explanation comes out ahead.

Further, a number of episodes offer particularly stark grist for falsification of the rival theories. For example, if national interests theory were true – that is, if states made policy in the realm of LSI solely on the basis of unitary, rational,

objective national interests – then we should expect to see states in similar circumstances behaving similarly. However, American policy toward Israel in 1987 and 1990 provide an excellent thought experiment in this regard. In both instances, Washington faced similar circumstances in Israeli politics, and yet it pursued divergent policies for reasons having to do with the subjective perceptions of the president and secretary of state at the time.

In both instances, the United States faced with an Israeli national unity government incorporating both the Labor Party and the Likud Party, in which Labor endorsed a peace plan that had elicited surprising Arab support but was opposed by the Likud. Yet in 1987, Ronald Reagan and George Shultz declined to pursue LSI, rejecting requests for them to do so through endorsing the London Accords, since they were not eager to get drawn into an intramural Israeli fight over the plan. Yet in 1990, George H. W. Bush and James Baker pushed for the adoption of the so-called Shamir Plan even after Yitzhak Shamir had abandoned the plan. They knew that to do so would risk the end of Israel's national unity government, and that the NUG might be replaced by a coalition led by Labor or by one led by the Likud. These were highly equivalent opportunities with divergent responses, and I argue in the case histories that the reasons for the difference come down to staffing on the American side.

The cases examined in this dissertation provide a critical test of the lobby-legislative approach, which envisions U.S. policy as the result of dictation by lobbies and other public interest groups, usually through their supporters in Congress. This is because the U.S.-Israel and U.S.-Palestine relationships are instances in which

lobby groups are seen as being especially influential. If the theory is indeed true, it should perform particularly well in these cases. If, however, the theory cannot perform even on its home territory, that should provide considerable reason for skepticism about the theory's explanatory power, at least as a model for behavior in the specific area of leadership selection intervention.¹¹

If the lobby-legislative perspective were true, we should expect to see very little LSI toward Israel. This is because pro-Israel lobby has rather consistently opposed American intervention in either Israeli or Palestinian politics, believing that such behavior is bad for American interests and for Israeli interests. Yet I find a very high level of such behavior by the United States government over recent decades. Under this theory one should also expect to see some other patterns of behavior that are not borne out by the cases, including: LSI attempts being significantly degraded by opposition from Congress, LSI attempts being concentrated in periods of united U.S. government, and LSI being near-impossible during the lead-up to elections in the United States. For instance, both Bush 41 and Bill Clinton pursued especially dramatic episodes of leadership selection intervention during years in which they were up for reelection.

Lastly, this project also rejects the bureaucratic politics approach as a model for explaining LSI behavior. The main elements of the bureaucracy which deal with Israeli and Palestinian politics – the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the Department of State – tend to prefer frequent LSI on behalf of perceived pro-peace moderates. And, although LSI is much more common than one would expect under

¹¹ Indeed, I do not seek to argue in this volume that foreign policy lobbies are inconsequential overall – rather that they are unimportant in the particular dimension of LSI.

the lobby-legislative approach, neither is it regular enough to fit the bureaucratic approach (and, indeed, closer inspection of the case studies bears out the thesis that this variation is due to factors in the realm of sender state leadership, not some combination of these other, structural factors).

In fact, not only does the U.S. government engage in LSI more rarely than working-level bureaucrats might prefer, but sometimes it intervenes in the wrong direction relative to theory's expectations. For example, this often takes the form of coming down in support of Likud politicians in Israel instead of candidates from the Labor or Kadima Parties instead. In 1983, the Reagan administration tried to bolster Likud politician Misha Arens as a successor to Menachem Begin because he seemed more moderate than possible alternatives; George W. Bush took steps in advance of the 2003 Israeli elections that were designed to help then-Likud leader Ariel Sharon win reelection.

Not only did such interventions clash with the preferences of working-level bureaucrats in the U.S. government, but they employed techniques for achieving LSI that were also unpopular with the bureaucracy. Bush's support for Sharon came mainly in the form of agreeing to delay release of the Road Map peace plan, a step that outraged lower-level U.S. officials. In 1983, the steps used to bolster Arens involved approval of U.S. support for Israel's Lavi fighter jet project, which was opposed by working level technocrats at the Defense Department (as well as the Defense Secretary, who was overruled by Reagan) for being too costly and not an effective weapons platform. The jet project was cancelled four years later for exactly that reason. Again, in 1996, Bill Clinton sought to bolster Israeli politician

Shimon Peres by approving the Nautilus laser weapon system as a possible avenue for defending Israel from missiles; again, the aid was one of numerous steps taken by the Clinton administration that were intended to bolster Peres in advance of an Israeli vote. Yet the idea had long been opposed by working-level Pentagon officials for being ineffective on the testing field and for being far too costly. Years later, U.S.-Israel cooperation to develop the Nautilus was cancelled for exactly the same reasons.

In short, this evidence should make observers highly skeptical about bureaucratic models of LSI behavior, along with the other two structural models tested by this dissertation: national interests theory and the lobby-legislative politics approach. Leadership theory provides a far more persuasive model of American behavior for explaining variation in both LSI occurrence and LSI efficacy across cases.

G. Plan for the Dissertation:

The remainder of this dissertation proceeds as follows: my theory chapter, Israel cases, Palestine cases, an Iran shadow case, and conclusions. In Chapter 2, I present competing theories about how LSI works and provide a framework for testing them against each other. I further justify my choice of research questions, articulate the four theories tested by this dissertation, and enumerate a list of specific observable implications that we should expect to see under each of those four theories. In the case studies that follow, I reprise this list of observable implications, methodically assessing how the theories stack up in each Israeli or

Palestinian episode according to each category observable implication. It is painstaking work but helps ensure that all four theories get a fair and consistent hearing throughout.

In Chapters 3 through 7 I set out to document the history of American intervention in Israeli politics from 1977 through 2009. I give each presidential administration since Jimmy Carter a full chapter's worth of analysis, and I document concurrent instances of intervention in Israeli politics by other governments (usually Egypt, Jordan, the PA, Britain, and France) as they come up in order to aid in boosting analytical leverage.

I then proceed to the Palestine dyad in Chapters 8 through 10 in order to explore how observations from the Israel dyad stack up in a different contextual setting. Chapter 8 considers the era before the Oslo Accords, comparing efforts by George Shultz and James Baker to marginalize the Palestine Liberation Organization. Chapter 9 examines the heyday of the Oslo era and Bill Clinton's efforts to embrace the PLO leadership atop the newly established Palestinian Authority government. Then, Chapter 10 considers George W. Bush's efforts to fill the void in Palestinian politics after Oslo's demise by picking and choosing the Palestinian leadership.

The last empirical section of this dissertation is Chapter 11. In it, I provide a brief longitudinal shadow case that musters existing published materials for to outline past U.S. efforts to intervene in the domestic politics of Iran. This includes both before and after the fall of the Shah. Since the purpose of this chapter is to probe external validity rather than to generate theory from scratch, my coverage of the data in these episodes is much shorter and more stylized.

Finally, I wrap up by offering some brief conclusions in Chapter 12. I review the dissertation's main arguments as well as commonalities and differences across the three dyads. I then finish by offering some lessons for both theory and policy.

Chapter II.

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The Theory

Why does the United States government play favorites in another nation's internal politics during some episodes but not others, seeking to enhance the power of one actor or faction at the expense of others? Why does the U.S. succeed at certain efforts yet fail at others? The core of this dissertation seeks to answer such questions by assembling a history of U.S. efforts to promote the Middle East peace process by meddling in the internal politics of Israel and the internal politics of the Palestinian Authority. It therefore serves two complementary objectives: documenting an important chapter of American diplomatic history and mapping out the dynamics of a behavior in international relations that is empirically commonplace but analytically neglected.

This study reaches the surprising finding that the agency of individual top leaders in the sender state is critical for explaining outcomes in this particular issue area. Because picking favorites is a taboo subject, officials avoid the potential costs of exposure by using elaborate pretenses to mask their true intentions and by developing an aversion to formal, written process to diminish the chances of leaks. This tendency has the peculiar side effect of boosting the leeway of top political leaders to pursue unpopular or even misguided foreign policies while mitigating major structural forces such as bureaucratic politics, pressure from Congress and lobbyists, or objective international interests.

Background & Overview:

In the previous chapter, I reviewed the literature on meddling in international relations. I defined leadership selection intervention (LSI) as a distinct type of meddling by which by one government attempts to bolster or change the character of another polity's ruling coalition using methods short of force. Further, I demonstrated that LSI has been understudied relative to the burgeoning literatures on other kinds of interference in foreign affairs, such as military intervention, support for coups, or state-to-state coercion. Although LSI is a commonplace form of behavior in contemporary international relations, we have little systematic knowledge about it.

In this chapter, I present competing theories about how LSI works and provide a framework for testing them against each other. In the first section below, I lay out two overarching research questions, each addressing puzzling variation in a different aspect of how LSI operates: occurrence and efficacy. That is, why does LSI occur in some instances but not others, especially within a specific bilateral relationship? And why does LSI succeed in some of those instances but not others?

Second, I present some competing theories that might answer these research questions. The four theories include: national interests, lobby-legislative politics, bureaucratic politics, and leadership theory. In this project, I argue that leadership theory, which emphasizes individual agency, offers a more persuasive answer to these research questions than the three structural theories (international or domestic) against which it shall be tested.

Third, I enumerate a list of specific observable implications that we should

expect to see under each one of the theories. By explicitly drawing out how expectations vary across theories, I provide tangible guidelines as to which kinds of evidence should lead us to reject the structure-based approaches in favor of agency.

Fourth, I explain why LSI is an issue area in which agency is so salient for explaining behavior. I argue that this is due to a phenomenon I call “the paper paradox”, by which officials balance their desire to meddle and the risks of doing so by avoiding the formal and written channels through which government decision-making normally takes place. When the deliberative process is driven underground, it reduces the automaticity with which structural pressures tend to be imposed upon policy. Instead, it falls to top leaders to determine whether and how a sender state engages in LSI. This phenomenon applies to both LSI occurrence and LSI efficacy, although for certain reasons it has more effect on the former than the latter.

Fifth, I describe my criteria for case selection. I explain why even a limited number of case studies can provide valid, generalizable knowledge when selected using the appropriate logic. I lay out my general logic for case selection and demonstrate why the specific cases I study fulfill these standards. *Inter alia*, my case selection methods are designed to minimize selection bias; minimize erroneous case codings (both false negatives and false positives); provide a critical, easy test for lobby-legislative theory (which it fails); and to maximize historiographic contributions. I also seek to assess external validity by applying the theory to cases beyond U.S.-Israel relations. These cases include: incidental discussion of intervention in Israeli politics by Arab or European states in Chapters 3 through 7, a parallel study of American intervention in Palestinian politics in Chapters 8 through

10, and a shadow case exploring U.S. intervention in Iranian politics since World War II in Chapter 11.

Sixth, I touch on issues of coding and measurement. Before assembling and evaluating empirical evidence in the chapters that will follow, I therefore aim to specify some objective standards for weighing historical evidence in theoretically salient terms. I also conclude with a dissertation road map to provide the reader with a clearer sense of what follows in subsequent chapters.

SECTION 1: The Research Questions

Since existing knowledge about LSI is so rudimentary, I seek to address research questions that are fundamental, consequential, and broadly applicable in nature. Thus, I focus on explaining variation in two specific dependent variables: occurrence and efficacy. Below, I explain why I choose to focus on these two DVs and provide illustrative examples to highlight puzzling variation in both categories.

Of course, these are not the only research questions worth asking about LSI. Other unexplored topics include: what explains the sender's choice of particular intervention techniques over others? Do different tools entail different causal mechanisms and different rates of efficacy? What explains the sender's choice of LSI over more forceful forms of intervention? When and why do sender states choose hybrid strategies that combine or switch between these two types? Further, who sends LSI? Only superpowers? Only democracies?

However, for purposes of rigor and concentration, this project leaves aside direct consideration of those questions for future projects. Instead, it focuses upon

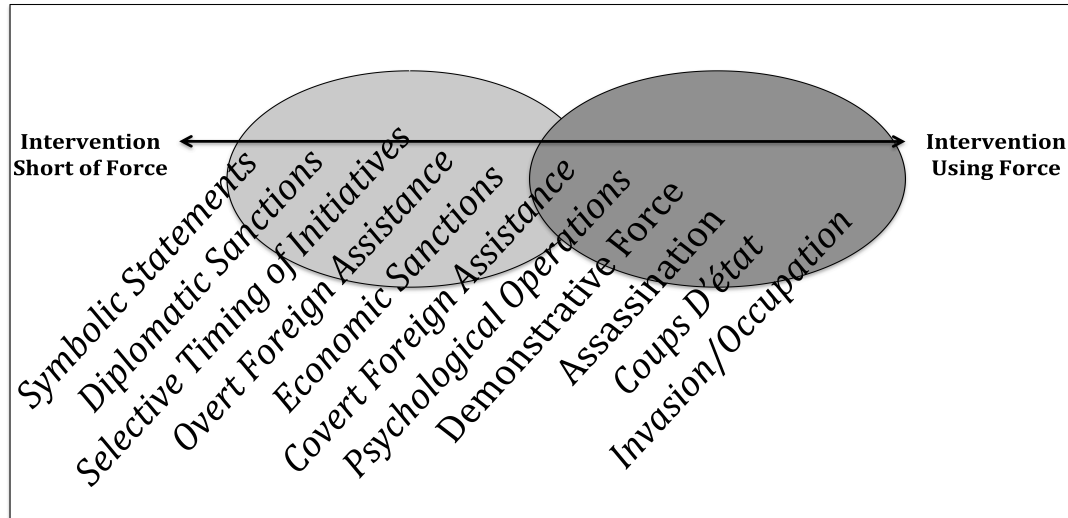
the two DVs that I believe provide the soundest foundation for policy knowledge and further research on the topic: occurrence and efficacy.

This study does bear on a few other topics in passing but does not focus on them extensively. For instance, one could ask how often LSI occurs, along with how often LSI succeeds. Based on the cases covered by this dissertation, my rough answer to each these questions is “sometimes”. Sometimes LSI occurs during potentially enticing circumstances for meddling abroad, and sometimes it does not. Sometimes LSI succeeds at achieving its practitioners’ intended objectives, and sometimes it does not. As vague as that may sound, it does provide limited support for some theories over others. For instance, some perspectives might envision very successful or near-constant LSI on these dyads (such as models of state clientelism, *dependencia* theory, and bureaucratic politics), while others might expect LSI occurrence or efficacy to be quite rare (such as the lobby-legislative perspective described below).

One thing I do not seek to achieve in this study is to build a grand theory for explaining which tools of LSI potential sender states adopt when and why. However, the range of tools observed in this study are quite extensive. For example, LSI can take place through public statements of praise or criticism, private electoral advice, selectively targeted treaties or aid as well as pointed denials of such measures to name a few. A notional taxonomy of common tools for LSI versus tools for “harder” intervention involving physical force is provided below in Table II.

Table II:

Tools of LSI versus Tools of Intervention Using Force



Dependent Variable #1: Occurrence

What explains variation in LSI occurrence – that is, why does LSI occur in some instances but not others? To be fair, not everybody presumes that this is the case. For instance, scholars who focus on concepts such as *dependencia*, neo-colonialism, and superpower control of client states tend to suggest great power intervention is a universal constant that is always taking place.¹ On the other hand, if one were to judge only from neorealist IR theory or from the overt rhetoric of U.S.

¹ Gavan McCormack, *Client State: Japan in the American Embrace* (Verso, 2007); Julia Sweig, *Friendly Fire: Losing Friends and Making Enemies in the Anti-American Century* (Public Affairs, 2006); Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East* (Beacon Press, 2005); Andre Gunder Frank, "The Development of Underdevelopment," *The Sustainable Urban Development Reader* (2004). For a more measured variant, see David Sylvan and Stephen Majeski, *U.S. Foreign Policy in Perspective: Clients, Enemies and Empire* (Psychology Press, 2009).

diplomats, it would seem that meddling might *never* take place.²

However, these assumptions are erroneous: there is clear – and sometimes puzzling – variation in the occurrence of LSI. Throughout this project I point out numerous instances of LSI occurrence and non-occurrence under comparable circumstances, including on the same two-country directed dyads. For now, however, my hope is that a single illustrative example should suffice.

Consider U.S. relations with Turkey in 1973-4 when Turkey elected a leftist prime minister, Bülent Ecevit, who formed a government that advocated socialist economic controls at home and warmer relations with the USSR abroad. This is just the sort of event that one might expect to have elicited U.S. efforts to bring the new Turkish government down. However, this does not appear to have taken place.³

On the other hand, in 1996-7 American policy-makers strove to undermine Turkey's Islamist PM Necmettin Erbakan for doing the exact same thing: advocating worrisome but gradual domestic transformations and closer relations with sworn American enemies. Washington's policy during this period sought to ensure close bilateral ties while preventing Erbakan from capitalizing on U.S. concessions, a policy that came to be known as "Turkey an ally, Erbakan no friend".⁴

Of course, this begs the question of why LSI occurred in one case but not the

² Versions of realist theory that treat states as undifferentiated black boxes inherently assume that all matters of internal politics are either nonexistent or inconsequential for foreign policy behavior. See Kenneth Neal Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (McGraw-Hill, 1979). For an apt discussion of the shortcomings of systemic theory with regard to internal politics of weak states, see John M. IV Owen, "The Foreign Imposition of Domestic Institutions," *International Organization* 56, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 377–378.

³ Dankwart A. Rustow, *Turkey, America's Forgotten Ally* (Council on Foreign Relations, 1987); Monteagle Stearns, *Entangled Allies: U.S. Policy Toward Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus* (Council on Foreign Relations, 1992); US Department of State, "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973–1976" (US Government Printing Office, 2007).

⁴ Alan Makovsky, "How to Deal with Erbakan," *Middle East Quarterly* (1997); Robert Satloff, "US Policy Toward Islamism: A Theoretical and Operational Overview," *Council on Foreign Relations* (2000).

other, despite circumstances seeming to justify it in both instances. My tentative reading of the Turkish cases seems to support leadership theory, since a major factor mitigating U.S. threat perceptions about Ecevit was a personal connection between leaders that was lacking for Erbakan. Kissinger explains that “I had known Ecevit since 1957, when he was a student at the Harvard International Seminar” and recalls that Ecevit’s political outlook had been “conventional left-wing attitudes of mainstream European intellectuals taking their lead from Parisian literary circles”. In fact, Kissinger even comments that, “because [Ecevit’s] first passion had been poetry, I was hoping that he would prove more flexible and sensitive to nuance than the more traditional Turkish leaders who tended to favor trench warfare”.⁵ I also note numerous instances in the course of the dissertation in which observers might have expected to see LSI yet intervention surprisingly did not occur.

I find these instances of within-dyad variation the most puzzling because so many country-specific factors are already held constant. This sort of fine-grained variation is also more policy-relevant because it allows us to assess with some specificity whether LSI is likely to occur in the context of a bilateral relationship at a particular point in time, not just on average relative to other possible dyads. The question of “is LSI likely by State A toward State B in the near future?” is likely to be somewhat more informative than “are State A’s dealings with State B generally prone to LSI?”, since the latter question can probably be estimated by a tentative glance at the historical record. It is also more policy-relevant, a key objective for studies that seek to produce applicable knowledge on real-world problems. Thus, as

⁵ Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal* (Simon and Schuster, 2000), 217.

I address this project's first research question – that of occurrence – I look at both kinds of variation but place greater emphasis of explaining variation within the context of a given bilateral relationship.

Further, although bidirectional meddling sometimes takes place (and is no doubt more common in the U.S.-Israel relationship), for the sake of feasibility I avoid searching for it directly. I only address two-way meddling in this project when reciprocity occurs and is pertinent for explaining behavior by the primary sender.

Dependent Variable #2: Efficacy

In addition to studying occurrence, this project seeks to explain variation in the efficacy of LSI, why some efforts at LSI succeed whereas others fail. This is another dimension in which one can observe both variation and puzzling outcomes.

For instance, America and its allies sought to facilitate the defeat of Slobodan Milosevic in the 2000 Serbian elections, and the prevailing wisdom seems to be that these efforts succeeded. By sanctioning the ruling clique and providing aid to political opposition groups, the international community helped skew Serbia's vote toward Kostunica and away from Milosevic.⁶ In addition to achieving success in the narrow sense of pushing out Milosevic, these efforts can be considered a broader policy success because they also helped advance democratization in Serbia and bring about a more peaceful environment in the Balkans.⁷

⁶ Thomas Carothers, "Ousting Foreign Strongmen: Lessons from Serbia," *Policy Brief: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* 1, no. 5 (May 2001). Nor is this an isolated case. For a broader approach, see Nikolay Marinov, "Do Economic Sanctions Destabilize Country Leaders?," *American Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 3 (July 2005): 564–576.

⁷ As I describe below in more detail, I disaggregate efficacy into categories of "narrow" and "broad".

However, subsequent efforts to isolate Serbian extremists have tended to fail. Despite U.S. insistence on boycotting hardline factions, such as the Socialist Party of Serbia and the Serbian Radical Party, these groups have not suffered as a result. If anything, their popularity increased since the policy of non-engagement was implemented. The SPS has played the role of a kingmaker during coalition formation, and both parties continue to exert an influence on policy outcomes.⁸

This begs the broader question of why some efforts at LSI succeed while others fail. For reasons I shall explain later, one of the reasons the Serbian episodes differ so much in their results has to do with the relative urgency of the policy endeavors. Leaders have much greater capacity and motivation to tip the scales during short-term efforts (e.g. the lead-up to elections in a target state) than during long-term efforts to change the balance of political power in a foreign society.

In sum, occurrence and efficacy comprise two types of variation that are crucial for understanding LSI. I place greater emphasis on explaining fine-grained (within-dyad) variation than differences across dyads, and I leave consideration of other possible research questions aside for another date.

SECTION 2: The Theories

What sorts of theories allow us to make parsimonious predictions about the dynamics of LSI? This section offers four prominent theories of foreign policy behavior and tailors them to the subject matter. Three of them focus on the role of

⁸ Marlene Spoerri, "US Policy Towards Ultrnationalist Political Parties in Serbia: The Policy of Non-Engagement Examined," *CEU Political Science Journal* 1 (2008): 25–48.

broad structural forces that tend to fall beyond the control of individual human beings: national interests theory, lobby-legislative politics, and bureaucratic politics. Meanwhile, the fourth framework – leadership theory – places greater emphasis on the role of individual agency for explaining outcomes in international politics.

I do not include an explicitly “constructivist” or “ideational” theory in this grouping for theory testing. Although models that emphasize normative causal factors comprise another prominent area of international relations theory, I do not believe that an explicit testing of this approach is necessary for this project. To the extent that ideational models emphasize factors that operate at the group level (i.e. those beliefs that are intersubjective), those beliefs are either too widely shared to explain intra-dyadic variation over time or are subsumed in the two structural models already tested that emphasize the demands of specific institutional actors in the sender state’s domestic context. To the extent that ideational models emphasize individual-level beliefs that are not widely shared, these factors are subsumed with success under the agency-based leadership theory approach.

I conclude in this study that leadership theory provides the most persuasive answer to my research questions. However, in order to conduct as fair a test as possible, I make sure to elaborate versions of the alternative theories that are well-suited to within-dyad variation in leadership selection intervention.

Theory #1: National Interests Theory

The first theory I consider here focuses on international structure. The preeminent school of thought in international relations is structural realism, also

known as neorealism. It argues that states act on the basis of national interests, evaluating costs and benefits in a unitary, self-interested manner.⁹ However, I loosen some of the strict assumptions commonly employed by neorealists to ensure that the international structural approach is given as fair a test as possible. However, I also seek to avoid warping its meaning so far as to lose track of its original insight, a pitfall known as “conceptual stretching”.¹⁰

First, neorealism tends to emphasize very slow-moving factors such as polarity and the gross balance of power.¹¹ Instead, a more appropriate framework for evaluating fine-grained variation in LSI would be to jettison this focus while retaining the rationalist roots of structural realism.¹² No doubt, slow-moving factors such as polarity are worth considering, and I note opportunities to evaluate them when possible (such as comparing pre- and post-Cold War cases). But they would not provide a very informative basis for addressing variation within the dyads.

Second, it is important to recognize that focusing on fine-grained power balances would not provide a very useful alternative. In fact, the balance of power between target and sender states may be quite removed from the question of how to

⁹ Some notable examples of realist thinking include Thucydides, “Melian Dialogues,” in *Essential Readings in World Politics*, ed. Karen A. Mingst and Jack L. Snyder, trans. Suresht Bald (Norton, 2010), 2–3; Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (A. A. Knopf, 1948); Morton A. Kaplan, *System and Process in International Politics* (Wiley, 1957); Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*; John A. Vasquez, *The Power of Power Politics: From Classical Realism to Neotraditionalism* (Cambridge University Press, 1998); John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2001).

¹⁰ Giovanni Sartori, “Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics,” *The American Political Science Review* 64, no. 4 (1970): 1033–1053; David Collier and James E. Jr. Mahon, “Conceptual ‘Stretching’ Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis,” *The American Political Science Review* 87, no. 4 (1993): 845–855.

¹¹ See especially Kaplan, *System and Process in International Politics*; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*; Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Cornell University Press, 1997).

¹² For the distinction between gross and fine-grained power balances, see Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Cornell University Press, 1999), 7–11, 256. See also Marc Trachtenberg, “A ‘Wasting Asset’: American Strategy and the Shifting Nuclear Balance, 1949–1954,” *International Security* 13, no. 3 (1988): 5–49.

approach the domestic politics of others. Thus, I focus on interests instead of power balances and loosen the neorealist presumption that domestic politics should not matter.¹³

Third, I choose to boil realism down to the logic of the objective and unitary national interest. One must ask how domestic cleavages in the target state impact the objective interests of a unitary sender state. Specifically, the theory should consider which political factions in the target state advocate policies that are most (or least) advantageous to the sender's interests and whether there is an opportunity for the sender to support (or undermine) that faction.

Thus, for the purposes of this project, Theory #1 (national interests theory), claims the following:

The main factor for explaining variation in the occurrence and efficacy of LSI will be the objective strategic interests of the unitary sender state.

Thus, states should undertake LSI according to their objective, unitary international interests, and their success at doing so should be directly correlated with their stakes in the outcome. Institutional or personal biases in the sender state should not skew the timing or effectiveness of intervention.

¹³ However, we should not stretch the theory too far by allowing domestic factors in the sender state to do most of the causal lifting. Doing so would incorrectly attribute explanatory power to international structure as opposed to domestic features of the sender state, which are covered better by the theories below. I do not consider more flexible versions of realism such as the neoclassical approach because I believe they would precipitate a test so weighted in favor of realism as to be uninformative. Also, these variants of realism can explain almost any outcome and are extremely difficult to falsify as a result. For more on this fallacy, see Michael N. Barnett, "Identity and Alliances in the Middle East," in *The Culture of National Security*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (Columbia University Press, 1996), 400–450; Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?," *International Security* 24, no. 2 (1999): 5–55.

Theory #2: Lobby-Legislative Politics

Whereas realism emphasizes the pressures exerted on states by international structures, liberalism emphasizes the importance of domestic political forces for shaping policy outcomes.¹⁴ Different theories of liberalism emphasize different ways in which domestic politics can shape state behavior. The second theory I consider here is one pertinent variant of the liberal approach to IR.¹⁵

An extensive literature points to the importance of ethnic, business, or foreign lobbies for explaining foreign policy choice. These factors are expected to be more salient in open, established democracies as well as on issues in which interest groups are especially well-organized.¹⁶ In addition to influencing the outcomes of

¹⁴ Andrew Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics," *International Organization* 51, no. 4 (1997): 513–553.

¹⁵ Two variants that are not tested here include arguments about democratic or commercial peace. They hold that the key determinant of relations among states is either those states' regime type or the nature of commercial relations among them. However, these variants of liberalism are too slow-moving to serve as a strong foil for leadership theory. I note the impact of these factors when looking between dyads instead of within them but focus more on other forces. Instead, I focus on lobby groups, legislatures, and – further below – bureaucratic preferences. For democratic peace, see Michael W. Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," *The American Political Science Review* 80, no. 4 (1986): 1151–1169; Zeev Maoz and Bruce Russett, "Normative and Structural Causes of Democratic Peace, 1946–1986," *The American Political Science Review* 87, no. 3 (1993): 624–638; John M. IV Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace," *International Security* 19, no. 2 (1994): 87–125. For commercial peace and economic interdependence, see Paul A. Papayoanou, *Power Ties: Economic Interdependence, Balancing, and War* (University of Michigan Press, 1999); Edward D. Mansfield and Brian Pollins, *Economic Interdependence and International Conflict: New Perspectives on an Enduring Debate* (University of Michigan Press, 2003); Michael Mousseau, "The Social Market Roots of Democratic Peace," *International Security* 33, no. 4 (2009): 52–86.

¹⁶ See Ross Y. Koen, *The China Lobby in American Politics* (Octagon Books, 1974); Theodore J. Lowi, *The End of Liberalism: The Second Republic of the United States* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1979); Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations* (Yale University Press, 1982); Nicholas John Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign against American "Neutrality" in World War II* (Oxford University Press, 1996); Tony Smith, *Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Harvard University Press, 2000); Stephen Ansolabehere, John M. De Figueiredo, and Jim M. Snyder, "Why is there so Little Money in U.S. Politics?," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17, no. 1 (2003): 105–130; Lawrence R. Jacobs and Benjamin I. Page, "Who Influences US Foreign Policy?," *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 1 (2005): 107–123; Ken Silverstein, "Their Men in Washington: Undercover with DC's lobbyists for hire," *Harpers* 1886 (2007): 53; Trevor Rubenzer, "Ethnic Minority Interest Group Attributes and U.S. Foreign Policy Influence: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4, no. 2 (2008): 169–185; John Newhouse, "Diplomacy, Inc.: The Influence of Lobbies on US Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 88 (2009): 73.

international negotiations by binding the executive branch's maneuvering space,¹⁷ this theory also anticipates that Congress puts an indelible stamp on U.S. diplomacy.¹⁸ And, of course, this perspective is a well-established, and hotly contested, perspective with regard to U.S. policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict.¹⁹

Since the influence of these groups is often greatest with regard to the legislative branch, this variant of liberalism expects that legislatures provide the main pathway for lobby preferences to get translated into policy choices. Under an idealized version of the theory, we should expect legislators to mimic and adopt the preferences of powerful lobby group. In essence, the theory expects that government is prone to frequent "capture" by lobbyists, via the legislative branch. At its most extreme, the theory considers presidents prisoners of their legislative

¹⁷ Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42, no. 03 (1988): 427–460; Peter B. Evans, "Conclusion - Building an Integrative Approach to International and Domestic Politics: Reflections and Projections," in *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics*, ed. Peter B. Evans, Harold K. Jacobson, and Robert D. Putnam (University of California Press, 1993), 387–430; George W. Downs and David M. Rocke, *Optimal Imperfection?: Domestic Uncertainty and Institutions in International Relations* (Princeton University Press, 1997).

¹⁸ James M. Lindsay, "Congress and Foreign Policy: Why the Hill Matters," *Political Science Quarterly* 107, no. 4 (1992): 607–628; Randall B. Ripley and James M. Lindsay, eds., *Congress Resurgent: Foreign and Defense Policy on Capitol Hill* (University of Michigan Press, 1993).

¹⁹ For debates over the role and impact of the pro-Israel lobby in Washington, see Paul Findley, *They Dare to Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby* (Lawrence Hill, 1984); Steven L. Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan* (University of Chicago Press, 1986); Cheryl Rubenberg, *Israel and the American National Interest: A Critical Examination* (University of Illinois Press, 1986); A. F. K. Organski, *The \$36 Billion Bargain: Strategy and Politics in U.S. Assistance to Israel* (Columbia University Press, 1991); Mitchell Geoffrey Bard, *The Water's Edge and Beyond: Defining the Limits of Domestic Influence on United States Middle East Policy* (Transaction Publishers, 1991); Camille Mansour, *Beyond Alliance: Israel in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Columbia University Press, 1994); John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Israeli Lobby," *London Review of Books* (March 10, 2006); Michael Massing, "The Storm over the Israel Lobby," *New York Review of Books* 53, no. 10 (2006); Walter Russell Mead, "Jerusalem Syndrome: Decoding the Israel Lobby," *Foreign Affairs* 86 (2007): 160; Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Macmillan, 2007); Robert C. Lieberman, "The 'Israel Lobby' and American Politics," *Perspectives on Politics* 7, no. 2 (January 2009): 235–257; Mearsheimer and Walt, "The Blind Man and the Elephant in the Room: Robert Lieberman and the Israel Lobby," *Perspectives on Politics* 7, no. 2 (2009): 259–273; Lieberman, "Rejoinder to Mearsheimer and Walt," *Perspectives on Politics* 7, no. 2 (February 2009): 275–281.

counterparts, cowed into pursuing a policy agenda designed not to offend sensibilities of the powerful and well-organized who comprise a motivated “issue public”.

For the purposes of this project, Theory #2 (lobby-legislative politics) claims the following:

The main factor for explaining variation in the occurrence and efficacy of LSI will be the aggregate preferences of lobby groups and legislators in the sender state.

Thus, states should undertake LSI only when lobbyists and legislators tend to desire it, and the efficacy of LSI should be correlated with the extent to which these actors desire intervention. As a result, lobbyists and legislators should be capable of undermining LSI if the executive branch conducts it against their wishes. Also, if lobbyists and legislators have an institutional bias regarding politics in the target state, that may undermine their own ability to pursue LSI effectively.

Theory #3: Bureaucratic Politics

The other variant of liberalism tested by this dissertation focuses on structural forces within the executive branch rather than the legislature. Theory #3 holds that policy choices tend to reflect organizational interests within and across government agencies, with policy outcomes bubbling up from below. Individuals and their personal beliefs are not driving causal forces because, as the old maxim states, “where you stand depends on where you sit”.

This perspective is a long-running school of thought in political science. For

instance, bureaucratic autonomy is a major topic of inquiry in the subfields of American and comparative politics.²⁰ It also has been shown to apply to national security affairs, including the Cuban Missile Crisis.²¹ Sometimes bureaucracies appear to reign supreme, disobeying, delaying, or distorting orders from their superiors in government. Political appointees are considered an insufficient means by which top leaders try but fail to exert control over the permanent bureaucracy.

This claim is not necessarily as extreme as it may sound; even presidents themselves have sometimes given credence to it. For instance, Truman reportedly predicted that his successor Eisenhower would be shocked to discover the impotence of the presidency at enforcing compliance from the bureaucracy: “he’ll sit here and he’ll say ‘Do this! Do that!’ *And nothing will happen*. Poor Ike – it won’t be a bit like the Army. He’ll find it very frustrating”.²² This perspective has also been applied to studies of America’s approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict.²³

Thus, for the purposes of this project, Theory #3 (bureaucratic politics) claims the following:

²⁰ Ezra N. Suleiman, *Politics, Power, and Bureaucracy in France: The Administrative Elite* (Princeton University Press, 1974); William A. Niskanen, *Bureaucracy & Representative Government* (Aldine, Atherton, 1971); Chalmers A. Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975* (Stanford University Press, 1982); Daniel P. Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928* (Princeton University Press, 2001).

²¹ Graham T. Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *American Political Science Review* 63, no. 3 (September 1969): 689–718; Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Longman, 1999); Morton H. Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Brookings Institution Press, 1974); Amy B. Zegart, *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NSC* (Stanford University Press, 1999).

²² Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership* (Wiley, 1960), 9 – emphasis is in the original.

²³ See, for instance, Robert D. Kaplan, *Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite* (Simon and Schuster, 1995); Mitchell Bard, *The Arab Lobby: The Invisible Alliance That Undermines America’s Interests in the Middle East* (Harper, 2010).

The main factor for explaining variation in the occurrence and efficacy of LSI will be aggregate organizational preferences of the sender state's permanent bureaucracy.

Thus, states should undertake LSI only when bureaucrats tend to prefer such a foreign policy. The efficacy of these attempts should depend upon the intensity with which these officials want intervention to occur, and bureaucratic freelancing without senior approval should probably occur rather frequently. Also, if bureaucrats have an institutional bias regarding politics in the target state, that may undermine their ability to pursue LSI effectively.

Theory #4: Leadership Theory

Whereas the three theories discussed above emphasize vast and impersonal structural forces, leadership theory holds that the main determinants of political outcomes are the contingent choices of key individuals.²⁴ Leadership of this sort tends to be underemphasized in political science because it conflicts with the basic tenet that political behaviors are systematic in nature. As Keohane explains, political leadership is “a leading example of a subject that is understudied (relative to its importance) because it does not respond to our methodological toolbox”.²⁵

The fact that leadership is emphasized so much in other fields such as business, science, and sports suggests that political scientists may be missing

²⁴ By key individuals I mean the president or prime minister of a polity and, at most, perhaps one or two of trusted national security aides.

²⁵ Robert O. Keohane, “Disciplinary Schizophrenia: Implications for Graduate Education in Political Science,” *Qualitative Methods: Newsletter of the American Political Science Association, Organized Section on Qualitative Methods* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 10.

something important when they aver that leaders “do not matter”.²⁶ Researchers who oppose the study of individuals in politics raise two main objections, neither of which are persuasive in their severe forms. First, they object that individuals are too idiosyncratic to study in a systematic manner. However, as Byman and Pollack demonstrate, leaders can shape political outcomes under predictable circumstances and in ways that are generalizable beyond particular cases or individuals.²⁷

Second, some researchers object to studying leaders because they anticipate that the forces of structure should be large enough to outweigh the contribution of individuals. However, Samuels shows that leaders in countries facing comparable obstacles often “stretch the constraints of structure,” making stark policy choices that change the course of political development and leave behind a distinctive legacy.²⁸ Also, Mukunda demonstrates that unusual “outlier leaders” who sidestep domestic institutions for leadership selection often are less reliable and therefore make brash or innovative policy choices that differ from the preferences of other potential candidates who have been more thoroughly vetted.²⁹

Sometimes, one may not even *need* to be an outlier leader for individual traits to have an impact on policy outcomes. In her recent book *Leaders at War*, Elizabeth Saunders offers extensive evidence that presidents’ decisions about where and how to undertake military intervention have been strongly conditioned by their long-

²⁶ Gautam Mukunda, “The Paths of Glory: Structure, Selection, and Leaders” (MIT Dissertation, 2010).

²⁷ Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, “Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In,” *International Security* 25, no. 4 (2001): 107–146.

²⁸ Richard J. Samuels, *Machiavelli’s Children: Leaders and Their Legacies in Italy and Japan* (Cornell University Press, 2005).

²⁹ Mukunda, “The Paths of Glory: Structure, Selection, and Leaders.”

standing personal beliefs about the sources of security threats.³⁰ In addition to beliefs, individuals' personal relationships, styles, and skills may also shape their behavior relative to how other individuals might have acted in similar positions.

In the general sense, leadership theory emphasizes the importance of a president's beliefs, priorities, and approach to decision-making for explaining political outcomes. Sometimes a leader's top few lieutenants also leave a personal stamp on policy, but decisions should occur in a top-down manner rather than bottom-up, and causal stories must be told in terms of individuals, not institutions. This perspective has also been applied systematically to explain American foreign policy with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict.³¹

Thus, for the purposes of this project, Theory #4 (leadership theory) claims the following:

The main factor for explaining variation in the occurrence and efficacy of LSI will be the subjective perceptions and behaviors of key leaders, especially the sender polity's head of government.

Thus, states should pursue LSI only when their top political leaders desire it. The efficacy of those attempts should depend upon two factors: the intensity with which those actors desire intervention and their personal understanding of political dynamics in the target state.

³⁰ Elizabeth N. Saunders, *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions* (Cornell University Press, 2011).

³¹ Most notably, see William B. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions: American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1967-1976* (University of California Press, 1977); Steven L. Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan* (University of Chicago Press, 1986); Aaron David Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace* (Bantam Books, 2008).

SECTION 3: Observable Implications

In this section I consider the range of observable implications that one might expect to see under each of the theories discussed above. This provides the reader with explicit, consistent criteria with which to assess how empirical data supports or contradicts the various theories.³² I focus especially on observable implications that are mutually exclusive so as to help distinguish not just between any given theory and the null hypothesis but also between rival theories.³³

Below, I enumerate seven areas in which patterns of behavior seem pertinent for distinguishing observable implications of the theories. Those categories are: (1) perceptions of sender interests, (2) perceptions of close contests abroad; (3) patterns of domestic debate; (4) cycles of domestic power; (5) bureaucratic freelancing; (6) consistency of message in foreign policy; and (7) the suitability of that message. The first two categories focus on occurrence, and the last two focus on efficacy. The three in between are closer to auxiliary phenomena what we should expect to observe alongside variation in those two dependent variables if one or another particular theory is correct.

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests

One factor that should impact patterns of LSI is whether a leadership contest

³² Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Cornell University Press, 1997), 104.

³³ This is akin to Lakatos's distinction between two- and three-cornered theory testing. See Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, ed. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

in the target state is seen as consequential for the interests of the sender. Each of the four theories poses different predictions regarding how sender interests are likely to shape the incidence of LSI throughout the cases. For instance, if Theory #1 (national interests theory) is true, sender interests should be objectively given. Barring some sort of extraordinary constraint, if the sender's interests are at stake, we should observe meddling occurring. If they are not at stake, meddling should not occur. And states should not "miss opportunities" for pursuing LSI.

Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) expects sender interests to be viewed through the prism of Congress and relevant lobbies. Thus, if there is a systematic bias to their perceptions about particular bilateral relationships, we should expect that bias to be reflected in LSI occurrence. In the core cases for this project, lobbies and Congress tend to downplay the value of contests in the target state because they see Israeli leaders on both sides of the aisle as trustworthy and good for U.S. interests but Palestinian leaders of all stripes as untrustworthy and bad for U.S. interests.

This fits with the empirical record over the years. As will be explored in more detail in the chapters that follow, AIPAC officials have typically sought to argue that right-wing Israeli leaders are just as good for U.S. interests as their left-wing rivals and that there is no such thing as an influential, moderate Palestinian.³⁴

³⁴ A plethora of examples jump out upon reading AIPAC's long-running weekly bulletin, *Near East Report*. Some older examples vis-à-vis Israel include the following: "Israeli Elections," *Near East Report* 21, no. 21 (May 25, 1977); "Near East Report," *Near East Report* 22, no. 13 (March 29, 1978); "Editorial: Israel's Permanent Interests," *Near East Report* 25, no. 4 (January 23, 1981); "Editorial: The Elections in Israel," *Near East Report*, no. 25 (July 3, 1981): 27; "Editorial: The Consensus," *Near East Report* 27, no. 2 (January 14, 1983); "Editorial: Begin's Decision," *Near East Report* 27, no. 35 (September 2, 1983); "Editorial: The Consensus"; "Editorial: What Do They Want?," *Near East Report* 30, no. 28 (July 21, 1986); "Dine: Unity to Meet Challenges (Excerpts Form the Address of AIPAC Executive Director

Because these actors tend to oppose American support for purportedly pro-peace leaders in either Israel or Palestine, LSI should be infrequent on both dyads if Theory #2 is correct.

Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) expects occurrence to be driven by perceptions within the bureaucracy. If bureaucrats have an outlook of in the target state that is biased in a certain direction, we should expect to observe a similar swing in rates of LSI occurrence. In the cases examined by this dissertation, the bureaucracy – exemplified by the State Department’s Bureau for Near Eastern Affairs – tends to see a deep, persistent, and meaningful difference between rival factions in the target polities. Thus, we should see very frequent LSI attempts toward both Israel and the PA.

Theory #4 (leadership theory) expects perceptions to vary based upon the subjective beliefs of individual leaders. Two types of beliefs may matter: general beliefs about the target polity or specific beliefs about individual counterparts. For instance, if leaders hold intense, general beliefs about the urgency of Palestinian self-determination and Israeli flexibility in the peace process, we should observe them attempt LSI toward the PA and Israel at much higher rates. Similarly, the sender state should be more inclined to engage in LSI when its leaders believe that their counterparts in the target are either genuine partners in need of support or disingenuous obstacles to be pushed out of the way.

Thomas Dine),” *Near East Report* 32, no. 21 (May 23, 1988); “Peace Takes Precedence,” *Near East Report* 34, no. 2 (January 8, 1990); “Shamir Stands Firm,” *Near East Report* 34, no. 8 (February 19, 1990); “What Next?,” *Near East Report* 34, no. 12 (March 19, 1990). Some examples from the Palestinian case include: “Sadat’s Reversals,” *Near East Report* 21, no. 1 (January 5, 1977); I. L. Kenen, “Converting the Enemy,” *Near East Report* 21, no. 2 (January 12, 1977); “Editorial: What Do They Want?,” *Near East Report* 30, no. 28 (July 21, 1986); “The Peace Agenda: The Palestinians,” *Near East Report* 35, no. 40 (October 7, 1991); “No Concessions to the PLO,” *Near East Report* 35, no. 48 (December 2, 1991).

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

Perceptions of a close contest in the target state should serve as an additional relevant factor. Potential senders should exert political capital to shape a leadership contest in the target only when they perceive a possible contest in the offing for which the outcome is reasonably up for grabs. However, the theories differ with regard to how they predict this will play out in practice.

Theory #1 (national interests theory) emphasizes the importance of objective information and national interests. Thus, we should expect sender states to make decisions about meddling on the basis of all information available about objective political trends in the target state at that time. If, however, senders do not undertake LSI on the basis of rationally updated estimations about the likelihood of a close contest, then that would seem to contradict the theory. Barring some sort of objective intelligence failure, LSI should be more likely to occur when an actual leadership contest is brewing in the target polity.

The domestic structural approaches (theories 2 and 3) do not appear to offer clear predictions on this variable, but Theory #4 (leadership theory) does. This is because top leaders have very limited time and attention. This means that they are more likely to perceive an impending close contest if they care enough about the target state and its internal politics to be paying attention in a proactive manner. Alternatively, they should be less inclined to perceive close contests when facing extraordinary exogenous distractions that pull their attention in other directions. Furthermore, their subjective personal biases may lead them to either over- or

under-perceive close leadership contests that are emerging in the target state. If Theory #4 is correct, we should also expect to observe rates of LSI increase when leaders have already manifested a strong, personal interest in the internal politics of the target state and to decrease when they are overwhelmed by immediate distractions such as a war or a political scandal.³⁵

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate

The various theories should also lead us to anticipate different patterns of debate within the sender government when making choices about LSI. Although Theory #1 (national interests theory) is agnostic about this sort of intra-governmental policy debate, the other theories offer distinct and often falsifiable predictions.

For instance, the domestic structure arguments would be supported if lobbies, Congress, and the bureaucracy tend to be both informed and influential when important decisions about LSI are being made. However, if top leaders are able to undertake LSI while leaving members of Congress and the bureaucracy in the dark, that would seem to support Theory #4 (leadership theory) and contradict Theories 2 and 3 (the lobby-legislative and bureaucratic politics approaches, respectively).

4. Cycles of Domestic Power

³⁵ NB Cases of war could also be consonant with national interests theory if that war changes the sender state's immediate, objective interests vis-à-vis the internal politics of the target state. However, distractions that do not change the strategic interests of the sender are not likely to be consonant with Theory #1.

To the extent that structural forces are salient factors, we should expect them to be especially preponderant under certain circumstances, providing us with an easy test for domestic structural theories and a comparatively hard test for leadership theory. If Theory #1 (national interests theory) is correct that objective international interests are a crucial factor, these dynamics should be especially pronounced during periods of war or otherwise high threat in the region. However, this overlaps with the distraction-by-war clause above, making it somewhat difficult to tell which theory is doing the causal lifting under these circumstances.

If Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) is correct that lobbies and Congress are driving forces for LSI, their powers should be preponderant during periods of divided government because the executive is at greater risk of being overruled. Second, they should be especially influential leading up to most sender state elections – or at least presidential ones – since leaders in that state are more accountable to public pressures during these periods.³⁶

If Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) is correct and executive agencies are the most salient factors, their influence should be even greater at the start of a president's term. This is because political appointees, though seen as somewhat weak under this framework, are one of the president's few means of imposing oversight on the bureaucracy. Before political appointees are in place, if anything the head of state should be even weaker relative to the bureaucracy.

However, if we observe even sporadic instances in which an engaged

³⁶ For similar arguments about domestic political pressure and its effect on foreign policy behavior, see Kurt Taylor Gaubatz, "Election Cycles and War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35, no. 2 (1991): 212; Miroslav Nincic, *Democracy and Foreign Policy: The Fallacy of Political Realism* (Columbia University Press, 1992).

president overcomes domestic structural pressures during these expected periods of dominant structural power, that would provide unusually strong evidence in favor of leadership theory than would have been the case under ordinary circumstances.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing

Sometimes LSI may be deliberated and carried out without official approval by executive officials below the level of the president. These instances of unauthorized behavior provide us with another point of leverage over the data. In the first cut, this phenomenon indicates an upper limit on the scope of presidential power. If such behavior appears to be especially frequent, that would provide strong support for the bureaucratic politics approach.³⁷ Thus, it is worth noting whether the overall frequency of such behavior is relatively high or low.

It is also important to consider whether the distribution of these instances is spread uniformly across administrations or is concentrated only under presidents noted for their lax managerial styles and approach to oversight on bilateral relations with the target state.³⁸ The former would provide evidence for Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach), but the latter would provide support for Theory #4 (leadership theory), suggesting that the president control is a prior causal factor – meaning that he or she must first cede control before other forces come into the

³⁷ It is also worth keeping an open mind toward the possibility of legislative freelancing by key leaders of Congress in a manner that is distinct from systematic legislative preferences.

³⁸ For a discussion of how presidential styles of management may impact foreign policy decision-making, see Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice* (Westview Press, 1980).

equation.

6. Consistency of Message

The main pathway by which LSI succeeds or fails is communicative in nature. Although practitioners maintain the pretense that they are not seeking to affect leadership selection in the target polity, they simultaneously strive to communicate a message abroad that happens to make the protégé faction look more appealing. When LSI succeeds, it is because the sender state's actions have persuaded swing voters or elite stake-holders to shift their allegiance. Usually, this involves acting in a manner that validates the campaign narrative of one political faction at the expense of its rivals. Therefore, one feature that should make LSI more effective would be when messaging is consistent and clear.³⁹ In this regard, domestic structural forces seem most relevant in their capacity to undermine an episode of LSI once it is underway by contradicting official messaging.

Because Theory #1 (the national interests approach) emphasizes the causal importance of international forces over domestic ones, it expects that mixed messages should not be a serious impediment to success and that messaging should stay consistent so long as geopolitical interests remain the same. Domestic failures to arrive at a common message would be evidence at odds with the international

³⁹ This is somewhat analogous to the extant concept in the literature on “signaling” in international relations, except that the target audience is not so much foreign policy-makers but rather members of the electorate in the target state who determine the result of leadership contests. For some exemplary materials in the literature on signalling, see James D. Fearon, “Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes,” *American Political Science Review* (September 1994): 577–592; James Morrow, “The Strategic Setting of Choices: Signaling, Commitment and Negotiation,” in *Strategic Choice and International Relations*, ed. David A. Lake and Robert Powell (Princeton University Press, 1999), 1–38; Kenneth A. Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

structural approach.

Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) anticipates that legislators and lobbyists should be well-positioned to undermine attempts at LSI by the executive. By providing observers in the target state with contradictory signals, they can undermine the president's message abroad. Under this theory, efficacy should be low whenever lobbyists and legislators hold preferences that clash with the president's posture toward politics in the target state.⁴⁰

According to Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach), one would expect to observe LSI efforts failing when they encounter resistance deep within the bureaucracy and to observe them succeeding when these organizational preferences align behind meddling abroad. In short, LSI efficacy should depend upon achieving bureaucratic consensus in favor of meddling.

Like national interests theory, Theory #4 (leadership theory) expects that domestic structural forces should not undermine effective messaging by the sender state. However, leadership theory does expect other kinds of domestic foul-ups; they are simply idiosyncratic and inter-personal rather than institutional in nature. Thus, the most important factors for achieving a consistent message should be coordination and commitment among a limited number of individuals. As long as the president and a few key aides remain involved in the issue – and coordinate among themselves to ensure they are on message – LSI should be likely to succeed.

7. Suitability of Message

⁴⁰ Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy*.

Finally, there is the matter of what that message entails. If the message communicated by the sender state is biased in a direction that diverges from ideal suitability for persuading stakeholders in the target state, then LSI attempts should be more likely to fail. Although Theory #1 (national interests theory) expects messaging to be perfectly suited to sender state interests, the remaining theories do not. And, as noted above, Theories 2 and 3 (the domestic structural approaches) suggest that institutionally biased preferences may lead the legislature or bureaucracy to undermine presidential efforts at LSI.

However, Theory #4 (leadership theory) expects the main determinant of whether messaging is suitable or not should be the personal beliefs of top officials in the sender state. Thus, if we observe selection of unsuitable messages by the sender state, it should be attributable to top leaders in the sender state holding beliefs about political dynamics in the target state that undermine their ability to project an appropriate message with finesse.⁴¹ For instance, later in the dissertation I will explain how brash statements about the peace process by Presidents Carter in 1977 and George H. W. Bush in 1990 may have undermined LSI efficacy by speaking from the gut when asked about an issue on which they had strong emotions.⁴²

Conclusion

In review, the four theories tested in this study offer a broad range of

⁴¹ For instance, in this regard we will see Presidents Carter and Bush Sr. undermine the effectiveness of U.S. policy toward Israeli leadership selection in 1977 and 1990. In both instances, presidents spoke off-the-cuff on the basis of deep-seated personal beliefs that backfired, producing leadership-struggle outcomes in the target state that contradicted U.S. preferences.

⁴² Those issues were Palestinian statehood and settlement construction in East Jerusalem, respectively. More detail on these cases is presented in subsequent chapters.

empirical predictions for the dynamics of leadership selection intervention. Because they offer contradictory predictions for seven different aspects in the causal process of meddling, the observable implications of these theories should allow us to distinguish which theory best explains variation in LSI occurrence and efficacy. As discussed above, these seven aspects of meddling behavior include: (1) perceptions of sender interests; (2) perceptions of close contests abroad; (3) patterns of domestic debate; (4) cycles of domestic power; (5) bureaucratic freelancing; (6) message consistency; and (7) message suitability.

SECTION 4: Why Agency Matters

In this section, I address four main points. First, I explain why certain features of LSI drive officials in the sender state to maintain pretenses about their true intentions when pursuing LSI in order to decrease the risk of a nationalist backlash within the target polity. Second, I explain why this pressure for pretenses impacts the deliberative process in the sender state, driving officials to avoid formal deliberative process in a dynamic I call the paper paradox. Third, I explain why this paradox often mitigates the three big structural forces of bureaucracies, lobby-legislative power, and international interests. Fourth, I explain why these effects apply to both occurrence and efficacy but tend to have greater impact over the former than the latter.

1. Pressure for Pretenses

Why do leaders matter so much in the realm of LSI? Because it is inherently

taboo in at least one of the two countries. Domestically, LSI can backfire if concrete proof is leaked to or subpoenaed by political opposition. Even more importantly, such leaks can cause this strategy to backfire in the target state, leading to a rally-around-the-flag backlash. Nobody likes being ordered around by foreign powers, *especially* in the sovereign realm of selecting one's own leaders. This provides a powerful tactic for factions in the target state who are disfavored by the sender. If they can persuasively claim that a foreign power is trying to pull strings to their disadvantage, a significant portion of the vote may swing in their favor. This creates disincentives against admitting LSI in public.

This pressure is remarkably persistent. It seems to apply even in countries where the U.S. is universally popular (such as Israel) or where the general public holds a more favorable view of America than do its leaders (such as present day Iran or countries in Eastern Europe during the Cold War). Even in the latter, when intervention verges on being too blatant it causes a severe enough backlash in elite politics as to outweigh any possible enthusiasm that may exist with the general public.

Even when officials in the target state solicit outside intervention – as seems to be the case in many of the episodes covered by this dissertation⁴³ – they do so in a manner that reflects these pressures for pretense. They come to Washington and

⁴³ One relevant literature describes foreign (usually American) pressures for favorable outcomes within Japanese politics, a phenomenon known as *gaiatsu*. However, *gaiatsu* can encompass pressure for many different kinds of desired political outcomes, not just LSI. However, when it comes to LSI in particular, I believe this pressure for pretense still applies. For some sample works on the topic of *gaiatsu*, see Aurelia George Mulgan, "The Role of Foreign Pressure (Gaiatsu) in Japan's Agricultural Trade Liberalization," *Pacific Review* 10, no. 2 (1997), 165-209; Leonard James Schoppa, *Bargaining with Japan: What American Pressure Can and Cannot Do* (Columbia University Press, 1997); Akitoshi Miyashita, "Gaiatsu and Japan's Foreign Aid: Rethinking the Reactive-Proactive Debate," *International Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (December 1999), 695-731.

quietly request support in their intramural political battles, but rarely will they make sure requests in public. Sender state officials may or may not respond in kind, but they generally will seek to maintain pretenses in these instances as well.

Furthermore, this pressure also seems to outweigh domestic incentives to be hawkish toward the target polity. At times there may exist positive domestic incentives within the sender state to pursue LSI toward a target state that is a sworn enemy. However, as I demonstrate in the Iran shadow case after 1979, the backlash that acknowledged meddling would create in the target state is still usually sufficient to dissuade the U.S. leaders from pursuing LSI in an open and frank manner.

Of course, the United States has often extended obvious support to favored strongmen before, during, and after the Cold War, and this is a pattern of behavior that is not unique to American foreign policy. However, as my pre-1979 Iran cases suggest, in order to be effective this support still must be extended in the context of elaborate pretenses. Most American leaders have recognized this fact, either explicitly or implicitly, and they adjust both their rhetoric and their deliberative processes accordingly.

The one partial exception to this need for pretense involves what I call the “One Vote Problematique,” which refers to the dilemma in which the sender state fears that a victory by hardline challengers in the target state may cause such catastrophic results – usually in terms of refusing to ever let another leadership contest occur – that the challenger is viewed from outside as beyond the pale. Under such circumstances, actors in the sender state may be somewhat more open

about their intention to marginalize a particular hardline faction in the target polity.

However, this does not obviate the pressure for pretenses – it only mitigates in somewhat. Officials in the sender state may announce its intention to exclude terrorists or other extremists challengers from political contestation in the target country, but they still usually adhere to the fiction that the target country's incumbent has genuine public support and is not propped up from outside. Thus, even in instances in which the pressure for pretenses is weakened somewhat, it still shapes public rhetoric and, as a result, deliberative procedures in the sender state.

2. The Paper Paradox

The pressure for pretenses forces prospective conspirators at LSI to confront a dilemma I term the paper paradox. They experience contradictory pressures between two types of incentives: on one hand, they seek strategic gains from “helping the good guys and gals” abroad; on the other, they face strong pressure to avoid being caught red-handed. Because of these contradictory pressures, leaders still tend to pursue LSI but in a manner designed to balance these risks.

The upshot of this dilemma is that policy-makers develop an aversion to formal process. Instead of putting policies down on paper, they prefer to deliberate LSI via offline, oral communication. Rather than communicating through inclusive formal channels, they tend to operate within narrow circles on a “need-to-know” basis. In the case of U.S. foreign policy, this means that written directives about LSI, when they exist at all, are classified “eyes only” and rarely if ever make their way beyond the walls of the White House and possibly the desk of the Secretary of State.

This also means that communication of the sender's preferences is done in a manner that is inherently ambiguous. Policy-makers in the sender state will tend to express their preference for a protégé in the target state through the idiom of promoting favored policies. To minimize risks of a backlash, meddlers justify their firm or conciliatory foreign policy gestures in terms of general issues in bilateral relations. Rather than saying "vote for so-and-so because she is moderate", they declare "we remain committed to supporting a policy of moderation" and provide financial aid or diplomatic support to perceived moderate causes in a manner designed to provide that individual with a well-timed political boost. LSI is often expressed and carried out through such pretenses – a veneer of politics-as-usual.

One consequence of this paradox is that it shapes the sender's deliberative process. This is an empirical pattern I touched on in the observable implications sub-section above entitled "patterns of domestic debate". It is also a pattern that recurs in the case studies and my interviews with first-hand participants, so I strive to flag it for the reader in the chapters that follow.

3. How it Impedes Structure

Not only does this paradox shape how the deliberative process unfolds, it also changes the incidence of deliberative outcomes on the relevant study variables. It blunts the impact that the three structural forces usually exert on policy outcomes and elevates the importance of agency for reasons described below.

<Bureaucracy>

Bureaucrats are hindered from putting their usual imprint on policy

outcomes for two distinct reasons. First, bureaucracies tend to discourage risk-taking,⁴⁴ and LSI is an area in which the personal and organizational risks of punishment can be exceedingly high. This helps deter lower-level officials who would like LSI occur from pursuing it for fear of punitive consequences.

Second, because written action is often important for building a winning coalition across offices and agencies, the introduction of prohibitive pressures that preclude formal modes of action may militate against efforts to assemble strong bureaucratic coalitions in favor of LSI.

Third, this pressure against formal modes of action also increases the importance of being able to act without formal inter-agency deliberations – that is, of being a leader senior enough to dispense with such formalities. As a result, the paper paradox coincidentally happens to select for cases in which leaders feel a distinct personal desire to undertake meddling. Under such circumstances, it is unlikely that bureaucracies will resist LSI against an engaged president.⁴⁵

<International Structure>

Not only does the paper paradox preclude the bureaucracy from acting as a biased agent, it also precludes them from being a faithful agent that serves as transmission belt for international structural pressures should those pressures conflict with leader beliefs. When normal political channels are blocked, the

⁴⁴ James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* (Basic Books, 1991), 69–70, 132–133, 191–192.

⁴⁵ Indeed, one of the most consistent findings by scholars who study the nexus between presidential and bureaucratic power is that bureaucracies loose when the president prioritizes and is therefore willing to allot precious personal attention and political capital to an issue. Neustadt, *Presidential Power*; Stephen D. Krasner, “Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland),” *Foreign Policy*, no. 7 (Summer 1972): 159–179; Robert J. Art, “Bureaucratic Politics and American Foreign Policy: A Critique,” *Policy Sciences* 4, no. 4 (December 1973): 467–490; Peter W. Rodman, *Presidential Command: Power, Leadership, and the Making of Foreign Policy from Richard Nixon to George W. Bush* (Random House, 2010).

government cannot translate objective international interests into policy choices with typical automaticity. If meddling is in the national interest but a president thinks otherwise, even a bureaucracy that is faithful to structure has difficulty transforming geostrategic interests into outcomes. If meddling is against the national interest but supported by the president, it is unlikely that a structure-faithful bureaucracy will prevail; in fact, it may not even get to weigh in.⁴⁶ And, as Saunders demonstrates in her study of military interventions, presidential beliefs about national interests and the nature of threats to those interests are often sufficient to determine U.S. policy-making in spite of the objective environment.⁴⁷

Of course, devoted structural realists may find it somewhat contentious to suggest that dictates of the international system can be eclipsed in this manner. However, if they are willing to entertain Walt and Mearsheimer's thesis that the pro-Israel lobby wields considerable, perhaps excessive, power, then deductively they should be equally open to my argument here.⁴⁸ This is because both arguments rest upon a similar premise: that some domestic actor can be powerful enough to capture and dictate the nation's foreign policy in spite of objective national interests. The only remaining question then is to inductively determine which camp in American domestic politics is calling the shots.

<Lobbies and Legislatures>

Lobby groups and legislative officials are also constrained in their ability to

⁴⁶ Of course, this is not to suggest I would like to pick unnecessary fights by claiming that I know the objective national interests of the United States or any other country. Rather, the underlying point is that, hypothetically, these effects should hold *regardless of what true national interests may be*.

⁴⁷ Saunders, *Leaders at War*.

⁴⁸ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Israeli Lobby," *London Review of Books* (March 10, 2006); John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Macmillan, 2007).

imprint preferences on policy outcomes due to features of LSI and the consequent paper paradox. First, this is because the politics-as-usual veneer and the informal procedures used by meddling leaders exacerbates a weakness of how the legislative branch exercises oversight.

Scholars of American politics have demonstrated that Congress exercises oversight sporadically like a fire alarm, not comprehensively like a police patrol.⁴⁹ Rather than keeping a watchful eye for questionable executive behavior of all kinds, members of Congress jump from issue to issue whenever solid enough grounds exist for them to make political points from grandstanding. By maintaining a respectable exterior pretense, presidents may be able to slip in under the radar and avoid detection by Congressional fire alarms during some of their lower-key efforts at LSI (described as “petit” LSI in more detail in the coding section below).

Second, as noted above, presidents self-select into LSI attempts on the basis of their resolve. This is important for instances in which the stakes are high and the scale of the effort would be more dramatic (a subset of cases defined below as “grand” LSI). In these episodes, presidents are more willing than usual to risk a public fight or to threaten one in hopes of preemptively dissuading a legislative challenge. And, because presidents can come up with a reasonable sounding pretense for pursuing such efforts – such as advancing the peace process or other acts of purported moderation – they often have a sound basis for appealing (or

⁴⁹ Mathew D. McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz, “Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols Versus Fire Alarms,” *American Journal of Political Science* 28, no. 1 (February 1, 1984): 165–179. In their original argument, McCubbins and Schwartz argue that the fire alarm-like nature of Congressional oversight should *increase* the power of lobby groups over the policy process. In general, I agree; however, the low-level nature of “petit” efforts by the executive should have the opposite effect on oversight.

threatening to appeal) to public opinion should they need to.⁵⁰

These claims may strike some as quite drastic, but my case selection strategy offers certain advantages for allaying these concerns. By focusing on the Middle East peace process, U.S.-Palestine, and U.S.-Israel relations, I rig the deck *in favor* of lobby-legislative theory by looking at cases in which the theory should face a favorable, easy test. If Theory #2 remains limited in its explanatory power relative to leadership theory even under such favorable circumstances, that should provide better grounds for questioning the former's applicability. I also note instances in which the behavior of officials seems to match the causal pathways described just above to reassure readers about the validity of my arguments.

This project does not aim to disprove the Walt-Mearsheimer thesis, although it certainly does bear on it. It may be true that a deep, generalized consequence (unintended, I would argue) of America's staunch pro-Israel posture has been to bolster the Likud by writing the right a blank check in Israel. However, the tale I relate in this project demonstrates that most U.S. presidents have actually evinced a systematic preference for the Israeli left, not the right, and sometimes they have even been willing to enact that preference into policy. The fact that this entire history can be written on the topic suggests that Walt and Mearsheimer's thesis does not offer the most persuasive explanation for this aspect of U.S.-Israel relations.

On the other hand, the cases that I explore on the U.S.-Palestine dyad do seem

⁵⁰ For instance, consider George H. W. Bush's preemptive threats to the legislature to avoid a fight over loan guarantees in 1991-2. Novel documentation of these threats are described in more detail in chapter three. He argued that the public would support him against Congress if he claimed the steps were essential for promoting peace so soon after American soldiers risked their lives to protect Israel during the Gulf War.

to fit with their thesis in other ways. Those cases suggest that, as long as the U.S. maintains lets the peace process linger, there are limits on the extent to which it can bolster Palestinian moderates.

4. Weighing Efficacy and Occurrence

Although an idiosyncratic feature in the issue area of LSI appears to be that the impact of agency is unusually large, it is worth noting that agency is going to be more consequential for explaining occurrence than efficacy in ways that are predictable, consistent, and systematic in nature. At the root of this pattern is the straightforward notion that the influence of leaders is undeniably stronger when it comes to deciding policy choices than influencing the results of those policies overseas. Thus, leadership theory explains more of the variation in one of my dependent variables (occurrence) than the other (efficacy).

This is not to suggest that agency is unimportant for determining efficacy, and I seek to argue the opposite in the cases that follow. However, it is important to consider why we observe differential effects when comparing the two DVs and also when we look from case to case. At least three patterns are worth noting in this regard.

First, leaders find it easier to tip close scales than to change the underlying balance of power in another society (let alone their own!). Thus, they are likely to achieve greater efficacy in short-term attempts at LSI that focus upon a specific, impending leadership contest such as an election than when generalized, long-term efforts without a specific terminus in mind. Long-term efforts are also more

challenging since leaders may be tempted to underinvest due to wishful, short-term thinking and having to maintain a credible pretense over a longer period of time.

Second, attempts are only successful to the extent that the gestures made by the sender state bolster the narrative and internal standing of the protégé faction. If the sorts of gestures required to really achieve this – as is often the case in the U.S.-Palestine dyad – would require a comprehensive reconsideration of national strategy, efficacy becomes constrained. This sort of gesture would involve much broader considerations than just issues of leadership selection abroad and thus leader opinions about LSI may be outweighed by their opinions about the process as a whole. Instead, efficacy decreases because the sender sticks with simpler gestures that do not fully validate that narrative.

Third, it often takes three to tango in order to validate a political narrative in the target polity, especially in the realm of peacemaking. Often, the sorts of deliverables that a protégé in the target state needs to succeed would have to come from the other society engaged in a peace process. It gets tougher for a leader in the sender state to deliver efficacious LSI because officials in the third polity have a veto that may scuttle the effort. Thus, bilateral gestures of LSI are more within the control of leaders than those requiring results in a multilateral diplomatic process.⁵¹

Fourth, it is important to recognize that, in spite of having intelligence assets and other material resources, leaders operate like most of us behind a sizeable veil of uncertainty regarding future political outcomes. Naturally, this includes leadership contests both at home and abroad. Even when they have reason to

⁵¹ For instance, American efforts to bolster Abu Mazen at the Aqaba summit in 2003 were undermined because Israeli PM Sharon was dismissive and confrontational in his public address.

expect that LSI could change political outcomes, they cannot know for sure whether the decisive issue will be something in their control or not.⁵²

In sum, top leaders are especially influential in the realm of LSI because the risks of exposure leads officials to avoid pursuing such attempts in writing through formal channels. This diminishes the impact of structural forces such as bureaucratic politics, objective international interests, or lobby groups and legislators. Finally, the effect of agency is greater with regard to LSI occurrence than LSI efficacy, but I strive to demonstrate that it still matters a great deal for both.

SECTION 5: Case Selection

The following section explains my logic for case selection. First, I review how the case-study method can provide useful, generalizable knowledge in a manner that is accurate and analytically rigorous. Second, I justify why I have chosen the case study method for this particular project. Third, I present the general criteria I employ for case selection to ensure that the findings produced in this study are as valid and informative as possible. Fourth, I describe why the specific cases examined in this project fulfill these criteria well.

1. Qualitative Research Methods

Social science research seeks to establish basic facts about how the world

⁵² For instance, American efforts in 1996 to help Labor leader Shimon Peres at the polls probably helped bolster him at certain key points in the election campaign. However, President Clinton could not have foreseen that an Israeli bomb aimed at Hezbollah but accidentally falling on a refugee site in Lebanon would swing the Israeli-Arab vote against Peres and place him behind Bibi just prior to elections.

works.⁵³ In order to establish laws about human behavior, scholars engage in theory testing, putting forward empirical evidence for evaluating the persuasiveness of prospective explanations. Of course, this is not always a simple task – scholars must try to give rival theories as fair consideration as possible – but theory testing remains their main preoccupation.⁵⁴

Of course, unlike in the hard sciences, in social science it is quite difficult to conduct true “experiments”, since application of the treatment effect is often beyond the control of researchers or unethical because it would cause harm to human subjects.⁵⁵ Instead, we tend to rely on observational studies of past events that are quasi-experimental instead.⁵⁶

Within the realm of quasi-experimental methods, there are a range of viable methodologies. For instance, one prominent technique for testing political science theories uses quantitative statistical methods to examine patterns among many different data points at once. Another prominent technique uses qualitative, case study methods to focus more deeply on causal processes in fewer cases. Thus, quantitative studies that examine are often described as “large-n” (where “n” is the

⁵³ Such research strives to produce “general statements about social phenomena” in which human behavior is “explained in terms of general laws established by observation”. Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry* (Wiley-Interscience, 1970), 4.

⁵⁴ The challenges of fair theory testing have been the subject of prolonged debates in the philosophy of science. For more on these challenges, see Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1959); Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); Lakatos, “Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes.”

⁵⁵ For instance, consider the monumental moral and practical problems that would be involved if one sought to establish knowledge about LSI by forcing the a government to meddle in some countries at some times but not others and then to examine the results for interesting patterns.

⁵⁶ Donald Thomas Campbell and Julian C. Stanley, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research* (Rand McNally, 1973). NB There is a valuable and growing movement toward the use of true experimental methods in political science. However, these projects usually take place in the context of a laboratory, and the method only applies to a certain range of research questions. Rose McDermott, “Experimental Methods in Political Science,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 5, no. 1 (2002): 31–61.

number of cases under consideration), whereas qualitative projects are often described as “small-n”. However, it would be erroneous to claim as some do that qualitative studies are therefore inferior because they allegedly look at less data; indeed, “qualitative and unscientific are hardly synonymous”.⁵⁷

Because both approaches are quasi-experimental in nature, they share common inferential limits. Neither quantitative nor qualitative methods can ever isolate and witness causation firsthand, since for any given object it is impossible to apply both a causal treatment and a causal non-treatment at the same moment in time. This is what Holland terms “the fundamental problem of causal inference”.⁵⁸ Rather, scholars must place trust in their secondary assumptions about how groups of objects are equivalent and to invoke ephemeral counterfactual assumptions about what would have happened in an alternate world where the incidence of treatments and non-treatments had been different.⁵⁹

Nor do qualitative studies necessarily entail utilizing less data. Whereas quantitative studies have a large number of data-set observations (i.e. their “n” is high), this tends to require a tradeoff in terms of causal-process observations.⁶⁰ Under traditional quantitative approaches, each “n” allows for only one or two

⁵⁷ The quote is from George and McKeown, emphases removed. Alexander L. George and Timothy J. McKeown, “Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision Making,” *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations* 2, no. 1985 (1985): 54. The claim that qualitative studies are inferior is most notably advanced in Arend Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” *The American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (1971): 682–693; Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁵⁸ Paul W. Holland, “Statistics and Causal Inference,” *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 81, no. 396 (December 1986): 947–8. See also King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, 91–97.

⁵⁹ James D. Fearon, “Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science,” *World Politics* 43, no. 2 (January 1991): 169–195; Timothy J. McKeown, “Case Studies and the Statistical Worldview: Review of King, Keohane, and Verba’s ‘Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research,’” *International Organization* 53, no. 01 (1999): 161–190; Henry E. Brady and David Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 25–36.

⁶⁰ Brady and Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, 252–264.

points of observation. However, observations about the order, presence, and interaction of causal factors within a single “n” at different points in time can be useful if not invaluable information.⁶¹ This information helps the researcher ensure that future quantitative studies are conducted well and are less inclined to suffer from omitted variable bias or erroneous mixing of incomparable case types.

Of course, none of this is to claim that case studies are superior to quantitative studies, either. Rather, the two methods are comparable with regard to their true inferential validity, and scholars must make tradeoffs picking between them. Ideally, they should do so on the basis of their intended subject matter.

2. Why Case Studies?

Which sorts of methods are best suited to *this* subject matter? I believe that case study methods are suited for this project due to inherent features of LSI itself. Since leadership selection intervention has been neglected to date as a topic for comparative inquiry, there is no ready-made universe of cases with which to conduct statistical studies, and I believe that there are considerable impediments at this point in time to building a valid set of this sort that is also comprehensive.

First, LSI is a phenomenon that is inherently difficult to identify when it does take place. Since meddling in another country’s sovereign politics is taboo and sender governments try to maintain a veneer of respectability, LSI is hard to identify accurately in practice. In fact, it may be much harder to compile large-n data for LSI than other, more-visible phenomena in international relations, such as wars,

⁶¹ Of course, time series statistics are one solution to this challenge. However, this still does not resolve the prior challenge of first learning by causal process observation what types of data one needs to be collecting.

occupations, national power, or militarized inter-state disputes.⁶²

Second, the hard-to-see nature of LSI not only necessitates a high level of effort, it also creates a high risk of false negatives when enumerating instances of it. Many episodes of LSI may be so subtle that upon careful consideration they may seem like non-cases – or they may not even attract researchers’ consideration at all. And it is difficult to know without direct investigation whether or not such false negatives might be correlated in a way that would systematically bias the findings.

Third, because conspiracy theories about meddling across borders are both pervasive and durable, building a data set runs a simultaneous risk of lumping in false positives on the basis of folk wisdom when evidence is scarce. If common knowledge holds that certain episodes are LSI but hard proof is not forthcoming, what is the scholar to do? This is especially problematic when looking far and wide for cases but not very deeply into specific episodes, and it involves a similar possibility of introducing systematic bias into the project’s findings.

Fourth, because little theorizing that has been done on the topic, there is also the risk of mixing incomparable types of cases into the same data set. This heterogeneity-of-types problem is not negligible; indeed, the validity of comparative analysis depends upon knowing when one is comparing apples to oranges rather than apples to apples.⁶³ Case studies offer an excellent means for developing this richer conceptual and causal understanding of LSI that will benefit the field as it hopefully develops a large-n research program in coming years. This is a key

⁶² Even then, datasets on these other topics have consumed the labor of generations of teams of researchers.

⁶³ Richard M. Locke and Kathleen Thelen, “Problems of Equivalence in Comparative Politics: Apples and Oranges, Again,” *Newsletter of the APSA Organized Section in Comparative Politics* 9, no. 1 (1998): 9–12.

strength of the qualitative approach because of its more exploratory nature.⁶⁴

3. Case Selection Criteria

One of the main challenges that studies assessing policy efficacy must confront is the risk that findings generated from a sample of observations may be skewed in a manner that is not representative of the broader population, also known as selection bias.⁶⁵ This project is therefore designed to minimize such risks.

First, by looking at a small number of dyads in great depth I am able to compare instances that resulted in LSI with periods involving similar circumstances that did not – or in which LSI was considered but rejected. This helps minimize one kind of selection bias by ensuring that important causal processes that are only observable in the non-cases are not lurking just out of sight.⁶⁶

In technical terms, this approach is called Mill's method of difference, by which the researcher seeks to tease out causal processes through contrasting cases with many similar characteristics but different values on the main study variables.⁶⁷ This approach permits blocking out a good deal of noise that is unrelated to the core topic of interest. Since any two cases on the same directed dyad have many extraneous variables in common, we can presume that those variables are not

⁶⁴ Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (MIT Press, 2005), sec. "Strengths of Case Study Methods" on pages 19–22; David Collier and Steven Levitsky, "Research Note - Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research," *World Politics* 49, no. 3 (1997): 430–451.

⁶⁵ David A. Baldwin, "Success and Failure in Foreign Policy," *Annual Review of Political Science* 3, no. 1 (2000): 167–182; James D. Fearon, "Selection Effects and Deterrence," *International Interactions* 28, no. 1 (2002): 5–29.

⁶⁶ Daniel W. Drezner, "The Hidden Hand of Economic Coercion," *International Organization* 57, no. 03 (2003): 643–659; Edward E. Leamer, "Let's Take the Con Out of Econometrics," *The American Economic Review* 73, no. 1 (March 1983): 39; Brady and Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, 230.

⁶⁷ Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, 57.

responsible for the particular instances of variation observed.

A third benefit of this approach is that it maximizes the return on case-specific, contextual knowledge. Looking longitudinally at one or two main dyads over time helps the researcher overcome the false negatives problem noted above by catching subtle, less well-known instances of LSI on those dyads as well as the more prominent ones that otherwise might be cherry-picked for a large-n study.

However, focusing on explaining all of the relevant events in just one or two dyads also has its shortcomings. It maximizes internal validity (correct understanding of causal processes in the sample of cases that are studied), but it raises challenges on the level of external validity (i.e. whether that understanding accurately reflects patterns for the broader population of cases).

Therefore, I adopt another technique for avoiding selection bias that is designed to provide at least a moderate boost in external validity: the use of shadow cases. Shadow cases are qualitative studies of a much shorter length and intensity than those that make up the core of the project. By providing additional variation on a few additional dimensions that might be salient to the study variables, shadow cases reassure us that certain initial findings are generalizable and help distinguish those that are simply idiosyncratic to the core cases. However, this is not to suggest that idiosyncratic findings are without worth, if the cases under consideration are themselves critical for us to comprehend – which happens to be one of my remaining case selection criteria.

Having attempted to address the issue of selection bias, I employ four additional criteria for case selection: (1) substantive importance, (2) historiographic

value, (3) suitability to the strengths of the researcher, and (4) critical values for theory-testing. First, substantive importance is a powerful criterion for case selection that is often dismissed by researchers in principle but then employed by them in practice.⁶⁸ However, the field gains an additional benefit when the episodes and countries studied by scholars are of intrinsic importance for the overall field of study (in this instance, geopolitics).

Second, substantive importance goes hand in hand with historiographic value. If telling a neglected tale fills an important gap in our collective historical understanding, then it contributes not only to our knowledge of patterns of behavior but also the chronological record. Considering this criterion is all the more important given the current relative neglect of diplomatic history in the academic discipline of history.⁶⁹ Also, the longitudinal framework used to address selection bias in this project applies well to the historical approach.

Third, qualitative studies can be more informative when the specific cases examined are critical values for the theories being tested. This means that cases should be especially suited to theory testing because they take place under circumstances in which the theories offer particularly explicit and certain predictions. Some of these may include what Van Evera calls a “hoop test,” in that the cases selected provide what should be an easy test for the theory to pass if correct.⁷⁰ I select cases that should showcase the power of legislators and lobby

⁶⁸ Ibid., 86–87.

⁶⁹ Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method* (Princeton University Press, 2006). For a more optimistic perspective, see Thomas W. Zeiler, “The Diplomatic History Bandwagon: A State of the Field,” *The Journal of American History* (March 2009): 1053–1073.

⁷⁰ Harry Eckstein, “Chapter 4: Case Study and Theory in Political Science,” in *Regarding Politics: Essays on Political Theory, Stability, and Change* (University of California Press, 1992), 152–163; Van Evera,

groups in order to demonstrate the theory failing an especially easy test. This should help bolster for my claims that other theoretical approaches seem to provide a stronger explanation of the data.

In short, a robust approach to case selection for this project would rely upon a very small number of longitudinal, directed dyads and a handful of shadow case episodes as a nod to external validity toward the end of the endeavor. All things being equal, they should also be cases that are substantively important, contribute to the historiography, play to the strengths of the researcher, and serve as critical cases for one or more of the theories.

4. Cases Examined in this Project

What specific cases best fulfill these general criteria? For the core cases, I choose to study U.S. efforts to influence in the internal politics of Israel since 1977 and the Palestinian Authority since 1986. Additionally, Chapter 11 provides a shadow case exploring American intervention in Iranian politics in order to provide some data beyond the Arab-Israeli conflict and Mideast peace process. I also flag additional instances of LSI by third parties in the PA or Israel when they occur, since doing so adds to both external validity and analytical leverage on the core cases.

With regard to time bounds, I use 1977 as the nominal starting point for cases of U.S. meddling toward Israel, since it denotes the first point at which Israel moved from a dominant-party system to one with a viable right-wing, Likud

Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science, 30–34; George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development*, 120–123.

challenge to the center-left power of Labor.⁷¹ For the Palestinian case, I focus especially on the period since the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 and the consequent creation of the Palestinian Authority the following year. Although I note in Chapter 8 how the US sometimes sought to undermine the PLO before the early 1990's, America's interest in the movement increased dramatically after its leaders moved to recognize Israel and participate in the peace process.

The cases I have chosen for the core of this project do an excellent job of satisfying the methodological needs of the subject matter. First, they each bear an extensive track record of LSI by the United States that can be employed as the longitudinal case studies called for in the sections above.⁷² Especially on the Israel dyad, there are also instances of non-cases for comparison, as well as both grand LSI and petit, more subtle cases. Thus, the cases make good candidates for the longitudinal studies by having numerous points of leverage and comparison.

Second, the cases are substantively important. The Arab-Israeli conflict is one of the most prominent flashpoints in international politics today. It occupies a notable place in the global public consciousness; is a major focus of foreign policy for the United States, Arab, and European states; and has severe effects on the quality of life for millions of people in the region. Additionally, it makes sense to study US-Israel and US-Palestinian cases together because joint examination provides a fuller picture of U.S. policy toward the conflict.

⁷¹ I also briefly note one or two episodes before 1977 during which LSI could have been pursued but probably was not. Those instances took place in 1954 and 1973.

⁷² For recognition of US-Israel LSI as a historical phenomenon, see Aaron David Miller, "U.S. Acts as Though It Seeks Regime Change in Israel - Los Angeles Times," *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 2010. For an excellent overview of America's leadership selection intervention in the PA, see Michele Dunne, "A Two-State Solution Requires Palestinian Politics," *Carnegie Papers: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* 113 (June 2010).

Third, the cases are ripe for historiographic contributions. I have found a gripping but forgotten story that I believe needs to be told. The record of American meddling in the internal politics of Israel and of the PA is a fascinating, scandalous, instructive, and largely unknown tale. In presenting this chronology, I not only extract insights for IR theory and policy-makers, I also address a notable gap in the history of the region. Conscious meddling of this sort features minimally in most studies of the conflict, U.S. policy toward it, and Palestinian or Israeli political history.⁷³ I provide new evidence about long-suspected cases, point out some new ones, and collect in one place the most comprehensive record about this sort of behavior in America's peace process diplomacy. I make a special effort synthesize new evidence through the use of interviews, especially for the more recent cases, and underutilized archival sources for older ones.

Fourth, these episodes provide a critical case for theory testing. If we are looking to see a strong role in LSI for structural forces – particularly the legislative branch and lobby groups – then policy toward this conflict should be the easiest possible test for such explanations. If, however, leaders still appear to have extensive leeway for shaping behavior and outcomes even in this most unlikely of cases, it strengthens the claim that agency matters. Sixth, the consideration of an

⁷³ For instance, consider Mark A. Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Indiana University Press, 1994); Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* (Oxford University Press, 1999); Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal, *The Palestinian People: A History* (Harvard University Press, 2003); Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (Cambridge University Press, 2006); Patrick Tyler, *A World of Trouble: The White House and the Middle East--from the Cold War to the War on Terror* (Macmillan, 2010); Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*; Howard Morley Sachar, *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time* (Knopf, 2007); Daniel Kurtzer and Scott Lasensky, *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: American Leadership in the Middle East* (US Institute of Peace Press, 2008); William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967*, 3rd ed. (Brookings Institution Press and the University of California Press, 2005); Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A History with Documents* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009).

Iran case offers variation along a range of additional study variables in order to boost our confidence that findings from the Arab-Israeli peace process apply beyond that particular historical context.

Fifth, along the way I also note some parallel instances of LSI that tie into the core cases. This includes both reciprocal cases of LSI by targets toward the sender and instances of meddling in Israel or the PA by third party actors. These are helpful for providing historical and analytical leverage to better understand the core cases themselves. For instance, it helps clarify why the U.S. did nor did not conduct LSI toward one of the target polities when the decision can be compared to that of a neighboring state that pondered a similar dilemma and may have reached a different conclusion. These parallel examples even include some surprising instances of Arab states backing the right-wing Likud Party in Israel.

SECTION 6: Coding & Measurement

In this section, I briefly address the techniques used for coding data in the case studies that follow. I discuss three relevant types of criteria: standards for coding occurrence, for coding efficacy, and for overall evidentiary standards.

1. Coding Occurrence

I code a particular time span of a directed dyad as an LSI attempt if foreign policies of the sender state were crafted by its officials with the explicit hope in mind of influencing leadership selection in the target country. Thus, policy-makers must not only express a private or public preference for one faction over another in

the target state, but they also must change policy with that goal in mind.⁷⁴

This usually entails one of three different levels of meddling attempts. The first seeks to change the distribution of formal offices in the target state, reconfiguring the cast of individuals who hold seats in government. I term this category “grand LSI”. The second seeks to influence the relations among those individuals without changing the distribution of formal offices, while the third seeks to strengthen a sitting leader in order to withstand a possible challenge or to pursue a controversial policy program. These I term “petit LSI”. In practice, I find that all three types of behavior display enough common characteristics to be comfortably grouped together under the rubric of leadership selection intervention.

I also distinguish at times between positive and negative instances of LSI. Positive LSI seeks to support sitting officials, whereas negative LSI seeks to undermine them. Understandably, the latter tends to involve tactics that are more confrontational than the former.

Third, it is important to recognize that a certain number of cases fall somewhere in the grey zone between full occurrence and full non-occurrence. Thus, I often describe these cases as “near-attempts” (aka “near-LSI”) when shaping leadership selection in the target state is considered at top levels as a policy option but is ultimately rejected. I also make note of cases in which LSI is solicited by prominent officials in the target state but rebuffed by the potential sender.

⁷⁴ NB This does not preclude the possibility of hybrid episodes in which the sender attempts multiple, concurrent varieties of intervention toward the same target state concurrently. Sometimes the sender state seeks to affect multiple targets-of-influence in the target state at the same time (not just ruling coalition but also policies or regime institutions). This should be coded as LSI occurrence so long as shaping the target’s ruling coalition remains one of these goals and the means employed do not escalate to the use of force.

2. Coding Efficacy

I code the efficacy of LSI according to two indicators: narrow and broader success. An attempt is coded as a narrow success if it successfully skews leadership selection in the target state in favor of the sender's preferred faction. However, this is only part of what efficacy means in the context of LSI. In order to be coded a broader success, an attempt must not only skew leadership selection in the target state but do so in a manner that furthers the underlying policy goals that justified LSI in the first place. If policy-makers in the sender state attempt LSI toward the target in hopes of making bilateral relations with the target state more amicable but narrow success shaping leadership selection does not have salutary effects on bilateral ties, such a case would be coded as a broader failure.

It should be noted that these metrics for efficacy are not the same thing as necessary-and-sufficient causation. Indeed, my reasoning here is informed by the exchange in *International Security* between Kim Elliott and Robert Pape.⁷⁵ Insistence on such a rigid standard would set the bar too high and produce the misleading finding that influence attempts simply never work and display no variation in terms of efficacy.

Instead, I employ a causal threshold of contributory causation. Narrow success does not mean that intervention is the only factor working in favor of the protégé candidate. It takes a multitude of factors to put a candidate past the finish line; I mainly seek to establish whether the sender's efforts gave her a useful push in

⁷⁵ Pape 1997; Elliott 1998; Pape 1998. See also Baldwin 2000b; Baldwin 2000a.

that direction. Similarly, broader success requires just that the sender's broader goals were incrementally but notably advanced, not achieved in whole.

In order to minimize problems of selection bias, I also evaluate policy efficacy in cases of non- or near-LSI. In these instances, I seek to assess whether avoiding conscious meddling turned out to be a more beneficial policy for the sender than it seems meddling likely would have been.⁷⁶

3. Evidentiary Standards

One final caveat is in order. This research endeavor is an effort at contemporary history. As such, there exist certain insurmountable limits to the sorts of information collection I can reasonably expect to undertake. My goal, therefore, is to increase public knowledge on the cases under consideration within reasonable constraints.

Although error is always possible, I do not believe that these evidentiary limits will bias the nature of my findings as a result. Further, the use of shadow cases and earlier cases on the Israel dyad are useful for cross-checking validity for the more recent case findings. I will also do my best to flag elements of probative uncertainty when determinative evidence for cases is not available.

However, I do treat statements by well-positioned past policy-makers in the sender state who admit LSI with greater weight than those that deny it. This is because I consider the former an instance of what legal officials term an "admission

⁷⁶ Of course, counterfactual reasoning of this sort is not without its pitfalls, but I believe its benefits outweigh the risks. Further, I am already relying upon some degree of counterfactual reasoning in order to assess efficacy in cases where LSI actually did occur; it is just more obvious in the non- and near-cases.

against interests” and therefore more credible. Policy-makers face much greater incentives to deny unsavory activities such as meddling than they do to admit it. Thus, when they such claims do emerge, I treat well-positioned admissions of responsibility as more striking – and thus more persuasive – than what may be *pro forma* denials of blame.⁷⁷ Thankfully, however, although the evidence is mixed in some cases, my hope is that the reader will agree it is often quite cut and clear.

Section 7: Dissertation Road Map

The remainder of this dissertation presents evidence for demonstrating the explanatory power of my explanation over its most prominent structural competitors. Chapter Three, Four, and Five provide a history of American meddling in Israeli politics from 1977 to 1992, making extensive use of newly declassified archives. Chapter Six and Seven consider American LSI toward Israel from 1993 to present. Chapters Eight, Nine, and Ten explore U.S. efforts to support relative Palestinian moderates before, during, and after the Oslo era. These chapters make extensive use of over seventy or so interviews that I have conducted thus far with expert observers or firsthand participants in the episodes. These include Americans, Palestinians, and Israelis and benefitted from field work in the West Bank and Israel-proper as a visiting researcher at Tel Aviv University’s security studies center, *HaMachon LeMechkarei Bitachon Le’umi*. Chapter Eleven examines

⁷⁷ A similar, pertinent notion is the idea that, because LSI is a self-concealing phenomenon, a judicious scholar should be persuaded by lighter evidentiary footprints about LSI than about foreign policy behavior in other issue areas. However faint these footprints may be, however, I remain reluctant to code cases as examples of LSI occurrence without indication that officials (a) maintained a preference among potential leaders in the target state and (b) shaped their policies toward that sender state with the goal in mind of actualizing this preference.

how the theory fares when applied to an additional shadow case: American efforts to influence leadership contests in Iran, both before and after that country's Islamic Revolution. Finally, Chapter Twelve concludes by reviewing my findings, offering recommendations for policy-makers, and discussing implications for future academic research.

Part I.

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WASHINGTON'S MEDDLING FOR PEACE IN ISRAELI POLITICS

Ever since the dawn of Israel's Second Republic, when the once-dominant Labor Party was finally forced to compete with viable parties on its right, American presidents have toyed with the possibility of meddling in Israeli domestic politics.¹ As the following chapters document, Jimmy Carter tried to undermine Menachem Begin; Ronald Reagan tried to build up Moshe Arens; George H. W. Bush tried to push out Yitzhak Shamir; Bill Clinton tried to strengthen Rabin, Peres, and Barak; and George W. Bush tried to strengthen Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert. Although this behavior is not a universal constant, it does seem to have become a recurring American tradition. Yet there is no history of this behavior in the voluminous literature on U.S.-Israel relations.

Because leadership selection intervention is relatively frequent in this particular directed dyad, it offers an excellent laboratory for theory-building about LSI in world affairs. In addition to being an intrinsically important case because of its impact on the Mideast peace process, this relationship is exceptionally data rich.

As Van Evera explains, "selecting cases for data-richness is especially appropriate if

¹ For an explanation of the Israeli Second Republic, see Asher Arian, *The Second Republic: Politics in Israel*, 2nd edition (CQ Press, 2005). For debate over whether the Second Republic may have ended in 1992, see Leon T. Hadar, "The 1992 Electoral Earthquake and the Fall of the 'Second Israeli Republic,'" *Middle East Journal* 46, no. 4 (Autumn 1992), 594-616; Sammy Smooha and Don Peretz, "Israel's 1992 Knesset Elections: Are They Critical?" *Middle East Journal* 47, no. 3 (Summer 1993), 444-463.

you plan to infer or test theories using process tracing, since process tracing requires a great deal of data”.² Since the initial objective of this dissertation is to derive a theory using not just congruence tests but also detailed causal process observations, process tracing and selecting cases on the basis of data richness are especially appropriate.³

In addition, I compare cases on the U.S.-Israel directed dyad in which LSI occurred with those in which such efforts did not take place. This technique helps minimize the possibility that selecting on the basis of data richness could produce certain kinds of selection bias. Similarly, it helps rule out possible rival explanations by holding a range of country-specific factors constant across cases in which a dependent variable of interest (LSI occurrence) obviously varies. This technique, known as Mill’s method of difference, allows the researcher to block out a good deal of noise that is unrelated to the main study variables.⁴

Finally, examination of leadership selection intervention on the U.S.-Israel dyad provides an especially powerful opportunity to falsify lobby-legislative explanations for foreign policy behavior in this issue area. Because this approach (Theory #2) should be at its most powerful on the U.S.-Israel dyad, then behavior on that dyad which does not fit the theory provides some strong evidence against it.

In the following case histories, I have drawn on widely available published sources such as scholarly analyses, memoirs, and newspaper articles. However, I

² Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Cornell University Press, 1999), 79.

³ For the distinction between congruence testing and process tracing in case studies, see Harry Eckstein, “Chapter 4: Case Study and Theory in Political Science,” in *Regarding Politics: Essays on Political Theory, Stability, and Change* (University of California Press, 1992), 117-176.

⁴ Van Evera, *Guide to Methods*, 57.

have also sought to expand the stock of available information on the subject. Thus, these case histories also draw on materials from the following archives: the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library in Georgia, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in California, the George H. W. Bush Presidential Library in Texas, the James A. Baker III Personal Papers at Princeton University, the CIA Records Search Tool at the National Archives and Records Administration Site II in Maryland, the CIA Electronic Reading Room FOIA Collection, the Digital National Security Archive, and the Foreign Service Oral History Project hosted online by the Library of Congress. I have also conducted interviews with a range of expert observers on the U.S.-Israel relationship, including in America as well as during a stint of field work based out of the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University.

Chapter III.
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The Carter Years
(1977-1981)

When he entered the Oval Office, President Carter brought with him an intense desire to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. In part, this could be attributed to an interest in the Biblical lands he had studied since youth.¹ In part, this was also due to his moral conviction that the “deprivation of Palestinian rights... was contrary to the basic moral and ethical principles” of the U.S. and Israel.² While convinced of Israel’s needs for self-defense, he evinced a view of Israeli politics that placed high value on flexibility toward the peace process. He also demonstrated an extremely active style of managerial oversight such that his ambassador to Israel compared his style to a “quarterback for his Middle East team, on the field, calling his own plays, orchestrating his players’ moves”.³

On the basis of these factors, it would seem that Jimmy Carter’s presidency was primed for meddling in Israeli politics. It is therefore somewhat surprising that during his term as president, Carter did not pursue LSI toward Israel with any sort of consistency. Two puzzling non-cases of LSI include the critical Israeli elections of May 1977 and when the Likud Party was politically weakened in 1979 and 1980. In addition, I will present three episodes of partial to full LSI during Carter’s presidency, including both positive and negative attempts as well as both petit and

¹ Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (University of Arkansas Press, 1995), 273.

² *Ibid.*, 277.

³ Samuel W. Lewis, “The United States and Israel: Constancy and Change,” in *The Middle East: Ten Years after Camp David*, ed. William B. Quandt (Brookings Institution Press, 1988), 227-8.

grand cases. Because the 1977 Israeli elections episode was especially consequential, I place somewhat greater emphasis on exploring that case than the ones that follow. In each instance, I seek to demonstrate how leadership theory provides a better explanation for these patterns than its structural competitors.

For each episode covered by this project, I follow the same procedure for organizing the text. After providing some very brief background (a few paragraphs at most), I code the cases in terms of this study's two dependent variables: occurrence and efficacy. That is, did leadership selection intervention take place, and did the U.S. policy succeed. I then methodically sift through the episode for seven categories of observable implications that enable us to distinguish which theory provides the most persuasive explanation for what transpired.

Carter, Case #1: The Israeli Elections of 1977

Jimmy Carter's administration came into office determined to pursue a comprehensive solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict. It sought to premise this effort around a multilateral conference in Geneva and quickly launched into advance consultations with regional leaders to ensure the various parties would attend. However, just a few months into this process Israeli voters tossed out the Labor Party for the very first time and produced a right-wing government under the Likud. Although the new Israeli government eventually embarked upon a bilateral peace effort with Egypt, its staunch positions on the West Bank diminished the prospects for Carter's multilateral strategy considerably.

Given the import of this event for the administration's Mideast agenda, one might have expected positive LSI by Washington to support the sitting Labor government in Israel. However, this generally did not take place. Instead, the vast preponderance of American actions during this period actually worked to undermine Rabin instead of bolster him, leading New York Magazine to declare it "the Carter administration's worst mistake to date in the management of foreign policy".⁴ These actions are best explained by the predictions of leadership theory, since its structural competitors actually imposed unanswered pressures for LSI to take place. Instead, these pressures were disregarded due to the inclinations of just a few top officials in the administration: President Carter, his national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, and, to a lesser extent, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance.

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

For the most part, no. The May 1977 Israeli elections stand as a puzzling instance in which the United States generally did not undertake leadership selection intervention. The Labor Party was headed toward disaster, and Washington's actions mainly pushed it further in this direction. The U.S. administration's actions were not consonant with a consistent and conscious policy of trying to help Rabin and Peres, nor were most of their discussions behind closed doors. In this section, I shall first indicate that there were structural pressures from the bureaucracy and the Israeli Labor Party for positive LSI. Then, I will describe two main junctures that

⁴ Szulc, "How Carter Fouled the Israeli Elections," 36.

provide the clearest indication possible that LSI was not the purpose of U.S. policy: a disastrous visit to Washington by PM Rabin and a subsequent dispute over American arms sales.

<Pressures for LSI>

Few observers predicted the severity of Labor's defeat, but it was patently evident that the party was in for a difficult election. There are a variety of reasons why more obliging leaders at the top of the American administration might have been inclined to undertake LSI before the Israeli vote. Many of the sources of Labor's bad political fortunes were widely observable in advance. Bureaucrats warned the White House about the left's shaky prospects, and Labor politicians even solicited American intervention in private before the vote. Because, the pro-Israel community opposed the administration's tough line on Israel, even legislators and lobbyists were pushing for a change in the policies that were undermining Rabin.

As American University political scientist Amos Perlmutter noted at the time, many of the reasons for Labor's defeat were widely visible at the time: the party was still being blamed for its failure to anticipate the Yom Kippur War, its control over national patronage institutions was beginning to unravel, and demographic trends had been shifting rightward for some time.⁵ The national economy was in poor shape, and a series of high-profile financial scandals reinforced public perceptions that the ruling party had been corrupted by power. Although Rabin was not directly responsible for these scandals, he chose to step down as leader of the party and was replaced by Shimon Peres shortly before the election took place.

⁵ Amos Perlmutter, "Cleavage in Israel," *Foreign Policy* (1977): 136–157.

The State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) reported on the basis of these factors that "the Labor Party has never entered an election campaign in so weakened a coalition" and "the elections could very well end Labor hegemony".⁶ Near East hands predicted that "the Labor Party will lose some ground. The question is how much".⁷

Officials from State also warned the White House that "a large number of voters, quite possibly a majority [in Israel] may take seriously opposition claims that they could handle economic problems better than the Labor Party. Announcement of an increase in U.S. aid before the election would lend credibility to one of Labor's principle campaign themes - - that only a Labor-led government can elicit large amounts of aid from the U.S. and preserve the vital U.S.-Israeli relationship".⁸

CIA analysts presumed PM Rabin "would hope that a highly visible dialogue, implying an endorsement by the new US government, would help boost his sagging popularity at home".⁹ The Agency also warned that "the Israeli elections are May 17 and the situation is fragile... we must resist pushing them too far, too fast".¹⁰ Following these warnings, White House officials acknowledged that Labor leaders

⁶ "Israel: Assessment of the Internal Political Situation" (Director of Intelligence and Research, US Department of State, January 17, 1977), Collection "Staff Material: Office", Box 111, Folder 6, Document 2-2, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

⁷ Remarks by Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Roy Atherton in "National Security Council Meeting - Summary and Minutes" (National Security Council, February 23, 1977), 10, Collection "Brzezinski Material: Brzezinski Office File", Box 31, Folder 4, Document 4-3, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

⁸ "'Economic Issues in the Israeli Campaign' in Additional Information Items - Memorandum from the Situation Room for Dr. Brzezinski", February 14, 1977, 2, Collection "Brzezinski Material: President's Daily Report File", Box 1, Folder 8, Document 69-6, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

⁹ "Intelligence Memorandum: Foreign Perceptions of the Incoming US Administration" (Central Intelligence Agency, January 7, 1977), 13, Collection "Donated Historical Material - Mondale, Walter F.", Box 227, Folder 4, Document 2-6, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

¹⁰ "Summary of Conclusions of PRC Meeting on the Middle East" (National Security Council, February 4, 1977), 12, Collection "Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection: Subject File", Box 24, Folder: "Meetings -- PRC 2: 2/4/77, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

“face strong challenges from the rightwing *Likud* bloc”¹¹ and were aware of “Israeli anxiety” that “the admin will pursue a cooler... line towards Israel”.¹²

Israeli government officials even tried to solicit LSI on behalf of Labor. Rabin begged Carter to notify him in advance of major pronouncements on the peace process, and domestic considerations weighed heavily in his mind when he made this request.¹³ Their Foreign Minister pushed for a timely change in key U.S. policies on the eve of the vote,¹⁴ and at least two separate efforts were made to privately solicit gestures of support from Carter to Peres after Rabin stepped down.¹⁵

Carter did make a public statement that seemed to praise Peres, but he stumbled over the message, contradicting himself in the very same statement. He stated in an interview with NBC that Peres was “a very strong and forceful leader who is able and eager to make a decision and stick by it, sometimes when it’s politically unpopular” and that “I think the Labor Party has shown a cohesiveness since Mr. Rabin’s problems. They’ve shown that their policies are going to be continuous”. Yet he also remarked that “the overwhelming thrust of national opinions and desires in the Middle East far transcend the identity of any particular

¹¹ “White House Profile for Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin”, March 1977, Collection “White House Central Files: Subject File-Executive”, Box FO-44, Folder “CO74 Executive,” Jimmy Carter Presidential Library. Emphases in the original.

¹² “‘Israeli Anxiety’ in Weekly National Security Report - From Zbigniew Brzezinski for the President”, February 19, 1977, 6, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Box “Subject File 3”, Folder “Weekly Reports [to the President]”, 1-15: [2/77-6/77], Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

¹³ Amos Eiran, former Director General of the Prime Minister’s Office, “Interview with the Author”, July 3, 2011.

¹⁴ “‘Vance’s Meeting with Foreign Minister Allon’ in Daily Report - Memorandum for the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski”, May 11, 1977, Collection “Brzezinski Material: President’s Daily Report File”, Box 2, Folder 3, Document 12-2, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

¹⁵ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977-1981* (Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1983), 92; “President’s Daily Report - Memorandum from Brzezinski to the President”, April 26, 1977, Collection “Brzezinski Material: President’s Daily Report File”, Box 2, Folder 1, Document 28-7, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

political figure under normal circumstances. So I think we have the same chance of a Middle East peace – nobody knows how great or small that might be. But the identity of the Israeli leader – I do not think will make that much difference”.¹⁶ Instead of highlighting differences between Labor and its rivals, President Carter got dragged down into defensiveness, spoiling whatever message he might have been trying to convey in praise of Shimon Peres and the Labor Party.

<Mr. Rabin Comes to Washington>

Yitzhak Rabin came to Washington in March seeking signs of support, but the administration held out on many of those gestures as carrots for progress toward Geneva. In fact, the administration’s peace process strategy was predicated upon Rabin taking domestically unpopular steps that he was unwilling to contemplate in the heat of a campaign. Thoughtlessness compounded these problems.

In preparing President Carter for the visit, Secretary of State Vance acknowledged that Rabin would seek to “obtain favorable decisions on arms [and] aid” and “enhance his party’s chances in coming election by demonstrating personal relationship with American leadership”. However, he urged a “response to Rabin’s probable requests for military assistance in a way that maintains our positions and freedom of action” because “our goal with Rabin should be... to make clear to him the direction in which Israel is going to have to move on the key issues if there is going to be any chance of successful negotiations”.¹⁷ Brzezinski and the President also preferred to hold increased support in reserve as leverage for future talks.

¹⁶ Interview is quoted in “Near East Report,” *Near East Report* 21, no. 16 (April 20, 1977).

¹⁷ “Official Working Visit by Israeli Prime Minister Rabin - Memorandum for the President from Cyrus Vance”, March 3, 1977, 1-2, Collection “Plains File”, Box 11, Folder 17, Document 1-8, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

Then, on the first day of Rabin's visit, Carter went off-script during a news conference by indicating support for what he considered "defensible borders" for the Jewish State. Although correct in a literal sense, Carter was unintentionally traipsing into a political minefield because the term he used had long been code in Israeli politics for very large annexations of territory in the West Bank – obviously a non-starter if the administration hoped to persuade Arab states to come to Geneva.

Vance also explained that the president's statement on defensible borders did not signify a change in U.S. policy.¹⁸ This probably would have been sufficient for solving the issue, but Carter decided to personally walk back his comments the next day in a manner that highlighted the gaps between the two governments and reflected poorly on Rabin at a sensitive moment in political time. To Rabin's great horror, Carter announced that what he meant by the phrase was near-total Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines, with only "minor adjustments".¹⁹

During this visit, Carter also broke new ground by insisting that any viable peace plan would have to address the Palestinian national cause. He followed this up with an unscripted statement at a town hall in Clinton, Massachusetts, calling for the creation of a Palestinian homeland. He then made headlines by shaking hands with the PLO's representative to the UN, all of which were seen in Israel as support for a position that was widely unpopular on both sides of the political spectrum.

<Up in Arms>

¹⁸ Bernard Gwertzman, "Carter Causes Stir by seeming to back Israel on Frontiers; He urges 'Defensible Borders' but Officials say his remarks, at welcome for Rabin, do not Represent Shift in Policy," *New York Times*, March 8, 1977.

¹⁹ The Public Papers of President Jimmy Carter, "The President's News Conference" (The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara, March 9, 1977).

Presidential Review Memorandum number twelve (PRM-12), introduced in late April, laid out the administration's new, more restrictive approach to selling arms, giving military aid, and sharing sophisticated weapons systems overseas.²⁰ As a caveat, the memo declared that nothing in the text would prejudice military support for allies with whom the United States had a formal defense treaty, especially members of NATO, Japan, Australia, or New Zealand. However, as upset members of Congress pointed out, Israel stuck out as a glaring omission from this list, meaning that PRM-12 put into question America's long-standing support for Israel's qualitative military advantage.

The week of the Israeli election (and with encouragement of pro-Israel members of Congress) Carter's team advised him to revise the memo to include an exception for Israel. Despite a detailed briefing from his national security team on how to explicitly frame the point, the president ruined the effort. At his press conference on Thursday, May 12, the president was asked both about a Palestinian homeland and about sharing arms technology and co-production with Israel. Without mentioning his decision to repeal PRM-12's restrictions with regard to Israel, the president avoided the issues of arms and chose to focus on his pet issue of Palestinian self-determination. Consequently, the reversal of PRM-12 was not announced until May 19, two days after the Israeli election had already taken place.

Did the Policy Succeed?

No. Labor was decimated at the polls, and there is reason to believe that

²⁰ On PRM-12, I primarily draw from Szulc, "How Carter Fouled the Israeli Elections."

American actions contributed to its destruction. Likud gained four seats to hold forty-three out of 120 in the Knesset. The Labor alignment pulled in only thirty-two, losing a remarkable nineteen seats. Filling much of this gap, a new centrist party for clean government, the Democratic Movement for Change (DMC or “Dash”) won 15. The National Religious Party gained two seats to rise to twelve. As leader of the largest party by far, it fell to Likud chief Menachem Begin to form a government, excluding Labor’s leaders for the first time in Israel’s history. To the extent that he was known, Begin was considered a warmonger and a fundamentalist. Officials considered Labor’s defeat a shocking setback for the peace process and U.S. interests,²¹ but they had done only things that could have helped its main rivals.

Historians have not fully taken the U.S. role into account when discussing the sources of Labor’s defeat in 1977. In particular, authors who specialize in electoral politics tend to minimize the foreign sources of Labor’s last-minute collapse.²² However, this perspective provides an incomplete understanding of what drove the results. Oxford historian of Israeli foreign affairs Avi Shlaim suspects that the Carter administration’s activism contributed to the Israeli public’s perception of the Labor government as a failure but provides little in the way of evidence.²³ Scholars have yet to draw upon the broad range of data available from firsthand participants to support Shlaim’s impressionistic claim.

American officials were concerned that their actions could be tipping the

²¹ For instance, see Carter, *Keeping faith*, 284; Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 95; William B. Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics* (Brookings Institution Press, 1986), 62-69.

²² See, for instance, Don Peretz, “The Earthquake: Israel’s Ninth Knesset Elections,” *The Middle East Journal* (1977): 251–266; Asher Arian, *Security Threatened: Surveying Israeli Opinion on Peace and War* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 130-40; Perlmutter, “Cleavage in Israel”; Colin Shindler, *A History of Modern Israel* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 148.

²³ Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (WW Norton & Company, 2001), 349.

election results against Labor. After the president made his controversial comments during the Rabin visit, NSC staffer William Quandt queried officials at State out of concern about “the likely effect of the President’s public statements on Rabin’s electoral chances in May”.²⁴ Although Quandt was reassured by them that “the best guess is that it will have very little import,”²⁵ he seems to have concluded after the fact that Carter’s statements “helped set off a chemical reaction in Israel” and may have played some part in undermining Rabin.²⁶ Allegedly, Assistant Secretary of State Roy Atherton remarked to an Israeli official at the time that Carter’s statements would certainly hurt Labor in the May elections.²⁷

To be fair, nobody in the administration or in Israel foresaw the severity of the landslide until the last minute erosion of Labor’s position in public polling.²⁸ However, in part this is because the U.S. role was not adequately factored into the equation in advance. Officials at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv reported that one of the reasons for this last-minute collapse in Labor’s standing was a heightened sense of U.S. pressure on Israel during the commotion over PRM-12.²⁹

Israeli officials also viewed American actions as a contributing factor at the time. Rabin’s speechwriter recalls that the prime minister was downcast after visiting Carter:

²⁴ “Evening Report - Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from Middle East (staff)”, March 11, 1977, Collection “Staff Material: FOI/Legal”, Box 44, Folder 4, Document 16-9, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*, 48, 62 & 65.

²⁷ Kenneth W. Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy: Sadat, Kissinger, Carter, Begin, and the Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace* (Psychology Press, 1999), 193.

²⁸ Peretz, “The Earthquake,” 251.

²⁹ “‘Prospects for the Israeli Election’ in Information Items - Memorandum for the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski”, May 14, 1977, Collection “Brzezinski Material: President’s Daily Report File”, Box 2, Folder 3, Document 26-7, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

“We rested up before flying home that night. Generally, the prime minister enjoyed a chat over a nightcap after take-off, but on this occasion he was unusually uncommunicative... seven hours later, nibbling on an El Al breakfast, Rabin told us that he had spent much of the night ruminating over Jimmy Carter’s abysmal ignorance of our affairs, and thinking about how the situation would affect the forthcoming Israeli general election three months hence. The last thing he needed before polling day was a crisis with Washington, he said”.³⁰

When discussing how to frame his two remaining U.S. speeches, he recalls Rabin saying “to put a brave face on things and totally downplay his difference with the president, just as he was doing with the Israeli press”.³¹

This perspective was also reiterated by the former Director General of Rabin’s office (the equivalent of his chief of staff), Amos Eiran. Eiran claims that the PM’s visit to Washington “hurt him politically very badly” and that Carter’s statements in particular “hurt Rabin internally extensively... we could not understand the move to affect Rabin internally [in a way that would] help the right in Israel that opposed U.S. peace plans... that was not their intention to promote the right in this country at that time, but that was the outcome of it”.³² For Rabin “this was a very, very painful trip in many ways”.³³

Other members of Labor also made similar claims. In his concession speech, Peres said “I do not look for scapegoats” but asserted that fear of an imposed

³⁰ Yehuda Avner, *The Prime Ministers: An Intimate Narrative of Israeli Leadership* (Toby Press, 2010), 329.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 328-329.

³² Eiran, former Director General of the Prime Minister’s Office, “Interview with the Author.”

³³ *Ibid.*

settlement by the U.S. was one of the reasons for the party's defeat.³⁴ During the campaign, Israeli Foreign Minister Yigal Allon singled out for criticism American positions on border modifications and PRM-12. Embassy Tel Aviv explained "the Labor Party is concerned that the issue may weaken the alignment's electoral support by making an issue of U.S./Israeli arms relationships" and that Allon was motivated by a "desire to project – for domestic consumption in the midst of the election campaign – a willingness to resist whatever U.S. pressure is forthcoming."³⁵

Allon then met with Vance and expressed "at length... the problems faced by the Labor Party in Israel in next week's elections, as a result of doubts which have been raised in Israeli minds by recent statements made by the U.S. on various elements of a peace settlement".³⁶ The incoming U.S. ambassador at the time, Samuel Lewis, also described in an interview for this project that Allon "gave me a blistering speech about the United States... costing them the election" soon after.³⁷

The perception that American actions benefitted the Likud at Labor's expense is also voiced by Israelis on the political right. For instance, in my interview with Yitzhak Shamir's longtime chief of office, Amb. Yossi Ben-Aharon, he suggested that Carter's statements about Palestinian rights "contributed to hurting Labor in the election" because "what Carter was suggesting was so far beyond what the

³⁴ "Israeli Elections' in Information Items - Memorandum for the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski", May 18, 1977, Collection "Brzezinski Material: President's Daily Report File", Box 2, Folder 3, Document 48-3, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

³⁵ "Israeli Concern over Relations with U.S.' in Daily Report - Memorandum for the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski", April 27, 1977, Collection "Brzezinski Material: President's Daily Report File", Box 2, Folder 1, Document 37-7, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library; "Israeli Displeasure Expressed' in Daily Report - Memorandum for the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski", May 9, 1977, Collection "Brzezinski Material: President's Daily Report File", Box 2, Folder 2, Document 55-6, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

³⁶ "Vance's Meeting with Foreign Minister Allon' in Daily Report - Memorandum for the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski."

³⁷ Former US Ambassador to Israel Samuel Wingate Lewis, "Interview with the Author", February 2, 2011.

Israeli public could stomach” that “people here realized that if you have a president like Carter, you might as well have someone who can confront him and not concede territory just to buy some kind of favor”.³⁸

Even AIPAC concluded that the perceived rift in U.S.-Israel relations caused by Carter’s new approach to Mideast policy probably contributed to Rabin’s defeat. Its weekly newsletter, the *Near East Report*, reflected one week after the vote that “voters appeared to react to a variety of domestic concerns and a feeling that after 29 years of Labor Party rule it was time for a change [but] another factor which must be taken into account was the perceived weakening of U.S. support for Israel as evidenced by a number of actions taken by the Carter administration”.³⁹

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

Each of the four theories tested by this dissertation anticipate that the sender’s perceptions of its interests help explain variation in the occurrence of leadership selection. However, they pose different predictions with regard to *how* sender interests matter. For instance, national interests theory (Theory #1) anticipates that senders should not miss opportunities to meddle when their interests are objectively at stake. However, 1977 is exactly one such drastic “missed opportunity”. U.S. interests in pursuing LSI should have been highest during the drive toward a Geneva conference, and yet we did not see an effort to support the

³⁸ Yossi Ben-Aharon, former Director General of the office of Yitzhak Shamir, “Interview with the Author”, June 23, 2011.

³⁹ “Israeli Elections,” *Near East Report* 21, no. 21 (May 25, 1977).

incumbent candidate in the target state, who was far more likely to countenance concessions the Arabs could accept than his right-wing successor. The fact that LSI did not take place in 1977 seems to contradict rather than support Theory #1.

The case also provides little support for domestic structural theories of LSI. Theory #2, lobby-legislative theory, holds that LSI toward Israel is unlikely because Congress and the pro-Israel lobby tend not to see a meaningful difference for U.S. interests between Israeli leaders on the right versus the left. Although LSI did not take place during the Israeli vote of 1977, this outcome is consonant with Theory #2 for the wrong reasons. The sorts of gestures that would have been most helpful to Labor (downplaying differences over border modifications, Palestinian interests, and weaponry) were exactly those policies being advocated by pro-Israel members of Congress at the time, but they were ignored by the executive branch.⁴⁰

Further, administration behavior contradicts the notion that it was pursuing policies on LSI favored by the pro-Israel lobby for that community's support. Otherwise, the administration would not have walked back its "defensible borders" statement (which was quite popular with that community) in favor of the 1967 with minor modifications (a statement that was equally unpopular).⁴¹ Nor would Carter have praised nascent moderation by the PLO, since AIPAC had already been regularly attacking "the myth of PLO 'moderation'."⁴²

⁴⁰ Szulc, "How Carter Fouled the Israeli Elections."

⁴¹ Carter's first statement on borders was praised by AIPAC as "significant and welcome," while his second remark was attacked for promoting a state of affairs that "between 1949 and 1967... encouraged Arab aggression and postponed a settlement". See "Carter for Defensible Borders," *Near East Report* 21, no. 10 (March 9, 1977); "Controversy over Borders," *Near East Report* 21, no. 11 (March 16, 1977).

⁴² "Sadat's Reversals," *Near East Report* 21, no. 1 (January 5, 1977); I. L. Kenen, "Converting the Enemy," *Near East Report* 21, no. 2 (January 12, 1977); I. L. Kenen, "Plot to Destroy Israel," *Near East Report* 21, no. 7 (February 16, 1977).

The case provides no more than partial support for Theory #3, bureaucratic politics theory. The theory predicts that rates of LSI toward Israel should be quite high, because Near East hands in the bureaucracy tend to see a deep and salient difference in the positions of Israeli political factions for U.S. interests. Executive agencies such as the CIA and State were the most vocal parts of the administration in pointing out Rabin's hopes for a domestic push from Washington, but their oblique warnings fell on deaf ears in the White House, and LSI did not take place.

The theory best supported in this regard is Theory #4 (leadership theory), which argues that occurrence is mainly driven by perceptions of sender interests that are filtered through the beliefs of individual top leaders. Although Carter, Brzezinski, and Vance *did* tend to perceive Israeli flexibility as a crucial factor for U.S. interests, rightly or wrongly they did not seem to think that U.S. interests were at stake in the Israeli election. Also, in terms of specific, interpersonal beliefs, Rabin made a poor impression on Carter in Washington. Carter found him surprisingly stubborn and expressed little interest in Rabin's political survival.⁴³ In fact, Carter apparently joked behind doors that if he were Israeli he would probably join the reformist Democratic Movement for Change in protest against Labor hegemony.⁴⁴

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

Decision-makers are only likely to exert the political capital required to undertake LSI when they perceive an imminent political contest in the target state that they believe is up for grabs. However, the different theories considered by this

⁴³ Carter, *Keeping faith*, 279-81.

⁴⁴ "National Security Council Meeting - Summary and Minutes," 9.

dissertation pose different predictions regarding how these perceptions are likely to vary and impact the occurrence of LSI. Theory #1 (national interests theory) predicts that leaders should respond consistently to available information about objective political contests abroad. However, Theory #4 (leadership theory) predicts that such responsiveness should be constrained by the subjective perceptions of top leaders in the sender state.

In this regard, leadership theory does a better job of explaining the outcome than its structural competitors. Both objective material circumstances and messages from the bureaucracy were providing indications that meddling might be required if the U.S. was going to get to Geneva and launch multilateral negotiations. However, U.S. leaders did not seem to believe that the outcome of the political contest in Israel was in question and therefore were disinclined to consider intervention. Because leaders did not perceive the contest in Israel as close enough to matter, their high value attached to flexibility on the process did not lead to LSI by the United States.

For instance, Brzezinski made repeated statements in private suggesting that he believed Rabin and Peres had the election sewn up, even after Rabin stepped down from leadership of the Party in the midst of scandal. During the Presidential Review Committee meeting for Mideast policy on February 4th, Brzezinski ignored CIA warnings that the outcome was uncertain. When urged by Acting CIA Director Enno Knoche that “the Israeli elections are May 17 and the situation there is fragile... we must resist pushing them too far, too fast,” Brzezinski responded that “We have to move toward a more active role. We can’t wait. I believe the situation

is more propitious than it has been in the past 23 years. But I think we need to give the Israelis and the Arabs a more substantive sense of what is required".⁴⁵

In April, Brzezinski's reporting to the president focused more on Peres's likely policy positions toward the U.S. than the prior question of whether or not he would get elected in the first place.⁴⁶ Whereas the Brzezinski's Mideast staff wrote to him in terms of "if Peres becomes Prime Minister,"⁴⁷ he tended to speak in terms of "once the elections are held, and he becomes Prime Minister".⁴⁸ He had begun to plan for after May 17th, arguing that "we don't want to lose time waiting... [and] need to get Peres engaged... why not invite him for early June?"⁴⁹

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

Another area in which the theories diverge involves the patterns of deliberation within the sender state leading up to LSI. Theories 2 and 3 (the domestic structural approaches) expect members of Congress, lobbyists, and/or bureaucrats to be in the loop and influential during debates in advance of adopting a policy of leadership selection intervention. However, Theory #4 (leadership theory) anticipates that these actors should be in the dark and excluded from the center of gravity with regard to national decision-making.

⁴⁵ "Summary of Conclusions of PRC Meeting on the Middle East," 12.

⁴⁶ "Assessment of Peres as Israeli Prime Minister' in Information Items - Memorandum for the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski", April 15, 1977, Collection "Brzezinski Material: President's Daily Report File", Box 1, Folder 5, Document 29-3, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

⁴⁷ "(Notes in Advance of) PRC Meeting on the Middle East, April 19, 3:00 p.m.' from William B. Quandt to Zbigniew Brzezinski", April 18, 1977, 3, Collection "Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection: Subject File", Box 12, Folder: "Meetings -- PRC 13: 4/19/77, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

⁴⁸ "[Minutes from] PRC Meeting on the Middle East: April 19, 1977, 3:00 - 4:30 p.m." (National Security Council, n.d.), 17, Collection "Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection: Subject File", Box 12, Folder: "Meetings -- PRC 13: 4/19/77, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 17-8.

Because this is a non-instance of LSI, this observable implication is somewhat less germane. In certain regards it provides support for bureaucratic politics theory, because the executive agencies were the strongest voice highlighting domestic problems being faced by Labor. However, the fact that there seem to have been strict limits on these groups' freedom of action provides tentative support as well for leadership theory and the paper paradox. Bureaucrats were able to highlight the closeness of the Israeli contest and even the impact of US actions on Israeli politics but were not sufficiently empowered to advocate specific policy recommendations on the basis of these concerns. Meanwhile, the disinterest of top political leaders helps explain why bureaucratic concerns had little impact on policy outcomes.

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

Another area in which the theories diverge involves cycles of domestic power within the sender state. Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) and Theory #3 (the bureaucratic approach) expect that certain periods of politics in the sender state should be especially weighted in favor of domestic structural forces against the agency of top political leaders, whereas Theory #4 (leadership theory) holds that these leaders should be relatively unconstrained without regard to their political calendar.

This observable implication provides strong support for leadership theory over its domestic structural competitors. Theory #2, lobby-legislative theory, holds that top leaders should be especially irrelevant and disempowered during periods of united government or in the lead-up to elections in the sender state. This was in

fact one of the few periods of united government covered by this study, and yet President Carter's intensive preparations for Mideast negotiations in spite of these forces drove main American actions that undermined Israel's Labor government.

Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) holds that top leaders should be especially overpowered by executive agencies early in their terms because administrations usually take some time to get their bearings, undertake strategic planning, and put in place a system of intended control through political appointees. However, this case provides extraordinary evidence for Theory #4 (leadership theory) over bureaucratic politics theory because President Carter's eagerness to push for comprehensive solution to the conflict evidently overrode even these exceptionally strong structural constraints.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

The theories also differ with regard to whether lower-level officials are able to undertake LSI without the approval of their higher ups, with Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) predicting high rates of such freelancing and Theory #4 (leadership theory) predicting lower rates of freelancing, occurring only during periods of low executive oversight.

In fact, it seems no unauthorized policy-making in the realm of LSI took place in this particular instance. This outcome supports Theory #4 (leadership theory) for two reasons. First, it supports the leader-centric approach simply because presidential authority was not infringed upon. Second, it fits with the dynamics of presidential oversight. As noted above, President Carter exerted very active

oversight on the peace process issues, having been described, for instance, as the over-involved quarterback of his team instead of the coach.⁵⁰ Leadership theory expects presidents who exert active oversight to be especially fortified against unauthorized behavior by their subordinates.

6. Consistency of Message:

The theories differ with regard to whether and how disagreements within the sender state over what sort of message to project toward the sender state affect the efficacy of LSI attempts. National interests theory expects that policy efficacy should not be affected by such domestic disputes. However, that is exactly what occurred in this instance, and these foul-ups were in large part attributable to the idiosyncratic choices and poor coordination among principal officials in Washington. The fact that these errors were not due to the dissent of major institutions such as Congress or the bureaucracy contradicts Theories 2 and 3 while supporting Theory #4 (leadership theory).

President Carter's talking points from Secretary of State Vance for Rabin's visit did not call for his controversial language either on border modifications or on Palestinian self-determination.⁵¹ Carter's call for a Palestinian homeland at Clinton, MA, was not in any of his talking points from bureaucrats at State.⁵² In fact, Vance and Brzezinski were themselves caught by surprise and considered issuing a

⁵⁰ Lewis, "The United States and Israel: Constancy and Change," 228.

⁵¹ "Official Working Visit by Israeli Prime Minister Rabin - Memorandum for the President from Cyrus Vance."

⁵² Alfred Leroy Atherton Jr., "Interview with Ambassador Alfred Leroy Atherton Jr.," Summer 1990, 123, The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), Library of Congress.

retraction until they were overruled.⁵³ The president later reemphasized the Palestinian question and failed to reverse PRM-12 the week before Israel's elections, despite having been carefully coached to do so twice that very morning.⁵⁴ Carter's remarks to NBC praising Shimon Peres and continuity within the Labor Party was undermined by his own contradictory language that suggested "the identity of the Israeli leader – I do not think will make that much difference".⁵⁵

President Carter evinced a strong preference for conducting diplomacy publicly but did so in a manner that sometimes undermined U.S. policy aims and his Israeli partners. Spiegel suggests that "Carter's comments revealed a president who was an unguided missile in public. No matter how carefully he was briefed by his aides in the intricacies of Mideast politics, no one could ever be certain what he would say before the microphones".⁵⁶ Quandt acknowledges that Carter "had little patience for such codewords" and made statements on the process "carelessly" and "somewhat awkwardly".⁵⁷ After botching his press conference in May, one U.S. official reportedly complained "why can't the president watch what he's saying?"⁵⁸

7. Suitability of Message:

Another determinant of efficacy is how well the sender's main message suits political realities in the target state, and the theories offer mutually distinct predictions on this point as well. National interests theory predicts that suitable

⁵³ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 91.

⁵⁴ Szulc, "How Carter Fouled the Israeli Elections."

⁵⁵ Quoted in "Near East Report."

⁵⁶ Steven L. Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan* (University of Chicago Press, 1986), 334.

⁵⁷ Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*, 44 & 58.

⁵⁸ Szulc, "How Carter Fouled the Israeli Elections."

messaging should be relatively unproblematic, whereas domestic theories of political action stress institutional or personal factors that may impede suitable messaging by officials in the sender state.

The 1977 electoral case provides strong evidence in favor of Theory #4 (leadership theory) and against the structural approaches. National interests theory is contradicted because it holds that talk is easily malleable and should be deftly suited to fit national interests. Theories 2 and 3 find little support because of the mismatch between U.S. messages and Israeli domestic politics was not the result of institutionally-driven preferences from either the executive or legislative sides.

Rather, the case material supports leadership theory because the mismatch appears to be idiosyncratic and personal in nature. The president and his principals were so focused on achieving substantive progress on the peace process that they overlooked the ways in which their procedural framework would undermine the Labor Party and their overall ability to make progress. The U.S. ambassador to Israel at the time concluded “Carter was very impatient. He did not want to wait, or couldn’t see why you had to wait, until the Israeli election was over to get his diplomacy going”.⁵⁹ Similarly, Brzezinski brushed aside concerns voiced by the CIA and others that the political situation in Israel was too fragile for tough public diplomacy toward Israel until after the vote took place.

Carter, Cases #2 & #3:

⁵⁹ Samuel W. Lewis, “Interview with Ambassador Samuel Wingate Lewis”, August 9, 1998, 34, The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), Library of Congress.

Figuring out Menachem Begin, 1977

The day after Begin's surprise victory, the United States began to regroup and reevaluate its policy toward the peace process. As is common during unexpected, critical junctures such as this one, failure of the prevailing approach created a brief window in which a variety of new avenues were open for consideration and structural pressures were somewhat less constraining than usual. As one well-placed observer puts it, "the tactics were very much in the air".⁶⁰ Thus, decision-makers were all over the map in terms of their stated policy objectives, pursuing two contradictory lines of (at least) partial LSI, one after the other.

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

Yes, in part. Initially, the administration decided upon negative LSI, aiming to undermine Begin and topple him in early, renewed elections. Soon, however, their perceptions shifted so drastically that they toyed with the idea of bolstering Begin instead, hoping he would make broad concessions for peace. Eventually, they settled somewhere between these two, rather antithetical policy positions.

<Negative LSI>

First, administration officials sought to catalyze internal opposition to him and eventually topple his government. Their position is best encapsulated by a

⁶⁰ Former US Ambassador to Israel Samuel Wingate Lewis, "Interview with the Author."

memo written by NSC Mideast staffer Bill Quandt the day after the Israeli elections, which is quoted in block at the start of the section above. In it, he suggests that an intransigent Israeli government would likely be harmful for U.S. interests and that, since “a new Israeli election may be inevitable in the near future,” Washington should ensure “Israeli voters... know that a hard-line government will not find it easy to manage the U.S.-Israel relationship. Intransigence must be seen to carry a price tag”. Presuming Begin “takes positions in his talks with us that preclude the continuation of our peace initiative, we should not hesitate to explain what has happened. Israelis can then draw their own conclusions, and perhaps the next election in 1978 or 1979 will produce different results”.⁶¹

National security advisor Brzezinski seems to have advocated a similar approach. He approved Quandt’s memo, or at least his recommendation that further deliberation be conducted on the basis of his arguments. Observers recall that Brzezinski sought to use the early Begin trip to “read him the riot act” and “laying down the law not to screw up Geneva preparations”.⁶² Brzezinski wrote to Carter:

““Let me make a ‘perverse’ observation: The electoral outcome may not be actually all that bad. At some point, a disagreement with Israel over a settlement would have been likely in any case. Begin, by his extremism, is likely to split both Israeli public opinion and the American Jewish community. A position of moderate firmness on your part will rally to you in time both the Israeli opposition and significant portions of the American Jewish community, including its responsible leadership.”⁶³

There is reason to believe that President Carter went along with this line of

⁶¹ William B. Quandt, “Subject: Israeli Elections - NSC Memo 3011-X”, May 18, 1977.

⁶² Former US Ambassador to Israel Samuel Wingate Lewis, “Interview with the Author.”

⁶³ “‘Israeli Cabinet Formation’ in NSC Weekly Report #13 - Memorandum for the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski”, May 20, 1977, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Box “Subject File 3”, Folder “Weekly Reports [to the President], 1-15: [2/77-6/77], Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

reasoning. Lewis recalls that “after Begin was elected, Carter and his team back here were trying to prepare to deal with this extremist when he came to Washington. Their instinct was, ‘we’re going to lay down the law to him’. This was Brzezinski’s advice which Carter very much shared, I think, initially”.⁶⁴ Brzezinski claims that “it was during this period that the President first discussed the possibility of a showdown over our policy toward Israel”.⁶⁵

The administration’s posture between mid-May and mid-June was compatible with this objective. Quandt wrote in early June that “more than ever before, we will need the support of domestic public opinion. Congress, American Jewish leaders, *and Israeli moderates* for our policies”.⁶⁶ Other goals for Begin’s visit included trying to “pin Begin down on a number of points” and “to keep a Begin-led government from taking preemptory action such as annexation of the West Bank or an accelerated pace of establishing settlements”.⁶⁷ The administration did move ahead with new arms shipments toward Israel, but these were part of a prior effort to walk back PRM-12 and reassure moderate supporters of Israel that the Carter administration did not consider Israel’s security up for negotiation.⁶⁸

It is likely that the administration adopted a goal of toppling Begin, albeit as a tentative and long-term objective. However, it is difficult to judge how extensively this objective actually shaped the policy. Thus, while it is possible that this

⁶⁴ Lewis, “Interview with Ambassador Samuel Wingate Lewis,” 34.

⁶⁵ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 97.

⁶⁶ Emphases added. “[Regarding] Discussion Paper for PRC Meeting on the Middle East, June 10, 1977, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. - Memorandum from William B. Quandt to Zbigniew Brzezinski”, June 6, 1977, 1, Collection “Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection: Subject File”, Box 24, Folder: “[Meetings -- PRC 17: 6/10/77],” Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1–2.

⁶⁸ Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*, 70-1.

represented a full case of negative LSI, at minimum it should be coded as a partial one, since there is little doubt squeezing out Begin was at least seriously considered.

<Positive LSI>

Second, the administration also seemed to consider within a very short span of time pursuing a strategy of *positive* LSI toward Begin as well, making for a second episode of (at least) partial LSI. Something clearly changed in the administration's thinking between mid-June and Begin's arrival one month later that led them to modify their actions. Begin received not just a cordial reception but one that was syrupy sweet. Carter called him "a man of courage and principle" and declared that "I like him very much".⁶⁹ Whereas Rabin left Washington in a state of frustration, Begin was elated at the warm welcome he received, transmitting on his flight home a thank you message to Carter praising his days visiting Washington as "some of the best of my life. They never will be forgotten, thanks to you and your gracious attitude".⁷⁰ A far cry from having been read the riot act.

Certainly, the administration's effort to regroup domestically may have played a role in this adjustment, but such an explanation seems to miss an important process of actual persuasion that was concurrently at play. It was not just Carter's domestic advisors sending him memos suggesting that Begin might be willing to reconsider his hardline commitments⁷¹ but his foreign policy advisors as

⁶⁹ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 101.

⁷⁰ "Message from Begin - Memorandum for the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski", July 25, 1977, Collection "Name File", Folder "Begin, Menachem (Prime Minister of Israel)," Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

⁷¹ "Israel Election and Related Matters - Memorandum for the President from Robert Lipshutz", May 23, 1977, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Country Files, Folder "Israel, 4-6/77," Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

well.⁷² After two last-minute trips back to Washington, Amb. Lewis successfully persuaded Carter that the best way to handle Begin was “with honey, not vinegar”.⁷³ It also helped his argument that Begin undertook some gestures that bolstered perceptions he might be more reasonable than expected, especially announcing that long-time Labor stalwart Moshe Dayan would serve as his foreign minister and that Israel would not annex the territories (which was Dayan’s main precondition).

Not just the president seems to have shifted his perception of Begin during this period. Quandt notes that, after the initial shock over Likud’s electoral victory wore off, many within the administration sought to gloss over Begin’s ideology, leading to nearly a year of wishful thinking he would be more accommodating on the West Bank than his beliefs actually allowed.⁷⁴ By late June, even Quandt’s own memos seemed to shift from speaking of an imminent confrontation to “assuming” Begin’s flexibility on a variety of issues, including perhaps even withdrawal from the West Bank and agreement to an indefinite settlement freeze.⁷⁵

The President and national security advisor seem to have shifted their perceptions of Begin even more drastically. At the very least, by the time he left Washington, each of them toyed with the idea of bolstering Begin’s position so he could be a strong partner for peace. They thought he might be the antidote to the troubles Kissinger had encountered with successive Labor governments so internally divided as to be unable to make progress on peace. Thus, these actions

⁷² Former US Ambassador to Israel Samuel Wingate Lewis, “Interview with the Author.”

⁷³ Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy*, 199.

⁷⁴ Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*, 66.

⁷⁵ “‘Begin Visit’ in Discussion Paper for PRC Meeting on Middle East”, June 22, 1977, 5-6, Collection “Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection: Subject File”, Folder: “[Meetings -- PRC 18: 6/22/77],” Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

represent a period of (at least) partial LSI toward Israel in the positive direction.

Carter wrote the following in his diary:

“We welcomed Prime Minister and Mrs. Begin, having done a great deal of preparation for this visit. There have been dire predictions that he and I would not get along, but I found him to be quite congenial, dedicated, sincere, deeply religious... I think Begin is a very good man and, although it will be difficult for him to change his position, the public-opinion polls that we have from Israel show that the people there are flexible... and genuinely want peace. My own guess is that if we give Begin support, he will prove to be a strong leader, quite different from Rabin.”⁷⁶

Akin to the notion that only Nixon could go to China, Brzezinski also came to think of Begin differently, musing that “Begin eventually might be better able than the Israeli Labor Party to deliver the concessions necessary for peace... [since] he would not face much domestic opposition if he showed flexibility”.⁷⁷

In time it would become clear that Begin would be a much tougher negotiating partner than Carter or Brzezinski felt during this hopeful moment. Upon returning home, Begin lent his support to expanded settlement activity in the territories, an act Carter felt was at odds with the spirit of their talks. On Vance’s next visit to the region the Secretary reported the disappointing news that Begin was acting more rigid than expected. By this point, there is little evidence to suggest that the administration was still interested to boost Begin’s domestic position.

Did the Policy Succeed?

Unclear. The initial strategy of treating Begin with vinegar seems to have been quickly reversed, so it is difficult to assess whether or not the policy had an

⁷⁶ Carter, *Keeping faith*, 290.

⁷⁷ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 99.

impact on Israeli politics. There is no doubt, however, that even tentatively sweeter approach to Begin affected his standing back home. This second instance of partial-to-full seems to have succeeded in the narrow sense of bolstering his domestic standing, even though it is unclear whether doing so actually furthered America's broader objective of advancing the peace process.

The warm reception given to Begin probably strengthened his government's hand in Israel, much to the chagrin of the political opposition. Begin's glowing thank you note to Carter fits the notion that he could not be happier with his position upon returning home from Washington. Lewis seconds this perspective:

"since a good many Israelis feared that this first encounter would turn out very badly for Israel, they were naturally very relieved. The Labor Party people may have been secretly quite disappointed that Begin didn't have a big confrontation with Carter on that first trip... there were many in opposition who were either secretly or openly hoping that a big crisis would ensue because they always believed that this would be an effective weapon in Israeli domestic politics... Begin avoided that on almost all of his trips and certainly on the first one".⁷⁸

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

One area in which the theories offer mutually exclusive predictions involves the expected effect of perceptions about sender state interests on the occurrence of LSI over time. Theory #1 (national interests theory) predicts that LSI occurrence should be directly correlated with objective national interests of the sender relative to the target state. Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) expects LSI to be

⁷⁸ Lewis, "Interview with Ambassador Samuel Wingate Lewis," 37.

relatively low because members of Congress and the pro-Israel lobby tend to see meddling in Israeli politics as contradictory to American national interests. Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) holds that LSI should be relatively frequent since working-level officials dealing with Israeli politics tend to desire frequent U.S. intervention on behalf of perceived moderates. Theory #4 (leadership theory) expects rates of LSI to vary in accordance with how top leaders in the sender state perceive national interests vis-à-vis the target.

It is difficult to conceive of an argument premised solely upon international structure that could explain why American perceptions Israeli politics could have seesawed so quickly within a matter of weeks. National interests theory would therefore have a difficult time explaining why the U.S. flirted with such contradictory approaches to Israeli politics in such a short span of time.

Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach), on the other hand, gets partial marks with regard to perceptions of sender interests. It can explain why the administration eventually flirted with a conciliatory approach to Israel's new Likud government but not why it initially hoped to overthrow it. However, this approach cannot explain why private assessments of Begin among administration officials also underwent such a drastic shift.

Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) also gets half marks vis-à-vis sender interests. It fits that the administration pursued a confrontational approach toward Begin but not that it so quickly reversed that approach. However, it does not accord with the theory that the most influential bureaucrat during this period

appears to have been a political appointee: the ambassador to Israel.⁷⁹

Indeed, the crucial variable behind the shift in occurrence from negative to positive LSI seems to have been the interpersonal perceptions of key leaders, a hallmark of Theory #4 (leadership theory). Ambassador Lewis's claims that Begin would respond better to honey than vinegar came about as a result of their initial face-to-face meetings. In turn, Carter and Brzezinski's change in position over LSI appears to be directly tied to Lewis's arguments and perhaps their own meetings with Begin.

2. Perceptions of Close Contests:

Another area in which the theories diverge involves perceptions of close contests in the target state. Theory #1 (national interests theory) predicts that LSI should accurately reflect all available information about genuine political contests in the target polity as they continue to develop. Theory #4 (leadership theory) expects that the personal distractions and subjective perceptions of top officials in the sender state should serve as a major constraint on this relationship.

Because the possibility of early elections raised by Quandt's May 18 memo was so far off into the future – at least a year or two away – it was easy for administration officials to tailor their conclusions about the likely outcome of future Israeli political contests to suit their motivational biases. When Begin was seen as a fundamentalist, toppling him in early elections was seen as both pertinent for discussion and eminently achievable. When Begin was seen as a bold and daring

⁷⁹ Technically, Lewis was a career foreign service officer, but he had been selected by Carter to serve in a senior political capacity.

moderate, bracing him against his internal opponents – either within the cabinet or the Israeli general public – became a more probable matter for consideration.

In this regard, there appears to have been little role played by international structure or domestic politics within the United States. Once top officials changed their subjective view of Begin's intentions (incorrectly, it seems), their perceptions of closeness in Israeli politics also seem to have changed in tandem. This produced a shift from negative to positive LSI and is most consonant with Theory #4.

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

Theories 2 and 3 expect that members of Congress, the pro-Israel lobby, and/or the bureaucracy should be influential and informed in advance of major policy decisions having to do with LSI. Theory #4 (leadership theory), however, expects that these groups should be kept in the dark, due to an overriding executive incentive to maintain secrecy about their true intentions regarding LSI attempts.

Members of Congress and the pro-Israel lobby tried to influence top decision-making during this period, especially on issues of arms shipments. However, despite voicing opinions about whether the U.S. could work with Begin, there is little to suggest that either were privy to internal administration decisions over how to actually deal with Begin.⁸⁰ Neither, it seems, was the bureaucracy, considering that the strategy behind Quandt's May 18 memo is only recently coming to light. Rather, the administration seems to have held its cards quite closely when deciding how to

⁸⁰ Bernard Gwertzman, "Senator to See Begin," *New York Times*, June 1, 1977; Robert Keatley, "Potent Persuaders: 'Israeli Lobby' in U.S. Gains Repute for Zeal and Overzealousness - Highly Effective in Past, it now Attempts to Avoid Carter-Begin Showdown," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 5, 1977; "Javits believes Begin will seek an accord," *New York Times*, July 18, 1977.

handle Begin's visit, which would support Theory #4 (leadership theory) and the paper paradox.

For instance, when distributing a summary of conclusions from the first June PRC on how to deal with the upcoming Begin visit to only four cabinet members, Brzezinski specified "given the sensitivity of this subject, this summary should be held very closely".⁸¹ When preparing a discussion paper that would be distributed at the second PRC meeting on the topic later in the month, Quandt wrote a note to Brzezinski outside the normal channels of communication that decisions on how arms policy relate to the diplomatic process are "too dangerous to put on paper" for the broader group.⁸² After the meeting took place, he wrote another outside-system note to Brzezinski specifying that "I am a bit reticent about having the summary circulated to the principals at this time, and I am not preparing a full set of notes. Once the President has approved the summary, you may want to consider only sending follow-on actions to State and Defense," a decision which Brzezinski soon approved.⁸³ These notes do not address LSI *per se*, but they offer conditional support for the model of decision-making expected under leadership theory.

Similarly, members of the pro-Israel community expressed a desire for Begin to be received warmly in Washington and then praised the Carter administration's

⁸¹ "Summary of PRC Meeting on the Middle East, June 10, 1977 - Memorandum from Zbigniew Brzezinski to Miscellaneous Principals", June 16, 1977, Collection "Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection: Subject File", Box 24, Folder: "[Meetings -- PRC 17: 6/10/77]," Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

⁸² "PRC Meeting on the Middle East, June 22, 1977, 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. - Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from William B. Quandt", June 20, 1977, Collection "Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection: Subject File", Folder: "[Meetings -- PRC 18: 6/22/77]," Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

⁸³ "[Cover Sheet for] Summary of PRC Meeting on the Middle East, June 25, 1977 - Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from William B. Quandt", June 27, 1977, Collection "Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection: Subject File", Folder: "[Meetings -- PRC 18: 6/22/77]," Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

approach to his visit after the fact.⁸⁴ However, there does not seem to be much evidence that it was privy to intra-administration deliberations on the trip, evidence which would seem to be required to validate Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) in this regard. In fact, the administration seemed to continue its strategy of blindsiding Congress and the pro-Israel community, soon afterward issuing a joint statement on Geneva with the USSR that provoked intense shock and angry backlash.⁸⁵

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

Another area in which the theories diverge pertains to the political calendar in the sender state. Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) predicts that LSI should be even less likely toward Israel during periods of divided government or during the lead-up to American elections. Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) predicts that LSI should be much more frequent toward Israel at the very beginning of presidential terms.

These two cases offer little in the way of relevant predictions or observations regarding cycles of domestic power, since it takes place neither at the beginning of the president's term nor in the lead-up to elections. It does take place during a period of united government, but evidence of Congressional influence is mixed, which is about what we would expect under theories 2 and 4. Nor did the events in question occur at the very beginning of a presidential term, so the possibility for

⁸⁴ "Common Strategy," *Near East Report* 21, no. 29 (July 20, 1977); "Near East Report," *Near East Report* 21, no. 30 (July 27, 1977).

⁸⁵ "Carter's Blunder," *Near East Report* 21, no. 40 (October 5, 1977); "Congress Angered by Joint Statement," *Near East Report* 21, no. 40 (October 5, 1977); Carter, *Keeping Faith*, 293–295.

testing Theory #3 is also limited.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

Some of the theories also offer divergent predictions with regard to bureaucratic freelancing and LSI. If working level officials pursue LSI frequently without regard for senior authorization, that would provide support for Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach). If such freelancing is relatively rare and occurs only during periods of limited executive oversight, then that would provide support for Theory #4 (leadership theory).

Because President Carter tended to exert an active style of managerial oversight on issues of Mideast policy, we would not expect to see much freelancing in these cases. This case fits those expectations, thus providing some additional support for Theory #4. Although in other instances the U.S. ambassador is often a common perpetrator when it comes to unauthorized pursuit of LSI, in this instance that individual exerted his influence through proper channels by persuading his superiors, not circumventing them.

6. Consistency of Message:

Whereas Theory #1 (national interests theory) predicts that consistent, effective messaging by the sender state should be unproblematic, the other theories stress personal or institutional biases that tend to get in the way of consistent public communication on behalf of the favored faction within the target state. Official governmental messaging during this case was internally consistent, which boosted

its efficacy, at least in the narrow sense of strengthening Begin back home. If the administration did indeed seek to bolster Begin, the fact that its message was largely uniform and coherent by the time of his visit fits with the expectations of the theory. The case material therefore provides little evidence for problems with domestic disagreements over messaging, which would be more consonant with Theories 2 or 3 than 1 or 4.

7. Suitability of Message:

Finally, the theories also offer divergent predictions with regard to whether officials in the sender state are able to project a message that is suitable for bolstering its protégé within the dynamics of politics in the sender state. Theory #1 (national interests theory) argues that suitable messaging should be relatively unproblematic, but again the other theories emphasize institutional or personal biases that should make such messaging more difficult.

Despite being internally coherent, the administration's message did undergo a quite rapid change, shifting from an appearance of confrontation to one of conciliation around mid-June. This shift could in part be attributed to legislative and lobby pressure but also must take into account drastic and unrelated changes in actual beliefs of administration leaders. This offers partial backing for Theories 2 and 4, since the administration's position by the time of his visit shifted on the basis of some or all of these factors.

Carter, Case #4:

Helping Cabinet Moderates, 1978

Over time it became clear that the Israelis were not the only party reluctant to endorse the multilateral format supported by Washington. Egyptian President Sadat, wanting to inject new life in the process but also concerned about the prospect of a Syrian veto at Geneva, decided to go to Jerusalem instead. His actions helped defuse the comprehensive track for the time being and the peace talks instead shifted over to a bilateral process between Egypt and Israel with the United States mediating. In the aftermath of Sadat's trip to Jerusalem, the parties set up working level talks, including both a political track and a military track.

However, Sadat quickly became concerned that Begin merely wanted to pocket his concessions without offering much substantive in return, especially on the West Bank. After Begin then insulted Egypt's foreign minister at a meeting of the political track, Sadat's frustration boiled over and he terminated the political track. In an effort to help salvage the process, Carter invited Sadat to Camp David for an intensive one-on-one in February 1978 to brainstorm next steps. At the meeting, Carter and Sadat agreed pursue an elaborate NSC plan that called for U.S.-Egyptian collusion to turn up the pressure on Begin over the West Bank.⁸⁶ Sadat would submit a moderate West Bank plan with a few unacceptable elements, Washington would submit a plan without those few elements, Egypt would accept the U.S. plan, and Israel would then face tremendous pressure to agree as well.

Coding the Dependent Variables

⁸⁶ Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*, 170-2.

(Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

Yes. In the course of trying to pressure Begin to accept this plan, both the U.S. and Egypt found themselves trying to build up some of the more moderate members of the Israeli cabinet.⁸⁷ Moreover, once a protest movement was launched in Israel that eventually became known as Peace Now, it encouraged the Egyptians to pursue grand LSI instead and also led the Americans to toy with it. Thus, both Egypt and the U.S. pursued petit LSI toward Israel; Egypt soon switched to grand LSI and the U.S. at least considered grand LSI as well. The differences and similarities between Egyptian and American approaches will be discussed below to provide extra inferential leverage over the U.S. choice.

<DM Weizman>

Both countries sought to build up Israel's defense minister, Ezer Weizman. Weizman was second in command of the Likud Party's dominant Herut faction, just begin the prime minister, and was viewed by U.S. officials as the most likely successor to Begin in the event of an unexpected turnover in power.⁸⁸ He also was considered more moderate in his positions on the peace process.⁸⁹

When Weizman visited Washington in March of 1978, the visit was used to

⁸⁷ This sort of effort to change the balance of power *within* an existing Israeli government rather than to change governments altogether is defined as "petit" LSI, as opposed to "grand".

⁸⁸ "Israel after Begin: Politics and Consequences of Succession - Central Intelligence Agency Memorandum", January 18, 1978, Collection "Staff Material: Middle East", Box 48, Folder 8, Document 6-8, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

⁸⁹ "Peace Negotiations and Israeli Coalition Politics - State Department Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski", October 7, 1977, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Country Files, Folder "Israel, 10/77," Jimmy Carter Presidential Library; "'Israeli Internal Political Dynamics' in NSC Weekly Report #32 - Memorandum to the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski", October 14, 1977, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Box "Subject File 5", Folder "Weekly Reports [to the President], 31-41: [10/77-1/78], Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

build Weizman up and sow dissent within the Israeli cabinet. Brzezinski recalls that the President intentionally excluded Israel's ambassador from his meeting with Weizman in order to foster concerns in Israel that the prime minister was being isolated politically.⁹⁰ It also was clear to the U.S. that Weizman was using the meeting to burnish his political standing back home.⁹¹

Further, decisions about military support during Weizman's March visit were heavily conditioned by political considerations. He came with an enormous shopping list related to Israel's efforts to modernize its armed forces, and one bone of contention was his request that Israel be allowed to apply a small portion of military assistance to finance weapons produced in Israel instead of American-made goods as usually is stipulated with such aid.

Brzezinski's advisors expressed the desire for a "weapons package for Weizman to take home" and suggested that "we should recommend considering approval of some Kfir [aircraft] and/or Merkava [tank] financing as a sweetener for Weizman".⁹² In particular, they suggested that "we do not want to be totally negative to Weizman, who is emerging as a comparatively moderate figure in the cabinet".⁹³

Brzezinski in turn explained to Carter that "most of the agencies were

⁹⁰ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 245. See also Ezer Weizman, *The Battle for Peace* (Bantam Books, 1981), 257-63.

⁹¹ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 245.

⁹² "PRC on Matmon C - Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from William B. Quandt and Gary Sick", February 25, 1978, Collection "Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection: Subject File", Box 35, Folder: "[Meetings -- PRC 55: 2/27/78]," Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

⁹³ "Draft Memorandum for the President on Weizman Visit, Sent to Zbigniew Brzezinski by William B. Quandt and Gary Sick", March 4, 1978, Collection "Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection: Subject File", Box 35, Folder: "[Meetings -- PRC 55: 2/27/78]," Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

negative to this point” on functional grounds,⁹⁴ including State and Defense, but reached the conclusion that “political considerations should guide such decisions”.⁹⁵ He argued that changing the aid stipulations was “politically quite important to Israeli leaders, particularly to Weizman, who is deeply interested in developing the Israeli aircraft industry”.⁹⁶ Carter approved the request.⁹⁷

<PM Begin>

Meanwhile, the United States was giving Menachem Begin the cold shoulder. When the Israeli prime minister visited Washington that same month, Carter was so tough on him that the PM later confessed the visit was one of the most difficult moments in his life.⁹⁸ One of Begin’s advisors suggests “the White House encounter was simply nasty”.⁹⁹ When Brzezinski sent up two possible public statements for after Begin’s departure, Carter deliberately chose the colder of the two.¹⁰⁰

Members of AIPAC leadership even read the administration’s cold treatment of Begin as an intentional effort at LSI. The organization’s weekly newsletter, *Near East Report*, issued an upset analysis on March 29th that read as follows:

“In the wake of Prime Minister Begin’s ‘grim’ meetings with President Carter last week, U.S.-Israeli relations fell to their lowest point since direct negotiations between Israel and Egypt began last fall. By purposely painting the gloomiest possible picture of the Carter-Begin talks, and *by implying that Israel would be better led by another Prime Minister, the Administration has tilted dangerously toward the*

⁹⁴ “Weizman Visit - Memorandum for the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski”, March 7, 1978, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Country Files, Folder “Israel, 1-3/78,” Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

⁹⁵ “Israeli Arms Requests - Matmon C - Memorandum from Zbigniew Brzezinski to Secretaries of State and Defense”, February 27, 1978, Collection “Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection: Subject File”, Box 35, Folder: “[Meetings -- PRC 55: 2/27/78],” Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

⁹⁶ “Weizman Visit - Memorandum for the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski.”

⁹⁷ Coincidentally, this served as a precedent for a second instance of LSI on a much larger scale via U.S. financing for indigenous Israeli arms production under the Reagan administration.

⁹⁸ Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 370.

⁹⁹ Avner, *The Prime Ministers: An Intimate Narrative of Israeli Leadership*, 482. See also Weizman, *The Battle for Peace*, 286.

¹⁰⁰ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 246.

*Arab position.*¹⁰¹

However, one day later during a press conference in Brazil Carter rejected a reporter's suggestion that his administration had given up hope on PM Begin:

“Question: Mr. President, have you or any other [officials] suggested that Prime Minister Begin may not be the right man to head that government in present circumstances... do you now think the Begin government can make the hard decisions necessary to move the peace process forward?”

Carter: I can say unequivocally that no one in any position of responsibility in the United States Administration has ever insinuated that Prime Minister Begin is not qualified to be Prime Minister or that he should be replaced. This report, the origin of which I do not know, is completely false... we have not given up on the possibility of a negotiated peace settlement in the Middle East under the Begin government with him as Prime Minister”.¹⁰²

<FM Dayan>

The administration also took a somewhat positive approach to Israeli Foreign Minister Dayan. It proposed meetings that it knew were being used by Dayan to bolster his standing domestically¹⁰³ and saw him as a moderate on the Sinai if not the West Bank.¹⁰⁴ He had a close working relationship with Vance even though his interactions with Carter were somewhat strained.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, the Egyptians were much less willing to consider embracing Dayan, considering him “devious and untrustworthy” and resenting his role in the defeat of 1967.¹⁰⁶

<From Petit to Grand>

An important turning point was the emergence of a grassroots movement

¹⁰¹ “Near East Report,” *Near East Report* 22, no. 13 (March 29, 1978).

¹⁰² Press conference in Brasilia, Brazil, on March 30th, quoted in “Carter: Begin Can Make Peace,” *Near East Report* 22, no. 14 (April 5, 1978).

¹⁰³ Moshe Dayan, *Breakthrough: A Personal Account of the Egypt-Israel Peace Negotiations* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981), 118-9; Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 245.

¹⁰⁴ “‘Israeli Internal Political Dynamics’ in NSC Weekly Report #32 - Memorandum to the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski.”

¹⁰⁵ Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy*, 24.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* See also Weizman, *The Battle for Peace*, 319.

founded by Israeli reservists who felt their government was not doing enough to pursue the opportunity for peace. The movement, which provided the basis for the current Israeli pressure group Peace Now, launched a petition drive and series of protests that put the Begin government on the defensive starting in March and fed perceptions that he could be outmaneuvered politically at home.¹⁰⁷

Top U.S. officials were certainly interested in “recent dissidence within the Israeli cabinet” and envisioned “a ‘center coalition’ for Israel” led by Weizman or Peres.¹⁰⁸ Brzezinski believed as late as June that “if we proceed carefully we should be able to appeal to more moderate political forces in Israel. Change will have to come primarily from within, which may take time”.¹⁰⁹ One of Vance’s advisors notes that inaction on the peace process would preclude “the possibility of bringing about internal changes in Israel. The current ferment in Israel will die” without action to “keep domestic debate in Israel going and thereby hold open the possibility of change in the Israeli Government position through pressure from within”.¹¹⁰

As noted above, rumors had already begun to emerge that the U.S. wanted to push Begin out entirely. Word also spread that the U.S. charge d’affaires in Tel Aviv, Richard Viets, had said Begin “had to go” even though the NSC staff insisted to Brzezinski that “Viets of course said no such thing” and that “anything we say can

¹⁰⁷ Mordechai Bar-On, *In Pursuit of Peace: A History of the Israeli Peace Movement* (US Institute of Peace Press, 1996), chap. 5.

¹⁰⁸ “‘A ‘Center Coalition’ for Israel?’ in NSC Weekly Report #50 - Memorandum to the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski”, March 10, 1978, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Box “Subject File 6”, Folder “Weekly Reports [to the President], 42-52: [1/78-3/78], Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

¹⁰⁹ “‘Middle East Strategy’ in NSC Weekly Report #61 - Memorandum to the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski”, June 2, 1978, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Subject File 8, Folder “Weekly Reports [to the President], 61-71: [6/78-9/78], Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

¹¹⁰ “Some Thoughts on the Talks with Dayan - Memorandum to Fred Atherton and Hal Saunders from David A. Korn”, April 28, 1978, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Country Files, Folder “Israel, 5-6/78,” Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

only make worse the charge of U.S. meddling in Israeli domestic affairs”.¹¹¹ And, although it is difficult to prove the U.S. actually shifted its policy from petit to grand LSI during this period, it was at very least considered. The Carter team was definitely interested in changing the balance of power within the Israeli cabinet and at the very least seems to have considered changing Israeli governments altogether.

Regardless, Egypt’s efforts definitely escalated to full, grand LSI. Sadat’s deputy prime minister Hassan Tuhamy persuaded the Egyptian president to adopt a policy of “let’s topple Begin!” in July 1978.¹¹² His foreign minister suggested fostering a change in the Israeli government gradually, but Tuhamy and Sadat were impatient to sow more dissent with an end run around Begin. Therefore, although Sadat had refused to meet with any other Israeli officials, he sought to help squeeze Begin out by inviting Weizman to a private meeting in Austria shortly after having met there with Shimon Peres at a meeting of the Socialist International.

Did the Policy Succeed?

Not entirely. On one hand, the Egyptian and American policies failed because they did not force a significant change in Begin’s government or policies, and the efforts were soon abandoned out of disappointment. On the other hand, the efforts did boost internal pressure on the prime minister and may have indirectly contributed to his willingness to grant certain concessions at Camp David.

¹¹¹ “Call for Begin Ouster - Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from Gary Sick”, March 27, 1978, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Country Files, Folder “Israel, 1-3/78,” Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

¹¹² Mohamed Ibrahim Kamel, *The Camp David Accords: A Testimony* (KPI Limited, 1986), chap. 26. See also Mohamed Heikal, *Secret Channels: The Inside Story of Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations* (Harper Collins, 1996), 271-2.

Eventually, U.S. officials concluded that their strategy was not working. As early as April, Brzezinski seemed to recognize in a memo to the president that “the internal debate over Israel’s foreign policy continues but thus far has not produced significant political realignment... the coalition partners continue to support the government’s stance on the peace process... [although] dovish elements have succeeded in carrying the debate into the public domain, as indicated by the letter to Begin from reserve officers critical of the government’s hard-line policy”.¹¹³ In May, Begin seemed to get a much warmer reception from the administration during Israel’s 30th anniversary celebrations being held in New York.¹¹⁴

In June, Weizman did break publicly with the prime minister over the government’s hardline approach to West Bank issues in the peace process.¹¹⁵ Brzezinski reported to the president the following month that “Peres first, and then Weizman, captured the headlines and left [Begin] looking ineffectual. Now Dayan can be added to the list as he returns from Leeds” in the UK, where a trilateral summit was officiated by Vance.¹¹⁶ However, although Begin “has been under enormous pressure in the last few weeks... it would be a mistake to assume that he is helplessly on the defensive”.¹¹⁷ One of Vance’s envoys reported to the Egyptians in late July that “Begin’s position in the Knesset was unchanged, and he still enjoyed

¹¹³ “‘Israeli Debate Continues’ in Information Items - Memorandum for the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski”, April 17, 1978, Collection “Brzezinski Material: President’s Daily Report File”, Box 6, Folder 1, Document 12-0, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

¹¹⁴ *Inter alia*, see “‘Talks Please Begin’, ‘Israel at Thirty’, and ‘Warm Reception for Begin’,” *Near East Report* 22, no. 18 (May 3, 1978).

¹¹⁵ Weizman, *The Battle for Peace*, 336–9; “Evening Report - Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from Middle East (staff)”, June 21, 1978, Collection “Brzezinski Material: Staff Evening Reports File”, Box 12, Folder 6, Document 10-0, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

¹¹⁶ “‘Israel: Next Steps’ in NSC Weekly Report #67 - Memorandum for the President from David Aaron on behalf of Zbigniew Brzezinski”, July 21, 1978, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Box “Subject File 3”, Folder “Weekly Reports [to the President], 1-15: [2/77-6/77]”, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

majority support. There were no indications of an imminent change”.¹¹⁸

Another reason that efficacy is often constrained, as I argue in my theory chapter, is that it frequently takes three to tango for LSI, especially in the context of peacemaking. U.S. efforts to shape Israeli politics depended upon Egyptian flexibility that was not entirely forthcoming. The proposal eventually submitted by the Egyptians under the NSC’s February plan was seen by the U.S. as “worthless legalistic documents in the guise of serious negotiating proposals” and so rigid that “an American compromise could not possible bridge it”.¹¹⁹

At the end of July, Sadat even terminated the military track headed by Weizman. The Egyptians had concluded that the meetings in Austria and the UK did not produce sufficient change in the Israeli position, and Begin publicly teased Sadat after Weizman told him of Sadat’s private request for some unilateral goodwill gestures. In a rage, Sadat declared there was no point to pursuing further contacts with Israel without more active American pressure and terminated further talks.

To no avail, some of his advisors begged Sadat to reconsider “because the military mission is under Weizman’s authority and its expulsion would be a personal slap to him. He is the only member of the Israeli government we can consider a friend, and if we lose him, we lose all means of contact with the Israelis”.¹²⁰ Weizman expressed to Sam Lewis his “regret at Sadat’s sudden move... [which] can only strengthen the hardliners in the Israeli government”.¹²¹ Also,

¹¹⁸ Cited in Kamel, *The Camp David Accords*, 245.

¹¹⁹ The first quote is cited in Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy*, 250. For the second quote, see Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*, 182.

¹²⁰ Kamel, *The Camp David Accords*, 225.

¹²¹ “‘Egypt’ in Memorandum to the President from Acting Secretary of State Warren Christopher”, July 26, 1978, Collection “Plains File”, Box 13, Folder 10, Document 17-6, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

American analysts judged that Peace Now had been both “outmaneuvered by Prime Minister Begin and undercut by Egyptian President Sadat’s public inflexibility”.¹²²

In turn, the U.S. administration chose to reassess its approach. This was in part due to the absence of a more flexible Egyptian partner, but domestic pressures in America were also a factor. In an effort to reassure Arab states about American commitment, Washington pushed through Congress a package of fighter jets that bundled Israeli, Egyptian, and Saudi planes together. The administration won this fight but it was an exhausting victory that cost it significant support in the Jewish community.¹²³ This contributed to the administration’s eventual decision to terminate its strategy of isolating Begin. It also led it to temporarily undermine the strategy along the way. In order to encourage pro-Israel members of Congress to pass the jets package, Carter appeared with Begin in early May at Israeli independence day celebrations in New York, suggesting ongoing U.S. support.¹²⁴

However, the reassessment of U.S. policy cannot be attributed to domestic pressures in isolation, especially once one takes into account the policy that followed. Quandt says finally decided that “instead of working against Begin, he wanted to work through him,”¹²⁵ but Democratic Congressmen and VP Mondale were begging him to drop his Mideast push altogether.¹²⁶ Instead, Carter hoped to double down, pursuing a high-level effort to break the impasse between Israel and

¹²² “‘Prospects for Israeli Peace Movement’ in Information Items - Memorandum for the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski”, September 13, 1978, Collection “Brzezinski Material: President’s Daily Report File”, Box 7, Folder 8, Document 24-9, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

¹²³ Carter, *Keeping faith*, 313.

¹²⁴ Cyrus R. Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America’s Foreign Policy* (Simon and Schuster, 1983), 213.

¹²⁵ Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*, 201.

¹²⁶ Carter, *Keeping faith*, 315.

Egypt. The result was the notorious Camp David Accords of September of 1978.

On the other hand, it would probably be excessive to write off LSI during 1978 as a total failure. Peace Now was given considerable impetus by the isolation of Israel that many felt the Begin government was bringing upon itself. Although it became clear by July that Begin remained in power, declarations by Weizman and then Dayan that the Egyptian government was serious about peace did put him on the defensive.¹²⁷ The causation is difficult to disentangle, but it is possible that their personal push for progress with Egypt was aided by America's efforts and that this may have influenced Begin's decision to make certain concessions at Camp David. The pressure Begin was facing certainly did encourage him to gradually move away from his adherence to the status quo that year.

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

One area in which the theories diverge involves the effect of perceptions of sender state interests on the incidence of LSI occurrence. Theory #1 (national interests theory) predicts that LSI should accurately reflect objective, unitary national interests abroad. Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) expects rates of LSI toward Israel to be low because these groups tend not to see such behavior as good for American interests. Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) expects that such behavior should be more frequent because these actors actually

¹²⁷ Weizman considers Dayan's realignment and declaration after Leeds that the Egyptians were genuine in their desire for peace to have been an especially important turning point in the Israeli internal scene. Weizman, *The Battle for Peace*, 339.

desire LSI toward Israel. Theory #4 (leadership theory) holds that LSI occurrence should depend upon how top leaders in the sender state perceive national interests vis-à-vis the sender.

As expected by leadership theory, Egyptian and American efforts at LSI toward Israel in 1978 were closely tied to perceptions that top officials held about their Israeli counterparts. During this period, Carter felt that “Begin was becoming an insurmountable obstacle to further progress”.¹²⁸ Sadat felt he simply could not work with Begin starting in the beginning of the year.

Meanwhile, Theory #1 (national interests theory) seems to have a more difficult time explaining why a president who previously considered bolstering Begin would later seek to undermine him in the cabinet so soon after. Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) does not fit with the occurrence of LSI because members of Congress tended to downplay internal differences of political opinion within Israeli politics, even though it can partially explain the pressures that led Carter to terminate the effort. Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) fits with the support that Carter and Sadat received for their plan from subordinates but not why the plan was ultimately terminated. Once the effort at LSI started to flounder, the advice Carter was receiving from State was to present a set of U.S. parameters, not the Camp David summit he ultimately chose to pursue.¹²⁹

2. Perceptions of Close Contests:

Another area in which the theories diverge involves how actors in the sender

¹²⁸ Carter, *Keeping faith*, 312.

¹²⁹ Vance, *Hard Choices*, 216.

state perceive close political contests abroad. If they consistently pursue LSI on the basis of accurate assessments of objective developments abroad, that would provide some support for national interests theory (Theory #1). If, however, they choose whether or not to pursue LSI on the basis of subjective perceptions of those foreign political developments or on the basis of personal distractions, that would provide support for Theory #4 (leadership theory).

In this regard, Theory #1 is only partly consonant with LSI in 1978. Certainly, there were objective indicators of political ferment in Israel, including the Peace Now marches and petition. However, the U.S. efforts at LSI may have continued longer than the objective indicators could justify. Brzezinski noted as early as April that “the internal debate over Israel’s foreign policy continues but thus far has not produced significant political realignment”.¹³⁰ Also, Sadat’s effort to heighten the pressure on Begin in July through following his Peres meeting by one with Weizman was clearly a misreading of the Israeli political map. Accurate objective factors would make it difficult to justify such actions.

Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) is not consonant with LSI during this period because executive branch officials perceived an internal contest in Israeli politics when legislators expressed little interest in such a possibility, demonstrating much more interest in Begin than Dayan or Weizman. Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) is consonant with the executive branch’s eagerness to believe an internal contest was imminent in Israeli domestic politics.

However, at many points the source of key decisions was from above and not

¹³⁰ “‘Israeli Debate Continues’ in Information Items - Memorandum for the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski.”

below, a prominent indicator of support for Theory #4 (leadership theory). For instance, Brzezinski explains that the politically-motivated decision to exclude Israel's ambassador from Weizman's meeting with Carter was the president's alone. Egyptian Foreign Minister Kamel discloses that his government's effort to topple Begin was the brainchild of two individuals, Sadat and Tuhamy, not Kamel's agency.

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

Theories 2 and 3 (the lobby-legislative and bureaucratic politics approaches, respectively) expect that these actors should be relatively influential and informed in advance of American decisions about whether or not to pursue LSI, while Theory #4 (leadership theory) expects these actors to be kept in the dark. American behavior and reasoning during this period fits extremely well with the paper paradox and leadership theory. Retrospectively, Quandt acknowledges that the NSC plan to collude with Egypt to corner Begin "was a risky strategy, especially if it leaked to the press".¹³¹ The decision to make Weizman's meeting with Carter a one-on-one appears to have been an informal decision made offline and not through standard written process. In advance of Weizman's visit, Brzezinski forwarded the Presidential Review Committee's findings only to the Secretaries of Defense and State with the strict warning that "this summary should be very closely held and distributed only on a must know basis".¹³² In preparation for that PRC meeting, Quandt wrote to Brzezinski that the meeting "is also not the setting for a sensitive

¹³¹ Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*, 171.

¹³² "Israeli Arms Requests - Matmon C - Memorandum from Zbigniew Brzezinski to Secretaries of State and Defense."

discussion on how political considerations should affect arms decisions”.¹³³

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

Theories 2 and 3 also expect top leaders in the sender state to be particularly weak during certain periods of that nation’s political calendar, but leadership theory argues that these dynamics should have little effect on leader agency to pursue LSI. The case material from 1978 offers little in the way of predictions for this category of observable implication, since it takes place neither at the beginning nor the end of a presidential term. Perhaps the influence of domestic pressures was somewhat greater in 1978 than 1977, with midterm elections less than a year away, but, again, such pressures were still not determinative. Rather, the fact that such an extensive effort to foster internal opposition to Begin’s leadership took place at all during an election year is a major mark against the lobby-legislative approach and in favor of leadership theory.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) expects that working-level pursuit of LSI without senior authorization should be frequent, but Theory #4 (leadership theory) holds that such freelancing should be rare and occur only during periods of weak executive oversight. The case material also provides little in the way of data regarding unauthorized behavior because no such activity took place. If anything, the locus of impulsive behavior was at the very top of the Egyptian and

¹³³ “PRC on Matmon C - Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from William B. Quandt and Gary Sick.”

American governments, rather than a few rungs below. For instance, Sadat's effort to turn up the pressure on Begin was criticized by his foreign minister as "pure whim... without due preparation" that was "deviating from the political and tactical line we were pursuing".¹³⁴ This provides support for leadership theory against the bureaucratic politics approach.

6. Consistency of Message:

Theory #1 (national interests theory) argues that consistent messaging in LSI should be relatively unproblematic for officials in the sender state, but the domestically-oriented theories emphasize institutional or personal biases that should make this task much more challenging. The Carter administration undermined its own efforts to project a consistent message to the Israeli public with its warm reception of Begin in April to help pass the jets package through Congress. The pressure felt by the administration that drove it to make these departures from its overall strategy was certainly due to the influence of pro-Israel activists and the lobby. This provides some support for the lobby-legislative approach regarding the efficacy of LSI at the expense of leadership theory.

7. Suitability of Message:

National interests theory also expects officials in the sender state to be relatively deft at choosing a message for their policies that is suited to the needs of their favored faction within the politics of the target state. However, the other

¹³⁴ Kamel, *The Camp David Accords*, 204–205.

theories emphasize institutional or personal biases that might make suitable messaging more difficult.

In general, the administration's message seems to have been deftly tailored to suit the political context. The administration picked its fights carefully, intentionally choosing "to engage Begin [on] U.N. Resolution 242 and settlements [because they] were both comparatively safe, especially since many Israelis and American Jews were more in agreement with Carter's position on these points than with Begin's".¹³⁵ Carter also tempered his desire to publicly criticize Dayan in April when Vance urged him to give the Israeli FM the benefit of the doubt.¹³⁶ To the extent that administration projected a more effective message toward the Israeli political system in 1978 than leading up to Israeli elections the previous year, that difference in efficacy should probably be attributed to Carter's more deliberate approach to public diplomacy, a factor that would be most germane to leadership theory.

Carter, Case #5:

Likud Gets a Free Pass, 1979-80

Given President Carter's strong interest in the peace process and deep animus against Israeli PM Menachem Begin, it is somewhat puzzling that LSI against the Likud did not take place during 1979 and 1980 when the peace process ground to a halt and the party was less popular at home due to hyper-inflation. The Camp David Accords of September 1978 were a framework agreement calling for

¹³⁵ Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*, 169.

¹³⁶ Vance, *Hard Choices*, 212.

comprehensive treaties on two sub-topics: (1) terms of peace between Israel and Egypt, and (2) a detailed agreement between Israel and Egypt over the autonomy and possible self-determination of Arabs living in the West Bank and Gaza. Unsurprisingly, the bilateral peace agreement, though not without its challenges, offered the path of lesser resistance. With heavy American mediation a treaty was finally agreed upon and signed in March of 1979. However, once the bilateral treaty was out of the way, negotiators moved on to the much more challenging topic of the autonomy talks starting in May. One might therefore anticipate that the period until the end of Carter's term would have been primed for LSI toward Israel.

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

No. It is relatively clear that the administration did not try to influence internal Israeli politics with leadership selection intervention during this period. Carter had already taken on a great deal of risk by getting so deeply involved in Mideast negotiations leading up to the Camp David Accords and the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty. Upon advice from Vice President Mondale, Carter appointed a special envoy to handle day-to-day issues in the autonomy talks and chose US Trade Representative Robert Strauss for the job, a Jewish-American former head of the Democratic National Committee. When Strauss left the job in late 1979, he was replaced by another prominent Jewish Democrat, Sol Linowitz, who had helped the administration in 1977 with negotiations over the Panama Canal.

No doubt, the absence of LSI during this period can in part be attributed to domestic considerations within the United States.¹³⁷ However, to explain the outcome solely in such terms would miss more important parts of the causal process. Although Carter clearly hoped that handing the baton to a special negotiator with credibility in the American Jewish community would yield domestic benefits, he did not intend to give up on the autonomy talks altogether. Behind closed doors, Brzezinski deplored the “suspicion [Strauss’s appointment] “is all just domestic politics and that we are abandoning our diplomatic activity altogether”.¹³⁸ In fact, the President, Vance, and Brzezinski all remained strongly interested that the talks succeed, and there is also reason to believe, as Spiegel argues, that they “feared Saudi oil pressure more than pro-Israeli domestic constraints”.¹³⁹

Indeed, the best indication that they did not intend to bury the autonomy talks is that they kept trying to promote them. In August of 1979, Carter publicly likened the Palestinian issue to the cause of civil rights in the U.S.¹⁴⁰ When they first sent Strauss to the region, he was to promote an administration plan to amend UNSCR 242 in a manner intended to facilitate PLO moderation, allowing them to incorporate the movement into talks and give the autonomy process a major boost. Despite last-minute guidance from Brzezinski and the President himself to “be firm,” Strauss’s palpable lack of enthusiasm for the plan encouraged Sadat and Begin to

¹³⁷ For instance, see Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*, 23; Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 438.

¹³⁸ Remarks in “Minutes of Meeting from Presidential Review Committee Meeting on West Bank/Gaza Negotiations”, May 17, 1979, 4, Collection “Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection: Subject File”, Number 22, Folder: “[Meetings -- PRC 107: 5/17/79],” Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

¹³⁹ Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 374.

¹⁴⁰ Linda Charlton, “President Angers U.S. Jewish Leaders: His Remarks Likening Palestinian Issue to American Civil Rights Movement Are Criticized,” *New York Times*, August 2, 1979.

reject it. The president wondered if “perhaps Sadat was against this initiative because Bob Strauss in fact talked him out of it”.¹⁴¹ In March of 1980, the administration even pursued the domestically risky strategy of endorsing a UN resolution condemning Israel for settlement activity within a month of the New York Democratic primary to keep Arab representatives at the negotiating table.¹⁴²

These efforts were relatively sporadic, but the administration was also dealing with enormous distractions, especially in the broader Middle East region. In February of 1979 the Shah of Iran stepped down, and the country’s ongoing turmoil emerged as a major distraction for the administration. This only became worse when the administration was struck with twin disasters in November and December that also took away from consideration of peace process issues: the taking of American hostages in Tehran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Both became major fixations for administration officials throughout 1980. Skyrocketing oil prices, inflation, and the SALT II treaty were also possible sources of distraction.¹⁴³

In between Strauss and Linowitz, the president actually expressed interest in letting the peace portfolio move back to Vance, but Brzezinski argued that Vance was actually too busy with other issues to get bogged down in the talks.¹⁴⁴ Vance resigned at the end of April over handling of Iran, and his absence was thought to

¹⁴¹ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 439; Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 375.

¹⁴² Carter specifically instructed that all references to Jerusalem as occupied territory should be removed from the text before the US lent the resolution its support. However, the US mission to the UN provided endorsement to the plan without all such text having been removed. Political analysts believe that the unintended resulting commotion played a crucial role in helping Ted Kennedy defeat Carter in the NY primary, weakening Carter in the general election and only adding to his domestic woes.

¹⁴³ Vance, *Hard Choices*, 254; Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 437; Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 373 & 376.

¹⁴⁴ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 440.

impede the autonomy talks somewhat.¹⁴⁵ Finally, Iraq invaded Iran in September of 1980. The administration did eventually put thorny Mideast issues aside entirely to focus on the campaign, but it would be a stretch to say that this effect lasted for more than the last few months of the campaign or was causally decisive.¹⁴⁶

Neither were the parties in the region particularly helpful with leadership selection intervention via the autonomy talks. On one hand, Arab actors were not making the sort of concessions that would have facilitated such an approach. Sadat's incentive and ability to make concessions on behalf of Palestinians were quite limited, and he was at a bargaining disadvantage until the Israelis returned the Sinai to Egypt in 1982 as agreed under the bilateral peace treaty.¹⁴⁷ The isolation imposed on Egypt by the Arab world for making peace with Israel was tougher than expected, and neither Jordan nor Palestinians chose to participate in the autonomy talks as the U.S. had hoped. In response to a provocative bill in the Knesset, Sadat terminated the talks in July 1981. Although the administration worried that the absence of talks undermined Sadat's position within Egypt, they hoped that arms and aid would be sufficient until broader progress could be achieved.¹⁴⁸

On the other hand, the Israeli government had retrenched in a manner that decreased possible points of leverage and made negative LSI more difficult to carry out. The coalition partner DMC had split in two, and the left-wing faction bolted

¹⁴⁵ Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 379.

¹⁴⁶ For a bit more on this, see *Ibid.*, 379 & 484, endnote 214.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 373; Vance, *Hard Choices*, 253.

¹⁴⁸ For instance, during an NSC meeting over providing arms to Egypt CIA Director Stansfield Turner commented that "without substantial U.S. [weaponry] support, Sadat might be in trouble domestically". "Summary of Findings from Presidential Review Committee Meeting on Egyptian Military Supply Relationship", September 20, 1979, 1, Collection "Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection: Subject File", Number 34, Folder: "[Meetings -- PRC 123: 9/20/79]," Jimmy Carter Presidential Library. See also "Minutes of Meeting from Presidential Review Committee Meeting on West Bank/Gaza Negotiations," 6.

from the coalition, decreasing the leverage that the remaining members had over government decision-making. Dayan and Weizman resigned over the government's hardline approach to the autonomy talks. This increased their public standing, but, as individuals not factions, they could not force an earlier vote. Meanwhile, the remaining partners in government had little incentive to permit early elections. The National Religious Party's influence over autonomy talks and other governmental deliberations had increased markedly, and members of the Likud avoided early elections in hopes that their dismal poll numbers might eventually come up. Ariel Sharon tried to attack the sitting government from the right but did so alone.¹⁴⁹

Did The Policy Succeed?

It is difficult to assess the question of efficacy given that this is an instance during which LSI did not actually occur. Normally for such non-cases, I contrast the policy that was pursued with the hypothetical LSI policy that could have been pursued but was not. However, such counterfactuals are most valid when they differ from each other in terms of as few antecedent historical facts as possible.¹⁵⁰

The episode of Israel's 1977 elections discussed above was also a non-case, but the antecedent historical conditions that made the difference between the policy that was pursued and its hypothesized alternative were relatively simple to identify: *not* taking the specific and misguided extra steps that harmed Rabin electorally.

¹⁴⁹ “Speculation that Sharon may be next casualty of Israeli cabinet’ in Noon Notes - Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from the Situation Room”, June 2, 1980, Collection “Brzezinski Material: President’s Daily Report File”, Box 15, Folder 6, Document 3-5, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

¹⁵⁰ Philip Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics: Logical, Methodological, and Psychological Perspectives* (Princeton University Press, 1996), chap. 1.

However, for 1979 and 1980, it is much more difficult to pinpoint exactly what would have had to be different in order to change the outcome from the policy that was pursued (i.e. non-LSI) to the hypothetical alternative.

What would have had to happen before the administration could realize it would not have a better opportunity to pursue LSI after the American elections? What would it have taken to get autonomy talks moving in a meaningful way? Then, once talks were underway, what positions would the parties take, and how would these positions influence the prospects for LSI? Because the counterfactual for this non-case is too indistinct to evaluate with plausible validity, I confine my discussion of this episode mainly to considerations of occurrence but not efficacy.

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

The first area in which the theories diverge has to do with the effect of perceptions of sender state interests on LSI occurrence. National interests theory (Theory #1) expects occurrence to correlate quite closely with objective national interests abroad. The lobby-legislative approach (Theory #2) holds that LSI toward Israel should be low because these actors think that such behavior harms U.S. interests. The bureaucratic politics approach (Theory #3) predicts that LSI toward Israel should be frequent because these actors perceive such behavior as advantageous for American interests. The agency-based approach (Theory #4) expects that LSI occurrence should vary upon top American leaders' personal perceptions of American national interests vis-à-vis Israeli politics.

National interests theory has a difficult time explaining why we would not see LSI in this instance but did see it in other periods toward Begin. If he was objectively bad for U.S. interests in a manner that produced negative LSI before, we should expect to see LSI in this case – which we do not. Lobby-legislative theory would expect U.S. policy to reflect the preferences of these political factions and thus LSI would not take place. In this regard, the outcome of this case is consonant with the theory. Meanwhile, it is not consonant with bureaucratic politics theory or even leadership theory, since Carter seemed to conclude from Dayan and other Israeli sources that Begin remained an unwilling partner, determined to avoid concessions over the territories.¹⁵¹ However, I explain below that is because other dimensions were carrying more causal weight than perceived sender interests in this case.

2. Perceptions of Close Contests:

Another area in which the theories diverge involves perceptions of close contests abroad. Theory #1 (national interests theory) expects that LSI occurrence should accurately reflect all available information about possible impending leadership contests abroad as they develop. Theory #4 (leadership theory) predicts that a major constraining factor should be the personal distractions and subjective perceptions of leaders in the sender state.

In one sense, the Likud was vulnerable starting in late 1979 due to the subject matter of peace process talks and because its polling numbers were

¹⁵¹ Carter, *Keeping faith*, 504.

suffering over severe economic inflation.¹⁵² However, for all the reasons explained above, the administration had few points of leverage for actually trying to shape Israeli politics. Further, although Likud's polling numbers were bad, Begin's government was unlikely to fall due to simple matters of coalitional arithmetic.

The Likud's domestic challenges did not escape the attention of the Carter team entirely but did so in a manner that delayed the possibility of LSI. By late 1979, Brzezinski was reporting to the president that Begin's leadership would be tested but that his main risk was losing an election in 1981, not falling before then.¹⁵³ Provided they were still in office to do so, officials in the Carter administration planned to hold another summit between Begin and Sadat to push for agreement on autonomy in 1981, when Israeli elections would be on the horizon.¹⁵⁴ Thus, top leaders anticipated a critical contest in Israeli politics but no real opportunity to pursue negative LSI against the Likud in the immediate term.

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

The domestic structural theories predicts that members of Congress, the pro-Israel lobby, and/or the bureaucracy should be informed and influential in advance of decisions over whether pursue LSI, whereas Theory #4 (leadership theory) expects that these actors should probably have been left in the dark.

¹⁵² Don Peretz and Sammy Smooha, "Israel's Tenth Knesset Elections: Ethnic Upsurgence and Decline of Ideology," *Middle East Journal* 35, no. 4 (Autumn 1981): 508.

¹⁵³ "'Israeli Cabinet Disarray' in Daily Report - Memorandum for the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski", October 12, 1979, Collection "Brzezinski Material: President's Daily Report File", Box 12, Folder 7, Document 4-6, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library. See also "'Role of the National Religious Party' - Memorandum from INR and NEA to Secretary of State Vance", June 12, 1979, Collection "Staff Material: Middle East", Box 50, Folder 2, Document 2-5, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

¹⁵⁴ Noted in Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 379.

Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) is undermined somewhat by patterns of domestic debate in this case. The appointment of Mideast envoys that reported directly to the president excluded the State Department from the decision-making process, since day-to-day negotiating functions had usually been performed by officials from the Bureau for Near Eastern Affairs. There is little evidence to indicate the paper paradox during this period, but, since it is a non-episode, there is not much to contradict it either.

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

The domestic structural theories also expect that members of Congress, the pro-Israel lobby, and/or the bureaucracy should be especially powerful during certain periods during the sender state's political calendar. This episode provides at least some support for Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) in terms of cycles of domestic power. With presidential elections looming on the horizon, it should come as little surprise that the outcome may tend to be more reflective of what lobby groups and legislators want than had previously been the case. However, one must also take into account the major distractions facing administration officials and occasional coordination problems among key individuals such as when Strauss undermined the administration's effort on UNSCR 242. Further, the fact that the principals did not stop trying to pursue their preferences in spite of appointing a special negotiator also partially undermines the lobby-legislative approach in favor of leadership theory.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) expects such freelancing to be quite frequent, but Theory #4 (leadership theory) expects that freelancing should be rare and depend upon lax executive oversight. It is likely that Strauss did engage in some unauthorized behavior in August of 1979 by undermining Carter's plan to amend UNSCR 242. Although this activity was not an effort to undertake LSI, it did decrease the opportunities for his boss to pursue such avenues. Although leadership theory would expect bureaucratic freelancing to be especially low under a president with an active managerial approach to the issue such as Carter, it does fit with the theory that such renegade behavior – if it were to take place at all during his presidency – should occur during a part of his term in which he was exercising relatively less oversight. By all reports Carter was less eager to invest Mideast issues after his intense efforts to produce the major agreements. For instance, although Carter did not want the administration to give up on stopping settlements, when the issue came up at an NSC meeting, he reportedly told his envoy "Strauss, take care of it".¹⁵⁵

Further, even if Strauss's behavior was in contradiction to Carter's preferences, that divergence cannot be attributed to organizational interests or desires, since Strauss came at the issue from a point of reluctance about leaning too heavily on Israeli leaders, whereas the deep bureaucracy – such as the State Department's near east offices – tended to prefer a more engaged position vis-à-vis the peace process that Strauss wanted.

¹⁵⁵ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 438.

6. Consistency of Message:

Another area in which the theories diverge involves consistency of messaging. Theory #1 (national interests theory) predicts that agreeing on a consistent (and therefore more effective) message should be unproblematic for officials in the sender state. The other theories emphasize personal or institutional biases that should make consistent messaging more difficult to attain.

It is somewhat difficult to speak of efficacy in instances of non-action such as this one. Still, it is certainly reasonable to expect that the president's renegade envoy might have undercut a message of toughness that could have been helpful in getting the talks underway and pursuing negative LSI toward the government of Israel. Domestic politics no doubt could have undermined Carter's leverage during this period somewhat as well. Thus, the case probably would fit with Theories 2 and 4 in terms of consistency of message, although the biggest issue affecting the potential efficacy of LSI would have been the lack of a concerted signal – not the unity of one – as the administration was increasingly consumed in other issues.

7. Suitability of Message:

The last area in which the theories diverge involve the feasibility of suitable (and therefore more effective) messaging by the sender state. Theory #1 (national interests theory) expects that arriving at a message that suits the needs of the favored faction within the politics of the target state should be relatively easy for officials in the sender state to achieve. Again, the other theories stress institutional

or personal biases that may make this task more challenging.

Again, it is somewhat difficult to evaluate the efficacy of an attempt that never took place. Nonetheless, if negative LSI had become a goal of U.S. policy toward Israel during this period, a more efficacious approach would have required projecting a very different message to the Israeli public. And the reason such a message was not adopted does seem to have some roots in domestic issues but is more directly attributable to matters of leadership coordination, leadership attention, and perceptions of strategic context.

Conclusion

The preceding chapter described five major episodes during the Carter administration that had insights to offer on the topic of leadership selection intervention toward Israel. In each instance, I methodically sought to demonstrate why the most persuasive framework for explaining patterns in the occurrence and efficacy of LSI focuses on the subjective perceptions and beliefs of top American leaders, not unyielding structural forces such as objective national interests, bureaucratic politics, or Congress working in lock-step with pro-Israel lobby groups.

This chapter makes up a quarter of the first part of the dissertation, which draws heavily on archival resources and chronicles U.S. decision-making toward internal Israeli politics before the Oslo peace process. The three other chapters that comprise Part One follow a similar approach while covering three presidential terms that followed Carter: Ronald Reagan's first term in office, his second turn in the Oval Office, and the presidency of George H. W. Bush. Then, Parts Two and

Three of the dissertation cover U.S. decision-making toward internal Israeli and internal Palestinian politics respectively since 1993. These sections make much greater use of contemporary interviews with American, Palestinian, and Israeli individuals who have expertise on the various cases. Then, these sections are followed by shadow cases to boost external validity and a conclusion that poses recommendations for policy-makers and future academic research.

Chapter IV.
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The Reagan Years
(1981-1989)

Ronald Reagan evinced a very different approach than his predecessor with regard to Israeli politics and leadership selection intervention (LSI). The peace process did not rank high on his list of priorities, and for the most part neither did Israel. He was much more interested in domestic politics, economic reforms, and building up the military.¹ To the extent that Israel did factor into his initial considerations, it did so as a potential military asset against the Soviet Union, not as a player in Middle East peace.²

Reagan also differed from President Carter in terms of his managerial approach, especially on the Arab-Israeli dispute. For instance, one historian of the conflict writes that “whereas Carter had immersed himself in details, perhaps overly so, Reagan ignored both details and the need to coordinate policy. As a result, officials fought among themselves while forced to respond to events, often instigated by the logic of Israel’s policies that helped intensify hostilities in the region”.³ If Carter was his team’s overactive quarterback, Reagan displayed “his own management style [that] was more akin to that of a professional football team’s

¹ Senior Reagan advisor for Mideast Affairs Geoffrey Kemp, “Interview with the Author”, February 16, 2011; Samuel W. Lewis, “The United States and Israel: Constancy and Change,” in *The Middle East: Ten Years after Camp David*, ed. William B. Quandt (Brookings Institution Press, 1988), 229.

² Ronald Reagan, “Recognizing the Israeli asset,” *Washington Post*, August 15, 1979; Lewis, “The United States and Israel: Constancy and Change,” 229.

³ Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A History with Documents* (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2009), 354.

owner than its quarterback. He employed extensive delegation of authority... a strong preference for staff consensus coupled with enduring reluctance to adjudicate key differences or enforce discipline on strong-minded subordinates".⁴

As a result of this style, his second secretary of state, George Shultz, also became a key player for American decision-making toward Israeli politics. As the United States disengaged from Lebanon, Reagan turned away from the region and *de facto* deputized Shultz to handle the region in his place. Whereas the administration proposed two peace plans for addressing the conflict – one in the first term and one in the second – fittingly only the first bore Reagan's name. The second plan came to be known as the Shultz Initiative.

During term two, Shultz played an enormous role in ensuring that America's approach to Israeli politics shied away from conscious intervention. This period coincided with a National Unity Government (NUG) in Israel in which right- and left-wing forces were closely matched and frequently at odds. This condition might otherwise have elicited repeated efforts by Washington to tip the scales toward the left, and Labor often entreated the administration to do just that. However, Shultz preferred a low-key approach to bilateral disagreements that unintentionally strengthened the Likud by default. Some lower-ranking American officials found this approach quite frustrating, causing bureaucratic freelancing to increase during Reagan's second term, but because of Shultz their efforts came to naught.

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Like Carter, Reagan's two terms are marked by a variety of episodes with

⁴ Lewis, "The United States and Israel: Constancy and Change," 228.

regard to LSI. These episodes range from non-cases to partial cases to full cases of leadership selection intervention. They include both petit LSI efforts to influence the balance of forces within the Israeli cabinet as well as grand LSI efforts to determine the content of the ruling coalition. They include negative strategies aimed at undermining the sitting Israeli government as well as positive strategies aimed at bolstering its members. Some efforts succeeded but others failed outright.

However, an overriding commonality across these diverse cases is that the worldview, managerial style, and subjective perceptions of Reagan (and key aides such as Shultz) played a decisive role in driving the case-by-case variation this study's two dependent variables of occurrence and efficacy.

In the sections that follow, I review three prominent cases from Reagan's eight-year tenure as president. Some of these cases are compound episodes, however, in which I discuss a handful of subsequent policy postures together because they are analytically interlinked. First, I discuss the administration's reluctance to undertake negative LSI during the Israeli elections of 1981, despite Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's greater willingness to interject himself into his neighbor's political contest. Second, I discuss the administration's jarring swing during 1982-1984 from non-LSI tinged with hostility to negative LSI to positive LSI and then back again to non-LSI, but of a much warmer tenor than before. Third, I discuss the administration's approach to Israel's National Unity Government from 1984 to 1988, during which Shultz came to the fore in making policy toward the region and staunching most attempts to intervene. Although he ensured that the U.S. did not intervene in the Israeli elections of 1988, for instance, I outline how a

broad range of outside actors – from Jordan, Egypt, and the PLO to Britain, France, and even perhaps the USSR – chose instead to try LSI that year on behalf of Labor.

Reagan, Case #1: Osirak & Israeli Elections, 1981

The elections of 1981 were perhaps the dirtiest in Israel's history. Menachem Begin was running for the Likud against Shimon Peres from Labor, and the two engaged in extensive *ad hominem* attacks. The Sephardic-Ashkenazi divide became strongly politicized, and tensions both racial and socioeconomic ran high at campaign rallies. In one especially memorable example, thugs brandishing knives and shouting pro-Begin slogans rolled barrels of burning garbage into crowds at a Labor rally. Peres fired back by attacking the Likud's fervor as "Khomeinism".⁵

The ballot on June 30th also turned out to be one of Israel's closest. Although Likud pulled ahead in the end, Labor appeared to be ahead just forty-eight hours beforehand.⁶ This was after a jarring back-and-forth in which Likud closed a months-long deficit and even pulled ahead in June only to temporarily fall behind again near the end of the race. Under other U.S. leaders, the 1981 Israeli election might have been seen as a ripe opportunity for outside meddling.

The election also coincided with a series of foreign policy crises that provided ample motivation and points of leverage for outside interference. Israel was engaged in a prolonged standoff with Egypt over the frozen autonomy talks, a

⁵ William Claiborne, "Opposition Party Takes the Offensive in Israel," *Washington Post*, June 16, 1981.

⁶ Samuel W. Lewis, "Interview with Ambassador Samuel Wingate Lewis", August 9, 1998, 99, The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), Library of Congress.

tense confrontation with Syria over Soviet missiles in Lebanon, and a controversy over its surprise destruction of Iraq's nuclear reactor with air strikes on June 7th. All of these actions provided points of leverage for outside actors, especially the U.S. and Egypt, both of whom the crises threatened.

Based on target state factors, therefore, the 1981 case might have seemed primed for negative LSI to undermine Begin's campaign for reelection. However, both Egypt and the United States pursued policies that actually bolstered the Likud. The U.S. did so unintentionally; Egypt did so on purpose. In both instances the policy can be traced back to the preferences of the sender state's chief executive. It is quite plausible – and perhaps even probable – that if other individuals had been in Reagan and Sadat's positions that negative LSI would have been pursued instead.

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

By America, no. By Egypt, yes. Egyptian President Sadat undertook positive LSI to bolster Begin in the weeks before the vote in a bizarre marriage of convenience to a man he had just recently professed to hate. The United States, on the other hand, seems to have pursued a policy of non-involvement, although the policy was pursued in such a manner that it unintentionally strengthened the Likud. A number of actions by the president and other officials provide strong support for the notion that Washington was not trying to influence the Israeli elections.

<The American Approach>

Throughout the first two years of Reagan's presidency, his government had

an exceptionally bad relationship with Israel under the Likud, and it was even clear to many that the relationship was likely to be a rocky one from the start. However, his administration pursued four policies that suggest it did not seek to influence internal Israeli politics, especially not to help Labor.

First, the administration declared that no Israeli official visitors, neither from the government nor the opposition, would be welcome in Washington until the Israeli vote was completed.⁷ Second, despite promises to the contrary, the administration did not promote the negotiations over Palestinian autonomy with any sort of enthusiasm or urgency. Third, the administration responded to Syrian-Israeli tensions with relative equanimity despite Begin's role in provoking Syria's escalatory action.⁸ Fourth, the U.S. responded to Israel's attack on Osirak with an odd mix of stern criticism and subdued empathy.

The Osirak issue was perhaps the most prominent, and the administration was quite tough on Israel in many ways. Initial reactions from the State Department called the Israeli air strike "aggressive" and "unprovoked".⁹ The White House notified Congress that Israel's use of American planes to bomb an Iraqi target may have violated the Arms Control Export Act (AECA). The message stated that further investigation would be required before the U.S. could proceed with scheduled plans to transfer more F-16 fighters to the IDF. Washington also voted for a resolution in

⁷ Steven L. Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan* (University of Chicago Press, 1986), 410; Lewis, "The United States and Israel: Constancy and Change," 233.

⁸ Syria's decision to move the missiles into the Beqaa Valley was in response to Israel shooting down Syrian helicopters in the valley during late April. Itamar Rabinovich, *The War for Lebanon, 1970-1985* (Cornell University Press, 1985), 118.

⁹ Rodger William Claire, *Raid on the Sun: Inside Israel's Secret Campaign that Denied Saddam the Bomb* (Random House, 2004), 220.

the UN Security Council condemning the air strike. Begin even expressed concern that Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger could be pushing for a total halt to military and economic aid to Israel, which was how Turkey was penalized in 1974 when its invasion of Cyprus was classified as a violation of the AECA.¹⁰ Given this sort of criticism, it is unlikely that the U.S. sought to reelect Menachem Begin.

President Reagan was initially incensed over the raid, believing that the Israelis had carried it out without first consulting with the United States. However, his temper cooled considerably when he was later informed that this was not the case – numerous memos detailing Israeli concern about the reactor had somehow gotten lost in the transition from Carter to Reagan. Leaving aside this brief misunderstanding, his reaction toward the strike was allegedly “boys will be boys”.¹¹ When asked at a press conference about the strike, Reagan began to backpedal on his criticism of the attack. He admitted that “it is difficult for me to envision Israel as being a threat to its neighbors” and pointed out that Israel “had reason for concern in view of the past history of Iraq, which has never signed a ceasefire or recognized Israel as a nation”.¹²

His administration also refused to follow up by telling Congress whether or not the attack actually violated the AECA.¹³ Despite voting for the Security Council resolution on June 19th condemning the attack, the White House made clear it would oppose the measure if it called for sanctions. A senior administration official told

¹⁰ Steven R. Weisman, “Reagan voices regret to Arabs, but assures Israel on ties,” *New York Times*, June 12, 1981.

¹¹ Richard V. Allen, “Reagan’s Secure Line,” *The New York Times*, June 6, 2010, sec. Opinion, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/07/opinion/07allen.html>.

¹² Cited in Abraham Ben-Zvi, *The United States and Israel: The Limits of the Special Relationship* (Columbia University Press, 1993), 133.

¹³ Shipments of F-16s were approved somewhat later as well.

the press that Reagan reassured the ambassador from Israel that “there is no fundamental re-evaluation of the United States’ relationship with Israel, nor does the United States Government anticipate any change,”¹⁴ and the archives corroborate these claims.¹⁵ Given this reassurance that the core relationship remained unharmed, it is unlikely Reagan was trying to unseat Begin.

This also fits with the recent recollections of actors regarding this period. A retired State Department official who oversaw Near Eastern Affairs issues at the time ventured that “to the best of my knowledge... we did not try to get involved in that election”.¹⁶ Similarly, a former NSC staffer commented that “every time the president met with Habib I was there... I don’t recall any discussion in which the Israeli domestic scene was a principal driver of American decision-making – in Osirak, in the case of the missiles... I don’t recall anything like that”.¹⁷

<The Egyptian Approach>

Historian Avi Shlaim writes that Sadat “knowingly helped Begin against his Labor opponents” leading up to the elections.¹⁸ Although he produces little evidence to support his claim, Shlaim’s claim is plausible enough because Sadat held an effusive meeting with Begin in Sharm el-Sheikh on June 4th even though the autonomy talks had been stuck in a frustrating deadlock for over two years. I have found additional evidence that buttresses the notion Sadat did so because he

¹⁴ Weisman, “Reagan voices regret to Arabs, but assures Israel on ties.”

¹⁵ “Acting Secretary Stoessel’s Memo to the President on ‘Political Strategy for Responding to Israeli Attack’,” - Memorandum to Richard V. Allen from Douglas J. Feith”, June 15, 1981, Folder “Subject Iraq-Israel 1981 (2 of 6)”, Box 37, Executive NSC Secretariat, Israel Country File, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

¹⁶ Retired, Senior State Department Official, “Interview with the Author”, March 8, 2011.

¹⁷ Reagan administration NSC staffer for Mideast affairs Raymond Tanter, “Interview with the Author”, February 15, 2011.

¹⁸ Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (WW Norton & Company, 2001), 384.

wanted Begin to win the election.

First of all, the transcript from their press conference is indeed quite remarkable. Despite prolonged stagnation in both the talks and their personal relationship, Sadat hinted when speaking to the press after a brief private meeting with the prime minister that “I’m hopeful that before the end of the year, by God’s will, we shall be reaching full autonomy and giving much more, I mean, push to the peace process”.¹⁹ Begin trumpeted that major, secret agreements had been reached – none of which later materialized – and politicized the content of the meeting without receiving any pushback from Sadat. The Egyptian president also blamed tensions between Israel and Syria entirely on Damascus, absolving Begin of any role in escalating the crisis. When asked by a reporter whether the summit could affect Israeli elections, Sadat let Begin brashly take the lead in proclaiming that “it didn’t even occur to us... we have so serious problems and you mix in the elections!”²⁰

Sadat’s approach to the issue stood in striking contrast to the approach favored by his underlings. UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who was serving as Egypt’s deputy foreign minister at the time, writes that most Egyptian officials believed only Labor could deliver a genuine agreement involving the West Bank and sought to help the Israeli left in the 1981 vote. The previous November, Boutros-Ghali and a handful of other officials from the ruling National Democratic Party organized an informal party-to-party summit with Israeli Labor that he says

¹⁹ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Press Conference with Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat - Sharm El-Sheikh - 4 June 1981” (Historical Documents 1981-1982, 1981).

²⁰ Ibid.

was intended “to contribute to the victory of Labor in the coming elections”.²¹ However, he says that Sadat met with the delegation but was disinterested and removed from the effort and had first vetoed a more official overture when it was suggested to him.

Yossi Beilin reports that Boutros-Ghali once described to him Sadat’s preferences even more starkly. He claims Boutros-Ghali said that, at end of the day, “Sadat was a Likudnik” for believing Begin was the only Israeli leader strong enough to deliver the West Bank. He reports Boutros-Ghali told him “when Begin asked for a meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh just before the elections, [Sadat] knew exactly why he wanted this and he played along, even though almost all his advisers told him not to get involved in an Israeli election campaign”.²²

If these claims are to be believed, it seems quite clear that Sadat was trying to interfere in Israeli domestic politics in support of the right-wing. This perspective is also supported by Ephraim Dowek, who was a political minister in the Israeli embassy in Cairo at the time. Dowek says that Sadat “decided, against the advice of his closest collaborators” to take the Sharm meeting, fully cognizant that it “might be construed as an indirect service to the election campaign of the Likud”.²³

Did the Policy Succeed?

No. Neither the American nor Egyptian policies furthered their overall

²¹ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Egypt’s Road to Jerusalem: A Diplomat’s Story of the Struggle for Peace in the Middle East* (Random House, 1997), 319.

²² Cited in Yossi Beilin, *Touching Peace: From the Oslo Accord to a Final Agreement* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 40.

²³ Ephraim Dowek, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations, 1980-2000* (Frank Cass, 2001), 141-142.

objectives of achieving national interests and furthering the peace process. PM Begin was able to turn both governments' postures to his electoral benefit yet yielded little on the peace process in his second term as premier. In fact, he returned to office with the most right-wing government in Israeli history up until that point and approved Israel's invasion of Lebanon and subsequent war in 1982.

<America's Impact>

The general hope within the American administration was that Labor would win the June ballot.²⁴ However, it pursued a policy that instead contributed to Begin's success. Putting the autonomy talks in deep freeze meant that the Likud could have its cake and eat it too, pursuing a maximalist approach to the territories without meaningful recompense. Begin could also pursue an approach to Lebanon that enabled him to look tough for Israeli voters and simulate a constructive relationship with Washington while knowing that the risks of all-out conflagration were dampened by American mediation.

A remarkably thorough CIA analysis in advance of the 1981 Israeli elections notes that

"Begin also has succeeded in rallying voter support by his skillful management of the impasse with Syria over its air defense missiles in Lebanon... by cooperating with U.S. Ambassador Habib's mediation mission, Begin has sought to reinforce his claim that he has established a close working relationship with the new US administration – a major aim of any Israel government and a key element of Begin's reelection strategy. Begin has tried to capitalize on his close cooperation with the United States to calm public uneasiness over his tough statements and to parry Labor claims that he is prone to precipitate military action. Begin also has reinforced his image as a strong, effective leader with the hawkish

²⁴ Senior Reagan advisor for Mideast Affairs Geoffrey Kemp, "Interview with the Author." One exception to this rule may have been Kemp's aide at the time Douglas Feith.

community of Sephardic Jews, a key Likud constituency".²⁵

Even more stark are the report's findings on the Osirak strike. Although the Israeli public overwhelmingly supported the IAF's raid on the Iraqi reactor,²⁶ the magnitude of this reaction may have been contingent on the U.S. response. The CIA analysis first notes that "as much as 25 percent of the electorate – including many traditionally pro-Labor Ashkenazi Jews – is undecided. Labor could recover much of its lost momentum if it succeeds in gaining significant support from this group in the final days of the election campaign".²⁷ It then explains that Begin:

"probably would become vulnerable on this issue, however, if the public comes to perceive him as responsible for provoking a major crisis in relations with the United States. Currently undecided Ashkenazi Jews – traditionally a pro-Labor group – might then rally to Labor, thereby increasing the prospect of a last-minute Labor comeback. But so far Begin and most Israelis appear to believe that the US vote for the Iraq-sponsored UN Security Council resolution condemning the raid is intended mainly to pacify the Arabs and that it will not cause major long-term damage to bilateral ties".²⁸

This assessment fits with Begin's behavior during the campaign. After it was publicly announced that Reagan had ruled out meaningful consequences for the bilateral relationship, Begin proclaimed the Reagan quote to a public rally, calling them "very important words".²⁹ The next day Begin warmly described Reagan as

²⁵ "The Israeli National Election: Prospects and Implications (An Intelligence Memorandum)" (CIA National Foreign Assessment Center, June 22, 1981), summary and 2, CREST Collection (The CIA Records Search Tool), The National Archives and Records Administration "Site II" facility in College Park, Maryland.

²⁶ "Opinion polls show Begin has surged since raid on Iraqi nuclear reactor," *Washington Post*, June 22, 1981.

²⁷ "The Israeli National Election: Prospects and Implications (An Intelligence Memorandum)," summary.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁹ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (ME/6752/A/7), trans., "Begin's 16th June election rally: US reactions to Osirak Raid (Excerpt from Begin's Speech with Introduction)," *Israel Home Service*, June 17, 1981.

“our glorious friend, the U.S. president”.³⁰

The administration even had a clear avenue for involvement once the Peres campaign decided to place a gamble in the last two weeks on taking a much firmer stance in criticism of Begin’s security policies. Instead of objecting only to the timing of the attack, the Peres team began questioning the Israeli government’s logic for calling the plant an imminent danger and suggesting that the international costs brought on by the attack would bring about Israeli isolation, especially from Washington. Peres also came out swinging on Lebanon, accusing the government of instigating the crisis by first shooting down Syrian helicopters.³¹

These were issues on which the Washington could have done much more to bolster Labor’s narrative had it chosen to do so. Possible tactics could have included hinting even just briefly that changes in relationship could be drastic, permitting sanctions to be included in the Security Council Resolution, drawing attention to the GoI’s (government of Israel’s) role in escalations over Lebanon, consulting visibly with the Israeli opposition, and/or publicly sharing more intelligence to point out the extensive intelligence flaws in Begin’s argument for why the reactor represented an imminent threat.³² Instead, PM Begin took numerous provocative actions and turned the American administration’s tame response to his electoral benefit.

<Egypt’s Impact>

³⁰ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (ME/6754/A/1), trans., “Begin’s remarks after meeting Philip Habib,” *Israel Home Service*, June 18, 1981.

³¹ Claiborne, “Opposition Party Takes the Offensive in Israel.”

³² Many of Begin’s initial claims to justify the attack were shown to be incorrect, including some at the time. See Anthony Lewis, “Abroad at Home: Lacking the Evidence,” *New York Times*, June 21, 1981; Shai Feldman, “The Bombing of Osiraq-Revisited,” *International Security* 7, no. 2 (1982): 114–142; Joshua Kirschenbaum, “Operation Opera: An Ambiguous Success,” *Journal of Strategic Security* 3, no. 4 (2010): 49–62.

In the narrow sense, Sadat's gestures seem to have succeeded at bolstering Begin in the election. In the broader sense, however, his approach failed to advance Egyptian interests in the manner intended.

The immediate political impact of their June 4th meeting at Sharm were quite clear at the time. A Likud film crew captured the event and turned it into a five-minute campaign commercial for prime-time Israeli television. Time Magazine reporters quoted "a Begin aide [saying] with glee, 'it's clear Sadat is voting for us'."³³ Boutros-Ghali writes that Sadat taunted him over the results, crowing "your Israeli [Labor] friends couldn't get elected, could they?" He also claims that "I responded timidly that the president's position had contributed to their defeat".³⁴

This rather odd arrangement – an Arab leader tacitly endorsing an Israeli right-wing politician – turned out to be fleeting. It is true that Sadat was "determined not to give Israel a pretext for refusing to withdraw from the rest of the Sinai in April 1982,"³⁵ but it would be erroneous to conclude that his decision was driven by this factor alone. Instead, it appears he harbored wider hopes that backing Begin would also yield benefits on the Palestinian track – a belief that soon proved to be mistaken. Also, Begin soon took reckless actions that put the Egyptian government in a difficult position for having cozied up to him. The bombing of Osirak less than one week later mortified Sadat,³⁶ and Israel's invasion of Lebanon

³³ Marguerite Johnson, David Aikman, and Nathaniel Harrison, "Middle East: Pausing at the Summit," *Time Magazine*, June 15, 1981.

³⁴ Boutros-Ghali, *Egypt's Road to Jerusalem*, 343.

³⁵ "Egyptian Foreign Policy in the 1980s: An Intelligence Assessment", March 1981. CIA National Foreign Assessment Center, June 22, 1981. CREST Collection (The CIA Records Search Tool). The National Archives and Records Administration "Site II" facility in College Park, Maryland."

³⁶ E. Allan E. Wendt, "Israeli attack on Iraqi nuclear facility: Message from President Sadat to President Reagan" (Cable 13649 from Embassy Cairo for Richard Allen, by Counselor for Economic and

the following year put his successor, Gamal Mubarak, in a very difficult position both at home and internationally. Both actions heightened Egypt's economic and strategic isolation from the broader Arab world. Sadat's wager on Begin succeeded in the narrow sense of helping strengthen the Likud leader but failed in the broader sense of advancing Egypt's overall strategic goals.

Coding the Observable Implications

The four theories tested by this dissertation pose mutually exclusive predictions across a range of observable implications. Those theories are: national interests theory (Theory #1), the lobby-legislative approach (Theory #2), the bureaucratic politics approach (Theory #3), and leadership theory (Theory #4). National interests theory expects that state behavior should be driven by the objectively given, rational interests of unitary states. The lobby-legislative approach expects foreign policy to be driven by the preferences of lobbyists, who influence state behavior mainly through their allies in the legislature. The bureaucratic politics approach expects foreign policy behavior to be the product of organizational interests and lower-level bargaining, with policy solutions bubbling up from lower levels of the executive branch. Leadership theory argues that policy programs instead come from the top down, with top officials in the sender state molding foreign policy to fit their personal beliefs and styles of behavior.

Commercial Affairs at U.S. Embassy Cairo, June 8, 1981), Folder "Iraq (Israeli Strike on Iraq Nuclear Facility 6/8/81) [5 of 6]", Box 37, Executive Secretariat NSC Records, Country File, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library; David B. Ottaway, "Baghdad raid is major embarrassment to Sadat's peace policy," *Washington Post*, June 13, 1981.

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

The first such observable implication on which the theories diverge is the area of perceptions of sender state interests. Theory #1 (national interests theory) holds that, barring some sort of intelligence failure, the United States should not miss clear opportunities to carry out leadership selection intervention because its government should act consistently on the basis of objective national interests. The 1981 election presented such objective opportunities. It was clearly close, the U.S. had multiple points for leverage over the outcome, and the Israeli government had just acted in a number of ways against U.S. interests. Yet America declined to exploit this relative opportunity.

Nor does Theory #2 (lobby-legislative theory) fare particularly well. The theory expects intervention to be rare because members of Congress and the pro-Israel lobby tend to believe that national interests are not served by intervention in Israeli leadership struggles. However, the causal patterns of U.S. decision-making during this period do not suggest that this preference was what drove the administration's choice not to try and skew the Israeli elections.

True, AIPAC officials did stress the "continuities in the life of nations... [that are] essential to contemplate... as we speculate upon the potential consequences of the Israeli election this spring".³⁷ They framed Begin as a moderate and minimized differences between him and any possible Labor alternative that might emerge, arguing that "Israel desperately wants peace... just as Israel wants peace, it eschews rule over a million Arabs... [but] will not abide any Palestinian Arab state

³⁷ "Editorial: Israel's Permanent Interests," *Near East Report* 25, no. 4 (January 23, 1981).

determined to destroy us... this is what the Begin policy amounted to. And, whatever the nuances of difference, no Labor government would demand less".³⁸

They also insisted that

"regardless of the outcome [of the elections in Israel]... Israel's policy on peace and survival will remain unchanged. There are doubtless nuances of difference in style, tone, and image between the two major contending parties, but none in the basic lineaments of what security requires. This reflects an extraordinarily broad, deep and durable national consensus among the people of Israel... It remains an inscrutable mystery why successive governments of Israel – whether led by David ben Gurion, Levi Eshkol, Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin or Menachem Begin – have been labeled intransigent by some, when it has been the Arab regimes that have truculently rejected Israel's legitimacy".³⁹

However, the causal processes in this case do not seem to support the lobby-legislative approach's argument for why the outcome in this particular sub-case was consonant with expectations of the theory. U.S. legislators were quick to declare that they did not want to undermine relations with Israel over the attack, but it is clear that the GoI's justification for the Osirak raid fell on many skeptical ears even among some in Congress.⁴⁰ The attack also seems to have lessened Congressional resistance to administration proposals for selling AWACS radar systems to Saudi Arabia soon after.⁴¹ Despite outrage in the Jewish community over the administration's criticism of Israel,⁴² Congress did not aggressively press this position on the executive, providing some evidence at odds with the theory.

Theory #3 (bureaucratic politics) predicts that organizational interests within the executive branch should be strong enough to hijack U.S. policy and force

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ "Editorial: The Elections in Israel," *Near East Report*, no. 25, no. 27 (July 3, 1981).

⁴⁰ Judith Miller, "Senators Skeptical of Israeli Argument," *New York Times*, June 17, 1981; "Senators Rebuke Israel but don't wish to alter relations," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 19, 1981.

⁴¹ "Stevens Predicts Senate will Approve AWACS for Saudis," *Dow Jones News Service*, June 15, 1981.

⁴² "Vote by U.S. is Assailed by Jewish Organizations," *Associated Press*, June 20, 1981.

the government to pursue LSI at very high rates. Although the case supports the notion that bureaucratic preferences tend in this direction, the outcome of the case (i.e. non-LSI) does not fit the theory's main prediction. The CIA report in advance of Israeli elections appears to support the notion that bureaucrats are especially open to LSI. Although it never actually presumes to suggest that the United States should pursue such a policy, the report clearly hints at a number of points that such a policy could be both feasible and desirable. However, the fact that LSI did not occur contradicts the theory's expectation that bureaucratic preferences drive policy.

Theory #4 (leadership theory) holds that LSI should only occur if top leaders in the sender state personally favor such an approach. In this regard, the theory receives much better support from this case than the structural approaches do. President Reagan's personal perceptions seem to explain the U.S. posture in 1981 and help explain why the United States did not carry out LSI against Begin. Reagan wrote in his diary that "I can understand his feel but feel he took the wrong option. He should have told us & the French, we could have done something to remove the threat. However, we are not turning on Israel – that would be an invitation for the Arabs to attack".⁴³ It appears that Reagan had decided to resume cooperation with Israel by June 10th, noting in his diary that even if Congress concluded that the AECA had been violated he would grant a waiver to allow military aid to continue.⁴⁴

Reagan may have preferred a more pliable Israel on West Bank issues, but he had long thought of Israel mainly in terms of being a bulwark against Soviet depredation, and LSI would not have done much to directly further these

⁴³ Ronald Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, ed. Douglas Brinkley (HarperCollins, 2009), 46-7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 47.

objectives.⁴⁵ Reagan writes that, when the Israeli election results were finally coming in, it “look[ed] like a dead heat between Begin & Peres which means problems whichever one wins”.⁴⁶ Either he saw little difference between the two candidates for U.S. interests or felt that a weak Israeli government would be problematic no matter who was at its helm. Of course, given the reckless invasion of Lebanon masterminded by Sharon that took place less than one year later, this judgment seems to have been off the mark. Further, it is quite probable that a different president in Reagan’s shoes – such as Carter or Bush 41 – might have perceived U.S. interests differently and pursued LSI to hinder the Begin campaign.

The Egyptian case also provides evidence for Theory #4, especially at the expense of the bureaucratic politics approach. Egyptian policy gave Begin a boost, and Sadat determined that policy over the disgruntled objections of practically his entire government.⁴⁷ It stretches the imagination to try envisioning the Egyptian scheme without Sadat.

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

Another area in which the theories diverge involves whether or not observers in the sender state actually perceived that a close contest was brewing in the target polity. Although theories 2 and 3 do not pose very clear predictions in this regard, theories 1 and 4 do. National interests theory holds that observers should tend to be well-apprised in advance of close electoral contests in the target

⁴⁵ Reagan, “Recognizing the Israeli asset.”

⁴⁶ Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, 27.

⁴⁷ Boutros-Ghali, *Egypt’s Road to Jerusalem*.

polity, whereas leadership theory expects that this awareness should be conditioned by the attentiveness and motivation of top officials in the sender state.

The absence of LSI in this case should be taken as mild evidence against Theory #1 (national interests theory). As noted above, the Israeli election of 1981 was objectively a close contest. Labor had frittered away a commanding three-to-one lead at the start of the year, and Likud briefly pulled ahead with a bump from Begin's handling of Iraq and Syria.⁴⁸ However, a number of factors brought Labor back into striking distance. Arab and Jewish voters typically inclined to vote for far-left parties rallied to Labor out of opposition to the prime minister.⁴⁹ Shimon Peres publicly reconciled with Yitzhak Rabin and was perceived as winning "a clear debating victory... over Prime Minister Begin" on Israeli television in the final week.⁵⁰ Final polls gave the Labor Party a razor-thin lead on the eve of the election.⁵¹ What may have ultimately tipped the vote in Likud's favor was a racist joke told by a comedian at the Labor election rally.⁵² With a result so finely in the balance, there should be little question that the election was objectively up for grabs.

The CIA report on the Israeli elections supports the notion that the contest was seen by at least some U.S. bureaucrats as a close contest that might still be up for grabs. The fact that Washington rejected LSI in spite of this assessment seems to

⁴⁸ David K. Shipler, "Begin gains in Israel poll as tough image pays off," *New York Times*, June 13, 1981.

⁴⁹ Don Peretz and Sammy Smooha, "Israel's Tenth Knesset Elections: Ethnic Upsurgence and Decline of Ideology," *Middle East Journal* 35, no. 4 (Autumn 1981): 516.

⁵⁰ "Israeli opposition rivals close ranks for election," *The Globe and Mail (Canada)*, June 27, 1981; Abraham Rabinovich, "Caustic Election Debate: Peres Wins Points on Israeli TV," *The Globe and Mail (Canada)*, June 26, 1981.

⁵¹ "Shifting Sands in Israel," *The Globe and Mail (Canada)*, June 30, 1981.

⁵² Lewis, "Interview with Ambassador Samuel Wingate Lewis," 98.

conflict with the predictions of Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach).

It should come as little surprise that Congress did not display much interest in the Israeli elections. What is more surprising is that Peres and Labor barely appear to have registered on the president's radar screen until the Israeli national unity government a few years later. Although Reagan noted the Israeli election results in his diary, after looking through both public and declassified sources on this period and conducting interviews with some of his close Mideast advisors, I cannot seem to find anything to suggest that Reagan displayed any interest or curiosity in advance of the Israeli elections. This is quite striking when considered in contrast to, say, Bill Clinton, who became an obsessive junkie for up-to-the-minute and even precinct-specific information during Israeli election campaigns.

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

Another area in which the theories diverge involves the patterns of domestic debate within the sender state in advance of a possible policy of LSI. Whereas the lobby-legislative and bureaucratic approaches expect these actors to be well-apprised of national policy in addition to being influential on its selection, leadership theory expects otherwise. As argued above in my theory chapter, leadership theory argues that patterns of domestic debate for LSI are unusually close-hold. This is because top decision-makers in the sender state face two countervailing incentives. On one hand, they face temptations to meddle in the target state's politics to achieve their strategic and/or ideological objectives. On the other hand, they face considerable risks because to do so openly would engender a

nationalist backlash in the target state. Therefore, they behave in a manner characterized by what I call “the paper paradox,” meaning they balance these two motives by meddling in a manner that avoids written directives, formal channels, and normal distribution lists, even inside the sender state’s normal decision-making apparatus. Thus, LSI is conducted in a manner that is partly hidden from view.

There is little in the way of official material on the decision-making of either Egypt or the United States toward internal Israeli politics during this period. In part, this is because non-cases are tougher to pin down empirically than visible cases. Indeed, there is a great deal of material on the Osirak attack in the American archives, but none of the reporting at the political level seems to address the implications that different U.S. policy options for responding to the attack could have on Israeli domestic politics. This is the case for memos to the president from State⁵³ and the national security advisor⁵⁴ as well as by NSC staffers Geoffrey Kemp,⁵⁵ Doug Feith,⁵⁶ and Raymond Tanter.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, Egypt’s efforts were conducted at such a high but informal effort that what appear to have been Sadat’s true motivations were only acknowledged in public through the writings and

⁵³ Walter J. Stoessel, “Walter J. Stoessel to the President re UN Security Council meeting on Israeli raid” (Typed Note, June 9, 1981), Folder “Iraq (Israeli Strike on Iraq Nuclear Facility 6/8/81) [1 of 6]”, Box 37, Executive Secretariat NSC Records, Country File, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

⁵⁴ “Political Strategy for Responding to Israeli Attack - Memorandum for the President from Richard V. Allen”, June 1981, Folder “Subject Iraq-Israel 1981 (2 of 6)”, Box 37, Executive NSC Secretariat, Israel Country File, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

⁵⁵ “Political Strategy for Responding to Israeli Attack - Memorandum for Richard V. Allen from Geoffrey Kemp”, June 15, 1981, Folder “Subject Iraq-Israel 1981 (2 of 6)”, Box 37, Executive NSC Secretariat, Israel Country File, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

⁵⁶ Doug Feith, “Memorandum for Richard V. Allen: Israeli Raid on Iraqi Nuclear Facility” (NSC Memo 3368, June 9, 1981), Folder “Iraq (Israeli Strike on Iraq Nuclear Facility 6/8/81) [4 of 6]”, Box 37, Executive Secretariat NSC Records, Country File, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

⁵⁷ Raymond Tanter, “Memorandum for Richard V. Allen: Israel’s Air Strike on Iraq’s Nuclear Facility” (NSC Memo 3360, June 9, 1981), Folder “Iraq (Israeli Strike on Iraq Nuclear Facility 6/8/81) [4 of 6]”, Box 37, Executive Secretariat NSC Records, Country File, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

informal conversations of his advisor years after Sadat's death. These patterns do not provide very strong support for Theory #4, but they do seem consonant with it.

4 & 5. Cycles of Domestic Power and Bureaucratic Freelancing:

Two other areas in which the theories diverge pertain to cycles of domestic power and to the likelihood of bureaucratic freelancing. Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) expects high levels of freelancing as well as even higher rates of LSI than usual during the early months of a new president's term because his political appointees are not yet in place to impose loyalty on the bureaucracy.

This case provides strong evidence against bureaucratic politics with regard to both observable implications. This episode took place early in President Reagan's first term, a time during which the bureaucracy's power over political leadership is supposed to be especially preponderant. The case provides an easy hoop test for Theory #3, and yet it fails the test.

First, the administration not undertake LSI toward Israel, which bureaucratic preferences should have led us to expect. Second, Nimrod Novik points out that, on Israel policy in particular, the Reagan administration got an especially slow start exerting executive control, especially with regard to policy toward Israel.⁵⁸ Not only were administration officials thrown off track appointing its political appointees and sorting out its policy priorities, they were still reeling since John Hinckley shot President Reagan just three months earlier and were divided on Israel at the

⁵⁸ Nimrod Novik, "An Intervening Variable: The Slow Start," in *Encounter with Reality: Reagan and the Middle East During the First Term* (Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, 1985), 15-20.

political level. The case provides an easy test for Theory #3, yet the administration did not undertake LSI toward Israel, which bureaucratic preferences should have led us to expect. Nor did any bureaucratic freelancing seem to take place, another strike against the theory.

6. Consistency of Message:

The theories also diverge with regard to whether or not the message conveyed by sender state policy is likely to be consistent and, therefore, effective. Theory #1 (national interests theory) expects that consistent messaging should be unproblematic, whereas the other theories argue that institutional or personal biases might detract from the consistency of U.S. foreign policy.

The American administration projected an inconsistent message toward the Israeli body politic. This works against Theory #1, since the national interests approach expects that domestic disputes over policy should not be consequential for messaging. Further, the fact that this inconsistency arose almost entirely from within the upper reaches of the Reagan administration, not across different branches or levels of government, contradicts Theories 2 and 3. Instead, the main disagreements over how tough to be with Israel came from the top echelons of the administration and did not line up with institutional interests.

The strongest calls inside the administration for a punitive approach to Israel, which helped drive the administration's initial tough talk over Osirak, came from officials such as Secretary of Defense Weinberger, Vice President Bush, White

House chief of staff James Baker, and Deputy Secretary of State William Clark.⁵⁹ Their opinions in this instance tracked much closer to their long-term views than their organizational interests. For instance, Clark disagreed with his immediate boss, Al Haig, and would hold a much tougher position on the issue as national security advisor than his predecessor, Richard Allen. These trends fit much better with Theory #4 than its structural competitors.

7. Suitability of Message:

Finally, the theories diverge with regard to whether or not the sender state's policies convey a message that is well-suited to the domestic political dynamics of the target political system. Theory #1 expects this to be unproblematic, while the other theories argue that institutional or personal biases might skew policy away from positions that would have been better suited to the needs of the protégé faction in the target state.

In this case, the administration projected a mixed message to Israeli audiences that was well-suited for its immediate, non-LSI purposes and yet rather mismatched for undermining Likud at the polls. The administration highlighted its political opposition to the Osirak bombing to help diminish the risks of fallout from moderate Arab allies. At the same time, it strove not to isolate Israel lest that isolation encourage radical Arab actors to chain-gang those moderates into war.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Allen, "Reagan's Secure Line"; Ben-Zvi, *The United States and Israel*, 133.

⁶⁰ Tanter, "Memorandum for Richard V. Allen: Israel's Air Strike on Iraq's Nuclear Facility." For a rather memorable dissent in which Feith derisively puts the word moderate in quotes when describing America's Arab allies such as Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, see: "Acting Secretary Stoessel's Memo to the President on 'Political Strategy for Responding to Israeli Attack'," - Memorandum to Richard V. Allen from Douglas J. Feith."

Thus, the U.S. intentionally voiced loud criticism of Israeli actions while making clear that American criticism would come without meaningful costs attached.

This two-pronged approach unintentionally bolstered Begin in each regard. First, by carefully capping its criticism the administration allowed him to reap the electoral benefits of a tough foreign policy posture without real negative consequences for his relations with Washington. Second, by continuing to criticize Israel nonetheless the administration gave extra campaign fodder to the nationalist right-wing in Israel. For instance, Begin blasted the American-backed resolution from the UN Security Council, insisting that the Israeli air strike had prevented another Holocaust and bashing the United States for ganging up on its ally.⁶¹

Reagan, Case #2: The Pendulum Swings, 1982-1984

America's posture toward Israeli politics oscillated wildly over the next few years in a progression I divide into four subsequent stages. First, the administration pursued a policy of non-LSI despite increasing frustration at provocations from Jerusalem. Second, the Lebanon War pushed the relationship to its breaking point, with the U.S. seriously considering negative LSI against the Likud. Third, the United States sought to bolster forces of moderation within Israel's cabinet using positive LSI after a partial shake-up of the government brought in some new blood. Fourth,

⁶¹ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (ME/6756/A/2), trans., "Israeli Cabinet Meeting on 21st June: Begin's Statement," *Israel Home Service*, June 23, 1981.

U.S. policy underwent another period of drift and *de facto* non-LSI, except this time non-LSI was tinged with warmth, not hostility. U.S. efforts to boost strategic cooperation with Israel thus worked to the Likud's advantage in the 1984 elections, although this was not actually the administration's intent. In all four instances, personal factors predict outcomes as well as or better than structural ones.

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

Occasionally, yes. In a short period of time, the administration's posture toward Israel swung from non-LSI to tentative exploration of negative LSI, then to positive LSI, and eventually settling into another period of non-LSI due to unintended drift. Even stranger, the initial period of non-LSI was characterized by very hostile relations, while the latter period of non-LSI was especially amicable.

<Phase One: Frustration Building>

Although the administration did not pursue LSI from late 1981 until early 1983, this was still one of the most difficult patches in the U.S.-Israel relationship. The relative doves of Begin's first government, Dayan and Weizman, had been replaced by Shamir and Sharon, and the new Likud government therefore grew more hawkish in its positions. The result was a series of Israeli provocations and American expressions of discontent. However, Washington did not try to undermine the Likud's hold on power.

American shipments of F-16 fighter jets were suspended a second time after

the Israeli air force bombed PLO targets in Beirut, producing high civilian casualties. A more bruising fight was around the corner, however. The U.S. sought to sell AWACS military technology to Saudi Arabia, and stiff resistance by the Gol created a severe rift between the two governments. Reagan advisor Geoffrey Kemp explains

“as agonizing as putting a hold on the delivery of the weapons was, it was later eclipsed by AWACS, which was infinitely more acrimonious. AWACS was the first time there was open hostility throughout the Reagan government versus Begin. The next year of bitterness was from the odor of AWACS... [and] left a bad taste in everyone’s mouth toward Begin”.⁶²

Reagan was especially upset that Begin appeared to be lobbying Congress against the sale after assuring the president that he would not do so.⁶³

When Begin finally did visit Washington and meet with the new president, they did agree to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding on strategic cooperation. However, after the Likud pushed a bill through the Knesset applying Israeli law to the Golan Heights (effectively annexing them), the MOU was suspended by the U.S. as a sign of protest. PM Begin summoned the American ambassador and subjected him to a tirade later leaked to the press in which he accused Washington of mistreating Israel like a vassal state and a banana republic.

The first few months of 1982 were spent ensuring that the scheduled handover to Egypt of the eastern Sinai took place as planned. Any goodwill engendered by the Israeli withdrawal evaporated just weeks later, however, after Israel responded to increasing PLO provocations from the north with a full-fledged invasion of Lebanon. Israel’s Lebanon War was originally sold to the cabinet as a

⁶² Senior Reagan advisor for Mideast Affairs Geoffrey Kemp, “Interview with the Author.”

⁶³ Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, 66.

limited military operation that would not extend beyond the country's extreme bordering upon Israeli territory. However, DM Sharon systematically misrepresented what he had actually conceived of as a plan designed to take the IDF all the way into Beirut to destroy the PLO's base in Lebanon once and for all.⁶⁴

Although Reagan publicly acceded to Israel's broadened war aims once they became clear, he claims that in private "I was pretty blunt" and that "we think his action was overkill".⁶⁵ However, when the IDF began air and artillery bombardment of PLO positions inside Beirut, Reagan snapped. He writes the following entry in his diary for August 12, 1982:

"King Fahd called begging me to do something. I told him I was calling PM Begin immediately. And I did - I was angry - I told him it had to stop or our entire relationship was endangered. I used the word holocaust deliberately & said the symbol of his war was becoming a picture of a 7 month old baby with its arms blown off. He told me he had ordered the bombing stopped - I asked about the artillery fire... Twenty mins. later he called to tell me he'd ordered an end to the barrage and pled for our continued friendship".⁶⁶

September of 1982 was another important turning point. On the first of the month, the president presented a peace proposal that became known as the Reagan Plan, calling for a settlement freeze and an autonomous Palestinian entity linked to Jordan. The plan was rejected outright by Jerusalem, although Labor and moderate Arab states voiced their support. On the 14th, Lebanese President Bashir Gemayel was assassinated, and the IDF occupied West Beirut. Seeking revenge, members of Gemayel's militia entered Palestinian refugee camps at Sabra and Shatila. They

⁶⁴ Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, *Israel's Lebanon War* (Simon and Schuster, 1985).

⁶⁵ Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, 138; Oswald Johnston, "Reagan Supports Most of Israel's War Goals," *Los Angeles Times*, June 22, 1982.

⁶⁶ Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, 150.

claimed to be pursuing PLO guerillas but instead carried out a civilian massacre that left at least 800 dead, the majority of whom were women and children.⁶⁷

The Phalange entry into Sabra and Shatila was in part facilitated by the IDF, and after enormous protests inside of Israel Begin indignantly folded to internal pressure to appoint a commission of inquiry into the events. The U.S. had only recently completed its mission leading a multinational force to facilitate withdrawal of the PLO and protect Palestinian civilians in Beirut. The massacres at Sabra and Shatila led Reagan, wracked with guilt, to send U.S. troops back into the conflict.

<Phase Two: Negative LSI>

In the period that followed, American frustration boiled over, and the administration moved toward negative LSI against some or all of the sitting Likud government. Now that American troops were back in harm's way, Reagan wanted the Israeli invasion to end. Also, Jordan refused to participate in his peace program as long as Israel continued to build settlements and remained in control of central Lebanon. Reagan concluded that the Israelis had overplayed their hand and it was time for them to go. He reappointed Habib as a special envoy to mediate Israel's withdrawal and told him "the msg. for P.M. Begin is that I want action".⁶⁸

By now the president's relationship with Begin had gone from bad to worse. They had been scheduled to meet in November of 1982, but the prime minister cancelled his trip and returned home because his wife unexpectedly passed away. However, had this unrelated event not occurred, it was quite clear to observers that Reagan was preparing to read Begin the riot act, especially over the West Bank,

⁶⁷ Smith, *Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 370.

⁶⁸ Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, 187.

settlements, and rejection of the Reagan Plan.⁶⁹ As Lewis argues, “Begin’s personal loss of credibility with Reagan was the most damaging consequence” of the Lebanon War for bilateral relations. “Begin had always been prickly and difficult... [but by August] Begin’s credibility in Washington had nearly dissolved. The last reservoirs were drained during mid-September”.⁷⁰ Reagan had gone from starting letters to the Israeli PM with “Dear Menachem” to instead addressing him strictly as “Mr. Prime Minister”.⁷¹ By this point Reagan had also met with Israeli opposition leader Shimon Peres and described him as “quite a contrast to Begin,” noting his relative flexibility on a number of points of bilateral friction.⁷²

The administration’s frustration toward Begin were no match for its attitude toward Defense Minister Sharon, whose style was something akin to “sticking his thumb in our eyes every time he got a chance”.⁷³ Sharon strong armed the new Lebanese president, Amin Gemayel, into a secret treaty but then torpedoed it by leaking it to the press to boost his own standing. He also went out of his way “to rub Habib’s nose in it... in front of the entire cabinet”.⁷⁴ Sharon then imposed maximalist positions on the negotiating teams and drew out the withdrawal talks. It was clear to American decision-makers that “Israeli demands [from Lebanon], at the behest of Sharon, have steadily escalated” and that “Israel (specifically Sharon) may see delay

⁶⁹ Judith Miller, “Begin Arrives for Visit to U.S.: Talks scheduled with Reagan,” *New York Times*, November 12, 1982; Judith Miller, “What if Reagan and Begin Had Met,” *New York Times*, November 19, 1982.

⁷⁰ Lewis, “The United States and Israel: Constancy and Change,” 239.

⁷¹ Senior Reagan advisor for Mideast Affairs Geoffrey Kemp, “Interview with the Author.”

⁷² Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, 149.

⁷³ Lewis, “Interview with Ambassador Samuel Wingate Lewis,” 123.

⁷⁴ Former US Ambassador to Israel Samuel Wingate Lewis, “Interview with the Author”, February 2, 2011.

in Lebanon as a way of forestalling [our] September 1 initiative".⁷⁵

There was also some speculation that the administration would use the January 1983 visit of Israeli President and possible contender for head of the Labor Party Yitzhak Navon as an opportunity to strengthen Navon for an eventual race to unseat Begin. However, the administration and Navon both seemed to play down such suspicions during his trip.⁷⁶

By early February, the president reached his breaking point over the stagnant Lebanon talks, writing "it's still Israel dragging their feet" and even that "Phil Habib is on his way back to Israel. I asked him to let me know if a phone plea to Begin would help. *If not we'll just have to separate ourselves from Israel*".⁷⁷

This sentiment was echoed in Reagan's public statements at the time. He emphasized the "moral point we think the Israelis are neglecting" not to be "an occupying force". He told representatives of the World Jewish Congress that Israel needed to freeze settlement activity because its actions were harming the chances for peace. He also staunchly defended a U.S. marine's decision to draw his pistol and order an Israeli tank commander to stand down from a disputed area in Lebanon.⁷⁸

Memos from his advisors fit the notion that negative LSI figured prominently on officials' minds. Howard Teicher ventured that "the President's prestige is on the line" and "the Israeli political scene was ripe in the fall of 1982, and most recently following the release of the Commission of Inquiry report". He argued that "we need

⁷⁵ "Lebanon Negotiations: Next Steps - Memorandum to the President from Kenneth W. Dam, Acting Secretary of State", February 3, 1983, John Boykin Collection, Box 4, Folder "February 1983," The National Security Archive (Washington DC).

⁷⁶ "Navon's Washington Debut," *Near East Report* 27, no. 2 (January 14, 1983).

⁷⁷ Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, 207 & 195. Emphasis Added.

⁷⁸ Steven R. Weisman, "Reagan Accuses Israelis of Delay on Withdrawal," *New York Times*, February 8, 1983.

to act boldly” and appoint a special envoy to push hard for peace. He suggested that Henry Kissinger would be the best person for the job since “Begin would have to calculate how Kissinger - - more than others - - might be able to turn Israeli public opinion against him. Should Kissinger label Begin intransigent, it would not only set the stage for increased U.S. pressures against Israel (if that becomes necessary) but might also trigger a domestic political storm inside Israel”.⁷⁹

The president’s national security advisor, William P. Clark, gave him similar advice in early February:

“The strategic change in the situation created by your September 1 proposal has been allowed to slip away... The Labor party [sic] immediately endorsed your proposal and invested considerable capital in it. That too has been eroded and is near the point of being lost... to achieve decisive results you must take decisive, bold action... Peace for territory is a concept widely accepted in Israel among the people if not by Prime Minister Begin. And if we use our influence carefully and remain credibly devoted to Israel’s security, I believe we can make progress by appealing to the Israeli people from the high road of ‘Peace with Security’.”⁸⁰

It therefore appears quite probable that at the very least the administration thought seriously about trying to push Sharon and Begin out of power during this period, which makes it an episode of at least partial LSI. However, I would be reluctant to code this as an episode of full LSI without further evidence.

<Phase Three: Turning Positive>

In February of 1983, the Kahan commission of inquiry in Israel called for

⁷⁹ “What Next in the Peace Process - Memorandum for Robert ‘Bud’ McFarlane from Howard Teicher”, March 2, 1983, Collection “Robert McFarlane Files”, Box 5, Folder “Sensitive Chron File - [01/07/1983 - 03/02/1983]”, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

⁸⁰ “The Middle East - Memorandum for the President from William P. Clark”, February 4, 1983, Collection “Robert McFarlane Files”, Box 5, Folder “Sensitive Chron File - [01/07/1983 - 03/02/1983]”, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

Sharon to resign for allowing the massacres at Sabra and Shatila to occur. The commission also censured PM Begin and FM Shamir for not doing more to stop the attacks. After putting up initial resistance, Sharon was soon forced to give up the Defense portfolio, where he was replaced by Israel's Ambassador to the U.S., Moshe (aka "Misha") Arens. Having originally lived in the United States as a young adult and attended MIT and Cal Tech before moving to Israel, Arens displayed a much better understanding of American sensibilities than his predecessors in Washington and already had made inroads with many American officials. He was certainly an ideological conservative but was considered by the U.S. as "a breath of fresh air" after Sharon for his less confrontational style.⁸¹

As defense minister, Arens immediately got to work decreasing friction with U.S. forces in Lebanon and sought to speed up the negotiations for Israeli withdrawal more than his colleagues preferred. The president felt "Arens as defense minister of Israel is a definite improvement over Sharon".⁸² In fact, the U.S. administration liked him so much they tried to boost him politically back home.

In April of 1983, the administration decided to green light support for Israel's controversial *Lavi* fighter jet project. The *Lavi* was Israel's effort to build a state-of-the-art fighter aircraft indigenously, but Washington had always been cagey about the proposal. It required substantial American funding and technological support in order to succeed, and yet it would provide U.S. defense manufacturers with added

⁸¹ Former US Ambassador to Israel Samuel Wingate Lewis, "Interview with the Author." See also the paean to Arens in Wolf Blitzer, *Between Washington and Jerusalem: A Reporter's Notebook* (Oxford University Press, 1985), chap. 2: The Israeli Presence in Washington; Former Chief of Staff to Sec. State Shultz, Ambassador Charles Hill, "Interview with the Author", March 17, 2011.

⁸² Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, 207.

competition for international arms sales.

The Pentagon had already turned down Israel's main tech transfer requests for the Lavi, finding the strategic rationale for the project unconvincing. However, the advent of Arens in the Defense Ministry provided America with an added political incentive for approving the project as a means for bolstering perceived moderates in Israeli politics. The political echelon in the Reagan administration overruled these objections from the Defense Department, allowing the Lavi project to proceed with American support.

Administration officials had three political rationales for approving in the spring of 1983 this request that had previously been turned down. One was to provide reassurance that the American commitment to Israel's security remained strong after a long period of tensions.⁸³ Another was to boost Arens' hand in the cabinet and in negotiations with Lebanon to finally help produce a viable agreement for Israeli withdrawal.⁸⁴ As mentioned above, this project defines such actions as "petit" LSI because they aim to affect the internal balance of power *within* a sitting foreign government rather than reinforcing or overthrowing that government wholesale. Apparently, a third rationale for the plan entailed "grand" LSI as well because it aimed to actually change the composition of Israel's government.

Teicher, the NSC staffer who served as the architect of this plan, explains the plan's logic in his memoirs. Although Begin would not resign for another half year, he had fallen into a deep bout of depression, and it was clear that he may have been

⁸³ Former National Security Advisor Robert "Bud" McFarlane, "Interview with the Author", February 17, 2011.

⁸⁴ Former Reagan Administration White House Official, "Interview with the Author", February 22, 2011.

on his way out. Teicher anticipated that a transfer of power could be imminent and anticipated a major struggle within the Likud for party leadership. He thought the three main contenders would be FM Shamir, DM Arens, and Minister of Housing David Levy. Although he was wary of the other two, Teicher felt it should be a “key goal” of American policy to “help strengthen Arens and others who understood the need to minimize friction between the two countries”.⁸⁵

Teicher writes that he specifically sought to do this via the Lavi because, “owing to Arens’s background as an aerospace engineer and his interest in the development of Israel’s high-technology defense industries, U.S. assistance to this sector would strengthen Arens’s influence”.⁸⁶ He claims that the relevant principals quickly bought into his plan:

McFarlane gave my strategy paper to Eagleburger, who in turn passed it on to [Secretary of State Shultz]... Shultz was so impressed with the paper that he had decided to make it his strategy... With McFarlane, Eagleburger and me present, Shultz presented the strategy... [and President] Reagan agreed to the general outlines of the strategy as well as Shultz’s specific request for the release of the Lavi licenses.... Recognizing the importance of the licenses in building Arens’s stake in the U.S. relationship Ambassador Lewis [in Tel Aviv] promptly communicated the news of the president’s decision to Arens.”⁸⁷

Teicher says that Defense Secretary Weinberger contacted the president hoping to reverse this decision but that Reagan broke with typical practice and held firm, overruling the secretary.

Arens himself says nothing about this angle of the Lavi project in his

⁸⁵ Howard Teicher and Gayle Radley Teicher, *Twin Pillars to Desert Storm: America’s Flawed Vision in the Middle East from Nixon to Bush* (William Morrow, 1993), 222-225.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

memoirs, and he denied the allegations in a recent interview. However, a number of other observers have echoed Teicher's account.⁸⁸ Israeli journalists Melman and Raviv give credence to Teicher's account,⁸⁹ and Reagan has a diary entry that also corroborates part of this story.⁹⁰ It is even possible that Arens specifically solicited America's support via gestures on the Lavi. Danny Halperin, a former bureaucrat from Israel's embassy in Washington recalls that at the time he advised Arens to call Shultz in early April because "the Americans 'hold you in high esteem and want you to succeed'." He claims Arens contacted Shultz on this premise to press for expediting the Lavi licenses and that the licenses were released within a matter of days.⁹¹

Even AIPAC thought their might be credence to claims that the Lavi was used as a fillip for influencing Israeli politics, writing at the time in its weekly bulletin, the *Near East Report*, that "there is also a view that the release [of Lavi-related tech licenses] was intended to bolster Arens' political position in the Israeli cabinet – especially since he is viewed in the U.S. as the minister most favoring withdrawal from Lebanon".⁹²

<Phase Four: Pro-Likud Drift>

By the spring of 1983, Israeli politics were in an obvious state of flux.

⁸⁸ Moshe Arens, "Interview with the Author," June 21, 2001; Arens, *Broken Covenant: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis Between the U.S. and Israel* (Simon & Schuster, 1995).

⁸⁹ Yossi Melman and Dan Raviv, *Friends in Deed: Inside the U.S.-Israel Alliance* (Hyperion Books, 1995), 263-264. The two authors had covered U.S.-Israel relations in some depths and interviewed a large number of administration officials in the course of writing their book, so I consider the fact that they buy Teicher's story to be supportive evidence.

⁹⁰ He writes the following entry on April 14th: "meeting with George S., Bill Clark et al re Israel. I think the time has come to approach P.M. Begin with a palm leaf. We're going to offer some helpful measure through defense minister Ahrens". Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, 216.

⁹¹ Charles R. Babcock, "How U.S. came to underwrite Israel's Lavi fighter project (The Special Relationship: Second of Four Articles)," *Washington Post*, August 6, 1986.

⁹² "The Lavi Decision," *Near East Report* 27, no. 15 (April 15, 1983).

Whereas during Israel's initial invasion only the pro-communist party dared to table a no confidence motion against the government, now the mainstream was also becoming quite critical. Even Labor leader Yitzhak Rabin, who represented Labor's more hawkish wing at the time, accused the government of making an enormous "mistake" by dragging out withdrawal, and he decried the "political illusions that underlay the war".⁹³ Anti-war activism had trebled on the streets of Israel, and the Reagan Plan had temporarily refocused Israeli public opinion on the prospect of trading land for peace.

Although Begin was still the most popular politician in Israel, his ratings had plummeted, adding to a perception of "the general weakness of [his] coalition".⁹⁴ From late 1982 through early 1984 the Likud's numbers underwent a precipitous collapse, falling consistently in polls from a drastic lead over Labor of 18 seats to an even larger deficit of 24.⁹⁵ Begin cancelled yet another scheduled Washington visit, and U.S. officials guessed "he simply was not up to the stresses of a Washington trip and did not want to face some tough questioning by us on his West Bank policy".⁹⁶

Given this background, one might have expected the United States to push its advantage and try to replace Begin's government with one led by the Labor Party. However, this was not the case. Relations over Lebanon had warmed considerably now that Sharon was out of the Defense Ministry. The trilateral talks with Lebanon

⁹³ Ralph Mandel, "Israel," in *American Jewish Yearbook - 1985* (Scranton, PA: American Jewish Committee & Jewish Publication Society of America, 1984), 260.

⁹⁴ "Popularity of Begin dips in Israeli survey," *Associated Press*, July 19, 1983.

⁹⁵ Don Peretz and Sammy Smooha, "Israel's Eleventh Knesset Election," *Middle East Journal* 39, no. 1 (Winter 1985): Table 2 on page 88.

⁹⁶ "Former Presidents Briefing: Middle East - Memorandum for William P. Clark from Geoffrey Kemp", August 18, 1983, Collection "Near East and South Asia Affairs Directorate, NSC", OA/ID#: 90585, Folder "Middle East - Briefing Papers 1983 [1 of 2]," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

finally reached fruition, and a treaty was signed on May 17th. Shamir and Arens visited Washington in Begin's stead, and their meetings focused almost entirely on coordination in Lebanon. They were perceived as reasonably flexible by the president and his aides.⁹⁷

By the time the two Israelis visited again that November, a broader reorientation had taken place, both in terms of U.S. policy and Israeli politics. Begin had stepped aside, and Shamir was newly appointed prime minister. The United States announced a new regional security strategy that depended upon vastly expanded military cooperation with both Israel and its Arab neighbors – a strategy articulated in National Security Decision Directives 111 and 115.⁹⁸ The public perception was that the administration was undergoing a drastic “turn toward Israel” and senior officials made leaks to the press praising the Israeli leadership and suggesting that the two countries had turned a new page in their relations.⁹⁹

The administration also gave Shamir and Arens a whole series of gifts to take home with them. Perhaps most remarkable among these measures was permission for Israel to use \$200 million in annual military aid on developing the Lavi indigenously – an unprecedented concession because it is almost always stipulated that military assistance of this sort must be spent purchasing items made in

⁹⁷ Ibid.; Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, 252.

⁹⁸ NSDDs 111 and 115 are not yet released in full, but partially redacted copies are now available, and the sections that are unavailable seem very minor and unlikely to change the intent of the documents. NSC, “National Security Decision Directive 111: Next Steps toward Lebanon and the Middle East”, October 28, 1983, Collection “Executive Secretariat, NSC: National Security Decision Directives”, Box 91291, Folder “NSDD 111 (Folder 1) [Next Steps toward Progress in Lebanon and the Middle East],” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library; NSC, “National Security Decision Directive 115: Visit of Prime Minister Shamir”, November 26, 1983, Collection “Executive Secretariat, NSC: National Security Decision Directives”, Box 91291, Folder “NSDD 115 [Visit of Prime Minister Shamir],” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

⁹⁹ Bernard Gwertzman, “Reagan turns to Israel,” *New York Times (Magazine)*, November 27, 1983.

America.¹⁰⁰ Other gestures included agreements to resume selling Israel cluster bombs, to treat American wounded from Lebanon in Israeli hospitals, for America to purchase Israeli small arms, to launch talks leading to a free trade deal, and coordination of military maneuvers inside Lebanon.¹⁰¹ One commentator went so far as to suggest the U.S. had been “falling in love” with Israel since the summer.¹⁰²

Given this public love affair, one might be tempted to code the summer and fall of 1983 as a period of positive LSI intended to benefit the new, more moderate face of the Likud government. In fact, this was my own initial suspicion. However, I eventually discovered evidence indicating this interpretation was incorrect. Instead, this was a period of U.S. drift vis-à-vis Israeli politics. America had a new policy for how to approach military cooperation but no policy for managing the reverberations that redoubled strategic cooperation would have in Israeli politics.

There were a variety of motivations contributing to this turn of events. The value to the U.S. of good relations with Israel over Lebanon had increased once American troops became the targets of increasing violence. There were also two major terrorist bombings against U.S. targets, first against the Embassy in Beirut and then against marine barracks; both attacks caused enormous casualties. This fed the nascent American apprehension over the threat of radical Islamist terrorism, and it also led to a gradual reevaluation by some as to the desirability of pushing for further Israeli withdrawals.¹⁰³ Thus, when it came time for Israel to withdraw from

¹⁰⁰ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (ME/7505/A/1), trans., “Shamir’s talks with President Reagan,” *Israel Home Service*, November 30, 1983.

¹⁰¹ Lewis, “The United States and Israel: Constancy and Change,” 244.

¹⁰² William Safire, “Falling in love again,” *New York Times*, June 16, 1983.

¹⁰³ Charlie Hill argues that “we were only vaguely beginning to figure out what terrorism was... and this was suddenly the number one issue” for many in Washington. Former Chief of Staff to Sec. State Shultz,

the Shouf Mountains in Lebanon, the American administration found itself begging the IDF to stay, not leave. Syria had been resupplied by the Soviet Union, its proxies in Lebanon had seized the offensive, and Assad was working to turn the May 17th Accords into a dead letter. By early 1984, the U.S. administration decided to scrap its Lebanon mission altogether. Political considerations regarding Reagan's upcoming reelection bid played a role, but so did increasing violence on the ground and the collapse of Amin Gemayel's fragile government in Lebanon.

In the immediate aftermath of the barracks bombing, the White House seized on a Mideast strategic review document that had been churning through the bureaucracy for nearly two years (National Security Study Directive #4) and repurposed it to suit its perception of the newly emergent strategic environment.¹⁰⁴ NSSD-4 originally noted that Israel could contribute little to U.S. interests in the event of a regional conflict but that its military might would be useful in the event that the USSR tried to physically invade the Middle East. In the context of expanded Syrian-Soviet cooperation and Syrian adventurism in Lebanon, the study directive's findings were twisted in NSDD 111 and 115, which retained the bland slogan of "strategic cooperation" with Israel but for somewhat different purposes.

As I will argue below, the administration's new Israel policy became a crutch that helped the Likud party limp through to the 1984 Israeli elections with

Ambassador Charles Hill, "Interview with the Author." For more contemporary review of this shift, see "Shultz Asks Move Against Terrorism," *New York Times*, April 4, 1984. Dick Murphy says the administration "started getting really concerned about terrorism, so Israeli concerns started getting listened to more... to be anti-terror was red meat for Shultz". Former Assistant Secretary for Near East Affairs Richard Murphy, "Interview with the Author", March 11, 2011.

¹⁰⁴ "NSSD-4/82 U.S. Strategy for The Near East and South Asia", July 11, 1983, Collection "NSC Staff Office Files", OA/ID#: 91290, Folder "NSDD 99 [2 of 3] [United States Security Strategy for the Near East & South Asia]," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

moderate success, but bolstering the Likud was not an intentional aim of U.S. policy. When I asked former Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs Richard Murphy whether the administration saw the replacement of Begin and Sharon with Shamir and Arens as the advent of genuine new partners, he flatly said “no”.¹⁰⁵

Secretary of State George Shultz, the architect of the new plan, had warm relations with Arens and Shamir, but even he was not blind to their points of disagreement. In the very memo in which he advocates for expanding strategic cooperation with Israel through the NSDDs, Shultz recognizes that Israel had

“new leaders [that], while somewhat more pragmatic in style than Begin and Sharon, are no more willing to be flexible on the West Bank and Gaza. This handicaps our peace diplomacy and weakens our position and that of our moderate Arab friends.... Hopes for the peace process will ultimately depend on changes in two basic factors [one of which is] the ideological rigidity on the Israeli side, represented by the present policies of the Israeli government on the West Bank and Gaza.... In the meantime, we should keep the September 1 initiative on the table and make clear that we do not accept either Israeli annexation of the occupied territories or continued settlement activities”.¹⁰⁶

Shultz worried that Israel was “going through an unprecedented period of war-weariness, demoralization, and political and economic crisis” and that “Israeli retreat in Lebanon is the crucial factor which has undermined the balance of forces there, making the Syrians bolder not only within Lebanon but in the Arab world generally. The Soviets, too, are bolder”. Shultz especially highlighted Soviet shipments of SS-21 surface-to-surface missiles to Syria that could target U.S.

¹⁰⁵ Murphy, “Interview with the Author.”

¹⁰⁶ “Our Strategy in Lebanon and the Middle East - Memorandum for the President from George P. Shultz”, October 13, 1983, Collection, “Executive Secretariat, NSD: Records, National Security Decision Directives,” Box 91291, Folder “NSDD 103 (1) [Strategy for Lebanon],” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

gunships off the Lebanese coast as an ominous indicator of this trend. He therefore argued that “it is essential now to take steps to bolster Israeli strength and self-confidence so that Israel can become a decisive deterrent to Syrian and Soviet ambitions”. Even Shultz, who was quickly becoming Israel’s biggest booster within the administration, never intended to bolster the Likud so much as hoping to advance “the broader purpose of bolstering Israel”.¹⁰⁷ Any political reverberations that this plan had in Israeli politics were an unwelcome and thoughtless byproduct but evidently not its objective.

Incidentally, it is also worth noting that the strategic validity of his arguments are open to question and highly subjective. Both Shultz’s office and the president mentioned the Syrian SS-21s as an essential indicator of Soviet tentacles in Lebanon.¹⁰⁸ However, it is not clear how much further the Soviets were prepared to go in arming Syria, and the navy’s AEGIS destroyers off Lebanon could probably have protected its gunships against any harm from the SS-21s.¹⁰⁹ The Defense Department and its secretary strenuously objected to the value of balancing the Soviets by helping Israel offset Syria, as did the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.¹¹⁰ Former Secretary of Defense and then-Mideast envoy Donald Rumsfeld also objected to the plan in a classified memo to Shultz at the time:

“I am troubled by the concept of ‘U.S. Strategic Cooperation with Israel.’ I don’t understand what it means or what we give or get out of it. It is unhelpful in the region. If we got from Israel a settlements

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ “Transcript of Address by President on Lebanon and Grenada,” *New York Times*, October 28, 1983; Bernard Gwertzman, “Syria Reported Awaiting Missile,” *New York Times*, October 7, 1983.

¹⁰⁹ Drew Middleton, “U.S. Ships off Lebanon: No Sitting Ducks Despite Missiles in Syria,” *New York Times*, December 22, 1983.

¹¹⁰ Gwertzman, “Reagan turns to Israel.”

freeze or some major breakthrough with respect to the peace process, I would see the logic. Absent that, I suspect the burden may be greater than the benefit, and reciprocity is debatable".¹¹¹

Neither was the turn toward Israel originally intended to give Israel a free ride on settlements or the peace process. Upon receiving NSSD-4, national security advisor Judge Clark wrote to the president that strategic cooperation with Israel should be seen as "expression of our determination where interests coincide" but that it was also "critical to improving our own freedom of action and latitude on issues where U.S. and Israeli interests do not coincide... our latitude to act on your peace initiative, for example".¹¹² Although the language on the urgency of the peace process was softened somewhat from NSSD-4 to NSDDs 111 and 115, they still called for the president's peace plan to be a core tenet of policy toward Israel.

Nor did the administration's actions seem to suggest that it was prepared yet to sweep West Bank issues under the rug. The president and his aides made clear to Shamir and Arens in November that they were still serious about pursuing the president's peace initiative.¹¹³ In December of 1983, Reagan publicly stated that he was hopeful that autonomy talks would soon restart.¹¹⁴ He received King Hussein of Jordan in February of 1984 and pushed him to give the process another try.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ "'Israel' in 'The Swamp' - Memorandum for the Secretary of State from Special Envoy Donald Rumsfeld", November 23, 1983, memo released online with the publication of Rumsfeld's memoirs - presumably from State Department FOIA files or somewhere in the Reagan Presidential Library now.

¹¹² "NSC Meeting: NSSD-4/82 U.S. Strategy for The Near East and South Asia - Memorandum for the President from William P. Clark", July 11, 1983, Collection "NSC Staff Office Files", OA/ID#: 91290, Folder "NSDD 99 [2 of 3] [United States Security Strategy for the Near East & South Asia]," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

¹¹³ David K. Shipler, "The Israeli-American Honeymoon is Over, Again," *New York Times*, January 1, 1984.

¹¹⁴ Bernard Gwertzman, "Reagan Sees Hope for a Resumption of Mideast Talks," *New York Times*, December 25, 1983.

¹¹⁵ Philip Geyelin, "Why King Hussein Blew His Stack," *Washington Post*, March 21, 1984.

However, as I show repeatedly in other cases in this dissertation, LSI in the context of a peace process can be more difficult because it often takes three to tango. King Hussein quickly became frustrated that he did not get the support he had expected from Washington for co-opting Arafat and the PLO on the issue of Palestinian representation to the talks, so he soon lashed out in frustration.¹¹⁶ He proclaimed there could be no Jordanian talks with Israel under the Reagan Plan, excoriated the U.S. for subservience to the pro-Israel lobby, and pointed to Israeli settlement activity as the chronic, underlying problem. As one U.S. official pointed out, the fact that he did so right as Reagan spoke up for arms sales to Jordan in front of a pro-Israel audience suggests that “if a committee had set out to devise the worst possible timing for such a statement, it could not have done better”.¹¹⁷

At this point, many within the U.S. administration were fed up, especially Sec. Shultz. He had been stuck holding the bag for the failure of the Reagan Plan in 1982, the May 17th Agreement in 1983, and this Reagan Plan redux in early 1984. Shultz blamed America’s Arab allies for each of these failures, even though the Israeli government had been equally staunch in its rejection of the president’s plan.¹¹⁸ One official describes this as Shultz having “this sort of ‘road to Damascus’ conversion toward Israel” from what many considered an initial, pro-Arab orientation.¹¹⁹

Fatigue was another important factor. As one of his Mideast advisors puts it, “George Shultz [was] absolutely exhausted. He had spent time on the Middle East

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Judith Miller, “Hussein Rules out Talks with Israel and Bars U.S. Role,” *New York Times*, March 15, 1984.

¹¹⁸ John M. Goshko, “Paralysis Seizes Mideast Policy: Foggy Bottom is Left to Grope,” *Washington Post*, March 25, 1984.

¹¹⁹ Reagan administration official, “Interview with the Author”, February 2011.

from the moment he walked into the office. We had the simultaneous launching of the Reagan Plan and the efforts to get the Israelis out of Lebanon...there was an Arab fatigue factors that set in, and... Shultz turned his attention toward righting the Israeli economy” instead.¹²⁰ Another official suggests that by 1984, “the American government was so tired over Lebanon that we didn’t want to be engaged any more,” and principals within the administration had instead turned their attention to the Iran-Iraq War and a reassessment of Cold War strategy. In effect, “the Reagan administration had a hangover toward the Arab-Israeli dispute”.¹²¹

By the time the 1984 Israeli elections rolled around, American officials were pursuing a policy line that emphasized security cooperation and closeness to Israel while marginalizing disputes over Lebanon, West Bank settlements, and the president’s peace plan. This naturally worked to the Likud’s advantage, but that was not the administration’s actual intent. The U.S. was pursuing a pro-Likud policy, but, as Shultz confidante Charlie Hill insists, “it was not done for that reason”. Both in late 1983 and in early 1984, “we were not focused on that, not tracking that. Nobody that I was working with talked about it that way at all. There was certainly no attempt to change American policy... in any way to affect the election, so not anything in the sense of we want to keep Begin [or his successors] in office”.¹²²

Did these Policy Succeed?

Yes and No. During phase one (hostile non-LSI during 1982), there was no

¹²⁰ Retired, Senior State Department Official, “Interview with the Author.”

¹²¹ Senior Reagan advisor for Mideast Affairs Geoffrey Kemp, “Interview with the Author.”

¹²² Former Chief of Staff to Sec. State Shultz, Ambassador Charles Hill, “Interview with the Author.”

efficacy to assess because the United States did not pursue LSI and was far from doing so.

During phase two (partial-to-full negative LSI), the counterfactual is much more plausible and the administration may even have implemented such an objective into its policies. In this instance, U.S. political intervention, to the extent that it was or would have been pursued, was set for narrow and broader efficacy.

During phase three (positive LSI in support of Arens), the administration should again receive positive marks in both the narrow sense of contributing to his standing and the broader sense of advancing American objectives and interests.

During phase four (effusive non-LSI), the administration's efforts had the narrow effect of unintentionally boosting the Likud and a broader impact that was quite mixed. It helped soothe and rebuild troubled bilateral ties while setting the stage for later confrontations over the territories and peace process down the road, especially after the eruption of the first Palestinian intifada.

<Efficacy, Phase One>

For many of the non-cases examined in this dissertation, I still seek to address the question of efficacy by asking whether LSI might have been a wiser policy approach. In some cases, this is quite doable – for instance, I will use this technique to varying degrees below for evaluating the efficacy of American actions during phases two and four. However, in some instances I argue that this technique is untenable, and phase one (i.e. 1982) is one of these cases. For counterfactuals to be a valid exercise, they must differ from the actual course of events in terms of as

few antecedent historical facts as possible.¹²³ When too many parameters need to be changed in order to achieve the counterfactual condition, the value of the findings it produces plummets dramatically.

In the early phases of the Lebanon War, Israeli society was experiencing a rally-around-the-flag effect. Only *Rakah*, the Israeli communist party, voted in the Knesset to stop the invasion. The U.S. probably would not have pursued LSI until a major reconfiguration of the Israeli internal scene took place. It also is not clear what sort of means the United States would have used to carry out LSI, which could be an important factor for evaluating the hypothetical strategy's odds of success. Further, one has to wonder just what sort of Israeli actions it would have taken to elicit LSI from Reagan and his team. If bombing Beirut and enabling the massacre of refugees at Sabra and Shatila were not enough, what would have been?

Because so many broad environmental factors would have had to change in order to reach such a counterfactual condition, I do not place much stock in whatever answer it might produce. Thus, I decline to wager an answer as to the efficacy of U.S. actions during this period.

<Efficacy, Phase Two>

Phase two, however, is a different matter. Many of the parameters that were so murky during phase one came into crisper focus during the period from Sabra and Shatila until when the commission of inquiry to investigate those events divulged its findings. In addition to turmoil within Israeli politics, the U.S.

¹²³ Philip Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics: Logical, Methodological, and Psychological Perspectives* (Princeton University Press, 1996), chap. 1; James D. Fearon, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science," *World Politics* 43, no. 2 (January 1991): 169-195.

government had finally begun to manifest its frustration with the GoI in ways that may have been aimed at achieving leadership selection intervention.

The main means being used by the Reagan administration to communicate a message to the Israeli body politic were public statements of frustration and a mild U.S. peace plan that garnered majority support from Israeli voters when asked about it in polls. If one were to read these actions as part of a conscious U.S. effort to push the Likud out of office, then no counterfactual is needed. Such reasoning is only necessary if one chooses to code this case as a partial instance of LSI.

Public protest against the government was massive, with roughly ten percent of the country taking to the streets in September to protest against the government after the massacres.¹²⁴ The National Religious Party, which served as the critical swing vote holding Begin's government together, demanded Sharon's dismissal and hinted it might quit the government if he remained.¹²⁵ Labor was now openly critical of the government and the wind was at its back politically.

For some time, it even appeared that Begin would have to resign in response to the political pressure he was facing and the report's criticisms of his role.¹²⁶ It was quite clear to political observers from the Israeli perspective that Washington wanted Sharon and perhaps Begin out. For instance, Wolf Blitzer, who reported for Israeli papers at the time, explained that

“the Defense minister has deeply angered State Department and White House officials with his comments, and they would clearly be delighted to see his career cut short by the final verdict of the

¹²⁴ David K. Shipler, “Israeli Inquiry Gives Leaders Indirect Blame in Massacre: Calls for Sharon’s Departure,” *New York Times*, February 9, 1983.i

¹²⁵ “Israel Coalition in Disarray, with Parties Split on Sharon,” *New York Times*, February 9, 1983.

¹²⁶ “Reports Say Begin May Resign to Resolve Sharon Crisis,” *The Wall Street Journal*, February 10, 1983.

Kahan Commission of Inquiry into the Sabra and Shatilla massacres. At best, Sharon is seen by the U.S. administration as anti-American – a pest. At worst, he is feared to be a dangerous fanatic – someone who has managed to make Prime Minister Begin look moderate and reasonable in comparison.”¹²⁷

The appointment of Arens, a clear U.S. favorite, to replace Sharon could also be read as recognition of Washington’s evident frustration with the way the Likud government had been handling its affairs in Lebanon.

The prime minister, though able to remain in office, now fell into a deep depression. Without his late wife to pull him out of it, he receded almost entirely from the daily affairs of government. His inflammatory rhetoric was visibly stunted, with American officials observing that “Begin’s diminished physical stamina sets clear limits on his formerly effective rhetoric and political activity”.¹²⁸ He was also less willing to push back during disagreements with the United States. The American ambassador at the time commented that

“whenever I would be dealing with issues... in that spring of ‘83, Begin uncharacteristically... would listen to whatever message or report Habib... or I’m bringing but never ask any questions and never really develop any interest in the subject, which was totally unlike what he normally was, so therefore Shamir and Arens were the two people we were dealing with on anything important because Begin was really withdrawn”.¹²⁹

Also, Reagan’s surprising willingness expressed in early February to separate the U.S. from Israel suggests an extremely high level of resolve. It is possible the administration’s attention would have remained focused and perhaps become more

¹²⁷ Wolf Blitzer, “Rebutting Sharon,” *Jerusalem Post*, February 4, 1983.

¹²⁸ “Former Presidents Briefing: Middle East - Memorandum for William P. Clark from Patrick A. Putignano”, June 15, 1983, Collection “Near East and South Asia Affairs Directorate, NSC”, OA/ID#: 90585, Folder “Middle East - Briefing Papers 1983 [1 of 2],” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

¹²⁹ Former US Ambassador to Israel Samuel Wingate Lewis, “Interview with the Author.”

targeted toward shaping the internal Israeli equation if Sharon had held on or if Begin went straight to early elections as a means of stabilizing their position.

American efforts during this period should be coded as successful both in the narrow and the broader senses. In the narrow sense, U.S. actions were probably helpful in bringing down Sharon and even in helping to sideline Begin, although the emotional toll they took on him was certainly not an intentional goal of U.S. policy. In the broader sense, American interests and objectives were advanced by helping to get rid of some of the worst irritants in the bilateral relationship.

<Efficacy, Phase Three>

Israeli journalists Melman and Raviv condemn the Reagan administration for buying into Teicher's strategy of focusing on Arens with approval of the Lavi. They argue that "Arens did not become prime minister anyway.... The Lavi... would not have brought him the nation's leadership. Teicher and other Americans should have known that Israeli politics are much more complex than the success or failure of pet projects – even when the United States pours in a billion dollars".¹³⁰ Indeed, when the Likud Party chose its new leader to succeed Begin in September, Arens could have been made head of the party but remained ineligible to replace Begin as head of government because he was not yet a member of the Knesset.¹³¹ Instead, Shamir was selected to lead the Likud and was appointed as the new prime minister.

However, I differ with Melman and Raviv's assessment for three reasons. First, the gesture probably did yield benefits within the context of the Israeli cabinet even if it did not achieve the more ambitious objective of helping make Arens the

¹³⁰ Melman and Raviv, *Friends in Deed*, 268.

¹³¹ Colin Shindler, *The Land beyond Promise: Israel, Likud and the Zionist Dream* (I.B.Tauris, 2002), 172.

prime minister. A White House official familiar with the plan argues that it strengthened Arens's hand in the cabinet and helped him advance U.S. goals by pushing harder to produce an agreement on IDF withdrawal from Lebanon. Although it seemed "Shamir really wanted to be absolutely hard line," this individual felt the release of the licenses increased Arens's ability and desire to persuade Shamir to soften Israeli positions. He felt that as a result "Arens [became] a moderating influence on Shamir... in my view, it actually worked. We got what we wanted. We got Arens' assistance in the diplomacy, within the Israeli government, to get the agreement, even if it eventually was ill-fated".¹³²

Second, these sorts of leadership contests are inherently uncertain and contingent. The fact that it turns out Arens did not get a chance to stand for the prime ministership does not mean that the effort to boost his chances was unreasonable or futile. In fact, the Likud Party was strongly considering calling new elections in which case he actually could have led the party at the ballot box.¹³³

Third, even without a Likud Party decision to dissolve the government, Arens still stood a reasonable chance of being chosen as party leader that September of 1983 at the party's convention. Fearing a loss of power to the upstart DM, the two other challengers, David Levy and Finance Minister Yoram Aridor, "decided to put up no more than token opposition [because] both were afraid a more popular candidate... Arens, might defeat all of them. Mr. Shamir is 68 and regarded as a stop-gap".¹³⁴ A poll at the time showed that only 1.8 percent of voters would have

¹³² Former Reagan Administration White House Official, "Interview with the Author."

¹³³ "Yitzhak Shamir: The stop-gap right-winger who could stay," *London Observer*, October 8, 1983.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

chosen [Shamir] as party leader, and the *Jerusalem Post* commented that ‘Shamir’s strength lies in his weakness’.”¹³⁵ It just happened to be that Shamir would surprise the skeptics, going on to dominate the Likud list for the next decade and serving the most time as Israel’s prime minister since David Ben-Gurion.

The effort to bolster Arens should also be given positive marks for broader efficacy over the long term. To the extent that the Lavi and warmer U.S. ties helped cement his place in the Likud’s top echelons, this seems to have advanced American interests and perhaps the peace process as well. Arens became a prominent voice for the Likud’s moderate wing, was often responsible or involved when the Likud did choose to make gestures toward the peace process, and was often described as a helpful intermediary in negotiations by U.S. officials over the following decade.

The move also was one of the main American gestures at the time – as Reagan saw it, a “palm leaf” in the mode of an olive branch – that helped usher in the shift from some of the darkest days in bilateral relations to some of the closest, during Reagan’s second term.¹³⁶ This shift is discussed in more detail below.

<Efficacy, Phase Four>

American actions in late 1983 and early 1984 had the effect of boosting the Likud, but, as noted above, it appears as though this was not the administration’s intention so much as a byproduct of using Israel to balance Syria and of reaping the benefits from better relations overall. But by aligning with Israel over Lebanon, the administration undermined Labor’s case and bolstered Likud’s on the issue of the

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, 216. See also Lewis, “The United States and Israel: Constancy and Change,” 242-245.

war. By deciding to shelve the revived Reagan Plan, the U.S. undermined Labor's case and bolstered Likud's over the territories. Likud's hand was also strengthened by its ability to point to booming security ties with Washington, whereas only recently relations had been frayed and near the breaking point.

This perspective is confirmed by former Shamir advisor Yossi Ben-Aharon. Ben-Aharon said the following about the PM's November 1983 visit to Washington:

“Look, you don't need to say it [that America supports Shamir], because this would feature in the elections [anyway]. Here was Shamir. Laborites used to attack Likud that they are not capable of maintaining a good relationship with America, they are losing the strong backing of the superpower, and here you have a guy like Shamir who is coming back laden with goodies, so to speak, and an understanding unprecedented. So that gave him a clear boost domestically”.¹³⁷

These dynamics set the stage for the upcoming July elections in Israel. Whereas the campaign of 1981 was perhaps the nastiest in Israel's history, 1984 may have been the dullest. The U.S. had stopped making an issue out of Lebanon, the West Bank, or bilateral relations, and Labor decided to do the same. The party's strategists decided instead to pursue a “catch-all” strategy of deemphasizing the party's ideological positions and instead trying to win over undecided voters by making the race about wisdom and experience.¹³⁸ Thomas Friedman, who served then as a foreign correspondent in the region, describes the election as follows:

“Neither the Labor Party nor the Likud Party focused its television campaign commercials on the key existential issue facing the state of Israel – what to do with the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Instead, each party aired pop commercials, with lots

¹³⁷ Yossi Ben-Aharon, former Director General of the office of Yitzhak Shamir, “Interview with the Author”, June 23, 2011.

¹³⁸ J. Mendilow, “Israel's Labor Alignment in the 1984 Elections: Catch-All Tactics in a Divided Society,” *Comparative Politics* 20, no. 4 (1988): 443–460.

of beaming faces and Pepsi-generation Israelis cavorting about and testifying in singsong voices about how wonderful life was in a Likud-led Israel or how much better it would be in a Labor-led Israel".¹³⁹

He also reports that, in an interview with Peres, the Israeli leader meticulously dodged his questions about the territories and referred to the West Bank by the Biblical names Judea and Samaria to appeal to undecided nationalist voters.¹⁴⁰

Labor's strategy abjectly failed. It frittered away the energized state of the Israeli left-wing that had been so engaged in protests against the Likud government and instead alienated those voters in hopes of wooing undecideds.¹⁴¹ Meanwhile, the undecided voters Peres was wooing, who were mostly Sephardic and politically conservative, stuck with the Likud at the end of the day. He could not overcome his unfavorable past image with Sephardic voters, and they actually went for Likud in even greater numbers than they had in 1981.¹⁴² Labor strategists foolishly banked on making the election about character for a candidate who had chronic image issues while avoiding the ideological topics on which he was most credible.¹⁴³

King Hussein's attack on the Reagan Plan was both unfortunate and ill-timed, and Washington cannot be blamed for Labor's ultimate choice of strategies once the Israeli campaign began. However, Washington can be blamed for decreasing the viability of Labor's main alternatives. Labor was working with a bad hand on the territories and on Lebanon, and many of those cards had just been dealt by the U.S.

Thus, in the narrow sense of helping Washington's preferred political

¹³⁹ Thomas L. Friedman, *From Beirut to Jerusalem* (Fontana, 1990), 255.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 255-256.

¹⁴¹ Asher Arian, *Security Threatened: Surveying Israeli Opinion on Peace and War* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 144-145.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 149; Shindler, *Land Beyond Promise*, 202.

¹⁴³ Mendilow, "Israel's Labor Alignment in the 1984 Elections."

partners in Israel, its policy of idyllic ties and non-LSI was a failure. This approach undermined that goal and helped revive the Likud's flagging political fortunes. In the broader sense, its impact was more mixed. In the short- and medium-term, the policy helped produce some of the warmest years of bilateral ties in the relationship's history. In the longer-term, it set the stage for inevitable confrontation with the Israeli government by impeding the prospects for peace with Jordan and facilitating the eventual displacement of the Jordanian option by the PLO. Washington's embrace of the Likud's new leadership in 1983/4 kicked a can down the road, setting the stage for more severe bilateral conflict in future years.

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

One area in which the theories diverge involves perceptions of sender state interests. National interests theory (Theory #1) expects that LSI should occur in direct relation to objective opportunities to advance national interests through foreign intervention. Intervention should be more likely when opportunities are objectively greater. The lobby-legislative approach (Theory #2) expects that LSI should be unlikely if members of these groups oppose intervention – which, in the Israeli case, they seem to do. The bureaucratic politics approach (Theory #3) predicts that LSI should be highly likely toward Israel due to support for such a policy from the professional-level bureaucracy within the executive branch. Finally, leadership theory (Theory #4) predicts that LSI should occur in correlation with the preferences and desires of top leaders within the government of the sender state.

<Phases One and Two>

That the U.S. did not actively consider LSI toward Israel until the end of 1982 is a difficult result to explain under national interests theory or, to a lesser extent, leadership theory. The government of Israel had been engaging in provocative actions that infuriated the administration for well over a year without eliciting a reaction in terms of leadership selection intervention.

The administration felt that Israel's invasion of Lebanon was an inappropriate overreaction. The bombings of Beirut in 1981 and 1982 were both seen as violations of U.S. interests. Annexation of the Golan was seen as harmful enough to the U.S. to justify cancellation of an MOU on security cooperation. The fight over providing AWACS to Saudi Arabia even devolved into a public showdown which the media called "Reagan versus Begin," yet LSI seemed nowhere in the offing.

One explanation for this discrepancy is provided below under the framework of observable implication number two: perceptions of close contests. Another factor that helps explain the difference between phase one and phase two for LSI considerations – at least for leadership theory – is that perceptions by American leaders toward their Israeli counterparts underwent a major shift during this period. After it became clear just how much responsibility Sharon bore for escalation of the fighting in Lebanon and for deceiving decision-makers in both governments, he lost all credibility with the U.S. As noted by Blitzer above, Sharon came to be seen in Washington at best as a pest and at worst as a dangerous fanatic.

This also filtered through to Reagan and Shultz's perceptions of Begin. Reagan began to hold Begin at distance even in their private communications, and

the PM's credibility was steadily eroded by naively passing on Sharon's doctored military reports to a Washington that simply knew better. Also, Reagan and Shultz were disappointed by Begin's absolute rejection of their peace plan. By the time it became clear Sharon was intentionally slow-rolling negotiations with Lebanon over withdrawal and that Begin was permitting this move, the administration had clearly had enough of both Israeli leaders. The U.S. began to discuss LSI in private assessments of the situation while escalating their negative statements in public.

The Congressional role during phases one and two does not provide much evidence for lobby-legislative theory. Despite having put up a staunch fight over AWACS before eventually caving to administration demands, members of Congress were furious with Israel after the start of the Lebanon War. They gave Begin a very nasty reception during the summer of 1982. After meeting with the Conference of Presidents, a prominent group of leaders from the American Jewish community, Shultz described them as "concerned but not hostile" about U.S. pressure toward Israel, noting that "a sense of good will was evident during the session".¹⁴⁴

The Congress did pursue one major action that contradicted the administration during this period, but it was tangential to LSI. Pro-Israel lobbyists prioritized their efforts during tough times by focusing on aid levels, persuading Senate Appropriations to approve \$475 million in aid to Israel beyond what the administration had requested. This was achieved despite warnings from State that

¹⁴⁴ W. Dale Nelson, "Begin Returns to Israel after Sharp Confrontation with Senators," *Associated Press*, June 23, 1982; "'Briefing of Jewish Leaders' and 'Lebanon: Congressional Briefing' in Nightly Report - Memorandum for the President from Secretary of State George P. Shultz", August 5, 1982, Folder "Sec of State Evening Report (7/27/82-8/12/82)", Box 91376, Executive Secretariat NSC Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library; "'Briefing of Congress on Lebanon' in Nightly Report - Memorandum for the President from Secretary of State George P. Shultz", August 4, 1982, Folder "Sec of State Evening Report (7/27/82-8/12/82)", Box 91376, Executive Secretariat NSC Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

the higher aid levels could have “disastrous effects on U.S. foreign policy and leave the impression that the U.S. condones Israel’s presence in southern Lebanon”.¹⁴⁵

However, White House officials do not sound as though they were particularly intimidated by domestic pressures. For instance, when counseling the president to consider LSI, national security advisor Judge Clark pressed him to “take decisive, bold action. I do not say that naively, ignoring the real domestic political constraints which impinge on what can be sustained with the Congress or the public at large... however... those elements also respect leadership and that success creates its own consensus”.¹⁴⁶ Teicher’s reporting was more concerned about the president’s prestige abroad than the possibility of domestic backlash for pursuing negative LSI.¹⁴⁷ Even the lobby’s show of strength on aid seems to have done little to dissuade Reagan from pondering a complete rupture in relations with Israel had developments not moved in a more favorable direction that February.

<Phase Three>

Positive LSI during phase three provides strong evidence for leadership theory over its structural competitors. Theory #1 suffers from the fact that the strategic logic alone for the Lavi had been insufficient for producing tech transfer licenses until political-level justifications strengthened the case for it.

Theory #2 suffers from the fact that the administration effort came from the initiative of individuals in the executive branch, not the legislative. Pro-Israel Members of Congress had long been in favor of the Lavi project, but their support

¹⁴⁵ “Chronology of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: October 16, 1982 - January 15, 1983,” *Middle East Journal* 37, no. 2 (Spring 1983): 239.

¹⁴⁶ “The Middle East - Memorandum for the President from William P. Clark.”

¹⁴⁷ “What Next in the Peace Process - Memorandum for Robert ‘Bud’ McFarlane from Howard Teicher.”

had not made the critical difference before, and their efforts to advance the project were stepped up in the fall of 1983, not in the spring (more on this below).

Theory #3 suffers from the fact the campaign for approval of the Lavi licenses deliberately bypassed the deep bureaucracy and instead involved a handful of individuals at the very top of government. The Lavi's Israeli promoters acknowledge that they decided "our strategy should be that the Pentagon doesn't exist. This is a political decision. We should go to State and the White House".¹⁴⁸

Theory #4 provides the best explanation for America's decision to grant the Lavi licenses in April of 1983. Reagan saw Arens as a major improvement over his predecessor, and Shultz had a very good working relationship with the new defense minister. The plan to use the Lavi for LSI originated at the White House with an NSC staffer and was advanced as a result of the personal opinions of McFarlane, Shultz, and Reagan, over the opposition of Weinberger and members of the bureaucracy.

<Phase Four>

Leadership theory also provides the most persuasive explanation for why the administration turned toward Israel in late '83 and early '84 in a manner that benefitted the Likud electorally. Strategic logic was invoked to justify the turn toward Israel – which would seem to support Theory #1 – but that logic was personalized and subjective. Shultz and his advisors believed it, and the president was evidently brought at least part way along, but Weinberger, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Vessey, and the State Department's Near East bureau all disagreed. Strategic thinking about power balances in the region played a part in the

¹⁴⁸ Babcock, "How U.S. came to underwrite Israel's Lavi fighter project (The Special Relationship: Second of Four Articles)."

administration's policy shift but on the basis of a threat assessment that was contested and subjective, not consensual and empirically obvious.

Theory #2 also receives some support here but was not a decisive factor in administration decision-making. AIPAC was a "third rail" consideration and presidential campaigning did eventually intervene in 1984, but administration insiders argue that their embrace of the Likud had much more to do with personal fatigue toward Arab-Israeli issues than electoral pressures.¹⁴⁹ The U.S. continued pushing hard on settlements until Hussein's tantrum undermined the Jordanian option. Officials defended this position – including the proposed weapons sale to Jordan – in front of pro-Israel audiences in spite of open criticism by AIPAC.¹⁵⁰ It seems that "from Reagan and Shultz on down, [the administration] intended to fight all-out for the sale even if AIPAC and other Israeli supporters couldn't be won over".¹⁵¹

Members of Congress did put on the agenda a proposal to let IAI pay for some Lavi expenses incurred in Israel with American military aid. In fact, the main advocate for the FMS waivers was none other than notorious Texas Rep. Charlie Wilson of *Charlie Wilson's War* fame. He and his colleagues were so eager to support the project that they even allocated \$150 million for the effort than the Israelis were able to spend in a single year. However, administration approval of the waivers in November was only a small part of turning toward the Likud, and that measure was

¹⁴⁹ Senior Reagan advisor for Mideast Affairs Geoffrey Kemp, "Interview with the Author."

¹⁵⁰ "Editorial: The President's Speech," *Near East Report* 28, no. 11 (March 16, 1984).

¹⁵¹ Goshko, "Paralysis Seizes Mideast Policy: Foggy Bottom is Left to Grope."

approved because it fit with its wider schema on regional security at the time.¹⁵²

Theory #3 does an exceptionally bad job as an alternative to leadership theory during this period. The bureaucracy remained alarmist about Likud intentions but were cut out of the decision-making process. During Begin's last days, they argued that

“were Begin to depart, and were the successor government to be Likud-led, it would likely pursue a similar policy. A Labor government, however, would be likely to revert partially to earlier, more flexible Israeli policies. In fact, Labor Party leaders have given clear signals that they would find the President's 1 September proposals a good starting point for negotiations leading toward a resolution of the Palestinian issue... [Also,] the U.S. must pursue the Middle East peace process... [because] this issue is fundamentally important for political and security reasons to most of the states of Southwest Asia”.¹⁵³

However, officials from the Near East bureau were “kept largely in the dark” while the turn toward Israel was being worked out by Shultz's advisors. More influential than NEA were those in Shultz's personal office, Deputy Secretary Eagleburger, and the secretary's Policy Planning Staff.¹⁵⁴ The perspective at the political level was “Sure, Shamir was an obstinate little bugger, but Sharon and Begin were out!”¹⁵⁵

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

The theories also diverge with regard to whether or not officials in the sender state notice that a close leadership contest is brewing in the target. Theories 2 and 3 do not pose very clear predictions in this regard, but national interests

¹⁵² Babcock, “How U.S. came to underwrite Israel's Lavi fighter project (The Special Relationship: Second of Four Articles).”

¹⁵³ “NSSD-4.”

¹⁵⁴ Goshko, “Paralysis Seizes Mideast Policy: Foggy Bottom is Left to Grope.”

¹⁵⁵ Former Reagan Advisor, “Interview with the Author”, February 2011.

theory (Theory #1) suggests that LSI should occur in direct accordance to objective circumstances abroad, whereas leadership theory (Theory #4) suggests that the occurrence of LSI should be conditioned first upon whether or not top officials in the sender state are actually paying attention to political dynamics in the target state.

The matter of perceived close contests may help explain why LSI emerged during phase two but not in phase one, as well as why U.S. activity during phase two may not have escalated from partial to full. There was already a steady stream of Israeli actions during phase one that upset the administration, but only in phase two was the Israeli public mobilized enough to make a close contest look feasible. Administration officials may have held back from full LSI during phase two for hope that the Kahan Commission might accomplish the dirty work of removing Sharon without direct American involvement. These observations help offset some of Theory #1's poor showing above and also fit with the predictions of Theory #4.

Positive LSI during phase three was no doubt motivated by a belief that Arens was a viable political actor, either to contend for the top post or at least to affect Israeli behavior in negotiations. This perception seems to have been correct, even to some extent regarding Arens' viability for contesting the PM job. However, it is not clear how much this perception was fueled by objective indicators versus individuals' positive experiences with him from when he served in Washington.

During phase four, the lack of LSI can in part be attributed to matters of attention and fatigue, providing additional support for Theory #4. Administration officials had a hangover for Arab-Israeli conflict resolution, and they were distracted by other issues at the time. One of these was the presidential campaign – which fits

best with Theory #2 – but so were internal policy debates over how to handle the Soviet Union and arming Iraq in its war against Iran. Neither the administration’s approach to Iraq nor the Soviet Union objectively required offsetting concessions toward Israel, so this distraction should be coded more as a drag on top individuals’ time and attention (Theory #4) than objective strategic interests justifying a change in Levant policy (Theory #1). As Charlie Hill notes, by mid-1984, nobody was paying attention to how close the Israeli elections were. That factor was objectively present but did not garner high-level attention in Washington.

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

Whereas the bureaucratic politics approach (Theory #3) and the lobby-legislative approach (Theory #2) expect these actors and institutions to be well-informed about administration deliberations over whether or not to conduct LSI, leadership theory (Theory #4) expects that these actors may actually be kept in the dark about administration intentions.

Both the positive and negative episodes of LSI described above offer evidence to support the predictions of Theory #4 and the paper paradox in the deliberative process. Shortly before Judge Clark’s memo to the president calling for negative LSI, Clark’s aide Bud McFarlane passed along a note to update him on their “close-hold” deliberations over how to deal with “Israel’s intransigence”. He notes that during a meeting with Phil Habib in the Oval Office “the President agreed that Israel was the problem”. McFarlane speaks in terms of “the moment of truth” and “firm action” toward Israel, explaining that

“All [in the Oval Office] understood the extreme sensitivity of this issue and the need for discretion. After the meeting I called Ken Dam and asked that he convene a small discrete [sic] group of three or four people to think about the issues... Yesterday at 5:30 Ken Dam convened a meeting. Contrary to my request, 12 people showed up... All of us agreed that we ought not put anything on paper until the night before the meeting with the President (if then)”.¹⁵⁶

This pattern also seems to fit internal administration deliberations about positive LSI during phase three. When I sat down to interview him, former Ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis acknowledged: “I don’t know what the hell Teicher’s talking about. It may be that that argument was made in a memo – I never heard of that memo – or the NSC meeting, but nobody ever suggested [it] to me”.¹⁵⁷

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

Theory #1 offers no predictions for this observable implication, and – since these cases did not take place during the start of an administration – neither does Theory #3. Lobby-legislative politics would expect domestic pressures to be more powerful toward the very end of a term as presidential elections are approaching. The fact that LSI did not occur during 1984 fits with this prediction, and there does seem to have been a domestic component to the administration’s decision to withdraw from Lebanon and embrace the Likud. However, as argued extensively above, in neither instance was the domestic factor decisive. Rather, key individuals’ subjective perceptions of the strategic environment mattered much more.

¹⁵⁶ “Ken Dam’s Close-Hold Review on Where to Go in Lebanon - Memorandum for Judge Clark signed ‘Bud’ [McFarlane]”, January 28, 1983, Collection “Robert McFarlane Files”, Box 5, Folder "Sensitive Chron File - [01/07/1983 - 03/02/1983], Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. Underlining in the original.

¹⁵⁷ Former US Ambassador to Israel Samuel Wingate Lewis, “Interview with the Author.”

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) anticipates that bureaucratic freelancing should be quite common. However, leadership theory (Theory #4) claims that it should be much rarer and conditioned upon whether or not the president demonstrates an active or passive style of overall management and of specific issue oversight regarding bilateral relations with the target state.

This case provides support for Theory #4, the leadership-based approach. President Reagan's behavior during this period was both unusual and consequential. He acted somewhat out of character when he decisively overruled his defense secretary to enforce a decision over the Lavi. His support for LSI in this instance and perhaps during phase two are also out of character for an individual renowned for his disinterest in the peace process and lax style of oversight. However, the president's attention was unusually focused on Israeli policy-making during this period because of America's embroilment in the Lebanon conflict.

Some freelancing may still have taken place. Amb. Lewis was later accused of colluding in early 1983 with a Sharon rival within the Likud, Simcha Ehrlich, to have the Defense Minister booted out of office.¹⁵⁸ There are reasons to cast serious doubt on these claims, but, if true, they could represent an instance of bureaucratic freelancing. Such behavior would have been in fitting with administration's goals

¹⁵⁸ "Sharon accuses U.S. officials of plotting his ouster," *Associated Press*, December 9, 1983, AM Cycle edition; "Sharon accuses U.S. Ambassador of trying to oust him," *Associated Press*, December 9, 1983, PM Cycle edition; Lewis, "Interview with Ambassador Samuel Wingate Lewis," 180-94. For instance, the story came from a reporter who was a favorite recipient of leaks from Sharon, and Ehrlich's widow denied the story even though it was predicated upon a claim about documents allegedly in her possession.

but probably not the specific level of interference that had been authorized. However, more instances of freelancing emerge during Reagan's second term, which makes sense since he no longer cared so much to address the conflict at that point.

6. Consistency of Message:

The theories also diverge with regard to whether or not the message communicated by the sender state's policies are likely to be consistent. Theory #1 (the national interests approach) predicts that this should be unproblematic, whereas the other theories emphasize institutional or personal disagreements that may undermine the sender state's ability to convey a consistent message abroad.

During phase one, the prevailing message toward Israel from Washington was one of anger with the Likud government, albeit not with the objective of LSI in mind. This fits with Theories 1, 3, and 4 and somewhat contradicts Theory #2. Lobby-legislative theory would predict not only that Congress would push back against this message but that it would do so enough to undermine its persuasiveness. However, it was quite evident to all involved that Washington's ire with Jerusalem was sincere and substantial. Also, other than during the AWACS dispute, at no point did Congress appear poised to overrule the executive.

During phase two, the message from Washington continued to be one of frustration but now it included the corollary that improved relations could depend upon certain members of the GoI departing the scene. This fits Theories 1, 3, and 4 but not the lobby-legislative approach. The White House's message was undermined, especially vis-à-vis its peace plan, when the Senate Appropriations

Committee decided to offer increased aid to Israel beyond what the administration was seeking. However, this decision did not prevent Blitzer or other observers from recognizing by early February that the administration was furious with Sharon, unhappy with Begin, and perhaps willing to work hard to push them out.

During phase three, the message being conveyed was that Washington considered Arens a genuine partner and that security relations would prosper if he remained influential. Congress and AIPAC boosted the Lavi project but were late to the party, working to achieve FMS waivers but not doing much to project the message in the first place through the approval of critical tech transfer licenses.

Theories 1 and 3 fare poorly in this instance. The strategic logic for the Lavi had not been persuasive enough to justify the project during earlier periods, and it was approved over the firm objection of the Defense Department. However, the prevailing mood was that these factions were out of favor at the time and they appeared unlikely to disrupt the administration's plan once put into action.

Messaging during phase four was both consistent and homogenous, but the topic of suitability makes for a more interesting question, which is taken up below.

7. Suitability of Message:

Finally, the theories also diverge with regard to whether or not the message they convey is likely to support or undermine the narrative supported by its favored protégé within the target state. Theory #1 (national interests theory) holds that this should be unproblematic, whereas the other approaches emphasize institutional or personal biases that may detract from the sender state's ability to convey a suitable

message for successful LSI.

Phase four was the period in which Washington's message was most out of sync with its true preferences toward internal Israeli politics. As noted above, the strategic logic behind the turn toward Israel was not uniformly accepted within the U.S. government; some bodies charged with assessing the security strategy – Defense, the Joint Chiefs, and State's Near East bureau – strongly objected to the administration's approach. However, their objection did little to undermine the strategy's unintended impact on the internal Israeli scene. Nor was the administration's Likud-friendly message the result of Congress forcing the hand of an unwilling administration. These trends contradict Theories 1, 2, and 3 with regard to the observable implication of message suitability.

Rather, it seems that Washington's message worked against its preferences about internal Israeli politics because of factors most germane to Theory #4: the idiosyncratic beliefs, perceptions, and concerns of top U.S. leaders. Reagan was sick of devoting so much attention to the Levant, and Shultz was absolutely fed up with the region, having spent almost his entire time in office consumed with managing the Arab-Israeli conflict. Shultz sold Reagan on the questionable threat of Soviet tentacles in the region via an overgrown Syria and the outrageous notion that Israeli decision-makers needed encouragement to be assertive about security affairs. King Hussein's tantrum also exacerbated the impact that their strategic embrace of the GoI had on internal Israeli politics, but the main drivers for this case seem to have been the subjective experiences of individual American officials.

Reagan, Case #3: Shultz's Siamese Twins, 1985-1988

During his second term in office, President Reagan and his administration confronted an entirely different political landscape in Israel. Neither Labor nor Likud could form a satisfactory government without the other, and so both agreed to participate in a National Unity Government (NUG). Shimon Peres would serve as Prime Minister for the first two years, after which he would hand the office over to Yitzhak Shamir. Understandably, this tenuous balance created numerous opportunities for American meddling in Israeli politics. It also heightened sensitivities among right-wing Israelis and some Americans about the risks of LSI.

In this section, I divide Reagan's second term into three main phase. In each instance, the administration devised an approach to Israeli politics that was decentralized, ambivalent, and internally conflicted. Without boots on the ground or a war in the Levant, President Reagan remained aloof from Arab-Israeli affairs. For example, his senior Mideast advisor at the NSC recalls: "when I started in 1987... the President did not place the so-called Middle East peace process high on his agenda. He paid some attention to it, but only as situations required".¹⁵⁹ Shultz, who had increasingly become the president's surrogate for the conflict, preferred a deliberately low-key approach that was ill-suited to advancing U.S. objectives in the Israeli political arena. Other individuals freelanced in ways designed to project a

¹⁵⁹ Robert B. Oakley, "Interview with Ambassador Robert B. Oakley", July 7, 1992, 80, The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), Library of Congress.

firmer line on Israeli political affairs, but their efforts generally came to naught.

As one keen observer points out, Shultz “presided over, and, given President Reagan’s detachment, was primarily responsible for a fundamental change in emphasis in U.S. policy on the Arab-Israeli conflict”.¹⁶⁰ Further, his policy legacy on the conflict was “the product as much of his personality and personal style as of any strategic planning”.¹⁶¹ As journalists have noted, Shultz tended to see the world as “a problem of management” (unlike, say, Carter the engineer’s conviction that deep-seated conflicts can and should be solved).¹⁶² Instead, the secretary provided ample grounds for suspecting he was “concerned only with preventing the world from blowing up in his face tomorrow”.¹⁶³ Whereas this subdued approach focusing on conflict management instead of resolution may have been an asset in Cold War relations – helping nudge Reagan to tone down confrontation with the Soviet Union during his second term – it also meant that Shultz was terribly ill-suited to creating anything but drift in the explosive realm of Israeli-Arab relations.

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

Yes. In all three instances, the administration responded with mixed and muted voice. Invariably, some officials tried to conduct leadership selection intervention that would help bolster Shimon Peres, but in each case they were

¹⁶⁰ Kathleen Christison, “The Arab-Israeli Policy of George Shultz,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1989): 44.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁶² Elisabeth Bumiller, “Gentle George & the Quiet Roar at State,” *Washington Post*, December 14, 1982.

¹⁶³ Ronald Steel, “Shultz’s Way,” *New York Times (Magazine)*, January 11, 1987.

stymied by the president's disinterest and the secretary of state's opposition.

During phase one (1985 and 1986), the U.S. Ambassador to Israel sought to help Labor void its rotation agreement with the Likud by producing a major Jordanian peace deal that the right-wing would no doubt reject. There were no doubt impediments to reaching such a solution, but Amb. Thomas Pickering did not get much help from back home. The rotation agreement took place as planned: Shamir became PM, and Peres moved to the foreign ministry.

During phase two (1987), FM Peres finally achieved a major breakthrough on the peace process: a secret agreement in London with King Hussein over how to launch negotiations. However, since he was no longer prime minister, Peres could not dissolve his government at will, and PM Shamir was dead set against the plan. Instead, Labor needed enough drama to garner 61 votes in the Knesset in order to topple Shamir, and for that Peres depended upon America to get involved. He and King Hussein sought for the U.S. to pitch their secret agreement as its own, so as to give each of them enough political cover to sign onto it in public. Pickering and some other U.S. officials hoped Washington would pursue an activist approach to the Accords that would help boost the forces of peace. However, Shultz refused to let the administration get involved. The London Accords – probably the last chance for a realistic Jordanian option – fizzled out due to apparent lack of U.S. interest, and, along with them, Peres's chances of toppling the unity government.

During phase three (1988), the U.S. government found itself back in the peace processing business. The outbreak of the first Palestinian intifada convinced many that something had to be done, and it gradually became clear even to Shultz that

Shamir was “still captive of old ways of thinking”.¹⁶⁴ Whereas previously President Reagan had proposed his own peace plan in September of 1982, this time he left it to his secretary of state, who revealed what became known as the Shultz Initiative in the beginning of '88. Shultz was not deterred by Congressional opposition, nor by the fact that it was a presidential election year, but he continued to believe that anything successful had to be done through Shamir, not over his opposition. Because Shultz refused to back up his plan with American threats, Shamir therefore felt free to kill Shultz's Plan by being obstinate nonetheless. Some administration officials tried to help Peres by toughening up Shultz's soft touch, but without the president's consistent support they were marginalized throughout.

Finally, I also contrast American efforts to influence Israeli politics with those by other outside actors during Reagan's second term, especially in 1988. Jordan and Egypt were both intensively involved in trying to shape Israeli politics. It seems the PLO, France, Britain, and perhaps even the USSR each tried a hand at this as well.

<Phase One: Blocking Rotation>

Peres pursued four priorities during his rump term as prime minister: (1) fixing Israel's crisis-ridden economy, (2) withdrawing the IDF from south-central Lebanon to a smaller security zone above Israel's border, (3) resolving a dispute with Egypt over Taba, and (4) promoting a peace plan that used the Jordanian option. This last item was of greatest interest long-term to Washington, but the

¹⁶⁴ “Meeting with the President, 1/22/87: Middle East [should read 88] - Memorandum of Input from Shultz”, n.d., Collection “Near East and South Asia Affairs Directorate, Dennis Ross Files”, Box 3, Folder “Peace Process: Transitional (2 of 3),” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

other three items were more pressing and took up much of his time in office.¹⁶⁵

According to Arthur Hughes, who served as deputy chief of mission at Embassy Tel Aviv, it was clear that for Peres “one of his objects in life was to figure out how to break the national unity government... before the transition”.¹⁶⁶ While he was still prime minister, Peres had more assets at his disposal for doing so. He could dissolve the government at will and was not required to muster 61 Knesset votes. He could also refuse to hand off the premiership, although he felt he needed a rather extraordinary justification for doing so.¹⁶⁷ Thus, Labor leaders sought to achieve something dramatic on the Jordanian track that would be unacceptable to the Likud but seen by the public as an important step forwards.¹⁶⁸

Apparently, Ambassador to Israel Thomas Pickering sought to help Peres use the issue of talks with Jordan as a means of both advancing the peace process and expelling the Likud from power. Pickering’s political counselor at the embassy, Roger Harrison, told the foreign service oral history now deposited at the Library of Congress that that Pickering “was conspiring... playing a quasi-partisan role in the [Israeli] political equation”.¹⁶⁹ Another individual who was familiar with this case confirms that some U.S. ambassadors to Israel “played Israeli politics without getting their hands dirty... did Thomas Pickering play? Yes he did”.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ Shimon Peres, *Battling for Peace: A Memoir*, trans. David Landau (Random House, 1995), 302; Lewis, “Interview with Ambassador Samuel Wingate Lewis,” 178-179.

¹⁶⁶ Arthur Hughes, “Interview with Ambassador Arthur H. Hughes”, January 27, 1998, 35, The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), Library of Congress.

¹⁶⁷ Michael Bar-Zohar, *Shimon Peres: The Biography* (Random House, 2007), 398-399.

¹⁶⁸ Adam Garfinkle, *Israel and Jordan in the Shadow of War* (St. Martin’s Press, 1992), 128-129.

¹⁶⁹ Harrison, “Interview with Ambassador Roger G. Harrison”, November 30, 2001, 79, The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), Library of Congress.

¹⁷⁰ Retired Senior American Diplomat, “Interview with the Author”, June 2011.

When an analyst for AIPAC went and met with the American ambassador the following summer, the headline that came out of their conversation was “Pickering denies interference,” in which he “acknowledged that the U.S. position on an international conference on the Middle East is closer to that of Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres than Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir but denied that in publicly communicating that policy Washington was meddling in internal Israeli affairs”.¹⁷¹ He felt compelled to insist that that United States has “on every occasion tried to make clear to all of our contacts that we did not wish to interfere and would not interfere in the internal political process in Israel and we were going at the same time to conduct our foreign policy by explaining clearly our position”.¹⁷² He recognized that “it is true that some in Israel have been sensitive to our position [and] have criticized us merely for articulating it, but nowhere in my diplomatic history did the doctrine of non-interference in internal domestic affairs ever impinge upon a state’s right, indeed its obligation, to its own people to make its view known”.¹⁷³

Pickering reflects back that he saw Peres as “an Israeli leader who showed the potential promise for bringing Israel along [and] should in fact be in the centerpiece of our concentration”. He also felt that the ideological dividing line in Israeli politics was quite stark and justified speedy action: “the truth was, David, that no agreement to organize a peace arrangement in my view as then bridgeable between Likud and even King Hussein... so we had to see what could be put in

¹⁷¹ “Pickering Denies Interference,” *Near East Report* 31, no. 32 (August 10, 1987).

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

place... regardless of whether there are Herut Likudniks deep in the background".¹⁷⁴

In order to succeed, he notes that obviously Peres could "enlist several forces to his side... one was the U.S. and the other was the Israeli public". Because of the NUG Peres "was forced into a situation in which, if he wanted to make progress, he had to use those levers". The ambassador says that he dealt with Peres "almost daily. Sometimes less than that, but often" and would frequently sit down with Peres aides Yossi Beilin and Nimrod Novik as well.¹⁷⁵

Harrison claims that Pickering "was interested in devising with Peres a peace proposal which would be attractive domestically, but unacceptable to the Likud".¹⁷⁶ He suggests that Pickering was maneuvering

"in collaboration with Peres... [and] Novik... [and] Beilin... to bring about a peace plan which could then be the subject of an election which would then prevent Shamir from coming to power. The idea being that Peres could not simply declare that he wasn't going to leave office, but he might by proposing a peace plan that was acceptable to the Arab side, the Palestinian side, he might then put that to referendum [sic] which would have the same effect. Peres was continuing [sic] promising Pickering he could deliver the Knesset for this... but the notion was that if you came to the Knesset with a fait accompli with the Palestinians' signature on it, even though the Likud was opposed to it... the Knesset would accept it and therefore [sic] or if they turned it down you could take it to a referendum in the country as a whole and win".¹⁷⁷

Meanwhile "I thought that Peres could not deliver. It was my view that he was over promising... whether you didn't like him or not [sic], whether you could deal with Sharon or not, or Shamir or not... you just simply couldn't override their wishes as

¹⁷⁴ Former US Ambassador to Israel Thomas Pickering, "Interview with the Author", April 9, 2011.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Harrison, "Interview with Ambassador Roger G. Harrison," 83.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 78-79.

Peres hoped to do and ram it down his throat”.¹⁷⁸

Also, William Quandt writes that this desire to help Peres among some applied to other issues as well. He explains that

“However tempted some American officials may have been to press forward with an initiative [on assembling a joint Jordanian-Palestinian negotiating team] in these seemingly propitious circumstances, there were three offsetting considerations... the third inhibition was derived from a concern for the political standing of Israeli Prime Minister Peres... Some American officials wanted to help Peres position himself for a showdown with the Likud. This desire led them to advise against anything that could be viewed as causing a strain in U.S.-Israeli relations, such as American dealings with the PLO”.¹⁷⁹

Ideologically, members of the Reagan administration appeared to have been much closer to Peres than Shamir in their general outlook on the conflict. However, it is unclear how widely this strategy translated into support back in Washington. U.S. officials seemed to prefer Peres at the time but were not uniformly interested to intervene on his behalf.

President Reagan’s views are particularly striking in this regard. He remarked upon meeting receiving Peres in 1984 that “I think he is the most flexible and reasonable PM that I’ve known since I’ve been in office”.¹⁸⁰ Upon his next Washington visit one year later, Reagan writes in his diary “a meeting with PM of Israel. I hope he remains PM. He’s a statesman and a fine man”.¹⁸¹ Finally, when Peres visited on the eve of the rotation agreement Reagan wrote “Shimon Peres time – PM of Israel. I admire him very much and am sorry the pol. rotation agreement will see him replaced as PM of Israel by Shamir. Of course, he will be Foreign

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 79.

¹⁷⁹ William B. Quandt, “U.S. Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict,” in *The Middle East: Ten Years after Camp David*, Quandt ed. (Brookings Institution Press, 1988), 369-370.

¹⁸⁰ Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, 389.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 506.

Minister then. That will help some. He's done a great job seeing the way toward peace in the Middle East".¹⁸² He later wrote that "I found [Peres] less combative and much more reasonable than Begin," more open to American relations with moderate Arab states, and that "I liked Shimon Peres... a statesman who was more realistic about the Middle East than Begin... [who] recognized that any solution to the region's problems would have to include a resolution of the issue of the Palestinian refugees".¹⁸³

However, Reagan kept the process at arm's length and did little to advance the prospects for an Israeli-Jordanian deal. If the Jordanians and Israelis could agree upon a satisfactory Palestinian contingent to participate in their negotiations, Reagan would let Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Richard Murphy meet with the delegation to confer it with U.S. backing. However, Reagan insisted that two conditions be met: that the participants could not be remotely associated with the PLO and that the talks had to take place in the context of direct negotiations, not an international conference. According to Shultz, "Ronald Reagan was taking a personal stand on this, and he was steadfast".¹⁸⁴ In fact, by helping to work out a set of lowest common denominator principles among the parties during a showboating tour of the region that summer, VP Bush showed more direct involvement in these issues than either the president or the secretary of state.

Shultz expressed some concerns that Peres was "operating up to – and perhaps beyond – the limits of his political capability in his coalition

¹⁸² Ibid., 639.

¹⁸³ Ronald Reagan, *An American Life* (Simon and Schuster, 1990), 427 & 493.

¹⁸⁴ George Pratt Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: Diplomacy, Power and the Victory of the American Ideal* (Scribner's, 1993), 453-454.

government”.¹⁸⁵ He did lead a U.S. effort to bail out the Israeli economy and encourage major structural reforms, which boosted Peres’s standing enormously, but the secretary was not motivated by Israeli domestic politics in this regard.

But by refusing to facilitate some sort of compromise between the Jordanian and Israeli positions on an international conference, Shultz “fail[ed] to even encourage Israel’s then-Prime Minister Peres in his 1985-86 attempts to pursue the Jordanian option”.¹⁸⁶ When Peres was finally focusing on Jordan in early 1986, instead of trying to throw off the rotation agreement Shultz approached the talks in order to “get something going so that Peres can put something in place that the other guy can’t tear down”.¹⁸⁷

In any event, he was much more interested in developments on the ground than in producing something dramatic on the negotiating track that would help Peres. When King Hussein visited Washington that June – an ideal opportunity to push for some sort of breakthrough – the talking points and briefing memo sent by the secretary to the president say almost nothing about the negotiations track and instead focus on promoting Shultz’s plan for trilateral confidence building measures to boost quality of life and marginalize supporters of the PLO in the territories.¹⁸⁸

<Phase Two: The London Agreement>

Shimon Peres continued discreet negotiations with Jordan as Israel’s foreign

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 453.

¹⁸⁶ Christison, “Splitting the Difference,” 31 & 45.

¹⁸⁷ Cluverius, “Interview with Ambassador Wat Tyler Cluverius IV”, May 31, 1990, 52, The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), Library of Congress.

¹⁸⁸ “Your Meeting with King Hussein of Jordan, June 9-10, 1986 - Memorandum for the President from George P. Shultz (with talking points attached)”, June 5, 1986, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 5, Folder “Chron File-June 1986, Dennis Ross (3 of 3),” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

minister. He and the king secretly met in London in April of 1987 and ironed out the remaining areas of disagreement. They would both accept a multilateral conference but as a toothless opening ceremony. All substantive talks would take place in bilateral negotiations, including direct talks between Israel and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. All Palestinian participants would publicly renounce terrorism and accept UNSCRs 242 and 338 to help mitigate Israeli sensitivities over loose affiliations with the PLO. There would be no right of referral from the bilateral talks back to the main plenary.

However, both leaders were skittish about the domestic political constraints, deciding their agreement should remain secret and instead should be pitched as an American plan to provide them with greater political cover. Peres recalls that

“we had decided, therefore, to transmit [the agreements] to the Americans, with each side separately informing the Americans that these documents summarized the position we had agreed on. We would both ask the United States to adopt the agreement, and to present it, through the Secretary of State, as an *American proposal*.¹⁸⁹

At first, American officials were thrilled when informed about the London Agreement. Peres aide Yossi Beilin rushed to Helsinki to catch the secretary on his way to meetings in Moscow. Beilin met with Shultz’s chief of staff, Charlie Hill, whom Peres says was “unreservedly enthusiastic”.¹⁹⁰ Another account claims that Shultz told Hill in excitement “we’ve got a touchdown!”¹⁹¹ As a result, Peres says

¹⁸⁹ Peres, *Battling for Peace*, 308.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 309.

¹⁹¹ Bar-Zohar, *Shimon Peres: The Biography*, 409. Beilin also told me that allegedly Hill told him Shultz was thrilled upon first hearing about the agreement. Former Minister Yossi Beilin, “Interview with the Author”, June 26, 2011.

“Beilin returned from Helsinki full of optimism. Ambassador Pickering in Tel Aviv was equally enthusiastic, as was Dick Murphy, who said he could hardly believe his eyes when he read the draft accords. All of us felt that we had made a major breakthrough, and that Shamir’s fears would be allayed: the international conference would not have the power to impose any solution, and the PLO would not participate in the negotiations”.¹⁹²

Upon his return home from London, Peres met with Shamir and informed him in detail about the agreement, although he refused to leave a text of the accord for fear of leaks.¹⁹³ Shamir then dispatched Arens to Foggy Bottom in hopes of dissuading Shultz from endorsing the Accord. Shultz says he tried to argue the merits of the deal with him, “describ[ing] for Arens in excruciating detail exactly how a conference could work and be kept under control, but he would not budge”.¹⁹⁴ In his memo to the president describing the meeting, Shultz reports:

“I made clear that I did not agree with the arguments that Shamir had made against the London Agreement and its significance. I said that I considered that it reflected a possibility that never existed before. Nevertheless, I accepted Shamir’s negative answer, although I consider it unfortunate since the King is finally ready to engage in negotiations with Israel”.¹⁹⁵

During their meeting, Shultz also agreed to a number of conditions that destroyed the momentum of the London Agreement and, along with it, the political gambit by Shimon Peres. He informed Arens that Labor asked him to present the agreement as a U.S. proposal and agreed not to do so. He also agreed not to visit the region to promote the plan and accepted Arens’s argument that the only way for

¹⁹² Peres, *Battling for Peace*, 310.

¹⁹³ Yitzhak Shamir, *Summing Up: An Autobiography* (Diane Pub Co, 1994), 169.

¹⁹⁴ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 941.

¹⁹⁵ “Meeting with the President: Middle East Peace Process - Comments by George Shultz”, April 29, 1987, Collection, “NSC Near East and South Asia Directorate - Dennis Ross Files”, Box 1, Folder “Hill, Charlie Meetings Folder - Dennis Ross (1 of 3),” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

progress to be made was for Shamir to hold his own secret meeting with Hussein.

Shultz really believed in this approach, claiming that “the Hussein-Shamir meeting... is the next essential step – realistically, little further progress is possible without it. Only Hussein can give Shamir the stake in the process”.¹⁹⁶ However, this argument was unrealistic for a variety of reasons. First, it was widely known within the U.S. government that Shamir rejected the principle of land for peace. For instance, an interagency paper being assembled at the time observed that “on the substantive issues to be taken up in negotiations, Shamir remains adamantly opposed to any solution based on territorial compromise”.¹⁹⁷ Yet this was a *sine qua non* for any sort of meaningful progress with Jordan and other Arab states.

Additionally, Hussein’s political strategy had been predicated upon working around Shamir to bring back Peres, not working through him. The king was convinced that “Shamir’s opposition isn’t to the agreement and the international conference idea but to any negotiations based on UNSC Resolution 242 and the principle of ‘land-for-peace’.”¹⁹⁸ Hussein relented in his opposition, but what he heard in his July meeting with Shamir frightened the king and left him perturbed about the reliability of Washington’s role.

When Shultz proposed to the two of them in October that they forego a stand-alone, symbolic conference for a press event on the sidelines of an upcoming

¹⁹⁶ “Meeting with the President, May 1, 1987: Mideast Peace Process - Comments by George Shultz”, May 1, 1987, Collection, “NSC Near East and South Asia Directorate - Dennis Ross Files”, Box 1, Folder “Hill, Charlie Meetings Folder - Dennis Ross (1 of 3),” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

¹⁹⁷ “Draft NSSD/NSDD on Middle East Peace Process”, March 17, 1987, Presidential Directives, Part II, Digital National Security Archive.

¹⁹⁸ “Letter from King Hussein - Memorandum for Frank C. Carlucci from Robert B. Oakley”, June 8, 1987, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 7, Folder “Chron File June 1987,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library; Garfinkle, *Israel and Jordan*, 112.

superpower conference, Hussein had finally had lost hope in the U.S. approach and said no. Shultz's staff wanted to troubleshoot further, but Shultz said "stop talking about it... it's over. No more memos. No need for a postmortem". He claims he had been told by an unenthusiastic Reagan that "the first guy who vetoes it kills it".¹⁹⁹

Others within the administration hoped for a more vigorous approach that would be more prone to aiding Peres. For instance, Peres claims that the plan to pitch London as an American idea was "in accordance with a prior understanding we had reached with Dick Murphy and Tom Pickering".²⁰⁰ If Murphy and Pickering agreed to do so, they were exceeding their authority. One observer wonders if Peres made this claim based upon a miscommunication or misunderstanding.²⁰¹ When I asked Murphy if the idea of pitching an agreement between Hussein and Peres as an American proposal had come up before London, he acknowledged "it must have".²⁰² Pickering says "there was no question that as a matter of possibilities it had been discussed that if Hussein and Peres could reach agreement it would be very important for the United States to pick it up and see if we could move it, but it was never discussed in terms of the conditions or where it was at the present time".²⁰³

Once Peres had informed Shamir about London, Pickering also sought to endorse Peres's plan. Although he knew it might be a difficult sell, the ambassador wrote the secretary a cable that was so enthusiastic that Harrison, his disgruntled aide, tried to send a dissenting cable as a minority report. However, Pickering put a

¹⁹⁹ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 944-948.

²⁰⁰ Peres, *Battling for Peace*, 308.

²⁰¹ Retired Senior American Diplomat, "Interview with the Author."

²⁰² Murphy, "Interview with the Author."

²⁰³ Former US Ambassador to Israel Thomas Pickering, "Interview with the Author."

hold on Harrison's message, so it did not get through in time to make a difference.²⁰⁴

Although it was not their "main goal," officials at the NSC also advocated a policy approach that they knew "will help Peres". They called for the administration to be more "actively engaged" and that

"such engagement requires us to keep the pressure on Shamir... pursuing answers to these questions and saying so publicly will keep the heat on Shamir.... building pressure on Shamir to be responsive both on the ground and on a negotiating track... We think he is blocking movement toward peace".²⁰⁵

They also called for a presidential speech to indicate that the peace process was high on his agenda but were unable to elicit his interest.

Robert Oakley, the head of the Near East and South Asian affairs at the NSC, complained that Shultz's slow-roll approach was harming the peace process. Shultz proposed sending his aide Charlie Hill on a mission to encourage movement by Shamir, but Oakley pointed out that it was being pursued in a manner that was all carrot and no stick, yet "another low-key push". He recalled that they had approved of Hill's mission "not simply to convey interest [and win Shamir's confidence], but to lay out a plan that Shamir would have a hard time rejecting". He emphasized Shultz had not been to the region in over two years, claiming "we appear disinterested, distracted, and purposeless.... we are seen in the region and elsewhere (including in Congress) as having given up the general diplomatic initiative".²⁰⁶ National security

²⁰⁴ Harrison, "Interview with Ambassador Roger G. Harrison," 79; Former US Ambassador to Israel Thomas Pickering, "Interview with the Author."

²⁰⁵ "Letter from King Hussein - Memorandum for Frank C. Carlucci from Robert B. Oakley."

²⁰⁶ "Shultz Agenda for Today's Meeting with the President - Memorandum for Frank C. Carlucci from Robert B. Oakley", July 29, 1987, Collection "Ross, Dennis Files", Box 7, Folder "Chron File July 1987," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

advisor Frank Carlucci agreed, urging the president to ask Shultz announce a visit the region soon so as to “demonstrate a higher level of interest and commitment”.²⁰⁷

Shultz’s line carried the day, and Peres was unable to use an endorsement of the London Agreement by Washington to engineer his return to power.

<Phase Three: The Shultz Initiative>

After letting the 1987 process sputter out, Shultz found himself back in the peace processing business just a few months later and even pitched a new peace plan that became known as the Shultz Initiative. Anger and despair in the territories had burst out in the form of the first Palestinian intifada, which started in December of ’87. He denounced “drift in the peace process,” though it was partly his own doing, and concluded that “both Israel and Jordan are out of fresh, workable ideas,” despite killing off their last fresh, workable idea.²⁰⁸ One of his advisors noted that it took a lot of effort to persuade Shultz to invest into the process again:

“When the intifada breaks out in December of 87, Shultz’s first inclination was to give a speech, it’s not to come up with a political initiative. And he becomes persuaded of the need for it, of an initiative, and in a sense that’s how the Shultz Plan, the Shultz Initiative gets born... but it wasn’t the first thing he thought of. First thing he thought of was well let’s give a speech and talk about the violence and the intifada.

Q: So what changed his mind?

A: Staff work. Staff convinced him to add a policy to the speech”²⁰⁹

Reluctantly, Shultz gradually accepted that an actual plan was needed.

The plan featured some modifications to suit current times but in many ways

²⁰⁷ “Meeting with George Shultz Today - Memorandum for the President from Frank C. Carlucci”, July 29, 1987, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 7, Folder “Chron File July 1987,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²⁰⁸ “Meeting with the President, 1/22/87: Middle East [should read 88] - Memorandum of Input from Shultz.”

²⁰⁹ Retired Senior American Diplomat, “Interview with the Author.”

was not so different from the accords he had let linger just months before. There would be an international conference substantive enough to give Hussein cover but tied into direct bilateral talks and toothless enough to win over Israelis. There would be a Palestinian entity tied in confederation to Jordan. The main new item was a revision of the traditional Camp David formula for an interim period followed by final status. Instead, there would be partial “interlock” between talks on interim status (to entice the Israelis) and final status (to appeal to Arabs).

After having neglected the region for over two years before visiting that past October, Shultz undertook a remarkable series of four intensive shuttles in February, March, April, and June of 1988.²¹⁰ Although he may have disagreed with Shamir’s perspective, he was determined to try working through the Israeli Prime Minister rather than against him. Shultz’s advisor confirmed for me that the secretary had no interest in trying to outmaneuver the Likud PM through LSI.²¹¹ However, some U.S. officials had other ideas. At various points they sought to toughen Shultz’s low-key message in ways that would benefit Labor at the polls.

Shultz’s February shuttle went poorly. Peres and Egypt endorsed the plan, but Shamir, Hussein, and Assad of Syria were ambivalent, saying no but thanking the secretary for his efforts. Shamir blasted the idea of an international conference – even a watered down one – as absolutely unacceptable. Shultz suspected that this argument was an excuse because Shamir was also making statements that contradicted the very premise of land for peace. And yet he sheepishly admits that

²¹⁰ Barbara Slavin, “Shultz having another go at Middle East,” *St. Petersburg Times*, June 3, 1988.

²¹¹ Retired Senior American Diplomat, “Interview with the Author.”

“I hoped that Yitzhak Shamir would somehow seize the moment”.²¹²

In March, Shultz tried again, delivering hand-written letters to leaders in Jordan, Syria, Egypt, and on both sides of the aisle in Israel. The letters formalized his plan and requested a formal response in ten days. Peres endorsed the offer and leaked a copy to the press in order to draw attention to the dispute.²¹³ At this point, Shamir responded harshly, proclaiming that “the only word in the Shultz plan which is I accept is his signature”.²¹⁴ He scheduled a Washington visit for the very last day of the ten-day decision period, and observers expected an imminent confrontation.

While in Washington, Shamir held one meeting with the president and four with Shultz, including coming over for pancakes cooked by the secretary’s wife.²¹⁵ The president reiterated his support for the peace plan but did not specify that there would be consequences for letting the ten-day deadline lapse. Shamir held steady, neither endorsing nor rejecting the plan, and returned home proclaiming victory.²¹⁶

In April, Shultz tried to boost public sentiment in Israel and Jordan for the proposal by giving extended interviews for television and print outlets, insisting that their leaders were missing a major opportunity.²¹⁷ He also suggested that hardliners could not kill the plan because he would continue his effort even without immediate signs of progress.²¹⁸

²¹² Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 1026. Also, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (ME/0079/A/1), trans., “Israel: Peres and Shamir comment on Shultz Initiative,” *Israel Television (i) and (ii)*, February 17, 1988.

²¹³ John Kifner, “Shamir foils vote on U.S. peace plan,” *New York Times*, March 7, 1988.

²¹⁴ David K. Shipler, “Can the U.S. Persuade Shamir to Yield on an Issue of Security?,” *New York Times*, March 13, 1988.

²¹⁵ Shamir, *Summing Up: An Autobiography*, 176.

²¹⁶ Jocelyn Noveck, “Shamir Returns from U.S., Mobbed by Supporters,” *Associated Press*, March 22, 1988; “Mr. Yitzhak Shamir, the Prime Minister, returned home yesterday from the U.S.,” *Financial Times*, March 23, 1988.

²¹⁷ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 1031.

²¹⁸ “Shultz urges speed in peace talks,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 4, 1988.

However, in his effort to win PM Shamir's support he opted for carrots when he probably needed a stick. Shultz fought and won an internal American debate to grant the Likud government a memorandum of understanding that formalized ongoing strategic dialogues and declared Israel a major non-NATO ally. The president granted Shultz's request out of deference to his chosen point person on the peace process. Thus, the MOU was announced during the April shuttle and signed later that month in honor of Israel's independence day.²¹⁹

Peres soon made arrangements to visit Washington in mid-May. During his visit, he urged the U.S. not to abandon the peace plan during Israeli elections so as not to feed into despair and fundamentalism.²²⁰ News outlets treated the visit as "a bid by Peres for U.S. support in advance of Israel's fall election".²²¹ An official in the Prime Minister's office attacked America for "meddling in Israel's interior problems" and claimed that "it shows the Foreign Minister using his official visit to Washington to get the American support for him in the political campaign".²²²

Shultz returned for his final shuttle two weeks later in early June, knowing it would probably be his last.²²³ He chose to base his regional travel out of Cairo instead of Jerusalem, which was perceived as a possible sign of his frustration with Shamir.²²⁴ Yet in an even bolder slap to Shultz the prime minister arranged to leave

²¹⁹ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (ME/0118/i(a)), trans., "US and Israel to sign 'memorandum of understanding'", April 6, 1988; James McCartney, "Reagan signs new friendship pact with Israel despite woes over plan," *Houston Chronicle*, April 22, 1988.

²²⁰ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (ME/0154/1), "Israeli Vice Prime Minister in Washington", May 18, 1988.

²²¹ Ruth Sinai, "Peres meets with Shultz, other officials," *Associated Press*, May 16, 1988.

²²² Joel Brinkley, "Israelis say U.S. praise of Peres may backfire," *New York Times*, May 19, 1988.

²²³ Retired Senior American Diplomat, "Interview with the Author."

²²⁴ Slaviv, "Shultz having another go at Middle East."

town for a UN conference shortly after the secretary's arrival.²²⁵ Shultz made some cautionary statements, calling the occupation a "dead-end street" and warning about the risks of war, but he left for home empty handed.²²⁶ He insisted he was ready for a fifth shuttle if prospects on the ground warranted it, but this was not to be.²²⁷

Shultz had hoped earlier on that a public endorsement of the plan by King Hussein would put pressure on Shamir to reciprocate but was disappointed when the king handed him a list of request clarifications in lieu of a yes. However, the Jordanians seem to have been more receptive than the Israeli government. Indeed, Reagan wrote in his diary then that Shultz "just can't move Shamir. He has King Hussein & Egypt's [sic] Mubarak going for him but not the hold out" Shamir, who is "being bullheaded about our peace proposal".²²⁸ Although Shultz tends to equate Jordanian ambivalence and Likud obstructionism in his memoirs, his private cables admit that "Hussein is engaging with the process while Shamir is not".²²⁹

At this point, America's window of opportunity began to close. The intifada had been putting the king under increasing pressure to fall in line with the PLO, and the Arab summit that took place shortly after Shultz's visit in June marked the beginning of the end for his assertive claims to the West Bank. Hussein was under strong pressure throughout the Arab world orchestrated by the PLO and he had simply had enough. At the summit, he stressed his acceptance of the PLO as "the

²²⁵ David Bernstein, "Shamir escapes the Shultz hard sell," *The Times (of London)*, June 6, 1988.

²²⁶ "Shultz can't sell Shamir on talks," *Reuters*, June 6, 1988.

²²⁷ Jay Bushinsky, "Shultz open to 5th peace shuttle," *Chicago Sun-Times*, June 8, 1988.

²²⁸ Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, 895 & 852.

²²⁹ "Jerusalem, April 5, 1988: My Meetings in Israel and Syria - Cable for the President from George P. Shultz", April 5, 1988, Collection, "NSC Near East and South Asia Directorate - Dennis Ross Files", Box 3, Folder "Peace Process: Shultz 1988 Trip [Feb 25-March 5] (1 of 2)," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people,” proclaimed that the PLO must represent the Palestinian people at any future peace conference, and suggested he was open to an independent Palestinian state not confederated with Jordan.²³⁰ On July 31st he gave a landmark speech announcing that Jordan would sever its administrative and legal ties to Palestinian institutions in the West Bank.

This process was a huge setback for Peres and also marked the end of the Shultz Plan. His aide noted that by early June Shultz was already

“aware that the initiative is dead, and he goes with the intention to leave behind a rhetorical record of which the Washington Institute speech is the capstone, so you can read his public statements in the region, I think there was an op-ed at the time that he published in the Washington Post, and then the Washington Institute speech as a - almost an integral whole. Shultz was of the belief that you needed to leave something behind and it wasn’t going to be a peace process, so it could be this rhetorical record”.²³¹

With Hussein’s disavowal of the West Bank, the secretary also began to explore other avenues for progress, including hints that the PLO was ready to moderate its positions in response for American engagement. By the time Israeli elections rolled around, Shultz was no longer actively pushing his peace plan on the parties.

Some American officials disagreed with Shultz’s conciliatory approach and did what they could to toughen America’s Mideast diplomacy in ways that might better benefit Labor. When Shamir visited in March, NSC staff persuaded the president to announce that “the United States will not slice this initiative apart and

²³⁰ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (ME/0174/i), “King Husayn says Shultz initiative still the subject of dialogue,” *Ma’ariv*, June 10, 1988; “Jordan gives unconditional backing to PLO: Hussein turnabout, Gadhafi outburst mark ‘stormy’ Arab summit session,” *Houston Chronicle*, June 8, 1988.

²³¹ Retired Senior American Diplomat, “Interview with the Author.” See also George Pratt Shultz, “‘The Reagan Administration’s Approach to Middle East Peacemaking’ - Speech by Secretary of State George P. Shultz to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy’s Wye Plantation Policy Conference, 1988” (Washington Institute for Near East Policy, September 16, 1988).

will not abandon it". In surprisingly tough language that could be interpreted as a threat of LSI, Reagan suggested "those who will say 'no' to the United States plan, and the prime minister has not used this word, need not answer to the United States. They'll need to answer to their own people on why they turned down a realistic and sensible plan". Shultz privately notified Shamir about the Reagan language a day in advance, and allegedly Shamir "almost popped".²³²

There was also a furious internal debate over Shultz's desire to provide Israel with the April MOU. Allegedly the debate "pitted Shultz against 'everybody else,'" with Pickering and national security advisor Colin Powell being perhaps the most outspoken. One upset White House official complained "we've been trying the soft-soap approach for years and have nothing to show for it... why do we want to reward Shamir? What has he done for us? He can now claim that there has been no cost to his stonewalling our initiative". Administration officials also tried to play down the agreement, deviating from normal protocol by giving the document to journalists only when specifically queried and holding the U.S. signing ceremony in a room without cameras, attended only by VP Bush and the Israeli ambassador.²³³

These officials did what they could to help Peres during his visit in May. They convinced Reagan to praise him as "creative and [having] the courage and wisdom to say yes when real opportunities arise" while criticizing "leaders who are negative,

²³² John M. Goshko, "President fails to persuade Shamir: Deadlock on Mideast Plan Unbroken after White House Parley," *Washington Post*, March 17, 1988; Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "Shultz thwarts Shamir's strategy," *Chicago Sun-Times*, March 21, 1988; David K. Shipler, "Reagan 'Will Not Abandon' Middle East Peace Plan," *New York Times*, March 17, 1988.

²³³ Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "Shultz's Israel Stumble," *Chicago Sun-Times*, April 22, 1988; McCartney, "Reagan signs new friendship pact with Israel despite woes over plan"; "U.S., Israel sign friendship pact: Ceremony goes on despite opposition within administration," *Dallas Morning News*, April 22, 1988.

consistently reject new ideas... [and] make progress impossible".²³⁴ The gesture was perceived as support for Peres and "indirect criticism of the prime minister".²³⁵

Finally, when Labor was damaged by King Hussein's divorce from the West Bank, administration officials scrambled to somehow keep the process moving. Reagan called for a rather odd emergency summit in late September at the UN General Assembly between Peres and his Egyptian counterpart, FM Esmat Abdel Meguid, to discuss the state of the peace process. Washington ensured Peres left the meeting with a tangible takeaway, granting his request that employees of Israel's defense procurement mission in New York be granted consular status.²³⁶ Pickering agrees there was evidently a domestic angle to the meeting and recalls that the Likud "raised hell when... the U.S. demeaned the position of Shamir as prime minister by asking his opponent to come to talk about the peace process".²³⁷ Shamir both belittled the event for having "no special value" and suggested it was an egregious attempt by Washington to tip the scales in Israel's election.²³⁸

Thus, during 1988 the prevailing American posture was exemplified by Secretary of State Shultz's initiative, which was very firmly intended to focus on eliciting Israeli behavior change while avoiding negative LSI. However, there was a strong undercurrent of opposition to this approach from other U.S. officials at the working level, who preferred a policy of leadership selection intervention.

²³⁴ Brinkley, "Israelis say U.S. praise of Peres may backfire."

²³⁵ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (ME/0156/i), "Israel Shamir declines to react to USA's 'indirect criticism'", May 20, 1988.

²³⁶ "U.S. Gives Israeli Arms Purchasers Diplomatic Status," *Reuters*, October 6, 1988.

²³⁷ Former US Ambassador to Israel Thomas Pickering, "Interview with the Author."

²³⁸ Karin Laub, "Shamir Suggests that Washington is Meddling in Israeli Election," *Associated Press*, September 7, 1988; "Peace talks in New York have no 'special value,' Shamir says," *Los Angeles Times*, September 9, 1988; Andrew Whitley and Nancy Dunne, "U.S. invites Israel and Egypt to Washington talks," *Financial Times*, September 1988.

<Post-Script: Other Meddlers>

A remarkable feature of the National Unity Government is that it also elicited LSI toward Israeli politics from a whole panoply of outside actors. Besides the United States, this group included Jordan, Egypt, the PLO, Britain, France, and perhaps even the USSR. I briefly discuss those efforts here in order to provide another point of reference for understanding American behavior during this period. Most of these efforts focused on the Israeli elections of 1988 and were probably in part elicited by international concern in light of the ongoing Palestinian intifada.

The Jordanian effort is most obvious. As early as 1985, the king's strategy was consciously predicated upon trying to help Shimon Peres call of the rotation agreement. Adam Garfinkle explains that

“Peres and his group understood however, as did the King, who is an expert in Israeli domestic politics, that as long as Likud remained a part of the Israeli government, dramatic breakthroughs were possible only in potential. The idea was to build up functional ties and a series of interim measures or changes that implied change in the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. These changes would create a certain trajectory that ultimately would force the divided Israeli government to break up. Peres's hope, and no doubt Hussein's too, was that by the time the domestic political crunch came, enough hopefulness would have been created in Israel and the United States to tip the scales toward Labor”.²³⁹

In 1987, after he finally reached that agreement in London, the king wrote a letter to Shultz urging him to “get engaged and help Peres; he is exposed”.²⁴⁰ British PM Thatcher wrote a similar letter to President Reagan calling on him to shore up Peres

²³⁹ Garfinkle, *Israel and Jordan*, 112.

²⁴⁰ “Letter from King Hussein - Memorandum for Frank C. Carlucci from Robert B. Oakley.”

after meeting with Hussein that summer.²⁴¹

Hussein's decision to sever ties from the West Bank in 1988 was immensely damaging to Peres, but within his new constraints the king tried to mitigate that damage. He appeared on *Nightline* back-to-back with Shimon Peres, proclaiming that a Shamir victory would be a disaster.²⁴² One week before the Israeli vote, the king also hosted a trilateral summit in Aqaba with Mubarak and Arafat designed to hint that confederation might still be possible. A source from the Jordanian court admitted to the press, "we believe that a strong Arab position before the elections would help the (Israeli) voters".²⁴³

Egypt also played an active role trying to influence the Israeli election. Leaving Aqaba, President Mubarak proclaimed that Egypt, Jordan, and the PLO had reached a secret agreement on confederation, though offering few details about the alleged union.²⁴⁴ Elaborating on the meeting's purpose, Mubarak's chief foreign policy advisor, Osama el-Baz, told the press that "we want the Israeli voter, whether Arab or Jew, to understand where his specific interest lies. Let him know, when he casts his vote, that there is an Arab partner ready for negotiations. The voter faces the issue of war and peace. If he wants peace, the Arab side is ready".²⁴⁵ I also found cables in which Mubarak is reported as telling American officials that "he will try to keep Egyptian-Israeli relationship on even keel between now and November

²⁴¹ "Prime Minister Thatcher's Letter on the Peace Process - Memorandum for Frank C. Carlucci from Robert B. Oakley", September 21, 1987, Collection "Ross, Dennis Files", Box 7, Folder "Chron File September 1987," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²⁴² Joseph Albright and Marcia Kunstel, "Hussein Holds Surprise Talks with Arafat: Goal May be to Boost Israel's Peres in Election," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, October 23, 1988.

²⁴³ Rana Sabbagh, "Arab leaders plan peace strategy ahead of Israeli poll," *Reuters*, October 23, 1988.

²⁴⁴ "Mubarak: Jordan, PLO agree to form confederation," *Associated Press*, October 23, 1988.

²⁴⁵ Christopher Walker, "Arab Leaders United in Bid to Gain Votes for Peres: Israeli General Election," *The Times (of London)*, October 24, 1988.

1,” which, of course, was the date on which Israeli elections were scheduled.²⁴⁶

More evidence has recently come to light on the Egyptian role during the first half of 1988. An Israeli journalist who received documents from Peres’s inner circle chronicles their close cooperation with Mubarak’s team to influence the 1988 elections to Labor’s advantage. The article is still only available in Hebrew, but I have tracked down a copy and translated it into English.²⁴⁷ As noted below, I have also confirmed a general description of the author’s argument with an observer within the Reagan administration at the time.

Mubarak advisor El-Baz was the point person for such efforts, and a series of highly restricted and “eyes only” memoranda summarize the content of his meetings with Peres advisors such as personal advisor Novik, then-Director General of the Foreign Ministry Abrasha Tamir, and Mideast studies Prof. Stephen Cohen. Tamir wrote to Peres after a January 1988 meeting with El-Baz that “their and our common motive is that our winning the elections is a prerequisite for progress in peace. With the Likud there can be no peace because for that party to accept territorial concessions is like the Soviet Union without Communism”.

Prior to the Shultz plan, Egypt hoped to pitch its own initiative that would call for the participation of foreign ministers, not prime ministers, so that Peres’s participation “would give him great exposure and help him in terms of Israeli public opinion”. Tamir says that El-Baz emphasized he “will do everything possible to

²⁴⁶ “Talking Points for Paris and London [Probably for Assistant Secretary Richard Murphy on his travels there but possibly for NSC staffer William Burns who was accompanying him and in whose files the document is located]”, n.d., Collection “Burns, William J: Files”, Box 91844, Folder “Peace Process, 1988 [4 of 4],” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²⁴⁷ Shimon Schiffer, “Khoter Le-Shalom (Striving for Peace, in Hebrew),” *Yediot Ahronot*, June 10, 2011, sec. “Shabbat Musaf” Friday Addendum. The quotes that follow are also from the Schiffer piece.

create a background to help the Labor Alignment win an election in every way. If they do not, there will be stagnation and possibly a victory for the Likud, and then this will be a disaster for us and for them. They have decided to help Peres from now until April to present to Israel a practical proposal for movement”.

El-Baz told Novik and Cohen that, when Mubarak visited the U.S. in January, the Egyptian president told Reagan and Shultz that “he sees in Israel only one partner. That only Peres is a partner for peace. He completely accepts this thesis, and to contribute to this the PLO will disappear under the carpet for the near future and will not even raise a request for change until after the elections in Israel”. At another meeting, El-Baz told Novik that “we will continue to prove to the Israeli voter that the Labor Alignment is the only partner for dialogue for the sake of peace” and that “Mubarak is ready to appear on Israeli television on the [current affairs program] ‘Moked’ [literally, “Focus”] as soon as you say it would be good for you”.

The Egyptian Ambassador to Israel, Mohammed Bassiouny, kept Peres’s people in the loop about his official meetings with Shamir’s office. He relayed that Mubarak turned down repeated entreaties from Shamir to hold a joint peace summit without preconditions that would also include King Hussein of Jordan. This fits with the claims of a former staffer at the Israeli Embassy in Cairo, who wrote that Mubarak intensely disliked PM Shamir and refused to grant him meetings (though not other Israelis) out of hopes this would undermine Shamir back home.²⁴⁸ Finally, I have recently confirmed the general thrust of Schiffer’s claims in the article with Dennis Ross. This portion of the conversation went as follows:

²⁴⁸ Dowek, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations, 1980-2000*, 290-291.

“DW: In eighty-eight we have Osama el-Baz telling folks like Nimrod Novik that the Egyptian government was going to do everything it could to make Labor look good before their upcoming elections.

Ross: I remember that. I had conversations with Osama el-Baz. But I told him it was a delicate business and Egypt should be careful not to look like it was trying to manipulate Israeli politics”.²⁴⁹

Egyptian efforts also seem to have been linked with separate endeavors by both the PLO and by France. Just after Egypt and Jordan held their meeting with the PLO at Aqaba, Arafat proclaimed that Israeli Arabs should “push forward the peace process” by voting in the Israeli election.²⁵⁰ Also, Arafat advisor Hani al-Hassan went to Saudi Arabia to ask Islamic authorities in Mecca to issue a fatwa instructing Israeli Arabs to vote for the candidate most likely to negotiate peace with the Palestinians.²⁵¹

French President Francois Mitterrand visited Egypt a few days after Aqaba to meet with Mubarak. During the visit, they sought to highlight ongoing multilateral negotiations to organize a possible peace conference and to draw more attention to the results of Aqaba. The fact that they had already met the previous month supports the notion that the purpose of their meeting may have been tied in with Israeli elections later that week.²⁵²

Some observers suggest that even the Soviet Union was trying to facilitate a

²⁴⁹ Dennis Ross, “Interview with the Author,” March 23, 2012.

²⁵⁰ “Arafat calls on Arabs to vote in Israeli election,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 24, 1988.

²⁵¹ Patrick Tyler, “PLO Official Discusses Revival of ‘Jordan Option’,” *Washington Post*, October 16, 1988.

²⁵² Christopher Walker, “Mitterrand backs moderate Arabs, Cairo summit talks, France and Egypt,” *The Times (of London)*, October 27, 1988; John Rogers, “Mitterrand visits Egypt for Middle East talks,” *Reuters*, October 25, 1988; Walker, “Arab Leaders United in Bid to Gain Votes for Peres: Israeli General Election.”

Peres triumph in 1988.²⁵³ Although the two nations did not have prior relations, the Soviets agreed to welcome an unprecedented Israeli consular mission to Moscow after meetings with Peres in Madrid, Washington and Geneva that May.²⁵⁴ Peres claimed that they also were relenting on their previous demand that relations could only be restored following the creation of a Palestinian state, instead lowering their bar to simply holding the international conference.²⁵⁵ Allegedly, in the lead up to Aqaba, Soviet officials played an important role in helping the Egyptians to persuade Arafat to hint that he was open to the plan for confederation with Jordan.²⁵⁶

Did these Policy Succeed?

No. Reagan's second term approach to LSI was characterized by policy drift. With the president so removed from decision-making and his secretary of state so restrained on Arab-Israeli issues, opportunities for LSI were missed or mishandled and were unable to succeed without higher-level support. Also, efforts by third-parties were unable to accomplish much in light of Washington's lackluster approach and King Hussein's stunning disavowal of the West Bank.

The overall low level of efficacy for LSI during Reagan's second term stands in stark contrast to the four years that followed and the four years preceding. During Reagan's first term, his attention was more tightly focused on Arab-Israeli issues because of the war in Lebanon. His policies therefore tended to be carried

²⁵³ "Editorial: Israel's Real Issue," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 28, 1988.

²⁵⁴ Ruth Sinai, "Peres Sees Soviets Agreeing to U.S. Mideast Accord," *Associated Press*, May 17, 1988; Sergei Shargorodsky, "Israeli Leaders Hail Consular Mission To Moscow," *Associated Press*, July 24, 1988.

²⁵⁵ Bernard Edinger, "Israelis say Soviets no longer demand Palestinian State," *Reuters*, May 27, 1988.

²⁵⁶ Albright and Kunstel, "Hussein Holds Surprise Talks with Arafat: Goal May be to Boost Israel's Peres in Election."

out then with stronger levels of U.S. commitment. During George H. W. Bush's term, the president was either deeply invested in leadership selection intervention or charged his activist secretary of state, James Baker, with doing the same. In both instances, the rates of LSI success were greater than Reagan's second term.

During phase one, the administration failed to act swiftly enough to take advantage of the brief window in which Peres still retained the prime ministership. A more active and early effort to provide the participants with political cover could have enabled them to reach a deal like the London Agreement when Peres was still powerful enough to dissolve the NUG and call elections based on the peace plan.

During phase two, the administration tended to follow Secretary Shultz's lead of refusing to get involved in Israeli politics. American non-involvement had an impact on Israeli politics that went counter to what administration officials hoped to see happen there. In addition to failing in this narrow sense, the administration also undermined its broader objective of marginalizing the PLO by letting its last real chance at a viable Jordanian option slip through its fingers.

During phase three, the administration promoted a peace plan that was designed to bolster the cause of peace and moderation in the region, but it failed to achieve this objective. Despite becoming more active on the process with repeated shuttle visits to the region, Shultz proved that he was a paper tiger, enabling Shamir to say no to him without tangible consequences. Some administration officials tried to advance a tougher line, but they were unsuccessful because they did not have sustained senior buy-in for their efforts. Conscious neutrality actually impacted the internal balance of power within Israeli politics by unintentionally bolstering Likud.

<Efficacy, Phase One>

Time ran out for Peres because the win sets between him and Hussein were just too far apart for a deal to be reached before the rotation agreement. For some time, the two sides could not close the ground between them over two main issues: the PLO and an international conference. Peres felt he could not proceed with the PLO and Hussein felt he could not proceed without them. Hussein wanted negotiations to take place in the context of a binding, multilateral conference, whereas Peres was reluctant to consider a conference that was anything but a “castrated” charade that would serve as an opening ceremony for direct talks. The king severed all ties with the PLO in February of 1986, but by that point there was little time to work out the necessary compromises that would enable a deal.

Pickering’s efforts to help Peres cling to high office would certainly have been easier had Peres and Hussein been willing to soften their negotiating positions before the rotation agreement. However, he suffered from a lack of enthusiastic support from Washington in this endeavor. The actions of principal American officials ultimately kept the Jordanian and Israeli positions farther apart rather than helping them bridge their gaps. Reagan and Shultz’s hard line against an international conference ignored the fact that the king was politically unable to water down this demand without political cover from outside. Wat Cluverius, a State Department official shuttling between Amman and Jerusalem, explained:

“This is where I have problems with George Shultz and his immediate staff. He said not to an international conference... Shultz wouldn’t push for it, and I kept writing messages that there is no way forward except through an international conference. And I would get phone calls saying ‘what are you smoking out there? The Secretary doesn’t want one’. And I would say I don’t care, I’m

supposed to tell him what I think would work and what I think won't work".²⁵⁷

In the end, what helped Hussein reach agreement with Peres at London in early 1987 was when the Egyptians decided to fill this vacuum and give Hussein the political cover Washington was not providing. As Foreign Minister, Peres visited Mubarak in February, and they agreed on compromises to mitigate the PLO and conference issues that emboldened Hussein to finally go out on that limb.²⁵⁸ This was a role that Washington could have been playing earlier had Shultz and the president been more flexible and nuanced in their approaches. Had a London Accord-type agreement been reached before rather than after Peres surrendered the premiership to Yitzhak Shamir, it might have been a totally different ballgame. Yet, when Hussein came to Washington in June of 1986, Shultz was encouraging the president to pay little heed to the ongoing efforts between Hussein and Peres.

<Efficacy, Phase Two>

Without American support, the joint scheme between Hussein and Peres quickly fizzled out. Not only did Shultz decide to cancel his plans to visit the region based upon his meeting with Arens, the Likud leaked this information, making it public knowledge that the secretary of state was declining to support the plan.²⁵⁹ Whereas before Peres would have benefitted most from American support to produce a deal, he had now lost many of the levers available to him as prime minister, and what he really needed was strong American backing for a deal after it

²⁵⁷ Cluverius, "Interview with Ambassador Wat Tyler Cluverius IV," 152.

²⁵⁸ Yehuda Lukacs, *Israel, Jordan, and the Peace Process* (Syracuse University Press, 1997), 171-172.

²⁵⁹ Thomas L. Friedman, "Peres-Shamir struggle: The battle for Shultz's ear," *New York Times*, April 28, 1987; Glenn Frankel, "U.S. pressing Israel, Jordan to hold direct peace talks: Move seen imperiling fragile coalition," *Washington Post*, April 30, 1987.

had been reached. He could no longer dissolve the government at will and instead needed a surge of initiative to help him garner 61 MKs for a vote of no confidence. He retained high public approval levels (25% higher than Shamir) but was unable to translate that popularity into political gains without an election.²⁶⁰

Without such support Peres fell flat on his face. By mid-May it became clear that Peres could neither garner a majority of the cabinet for the London Agreement, nor could he get more than 59 votes in the Knesset – just shy of what he needed to bring down the government.²⁶¹ Peres then visited Washington to urge more active American support for the plan, but Pickering says “by then the whole thing had gone flat, and you couldn’t get air back into the tire”.²⁶² Scholars Caplan and Zittrain Eisenberg agree that Washington’s lack of enthusiasm “denied Peres the political ammunition with which he was hoping to create a groundswell of support for the plan within the Knesset and among the Israeli electorate”.²⁶³

It was clear to many observers at the time that Shultz was abandoning Peres. For instance, British PM Thatcher wrote a letter to President Reagan urging a more proactive approach to the Jordanian-Israeli accords. Oakley explains to Carlucci that she was “urging greater activity on our part in support of Peres and the international conference. She says... giving [Shamir] a veto will, she believes, erode

²⁶⁰ Glenn Frankel, “Coalition, Peres’ Political Career Threatened by Israeli Dispute,” *Washington Post*, May 8, 1987.

²⁶¹ Glenn Frankel, “Israeli Cabinet Refuses to Back Peace Talks; Likud’s Victory leaves Coalition, Conference Plans Immobilized,” *Washington Post*, May 14, 1987.

²⁶² Former US Ambassador to Israel Thomas Pickering, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁶³ Laura Zittrain Eisenberg and Neil Caplan, *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: Patterns, Problems, Possibilities*, 2nd ed. (Indiana University Press, 2010), 83-84.

Peres' position".²⁶⁴ Hussein also wrote to Shultz urging him to "get engaged and help Peres; he is exposed".²⁶⁵ As noted above, NSC staff recognized that Shultz's approach was allowing Shamir to sit tight and wait out the London Agreement.

Not only did the administration fail in the narrow sense of trying to bolster a proponent of peace, it also failed in the broader sense of advancing the process and boosting American influence in the region. Oakley pointed out that Shultz's low-key approach also persuaded people in the region that the administration's posture was one of disinterest and drift. Observers aptly wondered why the U.S. was so focused on keeping the Soviets out of the region when it was itself so noticeably uninvolved.²⁶⁶ One area of administration reluctance about the plan was that they ideally would have liked for stronger terms for marginalizing the PLO from talks. However, by letting the London Agreement fall apart, the administration lost their last, best chance for a viable Jordanian agreement. When the intifada broke out later that year, it spelled the beginning of the end for Jordanian condominium.

<Efficacy, Phase Three>

In the end, the right and left blocs were evenly tied at 60 to 60 seats in the Knesset, with Likud winning one more seat as a party than Labor. Given that Likud held a commanding lead earlier in the year, the fact that Labor closed the gap at all is noteworthy. Labor ran a stronger campaign in 1988, winning more votes with a

²⁶⁴ "Prime Minister Thatcher's Letter on the Peace Process - Memorandum for Frank C. Carlucci from Robert B. Oakley."

²⁶⁵ "Letter from King Hussein - Memorandum for Frank C. Carlucci from Robert B. Oakley."

²⁶⁶ Mary Curtius, "Shultz under fire: Peres aides say U.S. has let Soviets seize Mideast initiative," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 17, 1987.

outspoken ideological appeal that it had with its “catch-all” strategy of 1984.²⁶⁷ However, a large part of narrowing this gap had to do with ideological polarization that diminished the returns for both major parties while boosting turnout for orthodox and radical secular parties.²⁶⁸ It is even possible that Labor could have won the election if not for a grisly terror attack just two days before the election.²⁶⁹

However, much of this gain was in spite of American efforts, not because of them. The fact that the administration was pushing a peace plan certainly appealed to Labor strategists, but the lackluster manner in which it was promoted both killed the initiative and defused the possibility that it might have had for helping Labor at the polls. Despite repeated attempts by other high-level American officials to reinforce Shultz’s message with an undercurrent of toughness, his soft-soap approach was generally what prevailed. By the time Israeli elections rolled around, there was very little being said in Washington about the peace process at all.

Whereas the next American secretary of state, James Baker, was notorious for threatening to “leave a dead cat” on the doorstep of whoever said no to his proposals for the 1991 Madrid conference, Shultz was a paper tiger. Shamir repeatedly flouted his entreaties, even when offered a generous set of carrots through the MOU on strategic cooperation. As one Israeli commentator observed, the message of letting his original 10-day deadline pass without an Israeli response and then also granting the MOU turned out to be “one may say no to America and

²⁶⁷ J. Mendilow, “The Swing of the Pendulum: The Israeli Labor Alignment, 1988,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25, no. 2 (1993): 241–259.

²⁶⁸ Don Peretz and Sammy Smooha, “Israel’s Twelfth Knesset Election: An All-Loser Game,” *Middle East Journal* 43, no. 3 (Summer 1989): 388–405.

²⁶⁹ Mendilow, “The Swing of the Pendulum,” 254.

still get a bonus!".²⁷⁰ Another commentator pointed out that what Shultz really needed to deliver was "the diplomatic equivalent of a good kick in the crotch".²⁷¹

<Efficacy, Other Meddlers>

A range of other actors actively tried to conduct LSI to help the Israeli left in the 1988 elections, and, unlike the U.S., their efforts probably had a generally positive effect. However, the magnitude of this effect is negligible in comparison to the deleterious effects of King Hussein's new West Bank policy and America's laissez faire posture. Also, in two instances the pretenses behind which LSI was being pursued did not hold up to scrutiny and backfired rather than helping.

For instance, the Egyptian effort to help Peres was probably a net positive, but Jordanian and Palestinian efforts were more problematic. Yasser Arafat's call on Arab Israeli voters to support the party of peace was a convenient tool for aggressive opposition advertisements suggesting the party was in league with terrorists: "'Why,' it was repeatedly asked in the Likud's television campaign, 'why does the PLO urge voters to support Labor?'" Then, when it was revealed that King Hussein's *Nightline* appearance had been solicited and facilitated by Peres's close advisors, the effort backfired and "lent credence to the Likud's accusations that the [Labor] Alignment was soliciting foreign intervention in the elections".²⁷²

More damaging by far, however, was King Hussein's political separation from the West Bank. When he started to float suggestions in June that he might bow out to the PLO, Shamir jumped on these statements to suggest that the Jordanian option

²⁷⁰ Yoel Marcus, "Six Feet Under," trans. FBIS, *Ha'aretz* (reprinted in the Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol 17, No. 4 [Summer, 1988]: pp. 153-155, April 7, 1988).

²⁷¹ Wilbur G. Landrey, "Shultz, the paper tiger?," *St. Petersburg Times*, March 13, 1988.

²⁷² Mendilow, "The Swing of the Pendulum," 249.

was a mirage, and Peres was forced to scramble to refute this claim.²⁷³ Then, when he announced the full-fledged schism at the end of July, it was devastating for Labor no matter how much the king later backtracked to hint that confederation was still viable. The peace camp did what it would to recover some ground by floating a new initiative – this one for elections in the Palestinian territories to elect a non-PLO leadership with which to negotiate. In spite of this plan, CIA analysts observed privately in August that “Foreign Minister Peres’s Labor Party has been dealt a severe blow by Hussein’s disengagement, as it undermines the ‘Jordanian option’ that has served as the foundation stone of Labor’s peace process platform”.²⁷⁴ In short, gestures of support can be helpful in isolation but are usually much more persuasive when used to amplify the context of a compelling overall process.

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

The four theories tested by this dissertation offer divergent predictions with regard to whether or not perceptions of sender state interests are likely to increase or decrease the possibility of leadership selection intervention. Theory #1 (national interests theory) anticipates that LSI occurrence should directly correlate to objective opportunities for meddling abroad. Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative

²⁷³ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (ME/0174/i), “King Husayn says Shultz initiative still the subject of dialogue.”

²⁷⁴ “The Arab-Israeli Peace Process: Jordan’s Disengagement from the West Bank’ - Item in Regular Report Entitled Near East and South Asia Review”. CIA Directorate of Intelligence, August 26, 1988. CREST Collection (The CIA Records Search Tool). The National Archives and Records Administration “Site II” facility in College Park, Maryland.” See also James McCartney, “Hussein has torpedoed peace plan, U.S. aides say,” *Knight-Ridder News Service*, August 11, 1988; BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (ME/0239/A/1), trans., “Israel: Peres says Palestinian uprising ‘cannot end in victory’”, August 22, 1988.

approach) expects that rates occurrence should be low on the U.S.-Israel directed dyad because pro-Israel lobbyists and members of Congress tend to believe that intervention in Israeli politics does not further U.S. interests. Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) expects rates of LSI occurrence to be high because working-level officials in the executive branch tend to see a strong relationship between national interests and support for peacemakers within Israeli politics. Finally, Theory #4 (leadership theory) expects LSI to vary in accordance to the preferences of higher-level political officials within the sender state.

In this regard, the data for this episode seems to support leadership theory. Two personalities loom large in this entire drama: (1) President Reagan for his deferential, aloof approach and (2) Secretary of State Shultz for his disinterested, low-key approach to the peace process and aversion to getting caught up in Israeli domestic politics. As Oakley notes in his ADST oral history, “Shultz had already been burned [over the Reagan Plan and May 17th Accords]... but even had that not happened, I don’t think the Secretary would have felt it wise to take 21 trips to Damascus and spend innumerable hours on a problem that was not flaring up. Some people get the ‘Middle East’ bug; others don’t – regardless of circumstances on the ground”. In my interview with then-Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs Richard Murphy, he remarked that “Shultz was especially very determined to avoid entanglement in Israeli politics... about not getting twisted around the wheel of domestic politics in Israel, especially the rivalry between Peres and Shamir”.²⁷⁵

In addition to getting upset at Pickering for constantly urging him to do more

²⁷⁵Murphy, “Interview with the Author.”

on the process,²⁷⁶ Shultz bore a personal animus against Peres during periods two and three that could not have boosted his desire to get involved. Philip Wilcox, who was then the U.S. Consul General in East Jerusalem and was in the waiting room during at least one of Shultz's meetings with Israeli intermediaries over the London Accords, says that "Shultz was furious toward Peres regarding Pollard and Iran-Contra. He felt betrayed by Peres" because both breaches happened while he was prime minister even though he was not responsible for the Pollard spying episode, nor was he aware that Shultz was being cut out of the loop on Iran-Contra. Also, he suggests that interpersonally "Shultz liked Shamir" even if they did not always see eye to eye on the territories.²⁷⁷ He felt less warmly toward Peres, since, as Pickering notes, "it was also true that Peres tended to drive Shultz nuts once in a while... because he had a thousand ideas, about ten percent of which were very good and about eighty percent of which were in the middle and 10 percent were [not]".²⁷⁸

These personal traits seem to have played a major role in shaping how Shultz perceived U.S. interests toward Israeli politics during term two and affecting the actual patterns of occurrence. The low rates of LSI and high rates of attempted freelancing fit quite well with Theory #4 but much less well with the other approaches. Objectively, meddling in Israeli politics should have been easiest during this period due to the existence of the NUG tied at 60-60, and also most appealing, due to the objective threat to US interests caused by the intifada and the global outrage that it provoked. And yet authoritative LSI happened at no point

²⁷⁶ Hughes, "Interview with Ambassador Arthur H. Hughes," 41-42.

²⁷⁷ Former US Consul General in East Jerusalem, Ambassador Philip Wilcox, "Interview with the Author", February 14, 2011.

²⁷⁸ Former US Ambassador to Israel Thomas Pickering, "Interview with the Author."

during this period by the United States. The fact that numerous other actors found these objective structural features of the situation compelling enough to justify LSI should provide additional reason to doubt that national interests were driving American decision-making with regard to whether or not to undertake LSI.

At first glance, the low rate of LSI is congruent with the preferences of lobbyists and members of Congress. For instance, in 1986 AIPAC argued that the Israeli rotation agreement that would put Shamir in power “will not, as Israel’s detractors claim, end the possibilities for negotiations” since “as Prime Minister, Shamir will follow the same national unity government agreement which has guided Peres”.²⁷⁹ The group was generally critical of the international conference premise upon which the London Accords revolved, and its executive director called on members to reject “the ever present danger” of disunity caused by “the split between the two major parties in Israel”.²⁸⁰

However, this data is congruent with Theory #2 for the wrong reasons. When asked about the impact of these domestic political forces, Murphy was dismissive, responding “was Shultz afraid of Congress and AIPAC? No, I wouldn’t describe it that way”. Instead, he put much more store in Shultz’s personal beliefs about the PLO, Arab states, and the peace process.²⁸¹ He also received strong support from members of Congress for his push for calm in 1988, given the low-key approach that he was naturally inclined to take.²⁸² Nor was Reagan’s disinterest in

²⁷⁹ “Editorial: What Do They Want?” *Near East Report* 30, no. 28 (July 21, 1986).

²⁸⁰ “Dine: Unity to Meet Challenges (Excerpts from the Address of AIPAC Executive Director Thomas Dine),” *Near East Report* 32, no. 21 (May 23, 1988).

²⁸¹ Murphy, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁸² For instance, see “Heard on Capitol Hill: Legislators Support Shultz Mission,” *Near East Report* 32, no. 10 (March 7, 1988).

resolving the conflict due to fear of Congress – he simply did not care that much.

Finally, the case also provides evidence against bureaucratic politics theory. Lower-ranking members of government repeatedly preferred LSI against Shamir, but their preferences mattered little for shaping mainstream American policy toward the conflict. Top principals felt otherwise, and their beliefs prevailed in the battle to determine whether or not the U.S. got involved.

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

The theories also diverge with regard to how tightly LSI occurrence is expected to correlate with close leadership contests in the target country. Theory #1 (national interests theory) expects that the correlation should be extremely tight, with the occurrence of LSI tracking very closely to the ebb and flow of possible leadership contests occurring overseas. However, theory #4 (leadership theory) expects that the occurrence of LSI must first be conditioned upon whether or not top officials in the sender state are actually paying attention to political contests as they develop within the target.

Objectively, 1984-1988 was the period of Israeli politics in which the two main parties were almost perfectly matched in their political power. The left- and right-wing blocs were tied in the Knesset 60-60, and the parties even traded the premiership mid-way through the government's term. With power in Labor's hands during the first half of the government, America could have advanced Labor's cause without even having to gain it votes or seats *per se*. All that would have been required would have been to help Labor sever the rotation and sustain the status

quo. And the intifada during the last year of this period also made Israeli politics more arresting and salient for American interests over the global outcry that it evoked. And yet the U.S. generally avoided meddling in Israeli politics. These cases therefore provide strong evidence against Theory #1.

One possible explanation is that administration officials would have loved to meddle in Israeli politics but were deterred or distracted by members of Congress or the pro-Israel lobby, who tend to see little difference between Labor and Likud. However, there is little evidence for this perspective. Cluverius and Oakley both argue that Congress kept a relatively low profile on the conflict during Reagan's second term and did not dissuade them much from pursuing preferred policies. When asked if the administration encountered problems with Congress, Cluverius, who worked on this file during 1985 and 86, responded "No. The tendency is to get involved when things are very high visibility. This was a period of low visibility".²⁸³ Oakley, who covered Mideast issues at the NSC in '87 and '88, remarks "I must say that in my two years at the NSC, we had relatively little pressure from U.S. domestic constituencies. We had some problems with arms sales to... Arab states, but we had no major [domestic] debates on the peace process".²⁸⁴ In fact, in March of 1988 Shultz even received a letter from thirty members of Congress, many of whom were traditionally pro-Israel stalwarts, urging him to persist in his efforts and expressing "dismay" at Shamir's statements rejecting land for peace.²⁸⁵

Nor does bureaucratic politics theory provide a better explanation than the

²⁸³ Cluverius, "Interview with Ambassador Wat Tyler Cluverius IV," 53.

²⁸⁴ Oakley, "Interview with Ambassador Robert B. Oakley," 84.

²⁸⁵ David B. Ottaway, "Shamir Faces Consensus in U.S. for Peace Plan: Battle of Wills Expected for Shultz, Israeli," *Washington Post*, March 13, 1988.

lobby-legislative approach. Working level officials covering Mideast affairs tend to perceive close contests in Israeli politics more often than the political leadership, but this would cause more LSI to occur during this period, not less. Many of the officials below Shultz's paygrade felt that Labor could be significantly advantaged by American involvement, but if their concern in this regard was decisive we should expect more LSI during this period, not less.

Instead, personalities provide the best explanation for variation in occurrence and perceptions of the state of Israeli politics. Throughout this period, Pickering was optimistic, perhaps even fixated, on the possibility that American involvement could tip the scales toward Labor. Reagan even wishfully foresaw a possibility that Peres might remain prime minister beyond 1986, but he does not appear to have given much thought to whether American involvement might make the critical difference. Meanwhile, Shultz does not appear to have given much consideration to the state of internal Israeli politics except by recognizing that he wanted to stay out. He appears to have been much less interested in the rotation than his ambassador in Tel Aviv, and he did not seem to foresee the possibility that a more active American role could have changed outcomes in Israeli politics. Shultz's unique perception of Israeli politics helps explain why LSI rates in Reagan's second term were so low, and it also provides evidence in favor of Theory #4.

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

The theories pose contradictory predictions with regard to the dynamics of deliberation about LSI within the sender state. Theories 2 and 3 (the lobby-

legislative and bureaucratic politics approaches) expect that these actors are likely to be well-informed about deliberations over whether or not to pursue LSI before they actually occur. Leadership theory, on the other hand, expects these actors to be kept in the dark because doing so serves the interests of the sender state's top political leaders.

Leadership theory seems to provide the best framework for explaining patterns of decision-making toward Israeli politics during this period. For instance, Pickering's disgruntled political counselor Roger Harrison remarks that his boss "didn't ever feel in need of political counsel, least of all from me. I mean, he was not a man tortured by self-doubt, so he essentially didn't use the political section". In effect, he was "running this out of his vest pocket".²⁸⁶

Similarly, deliberations over the London Agreement were mostly offline, conducted verbally and outside of normal channels. The U.S. was first informed about the agreement when Yossi Beilin rushed to meet Shultz's aide Charlie Hill in Helsinki, not in writing. In the weeks that followed, Labor and Likud envoys poured through Washington in efforts to make the case for their respective parties, leaving both the American and Israeli embassies cut out of the actual decision-making process.²⁸⁷ Final decision-making took place mainly out of the seventh floor of Foggy Bottom and in occasional conversations between Reagan and the secretary.

Even more astonishing are the remarks of Osama El-Baz with regard to Egyptian LSI toward Israel during this period. According to close-held memos from the Peres camp, El-Baz told Nimrod Novik when they met in Rome that "I prefer not

²⁸⁶ Harrison, "Interview with Ambassador Roger G. Harrison," 81 & 84.

²⁸⁷ Amb. Oded Eran, "Interview with the Author", June 6, 2011.

to talk on the phone. Our troops and your troops listen. They do not need to hear what we are planning”.²⁸⁸ All of the written memoranda comprising this exchange were marked “eyes only” for Peres or Mubarak, were labeled highly restricted (often outside of formal governmental systems), or were wiped clean from government computers when the premiership rotated to Likud.²⁸⁹

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

Another area in which the theories diverge involves cycles of political power within the sender state. The lobby-legislative approach (Theory #2) expects that these actors should be even more influential during periods of divided government and in the lead-up to elections in the sender state. The bureaucratic politics approach (Theory #3) expects that working-level officials in the executive branch should be more influential during periods at the start of a presidential administration. Alternative theories hold that failure to fulfill these predictions offers a rather strong test against these two domestic structural approaches.

In this regard, the second term Reagan cases offer some very strong evidence against Theories 2 and 3. The most active period of American peace process diplomacy was during the fourth year of the term, when, according to lobby-legislative theory American presidents are supposed to be the *most* wary of domestic pressures, not the least. American recognition of the PLO was delayed until after the vote, but the fall-off in activity during the summer had more to do with Hussein and Shultz giving up on hopes that the initiative would bear fruit, not

²⁸⁸ Schiffer, “Khoter Le-Shalom (Striving for Peace, in Hebrew).”

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

because the effort was hushed up due to domestic political reasons.

Meanwhile, the least active period of American activity on the peace process was 1985 and 1986. This should have been the most active time for U.S. diplomacy according to lobby-legislative theory because the president has a new mandate and elections are far off. This should also have been the most active time for U.S. diplomacy under bureaucratic politics theory because political appointees are weaker during the start of a president's term – especially the first but also the second. And yet we see less LSI in this period than in 1988. A large part of this discrepancy had to do with political appointees being more interested in other aspects of U.S.-Israel relations, especially crafting Israel's economic bailout package.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

The bureaucratic politics approach (Theory #3) holds that LSI should often be made by working-level officials without the approval of higher ups. Meanwhile, leadership theory (Theory #4) and the national interests theory (Theory #1) anticipate that the sender state's foreign policy should not be made with multiple voices at once. Leadership theory also anticipates that freelancing should be less likely to occur when the president demonstrates an active style of general management and of specific oversight vis-à-vis bilateral relations with the target.

There was an enormous amount of LSI freelancing during this period. This contradicts Theory #1 (national interests theory), which does not expect foreign policy to be made with multiple voices at once in the same nation. A large part of this has to do with personalities. Reagan was absent and Shultz was driving

recklessly slow in the highway fast lane. Naturally, other people handling the Mideast file and stuck behind his slow-go approach grew very frustrated, and sometimes this frustration found voice in freelance attempts at LSI. The fact that we see the most freelancing thus far in this study during Reagan's second term provides mitigating evidence for Theory #4 by suggesting that the president's lax management style provided the incentive and made allowance for more freelancing than normally occurs. Theory #3 is also bolstered somewhat, because it was lower-level (though still political level) officials conducting LSI in this renegade manner, but their influence was minimal and subject to the prior fact of Reagan choosing not to get involved.

6. Consistency of Message:

The theories also offer different predictions with regard to whether or not the sender state's policies are likely to convey a consistent message to observers in the target state. National interests theory (Theory #1) predicts that foreign policy messaging should be consistent and that dissenting domestic voices should be unlikely to emerge. Meanwhile, the other theories anticipate that institutional or personal disagreements within the sender state should be likely to undermine the consistency of messaging by that country's government.

The U.S. message did suffer from inconsistency during this period, and there is strong indication that this undermined the efficacy of American support for Israeli advocates of peace. Again, this contradicts Theory #1, which anticipates that domestic disputes should have a negligible impact over outcomes in international

relations. A big part of the discrepancy in messaging had to do with disputes among elite personalities. Reagan was open to pressure from below at times, while Shultz preferred to remain affable and conciliatory. Thus, we occasionally see tough statements coming out of not just Embassy Tel Aviv but also the White House, such as when Reagan said enemies of peace would have to answer to their own people and criticized leaders who do not work proactively to resolve the conflict. Meanwhile, the secretary of state, who was much more visible, was articulating a more gentle line toward Israel's right wing. This supports Theory #4.

Theory #2 receives some support but not much. Members of Congress did express a softer line toward Shamir when he visited Washington in March of 1988, saying they did not want to force Israel to act against what it felt were its important security needs. However, he also encountered widespread support for Shultz's initiative, and nobody in Congress seemed advocate for taking it off the table.²⁹⁰

Theory #3 does not receive much support. Lower-level officials did work to toughen Shultz's message some but did not seem to have much impact on how American policy was perceived at the time.

7. Suitability of Message:

The last area in which the theories diverge involves whether or not messaging by the sender state is likely to be suited to the needs of its favored protégé within the politics of the target nation. National interests theory (Theory #1) argues that messaging should be well-suited to sender state objectives, whereas

²⁹⁰ John Felton, "U.S. Leaders Shun Confrontation with Shamir," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, March 19, 1988.

the other theories emphasize institutional or personal biases that may undermine the sender state's ability to achieve this goal.

The core message during this period provides support for Theory #4 that unsuitable messages for boosting advocates of peace can generally be attributable to idiosyncratic personal preferences or beliefs of top leaders. Shultz's decision to provide Israel with an MOU in 1988 suggested to Israeli commentators that saying no to the U.S. was not only permissible but came with a bonus. In 1987, Shultz almost single-handedly determined Washington's response to the London Agreement as something akin to "thanks but no thanks". And in 1985 and 1986 he conveyed the message that it was up to Israelis and Jordanians to figure out how to get to direct talks and that American involvement would not extend beyond low-level intermediaries until they sorted that out on their own.

In each instance, the core U.S. message was insufficient for bolstering advocates of peace and probably benefitted their opponents. The selection of this message is not attributable to lobby-legislative forces because members of Congress do not seem to have played a decisive role in picking or forcing this message on the administration. Nor can the message be attributed to the bureaucracy, since those groups prefer a tough U.S. posture to Israeli inflexibility on the peace process, not a tender one. Instead, the reason for unsuitable U.S. messaging during Reagan's second term was intensely personal, the product of Shultz's low-key style and preference for conflict management over conflict resolution. In the absence of strong leadership from Reagan, his secretary of state may instead have exacerbated the very conflict he hoped to keep in check. Certainly, in these three phases of

Reagan's second term, America's tendency to engage in actions that benefitted the Likud and undermined Labor were largely attributable to him.

Conclusion

President Ronald Reagan displayed fleeting interest in addressing the Arab-Israeli conflict. Other than when his interest was keenly focused on the issue due to American involvement in the Lebanon War, he remained largely aloof from the issue. Nor did he exert meaningful oversight most of the time. Instead, he deferred to his point person, Secretary of State George Shultz, especially during his second term. Nor did he do much to stop lower-ranking officials from trying to carry out unauthorized LSI by freelance, who were frustrated with the go-slow approach generally preferred by the secretary.

The low rates of actual LSI, high rates of attempted freelancing, and dismal rates of efficacy – especially during term two – of American efforts to support the peace camp in Israel are largely attributable to issues of leadership. These include the subjective beliefs, perceptions, and styles of top American leaders. Far less persuasive are arguments that these patterns in the dynamics of LSI are attributable to structural forces – such as objective American interests abroad, overwhelming pressure from Congress and the pro-Israel lobby, or the dictates of organizational interests in the Washington bureaucracy.

The chapter that follows paints a very different picture with regard to LSI, and much of that difference can be tied to the personal decisions and styles of two

individuals: President George H. W. Bush and Secretary of State James A. Baker. Whereas Reagan and Shultz displayed aloof or low-key approaches to the conflict, Bush and Baker demonstrated a mix of strong feelings and steely resolve. As a result, the patterns of leadership selection intervention during Bush 41's presidency stand in stark contrast to the course of events under Reagan, the man for whom he had only just served as vice president.

Chapter V.
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The George H. W. Bush Years
(1989-1993)

President George H. W. Bush had served as Reagan's vice president for eight years, but he brought to the Oval Office a very different management style and worldview toward Israel than did his predecessor. It was clear from the outset that he and his secretary of state, James Baker, were disinclined to give Israel the same leeway it received during the Reagan years and that they would run a much tighter ship in terms of decision-making.¹ However, they faced frustrating circumstances in Israel: an ongoing Intifada and a government that had Likud at the helm.

As Baker advisor Aaron David Miller puts it "George H. W. Bush empowered Baker... [while] Baker drove the diplomacy". The Secretary was "the president's man at the State Department," but such a close connection to the Oval Office and their decades-long friendship meant that Baker was able to operate freely on the basis of the president's trust. As a result, "Baker's relationship with Bush, and the president's willingness to empower Baker to make peace a top priority, was indispensable... [giving him] the imprimatur of the president".²

The Bush administration pursued a variety of approaches to leadership selection intervention (LSI) in Israel. These include periods of: (1) urging Labor to

¹ Fred Axelgard, "The New U.S. Administration," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1989): 168-170. Also, William Andreas Brown, "Interview with Ambassador William Andreas Brown", November 3, 1998, 262-263, The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), Library of Congress.

² Aaron David Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace* (Bantam Books, 2008), 200-201.

remain in a Likud government in 1989; (2) a semi-incoherent approach to meddling during the 1990 Israeli coalition crisis; (3) total non-LSI from the 1991 Gulf War through the Madrid conference; and (4) the most confrontational episode of LSI in U.S.-Israel relations over American housing loan guarantees (HLGs) in 1992.

The Bush administration also witnessed a range of outcomes with regard to this study's second dependent variable: LSI efficacy. On one hand, its approach in 1992 was a double success: boosting Labor at the polls and advancing the Middle East peace process. On the other hand, its approach in 1990 produced a double failure: failing to help Labor form a government and failing to sustain the process. However, the administration was pursuing a high stakes strategy by running the risk of fracturing Israel's national unity government (NUG). If not for a series of unexpected developments, it is quite possible Washington's gamble in 1990 could have instead produced a double success.

In each instance, the American approach was suffused with features of the Bush-Baker relationship, including; tight coordination at most times between these two officials, willingness to issue sharp rebukes and accept prolonged stalemate, Bush's strong emotions on the conflict, and Baker's tenacity and capacity to play rough. At many points, the secretary operated as though "the main leverage I had" was a threat to "leave [a] dead cat" on the doorstep of whoever says no to the U.S.³

George H. W. Bush, Case #1:

Washington Defers to Rabin, 1989

³ James A. Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace, 1989-1992* (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995), 450.

The 1988 elections resulted in a slight Likud edge and a 60-60 tie between the blocs. Ultra-Orthodox parties had done unexpectedly well, leading them to make some extravagant demands for participation in a coalition. This eventually caused Likud turn to Labor, inviting it to join as the junior partner in yet another national unity government. However, this time there would be no rotation of the premiership, and so Labor conditioned its participation upon approval of a common denominator peace program. To satiate Labor and head off American pressure to engage with the PLO (which the U.S. had recognized in December of 1988), Shamir soon headed to Washington with a new Israeli peace initiative.⁴

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

Yes. The United States engaged in positive LSI during this period, including both petit efforts to change the balance of power within the Israeli cabinet and grand interventions aimed at influencing the makeup of that government altogether – in this case, reinforcing it.⁵ Yitzhak Rabin, who remained defense minister in the new Israeli government, had now become America’s favorite interlocutor. The U.S. administration carried out petit LSI by working to build up his influence in the cabinet as an advocate for peace. It also conducted grand LSI by working to keep the NUG together, siding with Rabin (who sought its continuation) against Peres

⁴ Moshe Arens, *Broken Covenant: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis between the U.S. and Israel* (Simon & Schuster, 1995), 53-63; Colin Shindler, *The Land beyond Promise: Israel, Likud and the Zionist Dream* (I.B.Tauris, 2002), 250.

⁵ As defined in Chapter Two, petit LSI seeks to affect the balance of power within a sitting government in the target state, whereas grand LSI seeks to change or reinforce that government as a whole.

(who hoped to bring it down) and keeping a Likud-led government in power.

What became known as the Shamir Plan was mostly formulated by others within his government. The plan adhered to the Camp David formula of focusing on Palestinian autonomy instead of moving straight to final status while taking up the idea of elections in the territories to select a Palestinian leadership that could serve as an alternative to the PLO. Rabin had pitched a plan for Palestinian elections in January of 1989,⁶ as did Arens that February.⁷ After strong urging from the moderate wing of the Likud, Shamir decided to adopt the Arens plan.⁸

Shamir announced the plan during his April visit to Washington, D.C., and the American administration considered it a pleasant surprise. However, after Shamir's announcement members of the party's hardline faction – Ariel Sharon, Yitzhak Moda'i, and David Levy – demanded a series of severe constraints to the plan, earning for themselves the nickname of the “shackle ministers”. Their demands included (1) no elections until the intifada had been crushed; (2) Arab residents of East Jerusalem should be prohibited from voting in the Palestinian elections; (3) no partition of “western Eretz Yisrael” (e.g. no land for peace); and (4) no contact of any sort with the PLO.⁹ Although at first it seemed Shamir would stand firm and defend the plan that bore his name, he caved to their demands at a meeting of the party's central committee in July.

These constraints were a major setback for the peace process. They also

⁶ Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (WW Norton & Company, 2001), 467-468.

⁷ Arens, *Broken Covenant: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis between the U.S. and Israel*, 44-45.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 53 & 60. Other individuals involved in brainstorming Shamir's strategy for April included brothers Daniel and Salai Meridor, Eli Rubenstein, Ehud Olmert, Yossi Ben-Aharon, and Bibi Netanyahu. At various later points Olmert, Rubenstein, and the Meridors broke off from the Likud to either join center parties or serve under non-Likud governments.

⁹ Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 270.

provided a pretense for some Labor ministers to hint that they were looking to quit the coalition in protest. Peres was especially eager to leave, but Rabin felt there was still room for progress and advocated continued participation.

According to an article by a *New York Times* reporter, Washington weighed in on the debate at this point in time, responding negatively to Peres's idea. The article claimed that American officials told the press they had relayed a message through the ambassador in Tel Aviv, William Andreas Brown, and through less formal conversations that "the Israeli peace process should be given every chance of success" and "keeping Israel's unity Government together is critical to that process".¹⁰ Although new constraints were described as "unhelpful," the plan was still described by U.S. officials as "the most realistic way to advance the peace process".¹¹ I have since confirmed a general description of this version of events with Dennis Ross, who seems to have been either involved in or well-informed about this particular episode:

"DW: The *New York Times* reported in 1989 in July that the United States dispatched messages to the leadership of the Israeli Labor Party that the U.S. felt it was not time for the national unity government to split up and that there was promise in the so-called Shamir Plan that we wanted to see where we could go with it.

Ross: That's true... we did this".¹²

The administration also worked to bolster Rabin's hand within the Israeli cabinet. When Rabin visited Washington in May, the head Mideast official on the NSC, Richard Haass, wrote to national security advisor Brent Scowcroft to suggest

¹⁰ Robert Pear, "U.S. officials urge Labor to remain in Israeli cabinet," *New York Times*, July 12, 1989.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Dennis Ross, "Interview with the Author," March 23, 2012.

that “As you know, the President is scheduled to meet with Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin... a positive statement afterward by [spokesperson] Marlin [Fitzwater] would help bolster Rabin’s position within Israel”.¹³ Scowcroft had also explained to the president’s scheduling staff that Rabin

“is a member of the inner Cabinet that controls all of Israel’s sensitive foreign and defense policy decisions. Rabin was also the original proponent of the elections idea; he tends to be both forthcoming and pragmatic on elections modalities.

Rabin will play a key role in the internal Israeli deliberations about the peace process. Our effort to promote an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue via elections depends on getting Rabin on board with our ideas and building up his role in the internal Israeli process”.¹⁴

The meeting was accompanied by a photo opportunity, and Fitzwater’s statement emphasized the “productive” nature of the president’s meeting with Rabin. He explained that the president “reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to a close relationship” and “made clear his determination to provide Israel with the resources necessary for its security”. He said the president told Rabin that the Israeli proposal for elections in the territories “gives us something to work with” and “constitutes an important contribution to the process”.¹⁵

Did the Policy Succeed?

¹³ Richard N. Haass, “Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft - Statement following President’s Meeting with Rabin”, May 23, 1989, Folder “Presidential Visit with [Israeli Defense] Minister [Yitzhak] Rabin - May 24, 1989”, Box “OA/ID CF01404”, Series “Haass, Richard N., Files”, Collection “National Security Council,” George H. W. Bush Presidential Library.

¹⁴ Brent Scowcroft, “Schedule Proposal”, May 9, 1989, Folder “Presidential Visit with [Israeli Defense] Minister [Yitzhak] Rabin - May 24, 1989”, Box “OA/ID CF01404”, Series “Haass, Richard N., Files”, Collection “National Security Council,” George H. W. Bush Presidential Library.

¹⁵ Marlin Fitzwater, “Statement by the Press Secretary (for immediate release by the Office of the White House Press Secretary)”, May 24, 1989, Folder “Presidential Visit with [Israeli Defense] Minister [Yitzhak] Rabin - May 24, 1989”, Box “OA/ID CF01404”, Series “Haass, Richard N., Files”, Collection “National Security Council,” George H. W. Bush Presidential Library.

Yes. In the narrow sense, these efforts probably helped keep the NUG together and boost Rabin's hand in the cabinet. In the broader sense they allowed the administration to continue trying to make the so-called Shamir Plan work through the start of the next year. Although it would have been difficult to envision the prime minister accepting the principle of land for peace, the next few months did seem like a promising period of movement on the process. Shamir eventually backed away from the plan for good in early 1990, but by then the administration had provided him with additional pretexts for doing so.

After the U.S. communicated its message to Labor through private channels that it should stay in the national unity government, an Israeli official familiar with the deliberations acknowledged "we got the message. The U.S. believes that dissolution of the national unity Government means an election campaign in Israel, and that means a period of uncertainty during which no Israeli government can pursue the peace process".¹⁶

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

One area in which the theories diverge involves predictions about the effect of perceptions of sender interests on the occurrence of LSI. Theory #1 (national interests theory) predicts that LSI occurrence should reflect objective opportunities and interests of the sender state abroad. Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) expects LSI toward Israel to be rare because members of Congress and the pro-

¹⁶ Pear, "U.S. officials urge Labor to remain in Israeli cabinet."

Israel lobby tend to believe that U.S. interests are not served by meddling in Israeli politics. Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) expects LSI toward Israel to be frequent because work-level officials who deal with Israeli politics tend to believe that American interests are served by intervening in support of pro-peace moderates. Theory #4 (leadership theory) holds that LSI occurrence should reflect the subjective beliefs of top officials about whether or not intervention serves U.S. interests.

The U.S. worked to stop what it saw as a potential imminent collapse of the NUG and to bolster the hand of Rabin within the Israeli cabinet. And, although lobby-legislative theory is consonant with American actions that redound to the benefit of the Likud, it would not predict U.S. interference in Israeli politics to achieve this aim. Intentional favoritism for Rabin over other Israeli interlocutors is also at odds with the lobby-legislative approach, which would expect the U.S. to remain ambivalent to the range of possible Israeli counterparts.

Theory #3, bureaucratic politics, also receives mixed marks for explaining events in 1989. The bureaucratic approach fits with American support for Rabin but cannot explain U.S. indifference toward Peres or willingness to bolster a government led by the Likud.

Theories 1 and 4 both fit with the fact that U.S. administration looked favorably upon the Shamir Plan as its best option for moving the process forward. The prospect of keeping a process going, even with some shackles, led the administration to throw its weight in with stability instead of sitting back while Labor left the government or helping it do so.

However, interpersonal relationships were the critical part of the causal story in 1989, a factor tied in with leadership theory. Peres hoped the United States would continue working through him as vice premier, finance minister, and formal leader of the Labor Party, but he was in for yet another disappointment. Instead, when the Baker opened a negotiations track with Labor to complement U.S. negotiations with the Likud leadership, he went to Rabin instead.¹⁷

The reasons for this favoritism for Rabin over Peres are not quite clear. It could be that Peres had worn out his welcome in the U.S. with his repeated maneuvering during Reagan's second term. On the other hand, Rabin was also a problematic interlocutor in some ways because he was still associated with implementing Israel's hardline response to intifada protest in the territories. However, the idea that Rabin not only would push for peace but perhaps could also deliver Shamir might have been the crucial factor here. Ambassador Brown notes that "Baker and [his Mideast advisor Dennis] Ross had the hope that Rabin, given his unique position and his direct entrée to Prime Minister Shamir, as well as his reputation as a tough, old warrior, might be able to help them pull something off".¹⁸

As a result, Peres was "very unhappy he wasn't the main channel for these discussions with the Americans," telling the U.S. ambassador "that 'these young men in Washington' were mishandling the situation. He clearly mean that Dennis Ross and his associates ought to be dealing primarily with him".¹⁹

This inclination to trust Rabin over Peres was predicated on the basis of past

¹⁷ Brown, "Interview with Ambassador William Andreas Brown," 253.

¹⁸ Ibid., 276.

¹⁹ Ibid., 275.

experience, but future events would show that it was unwise. The United States was caught unaware when Israel and the Palestinians later reached a major breakthrough at Oslo in 1993. They had been kept informed by Peres's people, but, because they figured he was an incorrigible dreamer and wheeler-dealer, they did not put sufficient stock in his claims that something big was afoot in Norway.²⁰

The American administration's belief that the Shamir Plan was the best means for forward progress was heavily predicated upon this interpersonal assessment of Rabin relative to Peres. Thus, although this case exhibits some behavior that is consonant with Theory #1, it seems leadership theory provides the most compelling explanation.

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

A second area in which the theories diverge involves the predicted effect of predictions about close contests that may be brewing within the target state. Theory #1 (national interests theory) predicts that LSI should occur in close correlation with all available information about possible leadership contests in the target state as they continue to develop. Theory #4 (leadership theory) predicts that an important intervening factor should be the subjective beliefs of top U.S. officials about whether or not a political contest in Israel appears to be imminent.

The administration perceived that a political contest could be imminent in Israeli politics and that preemptive U.S. action could prevent that contest by urging Labor to remain in the government. This is at odds with Theory #2, which suggests

²⁰ Hussein Agha et al., *Track-II Diplomacy: Lessons from the Middle East* (MIT Press, 2003), 52-54.

that because Congress and pro-Israel lobbyists tend not to focus much on Israeli political contests they should force the administration to look the other way when such a contest is looming. It is also at odds with Theory #3. Although Baker's favoritism towards Rabin can in part be attributed to his subordinate, Dennis Ross, it is also true that Ross seemed to favor keeping the NUG together, a position to the right of what the theory predicts traditional bureaucratic preferences should be vis-à-vis Israel. Instead, Ross's beliefs seem to track closer to his long-standing beliefs about the Middle East peace process than his organizational position at the time.

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

Theories 2 and 3 predict that members of Congress, the pro-Israel lobby, and/or the bureaucracy should be influential and informed in advance of decisions about whether or not to pursue LSI. Leadership theory, however, expects that policy-making within the sender state should leave these actors in the dark and to make use of informal channels of decision-making as a means of limiting the risk of leaks.

Administration decision-making on Israeli politics at this time was the epitome of informality. U.S. consultations with Rabin were held under the cover of secret pretense. Ambassador Brown explains:

“we developed a sense that Rabin was willing to negotiate, really negotiate... Rabin was willing to play. This developed to the point that Secretary of State Baker wanted to open a unique, special channel to Rabin. Dennis Ross instructed me to set one up. Indeed, and I think that this is the first time that I have discussed this, I approached Rabin after consultations with Dennis on how to handle this. I had a secure phone at home in a special vault in my residence. I would invite Rabin over for drinks, which he never

refused. We would have a glass of this or that, would go upstairs to this special vault, and I would then bring out and key in the secure phone. Having made telephonic contact with Dennis Ross, I would then turn the secure phone over to Rabin, and he and Dennis would conduct a conversation".²¹

Rather than coordinating its policy through open consultations, the United States was communicating out of a secret phone in an upstairs vault inside the U.S. ambassador's personal residence over cocktails. As Baker admits in his memoirs "we'd been working quietly with Rabin for months – so quietly that my staff and I referred to him in all our conversations as 'the man who smokes' to disguise our 'back-channel' conversations with the chain-smoking Defense Minister".²²

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

Theories 2 and 3 also predict that top officials in the sender state should be especially weak during certain periods of that country's political calendar. In particular, this was early in the administration's term, so we should expect the power of the bureaucracy over policy outcomes to be rather high according to Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach). Although it is true that Brown and Ross played a prominent role in these deliberations, they were both very political figures advocating positions at odds with the permanent bureaucracy. Both developed reputations as being more tolerant of the Likud than most of their colleagues. They were not chomping at the bit to topple the NUG in the manner Theory #3 would predict.

²¹ Brown, "Interview with Ambassador William Andreas Brown," 274.

²² Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace, 1989-1992*, 126.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) predicts that working-level pursuit of LSI without senior approval should be frequent, whereas Theory #4 (leadership theory) predicts that such freelancing should be relatively rare and occur only during periods of lax executive oversight.

U.S. officials in this particular case seem to have been operating in close consultation with Baker. Although Ross was the one talking by phone with Rabin, Brown saw it as Baker's personal channel to Rabin. The Secretary was not yet willing to engage his personal prestige in the peace process, but he was directing policy from Washington. It is not clear if Bush was very involved at this point in decision-making, but his authority was not being trampled upon. Although his relations with the Israeli PM were by no means warm, Bush still hoped he could establish a working relationship with Shamir and wanted to pursue his elections proposal. This fits with Bush's style of management: strong oversight tempered by a willingness to delegate to his trusted secretary of state and friend of thirty years.

6. Consistency of Message:

The theories also offer divergent predictions with regard to whether or not officials in the sender state are likely to be capable of crafting a message vis-à-vis politics in the target that is internally consistent (and therefore more effective). Theory #1 (national interests theory) expects that this should be relatively easy to achieve, whereas the other theories each emphasize different institutional or personal biases that may make this objective more difficult to fulfill.

The U.S. message during this period was clear and coherent. First, provided the PM would stick by his peace plan, the administration was willing to support his hold on power. Second, the administration praised Rabin as an ideal partner and hoped to maximize his influence within the Likud-led government of Israeli. And, as noted above, a senior Labor official told the press “we got the message”.

This fits with Theories 1 and 4, which predict clear messaging by the sender state provided that its top leaders coordinate amongst themselves or at least remain on the same page in terms of their objectives. Theory #2 is contradicted because it would have expected Congress and the pro-Israel lobby to block efforts to boost Rabin at the expense of other Israeli officials and perhaps even block U.S. efforts to keep the NUG government together, since doing so was itself an act of interference. Theory #3 is contradicted because it would have expected the bureaucracy to undermine the administration’s plan to keep the Likud-led government together.

7. Suitability of Message:

Finally, the theories also offer different predictions about whether or not officials in the sender state should find crafting a message that is suitable in its content for aiding the favored protégé within the context of politics in the target state. Theory #1 (national interests theory) again sees this goal as easy to obtain, whereas the other theories emphasize various personal or institutional biases that should make this objective more difficult to achieve.

The U.S. message was also well-suited to helping Rabin keep the NUG intact and bolstering his influence within it. By indicating both in private and in public via

leaks that the U.S. wanted Labor to stay in the government, the administration undermined Peres's ability to persuade his party colleagues that they should withdraw from the government. By showering Rabin with praises and making him America's main Labor interlocutor, the administration was acting in a manner that was well-designed to strengthen his influence within the NUG.

This fits with Theories 1 and 4 but not 2 or 3. National interests theory expects messaging to always be suitable to the interests of the sender state, and so suitable messaging is consonant with the theory's predictions. The lobby-legislative and bureaucratic politics approaches, however, expect that messaging should usually be skewed according to the interests of those organizations – which we do not see in this case. Leadership theory expects messaging to be subject to the personal idiosyncrasies of individuals who call the shots in the sender state. Although in later instances Bush's temper sometimes detracted from his ability to craft a message that was suitable to shaping Israelis politics, he was not yet invested in the conflict or infuriated with Shamir. Thus, it also fits with Theory #4 that the U.S. message in this case was suitable to achieving its intended aims.

George H. W. Bush, Case #2: Breaking Apart the NUG, 1990

The period that followed offers a superb natural experiment for testing theories about the dynamics of American LSI toward Israel. Whereas in 1987 the United States declined to push a peace proposal that was only backed by one side of a national unity government – the London Agreement between King Hussein of

Jordan and Israel's Shimon Peres – in 1990 the U.S. did exactly that. It promoted the peace plan that bore the Prime Minister Shamir's name even after he himself had abandoned it. Fear of shattering the NUG had prevented active U.S. involvement in the process in 1987, but if anything it served as an incentive for staunch promotion of the elections initiative into early 1990 when the government of Israel finally fractured.

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

Yes. The U.S. administration pushed the elections initiative even when it became clear that doing so might break apart the NUG. American decision-makers concluded that forceful diplomacy would either pressure the Likud to be more flexible or sideline them in favor of a more amenable Labor-led government.

The Egyptian government announced a ten-point peace plan in September after Mubarak's foreign policy advisor Osama El-Baz conducted separate consultations with the PLO and Peres aide Nimrod Novik. His efforts produced a plan that was in line with Labor's party platform but would obviously to be unacceptable to Shamir. The Israeli cabinet rejected Egypt's plan in short order.²³

²³ Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* (Macmillan, 2004), 57-58; Mordechai Gazit, "The Middle East Peace Process," in *Middle East Contemporary Survey - 1990*, ed. Ami Ayalon, vol. XIV (Westview Press, 1992), 103; Norman Kempster, "Baker won't offer formal Mideast peace plan," *Los Angeles Times*, October 7, 1989. Egypt's ten-point declaration indicated that the PLO would permit negotiations with Israel to be handled by Palestinians who were not members of the organization, provided that at least one member came from outside the territories and from East Jerusalem, respectively (so as not to suggest relinquishment of Palestinian claims to pre-1967 Arab Jerusalem or the right of return).

Upon urging by his staff, Baker soon proposed his own five-point plan.²⁴ The Baker ideas fell somewhere in between the Israeli and Egyptian initiatives and was designed to give Shamir sufficient cover to say yes and thus sustain the process. They suggested that perhaps the elections initiative could be set into motion if Israel held a dialogue in Cairo with non-PLO Palestinian intermediaries who would be carefully vetted so as to be acceptable to all of the parties. However, Shamir soon denounced even the Baker points in his public remarks.

Ross noted that by this point “both Baker and the President... had become fed up with Shamir”. Baker concurred that the two of them were now quite upset. The president called Shamir at Baker’s urging, asking him to stand by his own proposal. Bush also warned “I’ve just read the wire story quoting you about a confrontation with the United States. If you want that – fine”. After additional backchannel warnings were passed to Shamir that he was on the verge of losing the U.S., he instructed the cabinet to approve Baker’s ideas (albeit with a list of reservations).²⁵

However, matters soon stalled again over questions of implementation. In particular, Likud refused to agree to the PLO’s insistence on having Palestinians from East Jerusalem and abroad participate the Cairo dialogue.²⁶ Peres continued trying to break the NUG, but Rabin and Arens persevered, coming separately to Washington in early 1990 to work out alternative compromises for finessing the details of Palestinian representation with Baker. Each time, one of them obtained

²⁴ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 208.

²⁵ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace, 1989-1992*, 125; Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*, 60-61.

²⁶ The PLO insisted on these points to indicate that it was not willing to surrender its claims to East Jerusalem or the right of return.

Shamir's tentative agreement to a specific compromise, after which the PM would renege, bowing to pressure from the shackles ministers.

Finally, Rabin gave up on persuading Shamir and conceded to Peres that Labor should leave the government. Peres then issued an ultimatum that the cabinet should vote on the compromises for Palestinian representation right away, and Shamir announced he had decided to dismiss Peres. In response, all the other Labor ministers announced their resignation and secured the Shas Party's backing for a no confidence vote that toppled the government on March 15th.

In 1987 the United States had shied away from pushing a peace proposal that was endorsed by only one side of the national unity government. Now, "despite the disarray in Israeli political circles in early 1990, President Bush pressed hard for a positive reply to Baker's queries".²⁷ Ross explains that

"There were no tears in Washington over [the government's] demise. Shamir's opposition to the dialogue confirmed what Bush and Baker believed – namely, that he had been stringing us along. Peres was much more in favor of taking steps for peace, and had the votes to form a government. We believed that real progress could be made now".²⁸

However, the administration did make two statements that complicated this effort. First, Baker testified before Congress on March 1 that the \$400 million initial package of HLGs requested by Israel to help settle Soviet immigrants would be tied to a complete halt in settlement activity. Second, when asked an unrelated question at a joint press conference with the PM of Japan about Israeli settlement activity, President Bush sternly remarked that all settlement construction was illegal,

²⁷ William Quandt, "The Middle East in 1990," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1990): 54.

²⁸ Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*, 64.

including in East Jerusalem.²⁹

During the period that followed, the U.S. did what it could to remain out of sight while walking back the president's statement on Jerusalem. His spokesperson announced that the administration's position on Jerusalem had remained unchanged, in that its final status could only be determined through negotiations.³⁰ Richard Haass sent the press secretary additional guidance from the NSC before a press conference on the day of the Israeli no confidence vote explaining:

"Attached are the themes for use on background or on record by you regarding the Middle East Peace Process. It is essential that we keep the focus on the Peace Process and not on either Jerusalem or the settlements. It is also essential that we do not allow the notion to take hold that somehow we (in particular The President) are responsible for what is going on. Responsibility ought to be placed where it belongs: with the government of Israel and its inability to provide a basis for moving ahead on a viable Peace Process.... Have fun."³¹

The administration also released a warm letter from the President to Teddy Kollek, Jerusalem's longtime mayor, reiterating that the U.S. position had not changed.³²

The most notable aspect of this letter seems to have been the discussions leading up to it. As the NUG was beginning to collapse, on March 12th Haass sent a draft letter to deputy national security advisor Robert Gates, commenting

²⁹ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace, 1989-1992*, 127-128.

³⁰ Fitzwater Marlin, "Statement by the Press Secretary", March 5, 1990, Folder "Israeli Settlements [4]", Box "OA/ID CF01069", Series "Rostow, Nicholas, Files", Collection "National Security Council," George H. W. Bush Presidential Library.

³¹ Emphasis added. Richard N. Haass, "Press Guidance from Richard N. Haass to Marlin Fitzwater", March 15, 1990, Folder "[Middle East] Peace Process - March 1990", Box OA/ID CF01353, Series "Haass, Richard N., Files", Collection "National Security Council," George H. W. Bush Presidential Library.

³² President George H. W. Bush, "Letter from President Bush to Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek" (National Security Council, March 13, 1990), Folder "[Middle East] Peace Process - March 1990", Box OA/ID CF01353, Series "Haass, Richard N., Files", Collection "National Security Council," George H. W. Bush Presidential Library.

“As I mentioned in the staff meeting, a Presidential response to Mayor Kollek could help in two ways: it could help put out some of the fire on Jerusalem, and could restore the focus of attention where it should be, i.e., on the peace process. Attached at Tab A is a letter to Kollek drafted by yours truly and cleared by both Dennis Ross and John Kelly. It should be signed by the President as soon as possible”.³³

In a handwritten note at the top of the memo, Haass explains with added urgency:

“Bob: This really does need to be signed out by the Pres ASAP *to have the desired impact*”.³⁴

Gates clarifies in his cover memo to the president on the same letter: “our alleged change of policy is being used by some in Israel as an excuse for not moving forward with the peace process. Jerusalem’s Mayor Kollek has written a fairly positive letter dealing with his concerns. The prepared response provides an opportunity for us to set the record straight *and to bolster those in Israel who are willing to work with us on a viable peace process*”.³⁵

Even after March 15th, it appears the administration continued to “soft-pedal its attitude in public because it wanted to avoid charges of meddling in Israeli politics”.³⁶ They continued efforts to defuse the issue of East Jerusalem, as Secretary Baker sent a letter to Congressman Mel Levine stating that the administration’s position was Jews should be allowed to live in East Jerusalem if they so desire and, in restating opposition to the settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza,

³³ Richard N. Haass, “Memorandum for Robert M. Gates - Presidential Letter to the Mayor of Jerusalem (with handwritten notes from Haass to Gates)”, March 12, 1990, Folder “Israeli Settlements [4]”, Box “OA/ID CF01069”, Series “Rostow, Nicholas, Files”, Collection “National Security Council,” George H. W. Bush Presidential Library.

³⁴ Ibid. Underlining in original, emphasis added.

³⁵ Emphasis added. Robert M. Gates, “Memorandum for the President - Letter to Mayor Kollek of Jerusalem”, March 12, 1990, Folder “Israeli Settlements [4]”, Box “OA/ID CF01069”, Series “Rostow, Nicholas, Files”, Collection “National Security Council,” George H. W. Bush Presidential Library.

³⁶ “U.S. says Shamir ruined chances for peace talks,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 1, 1990.

pointedly made no mention of East Jerusalem.³⁷ They also “went out w/ very strong message to the Arabs – shut up – Peres hurt by anything Arabs say – they were pretty good”.³⁸ However, the U.S. kept a low public profile as Peres worked to assemble his new government.

Once it became clear that Peres’s efforts to form a government were in danger of failing, the administration emerged once again with outspoken criticism of the Likud. The State Department let loose with a wave of criticism toward Shamir that likely came from the top. State Department Spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler read from a prepared statement on April 19th stating “we have made important progress by getting to the point where Palestinians from the territories were prepared to engage in a dialogue with Israel about elections” and “*what is needed now to get to such a dialogue is for an Israeli government to emerge that is capable of saying yes to the proposals put forward by Secretary Baker*”. She also suggested it was “disappointing” that Shamir’s caretaker government was launching new “steps on settlements, which in our view make it more difficult to develop a meaningful peace process”.³⁹

Critical statements of this sort continued until it became clear Shamir really did have the votes to form the next government. On May 1st, Tutwiler gave a point-by-point rebuttal of Shamir’s claims the previous day about why the NUG fell apart. She claimed that “saying yes to Secretary Baker’s (proposal) meant saying yes to the

³⁷ “Baker says Jews have right to live in Arab East Jerusalem,” *St. Petersburg Times*, March 31, 1990.

³⁸ Thomas M. DeFrank, “Sub-Section entitled ‘Mid-Early 1990’ in Section ‘Kurtzer 6-29-94’ of interviews in wire-bound memo book entitled ‘Burns/Kurtzer 6-29-94, handwritten’”, August 9, 1994, Box 173 / Folder 10 / Interviews, Miscellaneous Notes Undated, James A. Baker III Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

³⁹ Barry Schweid, “State Department criticizes Shamir government,” *Associated Press*, April 19, 1990. Emphases added.

government of Israel's (own) plan, yes to Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and yes to peace. Continuing to say no will give us very little to work with" since the plan was "on the verge" of producing unprecedented progress.⁴⁰ Bush's spokesperson responded to riots after the murder of at least seven Palestinian civilians by an unstable IDF soldier by urging Israel's security forces "to act with maximum restraint" and explaining that "we look forward to the quick emergence of an Israeli government that is capable of making decisions on issues of peace and is committed, just as we are, to moving ahead on the peace process".⁴¹

Did the Policy Succeed?

Overall, no. The termination of the NUG inaugurated one of the most controversial moments in Israel's political history, a three-month period of blatant political maneuvering and bribery that afterward came to be known as the *HaTargil HaMasriakh*, meaning "the dirty maneuver" or "stinking trick".⁴² In the end, Peres failed to become prime minister, and instead Shamir formed what some have called the most right-wing government in Israel's history.⁴³ This meant that Washington's efforts neither put Labor in control nor enabled the peace process to move forward.

However, some allowance must be made for the contingent and unpredictable nature of leadership contests – especially informal ones that take

⁴⁰ "U.S. says Shamir ruined chances for peace talks."

⁴¹ Lawrence L. Knutson, "Bush Extends Condolences to Palestinians, Urges Israeli Restraint," *Associated Press*, May 22, 1990.

⁴² The episode was labeled as such by Rabin in his subsequent effort to wrest control of the Labor Party from Peres, despite his own personal involvement in the coalition maneuvers at the time. The episode also provided strong impetus for Israeli campaign reform in the 1990s, especially Israel's brief experiment with direct elections for prime minister. The reform was first implemented in 1996 but revoked after 2003 because it had the unintentional effect of strengthening rather than weakening third parties.

⁴³ Quandt, "The Middle East in 1990," 55.

place through opaque wrangling among political elites. If not for a series of improbable events, Peres was actually well-positioned to carry out his scheme with great success. In that case, one could have attributed a double success to American efforts instead of dual failure. Putting pressure on the Israeli government to deliver on the peace process forced the situation to a head – it is just that risking the end of the NUG was by nature a high-stakes approach.

On the other hand, it should also be noted that the United States government undermined its own efforts in a number of ways. In the end, the message it projected toward Israeli observers was not always clear and coherent, and this may have undermined the efficacy of American LSI. First and foremost in this regard was President Bush’s ill-considered remark on East Jerusalem. In addition to further undermining his own administration’s peace initiative, Bush’s statement also gave Shamir an initial advantage right out of the gate in his efforts to outmaneuver Shimon Peres and the Labor Party. Dennis Ross describes the harmful consequences of President Bush’s remarks as follows:

“The last thing we needed was Jerusalem, which would give Shamir a rallying cry and, more than that, a kind of diversion. This was a very delicate time... the last thing we need is an issue that drowns out everything else, that is kind of an emotional lightning rod and that Shamir can use to bolster his position and divert attention away from the effort to follow through on launching this dialogue”.⁴⁴

Yet Peres still had sound basis for some initial optimism. As finance minister, he had been using financial inducements to court the ultra-orthodox parties who could serve as kingmakers for any new government. The fact that Shas decided to allow his motion of no confidence to succeed suggested it would also be willing to

⁴⁴ Dennis Ross, “Interview with the Author”.

join his new government.⁴⁵ Before fracturing the government, Peres insisted that this was the case and “that he had worked that circuit well enough that he could engineer a political coup d’etat, as it were, with the result that the Labour Party could take over the Israeli Government... Peres assured Rabin that this operation was in the bag”.⁴⁶ However, he was mistaken, and his plan took repeated turns for the worse.

Although Shas had permitted the no confidence vote to succeed on the tentative initiative of one of its spiritual leaders, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, what outsiders did not realize was that the party was undergoing an internal power struggle at the time. Another religious leader, Rabbi Eliezer Schach, still held considerable sway with the party’s faithful, despite having technically departed to form his own orthodox party, Degel HaTorah. While Peres was trying to entice Shas to join a Labor-led government, Schach told a stadium full of his devotees that Labor was a bunch of godless, pig-eating hedonists and that they should not be allowed to form the next government. This precluded Labor from being able to entice not only Degel HaTorah into joining the government but the Shas Party as well.⁴⁷

Peres found yet another way to reach the 61 Knesset votes he needed to form a government, but yet another bizarre disaster struck down his effort. He reached exactly that number by enticing a former Likud minister, Abrasha Sharir, with promises of a safe seat and ministerial portfolio. Sharir went into hiding from his

⁴⁵ Arens, *Broken Covenant: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis between the U.S. and Israel*, 127-128; Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*, 64.

⁴⁶ Brown, “Interview with Ambassador William Andreas Brown,” 279.

⁴⁷ Joel Brinkley, “Peres at an impasse in forming Israeli government,” *New York Times*, March 24, 1990; Joel Brinkley, “Orthodox leader in Israel appears to spurn Peres,” *New York Times*, March 26, 1990.

former Likud colleagues. Peres also reached agreement with the remaining ultra-orthodox party in the Knesset, Agudat Yisrael, getting him to exactly 61 votes.

However, the Brooklyn-based Hasidic Rabbi Menachem Schneerson carried out some meddling of his own, calling upon members of Agudat Yisrael and forbidding them to join the government. Although the party had a written contract with Peres, two of its members left the party, refusing to join the government. The news came just as the Knesset gathered on the 11th to vote on forming a new Labor government, and Peres was forced to admit his coalition was not ready.

Peres got a reprieve, but once again that chance slipped through his fingers. Israeli President Chaim Herzog gave him a fifteen-day extension to assemble another majority. Also, a rabbinical court ruled that the two renegade members of Agudat Yisrael, Avraham Verdiger and Eliahu Mizrahi, could not void their contract by leaving the party because they had signed the its agreement with Labor. Yet still the plan failed. Verdiger submitted to the court's judgment and sheepishly returned to Peres. However, with the deadline for forming a Labor government less than twenty-four hours away, Mizrahi devised an unusual solution: "he called the phone company, had the number changed for his car phone and then drove around the country all day, to be sure that no one could reach him".⁴⁸

Also, Labor had nearly succeeded in buying off a five-member faction led by Likud MK Yitzhak Moda'i, but Moda'i just used that offer to extort a better one from the Likud central committee the morning before the vote. Again, an embarrassed

⁴⁸ Joel Brinkley, "Peres in trouble as deadline nears," *New York Times*, April 26, 1990; Joel Brinkley, "Israeli Coalition Cracks at Last Minute," *New York Times*, April 11, 1990; Joel Brinkley, "Israeli legislator who switched switches again," *New York Times*, April 19, 1990. See also Ariel Goldman, "One Brooklyn Rabbi's Long Shadow," *New York Times*, April 13, 1990.

Peres was forced to confess to Herzog that his votes were not there, and the mandate to form a new government now went to Shamir.⁴⁹

Even still the Peres plan was not yet dead. Despite “endless haggling,” Shamir himself needed to request an extension when his deadline for forming a government was about to expire. Despite all that had transpired, Arens even beseeched Shamir to consider another NUG for fear that Likud would be unable to form its own government by the new deadline on June 8th. Yet by June 7, Shamir finally succeeded in forming a narrow right-wing government without Labor.⁵⁰ Had he not done so, there is a good chance that Israel would have gone to new elections.

Thus, there are a number of different points at which the plan for forming a new Labor government could have succeeded but did not. Some American actions furthered this objective, but some of them undermined it. For instance, Baker believes that his March 1 testimony conditioning \$400 million in HLGs on a settlement freeze and Bush’s comment objecting to Israeli construction in East Jerusalem as illegal settlement activity were both counterproductive. He estimates that “my comments and the President’s strengthened the hand of conservatives by diverting attention from the larger issue of peace. More important, they gave Shamir a convenient excuse – his anger at being pressured by the United States – behind which to hide” when rending apart the NUG.⁵¹ Ross writes that Shamir grabbed onto Bush’s statement “as a pretext” for trying to kill Baker’s plan.⁵²

The New York Times editorial page agreed that Bush’s comment “made the

⁴⁹ Arens, *Broken Covenant: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis between the U.S. and Israel*, 132-133.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 137-138.

⁵¹ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace, 1989-1992*, 128.

⁵² Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*, 64.

maneuvering all the more complicated” because it was “a thoughtless, unnecessary jolt to Israelis on a matter that should not even be raised until the very end of a long and successful peace process”.⁵³ Repeatedly throughout the coalition formation process Likud attacked Labor on the issue of Jerusalem, and the American administration struggled to walk back the president’s ill-timed remark. It also provided a basis for pro-Israel members of Congress to outflank the administration with a resolution calling for the U.S. to recognize an undivided Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.⁵⁴ According to a firsthand participant, it turns out the idea for this bill was forwarded to Congress by Shamir’s political team via Israel’s embassy in the U.S. as a tactic for boosting Likud’s hand in coalition talks back home.⁵⁵

Further, the administration erred on the side of keeping a low profile during the first month of wrangling over coalition formation in Israel. However, in retrospect the U.S. might have had better luck firmly expressing its preferences while Peres still had a chance of forming a government rather than afterwards.

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

One area in which the theories diverge involves the expected effect of perceptions of sender interests on the occurrence of LSI. Theory #1 (national interests theory) predicts that LSI occurrence should directly reflect objective national interests abroad. Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) expects LSI

⁵³ “Editorial - The Right Bush Push on Israel,” *New York Times*, March 16, 1990.

⁵⁴ William E. Clayton Jr., “Pro-Israel House Act Stirs Rebuke,” *Houston Chronicle*, April 27, 1990.

⁵⁵ Retired Senior Israeli Official, “Interview with the Author”, June 2011.

toward Israel to be rare because members of Congress and the pro-Israel lobby tend to see meddling in Israeli politics as bad for U.S. national interests. Theory #3 (the bureaucratic approach) expects LSI toward Israel to be frequent because working-level officials in the executive branch who deal with Israeli politics tend to favor intervention. Theory #4 (leadership theory) predicts that LSI occurrence should vary according to leader's personal beliefs about how Israeli politics bear on U.S. national interests at the time.

By the time the NUG fell, the Bush team felt that a Labor government could serve U.S. interests much better than a Likud-led one given the chance. Israeli politics involved the same players as in 1989, and Shamir still regularly rejected the principle of land for peace in his public statements. Thus, the fact that perceptions of U.S. interests underwent a substantial shift toward the same Israeli political configuration of actors suggests that something other than Theory #1 it at play.

Nor does Theory #2 fare well. Congressional activity was more prominent in the 1990 episode than 1989. However, the fact that LSI against the Likud occurred in the former rather than the latter suggests that legislative pressure was not a decisive factor for explaining why negative LSI in one case but not the other. During the first half of 1990, AIPAC officials wrote repeatedly in their weekly newsletter that Shamir's positions were toward the center for Israeli public opinion, that there were not measurable differences between the Israeli left and right, and that Shamir's behavior demonstrated a noble commitment to peace.⁵⁶ Yet the

⁵⁶ "Peace Takes Precedence," *Near East Report* 34, no. 2 (January 8, 1990); "Israelis on Peace," *Near East Report* 34, no. 5 (January 29, 1990); "Shamir Stands Firm," 34, no. 8 (February 19, 1990); "What Next?"

administration acted in a manner that firmly contradicted these preferences.

Theory #3 receives mixed marks in this regard. The fact that negative LSI was carried out against the Likud fits with the predictions of bureaucratic politics theory, and comments attributed to Daniel Kurtzer that the diplomatic corps was telling Arab states to stay quiet in the spring of 1990 so as not to hurt Peres could be seen as an effort of this sort. However, it is equally possible that these efforts were being conducted by Baker himself, as I will demonstrate was the case in 1992.

Rather, it is the assessments of top American officials that seem to provide the most important moving pieces in this case. Baker wrote that “I felt battered, beaten, and betrayed. From the outset, I’d tried to give Shamir the benefit of the doubt... it was now clear to me that I’d been wrong about him. [His actions] said to me that Shamir simply must not be serious about peace”.⁵⁷ The president was angry with the PM’s retreat from so-called Shamir Plan, and Bush’s frustration showed in his curt warnings to Shamir described above. Rabin’s new willingness to leave the government also may have played a major role in influencing how top officials in Washington saw their interests vis-à-vis the NUG. These factors support Theory #4.

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

The theories also offer divergent predictions about how expectations of close political contests abroad affect LSI occurrence. Theory #1 (national interests theory) expects that LSI should correlate closely with all available information about

Near East Report 34, no. 12 (March 19, 1990); “Shamir: Peace is Highest Priority,” *Near East Report*, 34, no. 22 (May 28, 1990); “New Hope for Peace,” *Near East Report* 34, no. 25 (June 18, 1990).

⁵⁷ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace, 1989-1992*, 128.

objectively contests that as they are emerging within the target state. Theory #4 (leadership theory) predicts that the personal distractions and subjective perceptions of these developments are likely to be an important intervening factor.

Baker's willingness to push hard for an answer to his proposal were in part due to his belief that Labor was now a viable contender for power in Israel. He expresses his belief that a close contest in Israeli politics might have been imminent:

"In truth, I did not believe the situation was beyond redemption. At least Arens was passionately committed to the compromise. If anyone could reason with Shamir, I thought, it was Misha. Even if Shamir refused to accept the plan, Labor would almost certainly pull out of the coalition in the belief that it could muster the support to form a new government. Therefore, we reasoned, the plan was almost certain to be approved".⁵⁸

However, until it became clear Peres was in serious trouble, the administration did not pursue LSI toward Israeli politics with the sort of tenacity that might have had produced a larger impact. Most problematic may have been the fact that many in the U.S. believed that Peres had the votes for a new government sewn up. Dennis Ross writes that he believed "Peres... had the votes to form a government," perhaps based on his ability to muster a successful vote of no confidence on March 15th.⁵⁹

Another factor that may have contributed to the American administration's passive approach during much of the coalition crisis was that the Iraq portfolio was starting to heat up, becoming a major Mideast distraction for American official. One American official involved in these deliberations comments that:

"We dropped [the Shamir Plan] largely because that's when Iraq

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*, 64.

started heating up.

Q: In March?

A: Yeah, even in late February and in March. Saddam gives this speech... that he's gonna burn half of Israel... there are eight or nine very serious warning signs in the spring of '90, and the Arab-Israeli peace process just drops off the edge of the world.

Q: ... The administration was really quiet until Shamir gets the mandate to form a government and then they go nuts... I figured, was this their strategy about coalition formation, but the Iraq explanation makes so much more sense.

A: It's all Iraq."⁶⁰

Both of these factors seem to have been matters for Theory #4, not its structural competitors. Perceptions by top American officials that Peres had the government formation process sewn up were understandable but empirically incorrect. Further, their preoccupation with Iraqi threats functioned more as a drag on their attention than a strategic rationale for softening their criticism of the Likud. Otherwise, stern U.S. criticism should have fallen off completely, not just subsided until Shamir's stock was on the rise.

Also, Arens asserts that "most disturbing was the fact that the United States was doing nothing to alert Saddam Hussein to the reaction he should expect if he were to use chemical weapons again [as he was threatening to do against Israel]. As a matter of fact, there had been no high-level contact between us and the Bush administration since my meeting with Baker back in February... [they] were probably avoiding contact with us in the expectation that any day Peres would replace Shamir as prime minister".⁶¹

⁶⁰ Retired Senior American Diplomat, "Interview with the Author", June 2011. For more on Iraqi threats during this period see John Edward Wilz, "The Making of Mr. Bush's War: A Failure to Learn from History?," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (Summer 1995): 554; Quandt, "The Middle East in 1990," 56; Arens, *Broken Covenant: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis between the U.S. and Israel*, 130-135.

⁶¹ Arens, *Broken Covenant: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis between the U.S. and Israel*, 135.

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

Another area in which the theories diverge involves the patterns of domestic deliberation within the sender state at the time. Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) and Theory #3 (the bureaucratic approach) expects that these actors should be informed and influential in advance of important decisions about whether or not the sender state should engage in leadership selection intervention. Theory #4 (leadership theory) anticipates that those domestic forces should actually be left in the dark and that channels of communication among top officials should be unusually closed and informal to prevent leaks of their true intentions.

Congress as a whole was not privy to the administration's deliberations over internal Israeli politics. Instead, the two were at odds over Jerusalem. Also, the only bureaucratic actors at State who were involved in this episode were individuals working for the secretary such as Ross and Kurtzer, not officials out of the Near Eastern Affairs bureau. Both of these factors provide tentative evidence in favor of the paper paradox and leadership theory. However, firmer evidence is elusive in this case.

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

The theories also offer divergent predictions with regard to the effects of the political calendar within the sender state. Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) predicts that LSI should be more frequent early on in new presidential administrations. Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) expects LSI to be much

rarer during periods of divided government or during the lead-up to sender state elections. Theory #4 (leadership theory) expects these factors to be relatively unimportant for affecting the rate of LSI occurrence over time.

The fact that negative LSI against the Likud occurred in 1990 rather than 1989 contradicts the expectations of lobby-legislative theory with regard to cycles of domestic power. The theory predicts that domestic political pressures from Congress and lobby groups should be exceptionally strong in the lead-up to election periods. Indeed, Congress was more active in trying to discourage administration efforts in the 1990 case. However, the fact that the administration chose to pursue negative LSI in 1990 but not in 1989 suggests that Congressional behavior was not a decisive factor for explaining variation in LSI occurrence.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) expects efforts by working-level officials to pursue LSI without senior authorization should be extremely common. Theory #4 (leadership theory) predicts that such freelancing should be rare and constrained to periods of lax executive oversight.

There is little evidence of freelancing behavior in the 1990 case. The comment about quiet messaging to Arab capitals attributed to Kurtzer, the tough statements by Tutwiler and Fitzwater, and written notes between Haass and Gates all seem in fitting with the objectives of administration principals Bush and Baker. There is little to suggest that any of this behavior was taking place without suitable authorization.

6. Consistency of Message:

Another area in which the theories diverge involves the ability of officials in the sender state to project a consistent (and therefore relatively more effective) message abroad. Theory #1 (national interests theory) expects this to be a relatively easy task, whereas the other theories emphasize various personal or institutional biases that can make this task more challenging.

Three factors in 1990 undermined the persuasiveness of the administration's message toward Israel and thus may have detracted from the efficacy of American LSI. First, Congress's effort to outflank the administration on Jerusalem helped keep the focus on an issue that advantaged the Likud over Labor. As noted above, the bill was discreetly solicited by Shamir's own political team.

Second, the administration made statements that distracted the focus from Likud's refusal to accept a reasonable compromise on Palestinian representation. Bush's comment on East Jerusalem building as illegal settlement activity was most prominent in this regard.

Finally, the administration pursued a muted approach to Israeli coalition negotiations when it still looked as though Peres was going to be able to pull off his plan. Although one can debate how effective U.S. pressure would have been at boosting Peres's chances, it was clearly too late once his proposals for forming a government had imploded and he was forced to surrender his mandate to Shamir.

These factors provide support for Theories 2 and 4, since in each instance the American message was muddled either by pressure from the legislative branch or

from poor coordination among top officials in the executive branch.

7. Suitability of Message:

The last area in which the theories diverge involves the ability of officials in the sender state to project an international message that is well-suited in its content to the needs of their protégé within the target state (and therefore relatively more effective). Theory #1 (national interests theory) expects this to be a relatively easy task, while the other theories emphasize institutional or personal biases that may make this objective more difficult.

The core U.S. message at this time was that Washington wanted an Israeli government that was willing to move forward as a partner for peace – and that a Likud which opposed Baker’s ideas was not such a partner. However, the president’s outburst in the beginning of March contradicted this message by hinting that the administration would force Israel to make concessions that were more extreme than most Israelis were willing to entertain at that time.

This seems a rare instance in which Bush’s strong personal beliefs trumped his close ties and regular coordination with James Baker. The secretary writes in his memoirs that he only learned after the fact about what had motivated the president’s comments. It turns out Bush’s emotions had just been stoked by White House Chief of Staff John Sununu, who had shown him a map of Israeli settlement growth, particularly in East Jerusalem. Baker telephoned Bush, teasing him that “we almost had that Middle East deal worked out” except “you screwed it up so bad with

that statement about settlements that even *I* can't straighten it out".⁶²

This behavior supports leadership theory. Bush ran a tight ship on peace process issues, conducting oversight but delegating day-to-day management to the secretary and his staff. It seems quite fitting with Theory #4 that if something were to upset this pattern, it should be the passions of the president himself.

George H. W. Bush, Case #3:

Bush versus Shamir, 1991-92

The collapse of the USSR opened the floodgates for large numbers of Soviet Jews to move to Israel. To finance the anticipated expenses of resettling these new immigrants, Israel sought housing loan guarantees (HLGs) from the United States, asking Washington to cosign Israel's loans so they could borrow at lower rates.

The first such request came in 1990 for the U.S. to guarantee \$400 million in stopgap loans. After months of negotiations, Israel's new foreign minister David Levy elicited an agreement from Baker provided that Israel would "not direct or settle immigrants beyond the green line" that divides Israel's pre- and post-1967 borders.⁶³ However, it soon became clear that the Israeli government was systematically violating these commitments.⁶⁴ The stage was therefore set for a confrontation over the HLGs when Israel returned to the U.S. with its full request for \$10 billion in guarantees spread over five years.

⁶² Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace, 1989-1992*, 128. Emphasis in the original.

⁶³ Joel Brinkley, "Israeli bristles over U.S. loan-guarantee terms," *New York Times*, October 4, 1990; "Mideast tensions: Israel retracts pledge to U.S. on East Jerusalem housing," *New York Times*, October 19, 1990.

⁶⁴ Shindler, *Land Beyond Promise*, 265.

The request came to a head in September of 1991. Bush called for consideration of Israel's request to be delayed by 120 days in order to keep settlement issues from spoiling Baker's preparations for the peace conference at Madrid. Israel, Congress, and AIPAC fought the delay, but Bush pushed back and got them to accept it, albeit in a very rough manner that left bitter feelings on all sides.

The October Madrid conference was a major success, launching bilateral and multilateral negotiating tracks between Israel and its Arab neighbors. However, the conference also precipitated an eventual coalition crisis in Israel. Far-right members of the government opposed the Madrid process and joined with Labor in a vote of no confidence that brought down the government in January of 1992. This meant that Israeli elections were moved up from November to June and that reconsideration of the HLGs when the 120-day delay expired would now take place in the context of an Israeli election campaign.

Although it seemed for a short time as though the U.S. administration was willing to relent and grant the loan guarantees, it began in February to shift away from conciliation back to confrontation. Last-ditch efforts in March by key senators and by Arens to reach a compromise by watering down or splitting up the request were dismissed by Bush and Baker, who insisted on a tough package offer for \$10 billion over five years predicated upon commitment to a total settlement freeze or at least offsets for any money spent on settlements in violation of these terms.

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

Yes. Conservative Israeli politicians and some historians have accused the U.S. of using housing loan guarantees to topple Shamir's right-wing government but have been unable to produce concrete proof for this claim.⁶⁵ I have assembled extensive new material which demonstrates that the Bush administration's policy toward Israel by the start of 1992 was predicated upon trying to push out the Likud and bring in Labor. This influenced not only how Washington approached the loan guarantees but also how it handled a range of other issues, including the post-Madrid peace talks and public statements about Jerusalem and settlement activity.

U.S. officials tailored their approach to the Arab-Israeli negotiating tracks in order to try shaping Israeli public opinion. Declassified talking points for Baker's private meetings with Arab leaders were aimed at persuading them to remain in talks through the spring to bolster the peace camp in Israel. For instance, his notes for meeting with King Hussein of Jordan state that "your participation in bilaterals and multilaterals have sent very important signals to Israel. Please keep it up and look for ways to reach out, particular during the next several months. Helping to condition the Israeli public's attitude toward peace is [a] critical component of this process; you understand the best way to affect popular perceptions".⁶⁶

The notes for his meeting with Palestinian negotiator Faisal al-Husseini read as follows: "Keep on Negotiating: Some on Arab side... want to suspend talks until

⁶⁵ Yitzhak Shamir, *Summing Up: An Autobiography* (Diane Pub Co, 1994), 249; Arens, *Broken Covenant: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis between the U.S. and Israel*, 9, 281, 301; Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 497; Shindler, *Land Beyond Promise*, 276. For a contrary perspective, see Barry Rubin, "U.S.-Israel Relations and Israel's 1992 Elections," in *The Elections in Israel, 1992*, ed. Alan Arian and Michal Shamir (SUNY Press, 1995), 193-204; Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace, 1989-1992*, 555-556.

⁶⁶ James A. Baker, "Peace Process: Hussein Meeting", March 12, 1992, Box 111 / Folder 2 / 1992 March, James A. Baker III Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

after Israeli elections. This would... only strengthen hardliners in Israel. We need to demonstrate continuity in negotiations over the next three months, not open up questions about Palestinian/Arab commitment... Israeli politics: Situation is fluid with changes in Labor; what Palestinians do over next three months will be important to what happens in June. Don't give ammunition to hardliners."⁶⁷

The administration also made a careful effort to exclude East Jerusalem from demands for a settlement freeze. Part of the justification for doing so was because doing otherwise would leave Labor dead in the water. Ross wrote in February to the secretary: "so far we've kept Shamir off balance, denying him any easy rallying points for Israeli public opinion, like applicability of a freeze on new starts to Jerusalem... if we clarify Jerusalem at this point, we'll create a major problem: either we will kill Rabin or... push the Palestinians to do stupid things... I recommend we stick to our low-profile public line".⁶⁸

Before 1992, the administration's approach to the HLGs was targeted at influencing Israeli policy and not leadership selection. For instance, a memo from Ross to Baker in July of 1991 lays out the administration's strategy for linking the \$10 billion package to a large-scale settlement freeze that September. In it, the focus is on "our need to build leverage with Shamir" and says nothing that suggests

⁶⁷ James A. Baker, "Points for Hussein", February 20, 1992, Box 111 / Folder 1 / 1992 February, James A. Baker III Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. Underlining in the original.

⁶⁸ Dennis Ross, "Public Position on Israeli Loan Guarantees", February 21, 1992, Box 193 / Folder 3 / Chpt 29 – Baker Files, 1994, James A. Baker III Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

consideration of leadership selection intervention.⁶⁹ However, when the issue was revisited in 1992, the context had changed dramatically.

To date, the closest thing to published evidence on the topic is Dennis Ross's assessment that "delaying congressional consideration of the loan guarantees... thrust this issue directly into the Israeli elections set for June 1992. Baker was determined not to do anything that might help Shamir. Providing the loan guarantees would show that he could have settlement activity and still get our support. There would be no cost to him and he could use that in the election".⁷⁰ Both Quandt and Melman & Raviv also describe U.S. strategy as "refusal to help"⁷¹ However, these claims *per se* are difficult to classify as LSI. Barring evidence that the refusal to help Shamir was conscious, intentional, and changed policies from what they otherwise might have been, such claims are insufficient.

Of course, James Baker rejects that "the hard line on loan guarantees was deliberately pursued as a means of greasing the skids for Likud... it was not a conscious policy".⁷² To his credit, Baker is consistent on this point, even behind closed doors, insisting that LSI is "the wrong inference. We weren't thinking about domestic Israeli politics".⁷³ However, it is not even clear that the ghost writer for his

⁶⁹ Dennis Ross, "Approach to the \$10 Billion and the Peace Process", July 1, 1991, Box 193 / Folder 3 / Chpt 29 – Baker Files, 1994, James A. Baker III Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

⁷⁰ Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*, 83.

⁷¹ William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967*, 3rd ed. (Brookings Institution Press and the University of California Press, 2005), 312-313; Yossi Melman and Dan Raviv, *Friends in Deed: Inside the U.S.-Israel Alliance* (Hyperion Books, 1995), 439.

⁷² Shamir, *Summing Up: An Autobiography*, 249; Arens, *Broken Covenant: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis between the U.S. and Israel*, 9, 281, & 301. Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace, 1989-1992*, 555-556.

⁷³ Thomas M. DeFrank, "Transcript of Interview with James Baker", July 27, 1994, Box 193 / Folder 3 / Chpt 29 – Baker Files, 1994, James A. Baker III Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

memoirs, Thomas DeFrank, believed these claims, which provides some basis for suspecting his denials were intended either to protect his legacy or shield Bush's.

In preparing to help write Baker's memoirs, DeFrank interviewed a number of stakeholders in the Bush administration to gain a fuller idea of what the government was trying to achieve on various issues. The following is a transcript of DeFrank's interview with Daniel Kurtzer, who by 1992 was the deputy assistant secretary at State responsible for handling Arab-Israeli affairs full time at the Bureau for Near Eastern Affairs:

[Kurtzer]: "As a democratic government, we can't articulate as a goal the overthrow of another government, but it was not in anybody's interest to have Shamir win with regard to anything because of his positions on substance. Now, how much that played into the calculations to play tough on loan guarantees, how much the other factor played in -- which was the Bush-Shamir disconnect from Day One... all of that is now coming together at a point where the Israeli position in the negotiations is intransigent. Shamir is basically lording it over everybody, saying, I got us into a process that's not gonna result in anything, I'm a big hero, I want \$10 billion as my payoff, and I'm gonna win the election in six months. And this is a prescription for you know the President and the Secretary to get together privately and say, oh no he's not.

T[homas DeFrank] - I asked him [Baker] that and he said, you don't really think we'd do something like that?

K - Right!

T - He kind of takes umbrage. He says, we didn't do that, it was done on the merits. He's insistent.

K - The merits existed -- and they existed because of the experience of the \$400 million. But this was not done on the merits -- this was a political calculation. Now, do I know that for a fact? Of course not.

T - Will you believe it forever?

K - Yeah. Of course. And was it effective? Yes."⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Thomas M. DeFrank, "Transcript of Interview with Daniel Kurtzer", August 4, 1994, Box 193 / Folder 3 / Chpt 29 - Baker Files, 1994, James A. Baker III Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

Further, I have video footage of Bruce Riedel, who served then on the NSC, arguing at a public event that President Bush “*actively colluded with Yitzhak Rabin to have Likud voted out of office and to bring a Labor government to power*”.⁷⁵ When asked to elaborate in an interview for this project, Mr. Riedel explained that Bush and his NSC staff felt that “we had to get rid of him. And they consciously devised a strategy using the housing loan process... This was very much thought through that this will impact Israeli public opinion. We [were] tilting against Shamir”.⁷⁶

Did the Policy Succeed?

Yes. Certainly, Kurtzer seems to believe U.S. policy helped facilitate Rabin’s landmark victory, and many other observers agree.⁷⁷ Baker judges that “in hindsight, it’s obvious that the controversy over loan guarantees clearly contributed to the Likud’s defeat”.⁷⁸ Arens believes “the Bush administration’s confrontational style with Israel, especially the withholding of the loan guarantees, had contributed to the Likud’s defeat and, considering Rabin’s slim margin of victory, might well have been decisive”.⁷⁹ Ross thinks it was “certainly a factor”.⁸⁰

Veteran analysts of Israeli elections Don Peretz and Sammy Smooha describe

⁷⁵ Emphases mine. Bruce Riedel, *Remarks at MIT Event "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy"* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2007), pt. 45:00 - 47:00, <http://mitworld.mit.edu/video/488>.

⁷⁶ Bruce O. Riedel, “Interview with the Author”, April 9, 2011.

⁷⁷ Labor won the election by its biggest margin since in fifteen years, beating the Likud by an unheard-of twelve seats. It was also the first time since 1977 that the faction had won a “double victory” – as a party (over Likud) and as a bloc (over the right wing) – both of which often affect government formation. Sammy Smooha and Don Peretz, “Israel’s 1992 Knesset Elections: Are They Critical?,” *The Middle East Journal* 47, no. 3 (1993): 451. See also Leon T. Hadar, “The 1992 Electoral Earthquake and the Fall of the ‘Second Israeli Republic’,” *The Middle East Journal* 46, no. 4 (1992): 594–616.

⁷⁸ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace, 1989-1992*, 555.

⁷⁹ Arens, *Broken Covenant: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis between the U.S. and Israel*, 301-302.

⁸⁰ Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*, 84.

the American impact as follows:

“The Bush administration played a key role in sensitizing the Israeli public... [because it] forced the government and the Israeli public to make a choice... The hard-line Likud government selected the Greater Israel option. The Israeli public, with the assistance of President George Bush and Secretary of State James Baker, saw the high cost of this ideological option, and the majority decided in 1992 in favor of the peace alternative.

Public opinion polls revealed both the direct and indirect effects of the peace issue on the Israeli Jewish voter. First, there had been a clear, steady but gradual trend since 1990 in favor of land for peace. Second, foreign and national security considerations loomed prominently in the voters' decisions during 1992, especially in comparison with previous elections. Third, the choices of voters such as new immigrants, economically depressed working class families, industrialists, and many others affected by the economy, were indirectly shaped by peace concerns. The 1992 election was the first electoral campaign in which the linkage between the economy and peace was made so firmly.”⁸¹

Israel was experiencing an economic crisis, and denial of the HLGs for about half a year had decreased the state's ability to resettle immigrants and manage economic affairs. Unemployment was very high before the vote, and part of this can be attributed to the HLGs. Over a third of new immigrants were unable to find work, and Labor made gains among the poor, Sephardic, and Soviet immigrants.⁸²

Although Israel's overall rate of unemployment was already 11%, a Ministry of Finance report predicted levels as high as 16.2% in four years if the U.S. continued to withhold the guarantees.⁸³ Thus, the Bush administration's staunch position on loan guarantees also fostered an environment that played to Labor's election platform, which argued that Likud's focus on settlement construction was

⁸¹ Smootha and Peretz, “Israel's 1992 Knesset Elections,” 460-461.

⁸² Shindler, *Land Beyond Promise*, 276-277; Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 553.

⁸³ Shindler, *Land Beyond Promise*, 276; Smootha and Peretz, “Israel's 1992 Knesset Elections.”

diverting much-needed funds from socioeconomic causes within Israel proper.⁸⁴

American behavior helped boost Labor's message by validating the party's argument that rapid settlement construction would undermine the health of the Israeli economy as well as its foreign relations. Public support for a settlement freeze eventually reached as high as 76%,⁸⁵ and the Likud's settlement policy became "the major wedge issues of the 1992 elections".⁸⁶

This *narrow* success influencing the outcome of Israeli leadership selection also produce a *broader* diplomatic success by helping to promote the peace process. Rabin had made a campaign pledge to reach an agreement with the Palestinians within a year, and, although slightly behind schedule, he soon took this historic plunge via the Oslo Accords and mutual recognition with the PLO.

One possible down side of the American effort was that Shamir may have engaged in an act of score-settling after he had already been removed from office. In October of 1992, just before the American vote, an Israeli source gave the "Nightline" at ABC News a copy of a 1987 memo to Shamir from a deceased advisor, outlining that Bush knew more about the Iran-Contra scandal as it was going on than he had admitted to date. The article stirred up some controversy that dogged Bush in the lead-up to the 1992 presidential ballot in the United States.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Neill Lochery, *The Israeli Labour Party: In the Shadow of the Likud* (Garnet & Ithaca Press, 1997), 223.

⁸⁵ Shindler, *Land Beyond Promise*, 276-277; Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 553.

⁸⁶ Asher Arian, *Security Threatened: Surveying Israeli Opinion on Peace and War* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 156.

⁸⁷ For discussion of this episode, see: Anthony Lewis, "Abroad at Home: The Cover-Up Crumbles," *New York Times*, October 5, 1992; "United States: Old Scandals Threaten to Bury Bush," *Inter Press Service*, October 15, 1992; Walter Pincus and George Lardner Jr., "Iran-Contra Data, Disclosures Shed Light on What Bush Hasn't Told," *Washington Post*, October 22, 1992; Peter Huck, "What's it All About, Ari?" *Australian Financial Review*, December 11, 1992.

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

One area in which the theories offer divergent predictions involves the predicted effect of perceptions of sender interests on the likelihood of LSI occurrence. Theory #1 (national interests theory) expects that LSI occurrence should correlate closely with objective national interests abroad. Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) anticipates that LSI toward Israel should be quite rare because pro-Israel lobbyists and members of Congress tend to perceive meddling in Israeli politics as behavior that is counterproductive for American interests. Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) expects LSI toward Israel to be common due to the strong preference that working-level officials who deal with Israeli politics tend to have for American intervention on behalf of pro-peace moderates. Theory #4 (leadership theory) anticipates that LSI occurrence should vary in accordance with the subjective beliefs of top American officials about how best to achieve American national interests.

By 1992, Shamir had lost all credibility with the U.S. government. The administration's internal assessment was that, while they may have needed Shamir to get to Madrid, any further progress would be "impossible until the Shamir government was replaced". DeFrank records Kurtzer explaining that "all of us believed needed Sh[amir] 2 get into process, but it would fail if Sh. remained in the government".⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Thomas M. DeFrank, "Wire-bound Memo Book entitled 'DKurtzer [and] G. R. Ford 8-9-94'", August 9, 1994, Box 173 / Folder 10 / Interviews, Miscellaneous Notes Undated, James A. Baker III Papers, Public

However, these were not only generalized beliefs about the process – they were also subjective assessments of Shamir’s character and intentions. A verbal misunderstanding early in his administration had led Bush to believe he had been double-crossed by Shamir over what he thought was a face-to-face promise to constrain settlement construction.⁸⁹ The PM’s abandonment of even the so-called Shamir Plan in 1990 shook Baker’s faith in the prime minister as well. By this point in time, Bush had even taken to calling Shamir “that little shit” behind closed doors.⁹⁰ These factors point to the personalized nature of the administration’s animus against Shamir, a trademark of leadership theory over Theories 1 through 3.

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

Theory #1 (national interests theory) predicts that LSI occurrence should closely reflect objective political developments in the target state, whereas Theory #4 (leadership theory) expects the subjective perceptions of top leaders in the sender state to be a major intervening variable in this relationship. In this case, the occurrence of LSI clearly could not have been possible without the January 29th decision in Israel to call early elections. In the absence of an imminent opportunity for leadership selection, American policy had earlier been geared only toward changing the Israeli government’s behavior, not its membership.

However, a more crucial turning point for American policy seems to have

Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. See also Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 555.

⁸⁹ In reality, Shamir had said something to the effect of “don’t worry, it will not be a problem”. Ibid., 123; Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 210; Brown, “Interview with Ambassador William Andreas Brown,” 272.

⁹⁰ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 210.

been February 19th, when Yitzhak Rabin beat out Shimon Peres for leadership of the Labor Party.⁹¹ At least two of the internal memos cited above for implying LSI followed just after this date: Ross's memo on East Jerusalem on the 21st and Baker's talking points for meeting with Hussein on the 20th.⁹²

Also, attached to the Ross memo is a cover letter entitled "game plan", in which he advises Baker not on whether to shape the Israeli vote but on how to avoid eliciting nationalist backlash. Ross recommends low-key public posturing on the HLGs so that "we not look like we're playing pols or seeking to avoid a deal" lest U.S. efforts be "portrayed as a delib. effort to introduce new conditions to avoid a deal. more than anything else, you have got to look fair, not like someone seeking ways to change the goalposts". Then, on the 24th, Baker laid out the administration's strict new standard for granting the \$10 billion: a comprehensive settlement freeze.⁹³

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) and Theory #3 (the bureaucratic approach) expect that members of Congress, the pro-Israel lobby, and/or the bureaucracy should be informed and influential in advance of major decisions by the sender state about whether or not to pursue LSI. However, Theory #4 (leadership theory) expects that top officials in the sender state should keep these other actors in the dark about their true intentions and pursue restrictive, unusual deliberative

⁹¹ Leon T. Hadar, "The Last Days of Likud: The American-Israeli Big Chill," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 21, no. 4 (Summer 1992): 82; Morton M. Kondracke, "New Bush Strategy Tries to Win Both U.S., Israel Elections," *Roll Call*, April 20, 1992.

⁹² Baker, "Points for Hussein"; Ross, "Public Position on Israeli Loan Guarantees."

⁹³ Thomas L. Friedman, "U.S. details terms Israel must meet for deal on loans," *New York Times*, February 25, 1992.

procedures to reduce the risk of leaks.

Because meddling is such risky behavior, prospective co-conspirators face strong incentives not to put plans on paper or to share ideas too widely within the government. This notion helps us make sense of Ambassador Kurtzer's remarks that he never saw written evidence yet remains convinced that Bush and Baker reached an understanding to impede Shamir's election campaign by withholding the loan guarantees.⁹⁴ Riedel believes that there "probably... was no memo" and, if there was, it certainly would have been "with very limited distribution".⁹⁵

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) predicts that periods in the sender state of either divided government or in the lead-up to elections should make for especially predominant influence wielded by pro-Israel lobby groups and members of Congress. Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) holds that during periods at the start of presidential administrations – which clearly do not apply here – rates of LSI should go up. Theory #4 (leadership theory) expects that the political calendar in the sender state should usually not affect rates of LSI in these particular directions.

The 1992 case provides a remarkably strong test for leadership theory over lobby-legislative approaches. Not only is Congress expected to be more influential during election years, but 1992 was a presidential election year, and Bush himself

⁹⁴ This is something I am also finding in less disputed cases of LSI, such as Bill Clinton's 1996 effort to get Peres elected. Interview with a senior State Department official from the 1996 period.

⁹⁵ Riedel, "Interview with the Author."

was up for reelection. If Theory #2 provides the best explanation for the dynamics of LSI, then the 1992 case should be a trivially easy hoop for the theory to jump through – what Van Evera calls a “hoop test”.⁹⁶ And yet it fails.

Presidential involvement was a prominent feature of this episode. As early as summer of 1991, the memo from policy planning that first pushed for a strategy of linking HLGs with a settlement freeze said that success would depend on “total Presidential involvement” in what promised to be “an ‘AWACS plus’ fight... frankly, we’d also need to know the president was prepared to go all out before pushing this. (That means he sticks with it, even knowing some of his friends on the Hill will come to him at the first sign of a fight saying they can’t afford this and we can’t win it).”⁹⁷

Starting in September, the president became personally involved, both through public statements and in consultations with Congress. Bush and Baker also met in private with Jewish and pro-Israel leaders, urging them to consider the delay. When that did not yield their support, President Bush went public and fought hard.

Bush proclaimed “I don’t care if I get one vote, I’m going to stand for what I believe here. And I believe the American people will be with me”. He argued that, so soon after “American men and women in uniform risked their lives to defend Israelis in the face of Iraqi scud missiles,” it was necessary to be more understanding of the administration’s efforts and grant the 120-day delay. He complained that “I heard that there was something like a thousand lobbyists on the Hill working the

⁹⁶ Stephen Van_Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Cornell University Press, 1997), 120-123.

⁹⁷ Ross, “Approach to the \$10 Billion and the Peace Process.”

other side of the question. We've only got one lonely guy down here doing it".⁹⁸

Just as Ross's July 1991 memo called for "total presidential commitment," a memo to Baker in the last week of that August from State Department Legislative Liaison Janet Mullin explained that linkage would require the administration to fire a shot across Congress's bow:

"If we convince the leadership privately that we intend to play hardball and take our case to the American people, they could then prevail upon their colleagues to defer... the first step is to make sure the leadership understands that proceeding now on loan guarantees will doom the peace process... further, we would emphasize that the responsibility for that would fall directly on the Congress. That should get their attention".⁹⁹

The next week, the president met with Sen. Patrick Leahy of the Appropriations Committee to discuss the issue. His declassified talking points read as follows:

"Approach if deferral blocked: Don't want a fight. But if you don't defer the issue, there'll be one. You'll leave us no choice. And have no illusions about what the fight will be like... we'll state bluntly that rush to action puts peace process directly and unnecessarily at risk... We'll point out who bears responsibility... we'll make proponents of premature action explain to American people why we should rush ahead on \$10 billion program -- biggest ever to single country -- at time when we're holding off on unemployment, insurance, dairy price supports, etc."¹⁰⁰

When the issue came up again in the context of Israeli elections, it was a similar meeting between Bush, Leahy, and Leahy's Republican counterpart Bob Kasten that ended the effort. Leahy concluded after this second meeting with Bush that the

⁹⁸ The Public Papers of President George H. W. Bush, "The President's News Conference" (The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara, September 12, 1991).

⁹⁹ Janet Mullin, "Note to the Secretary", August 27, 1991, Box 193 / Folder 3 / Chpt 29 – Baker Files, 1994, James A. Baker III Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

¹⁰⁰ James A. Baker, "Presentation to Leahy on Absorption Aid: Outline for President", September 3, 1991, Box 193 / Folder 3 / Chpt 29 – Baker Files, 1994, James A. Baker III Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

Israeli request was “dead” and described himself as “very, very discouraged”.¹⁰¹

Once Rabin was elected, Bush did rush to heal the relations with Israel and its American supporters just before the November U.S. vote. Rabin and his wife were invited to join the Bushes at their family retreat in Kennebunkport, Maine, for a symbolic vacation summit.¹⁰² After speedy talks to sort out details, President Bush announced with delight that they had reached agreement on extension of the loan guarantees and sharp curtailment of Israeli settlement activity. Reportedly, Rabin tried scaling back his demands at Kennebunkport to \$2 billion as a tactical concession but was urged by a jovial Baker to take all \$10 billion instead.

Despite clear awareness within the administration that withholding loan guarantees would elicit a fight with Congress and AIPAC, Bush and Baker persisted, even as the dispute spilled into a presidential election year. Certainly, it is possible that a less determined president might have acted differently under similar circumstances. However, it is striking that even the anticipation of an “AWACS plus’ fight” may not be enough to deter or cut short LSI when the president and secretary of state are themselves onboard with such an initiative.

Nor is this phenomenon something unique to George H. W. Bush. When President Clinton faced reelection in 1996, he engaged in not one but two dramatic and domestically risky efforts at leadership selection intervention to bolster close

¹⁰¹ Thomas L. Friedman, “Bush rejects Israel loan guarantees,” *New York Times*, March 18, 1992.

¹⁰² See James A. Baker, “Proposed Agenda for Meeting with the President”, June 24, 1992, Box 115 / Folder 9 / White House Meeting Agendas, 1992, James A. Baker III Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. Rabin “wants to be seen as putting U.S. relations back on track. It’s in our interest to help him do so, because it will build his authority and make it easier to move quickly on peace process. It’s also good politics here. You ought to think of having a Rabin visit to Kennebunkport at the end of August”.

partners facing tight races in both Israel and Russia.¹⁰³

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

The bureaucratic politics approach (Theory #3) expects unauthorized LSI by working-level officials to be relatively frequent. However, Theory #4 (leadership theory) expects such freelancing to be rare and constrained to periods in which executive oversight is lax.

No unauthorized behavior took place in this case. Ross explored the idea of a softened compromise with Israel's ambassador, Zalman Shoval. However, this was not intended to undermine the administration's efforts at LSI or to carry out LSI without formal approval. Regardless, Baker simply overruled him.¹⁰⁴ As discussed extensively above, the 1992 effort came from the top down. It may have been recommended or implemented by officials at State or the NSC, but the policy that the U.S. pursued bore the president's imprimatur and his active participation.

This outcome supports leadership theory in two ways. First, the fact that presidential authority was untrammelled supports the theoretical perspective that emphasizes the power and prerogatives of the chief executive. Second, the fact that freelancing was so much less frequent under Bush than his immediate predecessor, Reagan, suggests that presidential styles of management matter. Bush's firm oversight and activist policy position each reduced the amount of freelancing that

¹⁰³ Also, Netanyahu's efforts to collude with a Republican-controlled Congress against the Clinton White House may have reinforced the president's aggravation and his desire to push Netanyahu out. See Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East* (Simon and Schuster, 2009), 179.

¹⁰⁴ Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*, 84.

took place during his administration, and 1992 is a perfect example of this pattern.

6. Consistency of Message:

The theories offer divergent predictions with regard to whether or not officials in the sender state should be capable of crafting a message vis-à-vis politics in the target that is internally consistent and therefore more effective. Theory #1 (national interests theory) expects this task to be relatively unproblematic, since it does not anticipate domestic disagreements cropping up within the sender state. The other theories, however, emphasize particular personal or institutional biases that they believe should be likely to make this a more problematic task.

In this case, the top administration officials were unified in their objectives and coordinated well amongst themselves.¹⁰⁵ Meanwhile, members of Congress and the pro-Israel lobby put up vocal resistance against the administration's decision to link loan guarantees with settlement activity. However, the fact that the American message still came through clearly and credibly to the Israeli public provides support for leadership theory at the expense of the lobby-legislative approach.

7. Suitability of Message:

Finally, the theories offer divergent predictions with regard to whether or not the core message conveyed by officials in the sender state is likely to be suitable to the needs of its favored faction within the target state (and therefore more effective). Theory #1 (national interests theory) expects this task to be relatively

¹⁰⁵ For instance, compare 1992 with 1990, when Baker called Bush to tease him about upsetting their strategy with his offhanded remarks about East Jerusalem.

unproblematic, but the other theories emphasize personal biases (Theory #4) or institutional biases (Theories 2 and 3) that make this task more difficult to achieve.

Some Israelis I have encountered during my field work have suggested that negative LSI by President Barack Obama today would stand little chance of success because he is so much less popular among Israeli voters than President Clinton was. However, the 1992 Bush case provides a useful counterexample in this regard. Bush was no darling of the Israeli public, and by the end of his term he was even accused by some of being anti-Semitic. Yet he was still able to make a credible argument that the massive expansion of settlement construction between 1990 and 1992 was a threat to U.S. national interests that would not be tolerated indefinitely.

Second, his message was well-suited to reinforcing the Labor Party's platform that rapid settlement construction would cause serious harm to Israel's economic and diplomatic well-being. The dearth of affection for Bush in Israel did not keep his actions from validating Labor's depiction of Israeli national interests.

Finally, Bush did a better job of holding his tongue in 1992 relative to his ill-timed comment about East Jerusalem in 1990. Although his remarks attacking the pro-Israel lobby in September of 1991 left a legacy of mistrust in the Jewish community, persuading many that he was accusing them of dual loyalties, he made a number of goodwill gestures to at least soften this perception and kept on message throughout early 1992 until the Israeli vote in June.

In all three regards, the American effort to conduct LSI was made more effective because President Bush projected and sustained a message that was suitable to the context of Israeli domestic politics at the time. This provides

additional support for Theory #4.

Conclusion

President George H. W. Bush differed from his predecessor by viewing Israel in terms of its flexibility on the peace process – and settlement construction in particular. He displayed a much more active style of management, delegating specific roles to his secretary of state but assuming control when it suited his geostrategic objectives. Both he and Baker were doggedly tenacious and willing to withstand a fight with the Likud if they felt it could advance American interests.

As a result, we see LSI occur at a much higher rate during Bush's presidency, while instances of bureaucratic freelancing decline in comparison. This period entailed greater breakthroughs on the Middle East peace process as a whole, and – had the unpredictable dictates of coalition wrangling in 1990 gone just a bit more favorably for Peres – it also might have been characterized by consistent U.S. successes at leadership selection intervention in Israeli politics over the years.

By helping the parties get to Madrid – and helping to install the first Israeli government without the Likud in the last fifteen years – the Bush administration set the stage for the breakthrough at Oslo that would soon follow. His successor, President Clinton, therefore arrived upon the scene in a very different regional context. Throughout the 1990s, President Clinton worked to keep an active process alive rather than trying to start something from scratch. He also faced a context in which he would be forced to balance decision-making toward internal Israeli politics with a newfound concern for the well-being of the PLO leadership that had

participated in Oslo. Although this is not to suggest that he necessarily granted the two sides equal consideration, it does mean that LSI became even more central to understanding American deliberation toward the Middle East peace process.

Chapter VI.
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The Clinton Years
(1993-2001)

William Jefferson Clinton came to office with little experience in foreign policy. On the campaign trail, he highlighted the preeminence of domestic over international problems and attacked George Bush for being too aggressively caught up with Israel.¹ Yet in time, Clinton's government meddled in Israeli politics far more extensively than even Bush 41 had done.

No doubt, objective international circumstances piqued this interest, including Bush and Baker's achievement at Madrid and the secret Oslo deal worked out under Norwegian auspices early in his presidency. But America's involvement in the process under Clinton was also driven by his personal convictions. Although his presidency has been criticized for not paying enough attention to the issue in between moments of crisis, the administration's characteristic inclination toward high-stakes summitry reflected the president's willingness to invest his personal prestige in hopes of clinching Arab-Israeli peace.²

The president's personal attention to the peace process was especially acute in the area of leadership selection intervention (LSI). First of all, this was due to the decision-making structure of his administration on foreign policy issues in general

¹ Leon T. Hadar, "The Last Days of Likud: The American-Israeli Big Chill," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 21, no. 4 (Summer 1992): 89–91.

² His administration has also been criticized for investing presidential prestige too much. For this argument, see Aaron David Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace* (Bantam Books, 2008).

and on Mideast peace issues in particular. President Clinton was served by two secretaries of state who were remarkably detached from this issue. True, Warren Christopher made numerous visits to Damascus, and Madeline Albright managed a few days of the Camp David 2000 summit while President Clinton left to attend the G-8. But neither secretary exerted predominant influence over the issue in the way that their predecessors Shultz or Baker did. Instead, they were cut out of day-to-day management of the process by a strong envoy, Ambassador Dennis Ross. And although Ross and some of the president's other aides, including Martin Indyk, were at times involved in episodes of leadership selection intervention, the main impetus came from an especially motivated president.

Clinton felt unusually close bonds with his counterparts from Israel's Labor Party (Rabin, Peres, and Barak) as well as genuine animosity toward his counterpart from the Likud (Netanyahu). Often, it was not just his political agenda that was tied up in their success, but his emotional sympathies as well. He was a "political junkie," following even obscure details of his allies' political contests abroad.³ This tendency combined with the high-stakes nature of the peace process during the Oslo era to yield a level of intervention during the 1990s that was historically unprecedented.

In short, the Clinton administration was the high-water mark for American intervention in Israeli politics. Prolific political analyst Barry Rubin argues that American behavior during the 1990s did not involve meddling because "the same things would have been done even if there had been no election in Israel at the

³ Amb. Martin S. Indyk, "Interview with the Author", April 10, 2011.

time”.⁴ He is flat-out wrong.

Of course, this high level of meddling cannot be sustained indefinitely. At some points during Clinton’s two terms, his government avoided political meddling in Israeli affairs. Until the Oslo Accords, he generally avoided political interference of this sort. Also, during the first two years of Netanyahu’s premiership, Washington’s focus was on trying to work with him rather than against him.

At other times, American intervention was sporadic and not sustained.⁵ During these periods, Washington acted on a general preference for the Labor Party’s success but did not prioritize this goal as a sustained objective. Examples include episodic but very conscious efforts to bolster Rabin between the Oslo I and Oslo II agreements; efforts to force Netanyahu to either implement the Wye River Memorandum or step aside; and efforts to keep Barak’s coalition together even before his failed summit at Camp David.

Finally, the Clinton administration at times engaged in all-out political warfare in Israel, undertaking dramatic and sustained efforts to skew the outcome of Israeli elections in 1996, 1999, and 2001. In these cases, I document American intentions, describe a much broader campaign than previously has been recognized, and highlight attempts by third parties to also influence Israeli political contests.

Clinton, Case #1: Rabin, the father figure (1993-1995)

⁴ Barry Rubin, “External Factors in Israel’s 1999 Elections,” in *Israel at the Polls, 1999*, ed. Daniel Judah Elazar and M. Benjamin Mollov (Frank Cass, 2001), 199.

⁵ These efforts fall somewhere on the typological spectrum between partial and full LSI. Indeed, I most confess that my own conceptual framework seems to fall a bit short here.

Owing to the circumstances of the 1992 U.S. presidential campaign, President Clinton's relationship with Yitzhak Rabin got off to a poor start. After a bruising fight with Shamir, Bush was eager to curry favor with the Israeli prime minister, inviting Yitzhak Rabin and his wife Leah to a family retreat at Kennebunkport and announcing swift agreement on how to issue Israel loan guarantees. Whereas the Republican team offered Rabin loan guarantees, proven experience in promoting the peace process, and had done a good deal to help get Rabin elected, the Clinton team struck Rabin as inexperienced and overly idealistic.⁶

But once Clinton was situated in the White House, their consequent interactions went much better. Clinton expressed his desire for continuity on the peace process despite past criticisms of Bush's approach. Furthermore, although Clinton's predilection for approaching Israel with carrots rather than sticks may have been a liability in Rabin's eyes when Shamir remained prime minister, the president's "hug Israel" mentality eventually became an asset for Rabin. A strong personal relationship began to form, and in time numerous former Clinton advisors would suggest that their boss came to see Rabin as a father figure.⁷ In time, this close personal relationship helped sustain efforts by the U.S. to bolster Rabin so he could pursue an unprecedented opportunity to make peace with the PLO.

⁶ Leon Hadar, "To Tell the Truth: Will Yitzhak Rabin Provide George Bush's October (1992) Surprise?," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (September 1992): 11–12, 38; Samuel "Sandy" Berger, "PBS Frontline Interview on the Clinton Years," interview by Chris Bury, November 2000.

⁷ Bruce O. Riedel, "Interview with the Author", April 9, 2011; Donald Harrison, "Clinton, Israelis Share Strong Affection, Former Aide Says," *San Diego Jewish Press-Heritage*, December 18, 1998.

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

Eventually, yes. I cannot find evidence to suggest leadership selection intervention by the United States toward Israel during first nine-plus months of Bill Clinton's presidency – through at least the White House lawn signing ceremony for the Oslo Accords. Nor do I have reason to suspect otherwise, especially in the absence of an impending political contest within Israel.

However, once Rabin tied the political fortunes of his coalition to the Oslo process and peace with the Palestinians, the American administration adjusted accordingly, taking occasional breaks from focusing on the process in order to also address the matter of Rabin's politics at home.

<Phase One: Non-LSI>

At first, U.S.-Israel relations and the Mideast peace process were stuck in slow motion. Clinton's team came to office confronting a crisis in post-Madrid peace talks, with Arab delegations boycotting over the controversial expulsion to Lebanon of 415 supporters of Hamas and Islamic Jihad without trial.⁸ When talks resumed, American negotiators pitched bridging proposals at the working level but were unable to achieve substantive progress due to the sizable gaps between the Israeli and Palestinian teams.⁹

⁸ David Horowitz, ed., *Shalom, Friend: The Life and Legacy of Yitzhak Rabin* (Newmarket Press, 1996), 142; Marvin C. Feuerwerker, "Israeli-American Relations in the Second Rabin Era," in *Israel Under Rabin*, ed. Robert Owen Freedman (Westview Press, 1995), 12–13.

⁹ Morton M. Kondracke, "Clinton Diplomats Score a Success in Mideast Talks," *Roll Call*, February 8, 1993; Helena Cobban, "Israel and the Palestinians: From Madrid to Oslo and Beyond," in *Israel Under Rabin*, ed. Robert Owen Freedman (Westview Press, 1995), 95–101.

Talks were further stymied by the fact that both Rabin and Arafat had shifted their attention toward cutting a deal at Oslo rather than through the Madrid process, a development largely missed by observers in Washington. Finally, the U.S. administration had decided to shift most of its focus to the Syrian track, believing that a deal with Damascus would be less complicated to negotiate, easier to implement, and put greater pressure on the PLO at a later date.¹⁰

Some events did occur that did set the stage for American LSI at a later date. First of all, Clinton was quickly persuaded by his staff that the Mideast peace process was one area in which major progress was possible and could play a part in his broader presidential legacy. Second, Clinton began seeking out information about Israeli domestic politics. One of his main Mideast advisors at the time, Martin Indyk, observed from the NSC that Clinton was “a political junkie” when it came to his friend’s elections abroad and quickly started following Israeli domestic politics:

“MI: I remember when I briefed him for his first meeting with Rabin [in August of 1992]. This was before he was elected, he was running as a candidate. He was very nervous about it and did not know a lot about Israeli politics at that point... he didn’t know a lot. But it didn’t take him long. It’s not as if we sat down and briefed him on Israeli politics. He was picking it up from his friends. [And] reading. I mean, he was a voracious reader... I think he also got it from talking to Israeli leaders, right. He talked to Rabin about his political situation.

DW: When?

MI: When he came, the first meeting. Clinton discussed it with him, and Rabin was happy to share it with him because it was in Rabin’s interest that he would understand the difficulties he faced...

DW: Now to what extent did we keep Rabin’s domestic situation, his domestic strength, his coalition stability in mind?

MI: Totally.”¹¹

However, circumstances did not yet call for this concern to be tested or put

¹⁰ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 252.

¹¹ Indyk, “Interview with the Author.”

into action. Further, Rabin's electoral victory was quite recent, and there was little reason to believe that his hold on power was going to be put to the test. Thus, at this time there was very little American interest expressed in pursuing LSI.

<Phase Two: LSI>

Once Rabin staked his political future on the Oslo Accords, the Clinton administration's approach to Israeli politics shifted considerably. Rabin returned to the White House just two months after the Oslo signing ceremony to seek an American nod of approval in the face of lagging domestic support for his agenda. Rather than focusing on how to move the agreement forward, Rabin's November visit focused instead on demonstrating to the Israeli public that its sacrifices for peace would yield substantive benefits for Israel in its relations with America.

During the visit, President Clinton made a series of gestures that he said were designed to help Israel "defray the costs of peace".¹² He reiterated past pledges to protect Israel's \$3 billion in annual aid, despite of a tough fiscal environment and domestic pressures to decrease foreign aid since the end of the Cold War. He also promised new measures to boost Israel's qualitative military edge in the region. For instance, he announced the approval of technology transfer licenses for sophisticated supercomputers and other electronics with military applications that had previously been banned for export to Israel. He instructed the Defense Department to approve advanced F15-E fighter planes described by the Washington

¹² Steve Holland, "Clinton Offers Incentives to Bolster Rabin," *Reuters News*, November 12, 1993. For additional detail on U.S. pledges made during this visit, see "Clinton Promises Warplanes to Israel: U.S. Will Also Relax Rules for High-tech Exports," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 13, 1993.

Post as “the most sophisticated attack jets ever sold by the United States”.¹³ Also, he pledged to persuade Congress to let Israel repurpose \$250 million of existing loan guarantees towards costs that the IDF would incur from redeploying out of Gaza City and Jericho under the Oslo Accords.

Administration officials made anonymous statements to the press that LSI featured prominently in their intentions at the time. Thomas Friedman wrote in his New York Times column that these deliverables comprised a conscious “effort to bolster Rabin” that Clinton “hopes will both reinforce the Israeli leader’s political standing at home” while also facilitating possible steps toward Syria. He claimed that these assertions were based on private comments from U.S. officials:

“the politics behind this package, say American officials, is this: Since Mr. Rabin signed the peace accord in September with Yasir Arafat, the PLO chairman, there has been a slight erosion in support for the treaty in Israel, as shown by the recent municipal elections in which Mr. Rabin’s Labor Party took a beating from the right-wing Likud in both Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

“Administration officials say they want to do all they can to bolster Mr. Rabin’s standing, by showing the Israeli public that the Prime Minister can deliver on their security concerns. At the same time, they want to make the Israeli leader more comfortable with the idea of striking a deal with Syria.”¹⁴

Boston Globe reporter Mary Curtius also cited administration officials stating on background that “the promises of assistance are meant to bolster Rabin’s political standing in Israel, where Palestinian attacks on Jewish settlers and soldiers have eroded public support for Israel’s accord with the PLO, administration officials

¹³ Daniel Williams, “U.S. Offers to Sell Israel Upgraded Fighter Jets: Aspin and Rabin Discuss Terms for F-15s,” *Washington Post*, November 16, 1993.

¹⁴ Thomas L. Friedman, “U.S. to Give Israel Incentives to Seek a Broader Peace,” *New York Times*, November 12, 1993. Other reports cite the off-record administration comments

said”.¹⁵ The *Globe’s* editorial page described administration efforts that week as “a policy predicated on Clinton’s conviction that Washington must do everything it can to bolster support for Rabin’s government within Israel”.¹⁶

Just over one year later, the administration again made overtures designed to help bolster Rabin back home in Israel. Two especially dramatic terrorist attacks in October 1994 and January 1995 did severe damage to the cause of peace within Israeli politics.¹⁷ By early 1995 only 37% of Israelis wished to continue peace talks, and Benjamin Netanyahu pulled ahead of Rabin for the first time in public polling.¹⁸

In this difficult political climate, the White House again sought to strengthen Rabin. *Washington Post* reporter Daniel Williams cited anonymous U.S. officials that “the Clinton administration is trying to shore up the domestic political fortunes of Yitzhak Rabin, the battered Israeli prime minister”. Williams explained that “Washington regards Rabin as the best hope to reach final peace solutions... but over the past several months, guerilla and terror attacks inside Israel have raised Israeli popular doubts about peace talks as an avenue to security, severely weakening Rabin’s standing”. Thus, “in a move partly designed to close ranks with Rabin, President Clinton announced on Tuesday a freeze on any financial transactions by Middle Eastern groups and individuals suspected of supporting terrorism. In addition, the administration is tolerating Rabin’s desire to delay troop

¹⁵ Mary Curtius, “Clinton Vows Aid, Weapons for Israel: Rabin, in DC, Encourages More U.S. Help in Peace Talks,” *Boston Globe*, November 13, 1993.

¹⁶ “Editorial: Clinton’s Partner for Peace,” *Boston Globe*, November 13, 1993.

¹⁷ Those attacks struck in central Tel Aviv at the prominent Dizengoff shopping center and then at a busy bus station nearby Netanya. The first attack killed twenty-two Israeli civilians; the second killed one civilian and twenty soldiers. Horovitz, *Shalom, Friend*, 157.

¹⁸ Dan Kurzman, *Soldier of Peace: The Life of Yitzhak Rabin, 1922-1995* (HarperCollins, 1998), 478; Dan Leon, “Israeli Public Opinion Polls on the Peace Process,” *Palestine-Israel Journal* 2, no. 1 (1995).

withdrawal from the occupied West Bank and his plans to expand West Bank settlements, both in the name of security". Meanwhile, Williams explained that the U.S. also sought to push Syria to restrain terrorist groups based out of Damascus to give Rabin increased room to maneuver.¹⁹

He points out that the U.S. gestures against terror were largely symbolic, since most of the funding for Hamas came from sources like Iranian officials or private Saudi citizens. He explained that the gestures were consciously aimed at Rabin's domestic position:

"in the longer term, the administration worries Rabin will lose reelection in 1996. A victory by the rightist Likud party, which strongly opposes the talks, could abort the peace process. Moreover, signs of Rabin's weakness could deter Assad from further talks... '[although] it's too early to make definitive statements on Rabin's political future... his central task is to address the security issue,' a senior U.S. official said. 'We are willing to help him on that'."²⁰

Finally, in response to the early 1995 suicide bombing, the U.S. tried putting together a joint condemnation of terror by the Palestinians, Jordanians, and Egyptians that Ross explains was for the purpose of "demonstrating to Israelis that peace would produce Arab partners for combating terror".²¹

Yet at some other times the U.S. prioritized the peace process itself over addressing Rabin's domestic concerns. First, it rejected requests in August of 1993 from his foreign minister, Shimon Peres, for Washington to lie and take credit for the Oslo Accords as an American-mediated initiative. Peres hoped that if the U.S. did

¹⁹ Daniel Williams, "U.S. Trying to Bolster Rabin Political Fortunes: Israeli Leader Seen as Key to Mideast Peace," *Washington Post*, January 27, 1995.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* (Macmillan, 2004), 194.

so, it would help shield Israel's Labor-led government from blame for acceding to the agreement. However, Christopher and Ross doubted that the truth could be held back for long and believed that the deal would have greater legitimacy if the Israelis owned up to having negotiated directly in Norway with the PLO.²²

Second, President Clinton overruled his aides and decided to pressure Rabin into attending the Oslo signing ceremony alongside Yasser Arafat on the White House lawn. This episode will be covered in greater depth in the parallel chapter on American LSI in Palestinian affairs, since there is reason to believe that the gesture was motivated partly by a desire to strengthen Yasser Arafat as a partner for peace. However, for the time being it is sufficient to note that until Clinton publicly forced Rabin's hand by inviting Arafat to attend, the Israeli prime minister was determined not to attend the ceremony because he feared it would hurt him domestically to be seen standing beside the leader of the PLO, his nation's longtime enemy.²³

Finally, it is important to note that U.S. efforts during this period were unfocused and intermittent. In time, the pressure of an imminent Israeli election campaign in 1996 did more to focus the attention of U.S. officials, but as fate would have it this occurred after Rabin's assassination on behalf of his successor, Peres. President Clinton's intervention in support of Rabin was sporadic and at least reactive to the vagaries of domestic politics in Israel.

Did the Policy Succeed?

²² Ibid., 116–117.

²³ Kurzman, *Soldier of Peace: The Life of Yitzhak Rabin, 1922-1995*, 458–460; Warren Christopher, *Chances of a Lifetime: A Memoir*, First ed. (Scribner, 2001), 202.

Yes. However, American gestures were measured, and so were their likely results. U.S. efforts on behalf of Rabin did not protect his popularity from the damage caused by a spate on ongoing terror attacks, but they probably helped protect him from falling further by validating his strategic argument that an Israel committed to peace would be backed staunchly by the international system's sole remaining superpower.

Rabin left the November 1993 meeting noting that "I return home stronger in many aspects, more confident in our ability to reach peace and reassured that thousands of miles away from Israel, we have a true friend the White House that we can rely on".²⁴ Then again, once terror attacks continued to escalate in 1995, there was only so much the United States could do to offset the cumulative impact on Israeli public opinion. Indeed, as then-journalist David Makovsky noted at the time, during the 1992 election Rabin had made a "promise implicit[ly]... that a peace agreement with the Palestinians would insulate voters inside the Green Line from violence".²⁵ Still, it is likely that the impact of the terror attacks on Rabin's standing would have been greater without American backing.

I believe the 1993-1995 episode of U.S. LSI on behalf of Yitzhak Rabin should be coded as a modest narrow success at the goal of raising his domestic standing to a limited extent. It should also be coded as a broader success at the general goal of incrementally contributing to the feasibility of producing major steps forward on the overall peace process – by helping Rabin remain in office and avoid political

²⁴ Holland, "Clinton Offers Incentives to Bolster Rabin."

²⁵ David Makovsky, *Making Peace With The PLO: The Rabin Government's Road To The Oslo Accord* (Westview Press, 1996), 150.

crises that would diminish his ability to pursue peace.²⁶

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

The various theories offer mutually exclusive predictions vis-à-vis the dynamics of LSI, including with regard to whether U.S. officials view intervention in Israeli politics as relevant for advancing national interests. In this case, it is noteworthy that America's initiatives to bolster Rabin came from the executive branch, not the legislative one. This suggests that the expectations of Theory #2, lobby-legislative theory, do not fit with the data for this category.

That having been said, Congress was generally supportive of these particular gestures, since their overt pretense was aimed at strengthening Israel's defense capabilities. Right-wing lobbyists did occasionally partner with members of Congress to undermine administration aid efforts during the early Oslo years, but these attacks were largely confined to fighting aid to the Palestinians, not against aid to Israel that coincidentally was intended to strengthen Rabin.²⁷

Aaron David Miller argues that this pattern continued throughout the Clinton presidency, thanks to proactive outreach and exceptional sensitivity from above:

“We did reaching out to the organized Jewish community with conference calls, meetings, and briefings, not only Christopher, but the President as well, and on down from him. As a result, Bill Clinton faced less pressure from domestic politics

²⁶ It is even possible that such staunch U.S. support might have encouraged Rabin to proceed with the peace process by signing on to Oslo II, a deal he was in some ways hesitant to sign. However, there is little evidence to prove this suspicion. For Rabin's reluctance over Oslo II, see Kurzman, *Soldier of Peace: The Life of Yitzhak Rabin, 1922-1995*, 478.

²⁷ Scott Lasensky, “Underwriting Peace in the Middle East: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Limits of Economic Inducements,” *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA)* 6, no. 1 (March 2002).

than any other president engaged in serious Arab Israeli diplomacy. In fact the real pressure from the Jewish community came from groups like Peace Now and the Israel Policy Forum pushing him to go fast... as Christopher recalls, at least during Clinton's first term 'I can't remember a specific issue on which we took a decision or didn't take a decision because of fear of the so-called Jewish community'.²⁸

Furthermore, AIPAC itself had undergone a leadership shakeup, temporarily bringing in a new executive director, Neal Sher, who was seen as more friendly to the Oslo process and the ruling Labor Party in Israel.²⁹ The group had even lobbied in favor of the Clinton administration's positions in 1995 on working with Rabin to reach out to Syria, arguing that lobbying of Congress by the Zionist Organization of America and Likud officials against a possible Golan deal could "limit the flexibility of the negotiators and thereby undermine a unique opportunity for peace".³⁰

Moving on, Theory #3 (bureaucratic politics) receives mixed marks for explaining perceptions of sender interests from 1993 to 1995. Although members of the State Department bureaucracy did see Rabin's political tenure as advantageous to U.S. interests, they were hesitant toward some of the measures Washington ended up employing. On one hand, some pro-Rabin gestures came at the expense of the Palestinians and momentum for the Oslo process – such as enabling Israel to delay PA elections or IDF evacuation from Palestinian cities. On the second hand, some pro-Rabin measures – such as the F-15E jets or the

²⁸ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 248.

²⁹ In addition to the Oslo Accords, other factors that may have contributed to the shakeup include a derogatory comment by the previous executive director insulting Orthodox Jews, personal and political tensions among AIPAC board members, and Rabin lashing out at the group during his first Washington visit after become premier, criticizing AIPAC for taking positions on loan guarantees that had benefitted his rival in the 1992 election. *Inter alia*, see Ofira Seliktar, *Divided We Stand: American Jews, Israel, and the Peace Process* (Greenwood, 2002), 133-134; Nathan Guttman, "AIPAC and Israel: The Rosen-Weismann Scandal Sheds Light on the Complex Relationship between the Lobby and Israel," *Moment Magazine*, June 2006.

³⁰ "AIPAC: Premature Hill Action on U.S. Golan Personnel Could Jeopardize Peace," *Near East Report* 39, no. 3 (January 30, 1995).

supercomputer licenses – involved the approval of technology transfers that had previously been denied by executive agencies. Neither of these measures bear the mark of a bureaucratically-driven policy program.

Theories 1 and 4 (national interest and leadership theories, respectively) both fit with the fact that the administration felt backing Rabin was consonant with U.S. interests. Failure of Israel's Labor government would entail a serious decline in the Oslo peace process – as was later demonstrated starting in 1996 under Netanyahu – so efforts to shore Rabin up when his public backing seemed to lessen does fit with the predictions of either theory.

However, the fact that the personal relationship between Clinton and Rabin was so strong – again, a bond ultimately likened to a father-son relationship – seems to fit especially well with the predictions of leadership theory. The president's personal motivation helps underpin his exceptional sensitivity to Rabin's domestic situation. The fact that they explicitly consulted on Rabin's domestic situation also fits with the notion of a top-down political process driven by leadership in the White House, as does the description of Clinton's general tendencies toward being a "political junkie" with regard to his friends' electoral contests overseas.

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

The fact that both major U.S. initiatives to boost Rabin, in November 1993 and January 1995, were expressly justified in terms of perceived challenges to his domestic standing fits quite well with theories one and four. Allegedly, the 1993 supplementary aid package to Israel was prompted due to losses by Labor Party's

candidates in the Tel Aviv and Jerusalem mayoral races and perhaps also by the Shas Party's decision to leave the coalition that September.³¹ The measures in 1995 were allegedly prompted by major declines of Rabin's standing in the polls versus the Likud, with an eye toward Israeli elections the following year. Both measures were taken in hopes of partially offsetting the damage to Rabin's standing caused by terrorist on Israeli civilians.

However, two additional dynamics seem to point to the subjective biases of leadership theory at the expense of national interests theory. First, the president's Mideast advisors became increasingly distracted by Oslo II negotiations over the course of 1995, which might help explain why the administration did not do much for on Rabin's domestic standing beyond January, even as suicide bombings in April, July, and August continued to damage his poll numbers and election prospects.³²

Second, the episodic nature of American gestures – tied to major, attention-getting events and eliciting sporadic policy responses rather than coming in smooth, gradual waves to match fine-grained, fluid variations in Israeli public polling over these three years – seems fit with the inherently “sticky” nature of belief updating in real-world praxis. In fact, the 1993 LSI attempt may not have even been tied to a dip in Rabin's personal standing in the polls. It was pursued on the basis of other indicators that went beyond poll figures and seemingly signaled his political weakness, including difficult municipal battles for Labor and possibly Shas's

³¹ For more on these mayoral races, see “Israeli Right Strengthens Hold on Town Halls,” *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, November 3, 1993. For Rabin's coalitional challenge after Shas departed, see “More Shas Deputy Ministers Resign, Spiritual Leader Meets Rabin,” *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Editorial Report, September 14, 1993); “Rabin Says He Has Had Enough of a Minority Government,” *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, March 3, 1994.

³² See, for instance, “Poll: Netanyahu Beats Rabin,” *Jerusalem Post*, May 29, 1995. For a list of major terrorist attacks during this period, see Horovitz, *Shalom, Friend*, 158.

departure from Rabin's coalition government. In fact, there is reason to question whether the administration had even seen polling that demonstrated Rabin's sliding poll numbers before deciding to bolster him during his visit that November.

Ongoing Palestinian violence and disputes over how to implement Oslo also did damage to Rabin's standing in the polls, but public data on this trend actually came at about the same time as the prime minister's visit to Washington. Coming from a dead heat against the Likud in June, the Oslo agreement had put Rabin way ahead, leading Netanyahu by at least thirteen percentage points and giving his party an eleven percent lead over its right-wing rival. These numbers held steady through at least mid-October.³³ However, five terrorist bombings after the Accords began to feed settler riots and broader dissatisfaction within Israel.³⁴ Rabin called the mayoral races in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem a test of confidence in his peace initiative and had campaigned for the Labor candidate, Teddy Kollek, in Jerusalem.³⁵ Later that week the right wing called for early elections in Israel, claiming their municipal victories pointed to a new groundswell of domestic support for their position.³⁶

However, as best I can tell it was only on November 12th that Rabin's standing plunged in publically available opinion polls, putting the right- and left-

³³ Dan Perry, "Right-Wing Leader Plans More 'Pragmatic' Approach," *Associated Press*, October 18, 1993; Patrick Martin, "Israeli Parliament Backs Peace Agreement with PLO: Public Opinion Poll Shows Overwhelming Support for Prime Minister, Sharp Decline for Likud," *The Globe and Mail (Canada)*, September 24, 1993.

³⁴ For a list of attacks, see "Palestinian Blows Himself up in West Bank Car Bomb," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, November 2, 1993. For the broader, Israeli response, see also Richard Beeston, "Attack on Rabbi Sparks Violence in West Bank," *The Times (of London)*, November 8, 1993.

³⁵ Clyde Haberman, "Jerusalem Journal: This Race Is a Cliffhanger (Watch the Arab Vote)," *New York Times*, November 3, 1993; Julian Ozanne, "Israeli Poll Is Test for Peace Drive," *Financial Times*, November 3, 1993.

³⁶ Barry Parker, "Right-wing Demands Early General Elections in Israel," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, November 4, 1993.

wing blocs tied neck-and-neck at sixty projected Knesset seats each.³⁷ That poll came during Rabin's Washington visit and likely after the U.S. administration had already made up its mind to bolster the Israeli prime minister.³⁸

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

Another area in which the theories diverge has to do with the patterns of domestic debate that are predicted to occur within the sender state. In particular, leadership theory holds that presidents or other top political leaders in the sender state have incentives to undertake LSI in a deceptive manner that avoids formal decision channels and leaves lower level officials and legislators in the dark regarding their actual intention to undertake meddling. This case fits with the expectations of leadership theory to the extent that these domestic structural forces seem to have been excluded for the most part from decision-making about the initiatives that were used to carry out LSI.

Whereas Indyk claims that officials at the White House were "totally" fixated on Rabin's domestic circumstances, there is little evidence to suggest that such attention was also given to the issue by either members of Congress or the bureaucracy. In fact, neither body seems to have been in a position to initiate any of the measures undertaken by the administration to bolster Rabin. The bureaucracy was informed that its previous judgments on technology transfer issues were to be overruled for political reasons by the White House. And Congress led on only one

³⁷ "Israeli Left Plunges in Polls," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, November 12, 1993.

³⁸ Then again, it is likely that the other signs of disaffection prepared them for Labor's drop in the polls. Also, it is certainly possible that the CIA or State Department had conducted private polling in Israel during this month or that Rabin's team shared with them figures as a result of private, internal polling.

major gesture toward Israel during this period – a bill obligating the president to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem or explain every six months why he declined to do so. And yet this measure elicited Rabin’s private consternation not his gratitude, since he felt it was counterproductive and unprofessional.³⁹

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

Theories two and three (lobby-legislative politics and bureaucratic politics), expect the power of various domestic forces to be greatest during particular periods in the sender state’s electoral cycle. Specifically, Theory #2 it expects the preferences of lobbyists and the legislative branch to be exceptionally powerful and imprinted upon policy outcomes during the end of two- and four-year electoral cycles, when the president is held more accountable to domestic pressures. Meanwhile, Theory #3 expects the relative power of bureaucratic officials to be greatest during the beginning of presidential terms, meaning that policy outcomes during this period should be especially likely to reflect bureaucratic preferences.

Neither proposition finds very strong support in these cases, although Theory #2 at least is consonant with the timing of the data. True, the timing of sporadic efforts to help Rabin took place in late 1993 and early 1995 skipped the lead-up to mid-term election in the year 1994, an outcome that is consonant with the expectations of lobby-legislative theory. However, the timing of these behaviors could have been attributable to exogenous factors having to do Rabin’s sinking poll

³⁹ Horowitz, *Shalom, Friend*, 192; Steven Greenhouse, “Rabin Tells U.S. Lawmakers Aid Cuts Would Hurt Peace Effort,” *New York Times*, May 9, 1995; Colleen Siegel, “Israel Wary on U.S. Embassy Move to Jerusalem,” *Reuters News*, May 7, 1995.

numbers and the irregular attention of officials in the executive branch.

Further, this minor consonance is more than outweighed by the fact that President Clinton's most dramatic efforts at meddling in Israeli politics during his first term came in 1996, the year of his race for presidential reelection.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the capture of both the House and Senate by the Republicans for the first time in decades in 1994 seems to have had little serious impact on the president's relatively free hand on peace process issues.⁴¹

Meanwhile, Theory #3 (bureaucratic politics) is directly contradicted by the data. The theory expects that early periods in a president's term should display a higher rate of meddling because bureaucrats tend to have a more consistent, strong preference in favor of intervention and are relatively more influential over policy outcomes when a president's political appointees are still getting their bearings. However, we actually see the lowest rate of intervention during the first nine months of Clinton's first term, not the highest. Thus, this outcome fits much more with Theory #4 (leadership theory), which suggests that organizational disarray and undetermined preferences within the executive branch leadership should lead to lower, not higher, rates of meddling during these early adjustment periods.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

Sometimes, leadership selection intervention may be carried out by career

⁴⁰ Indeed, although parsed into separate cases in this paper according to eras of Israeli leaders, these cases could instead be viewed as part of a single Israeli election cycle. Rather than being driven by domestic American politics as predicted by Theory #2, this dynamic appears to be driven by real or perceived trends in the domestic politics of Israel, which would seem to fit better with theories one and four.

⁴¹ Yossi Beilin, *The Path to Geneva: The Quest for a Permanent Agreement, 1996-2004* (Akashic Books, 2004), 39–40. For an alternative perspective, see Colin Shindler, *A History of Modern Israel* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 258.

bureaucrats rather than by top political leaders. When this occurs, it provides support for bureaucratic politics theory at the expense of leadership theory. However, when it appears conditioned by presidential styles of decision-making and oversight or by possible opposition elsewhere in the bureaucracy, that vitiates the extent to which the evidence seems to bolster Theory #3.

In this case, the evidence seems to weigh more in favor of Theory #4 than Theory #3. Indyk insists that Clinton was a driving force behind policy decisions aimed at affecting Israeli politics and that he was a “political junkie” by nature, worrying actively about Israeli domestic politics from his first official meeting with Rabin in early 1993. On this issue, his administration’s style of decision-making was active and White House-driven. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that decisions were being driven by bureaucratic actors. In fact, during U.S. efforts to bolster Rabin in late 1993, these measures were framed as political choices to overrule previous decisions by the bureaucracy, not decisions made at its behest. In terms of possible bureaucratic freelancing, this case seems to fit more persuasively with leadership theory than with the predictions of the bureaucratic politics approach.

6. Consistency of Message:

Although practitioners of leadership selection intervention typically adhere to the farce that they are respecting the target state’s sovereignty, their ability to impact political outcomes there requires the projection of a consistent underlying message that validates the campaign narrative of its favored political protégés. Given that the theories pose distinctive observable implications in this regard, it

offers us some additional leverage for explaining variation in LSI outcomes – particularly with regard to efficacy.

Theory #1 (national interests theory) views domestic political phenomena in the sender state as epiphenomenal for predicting that state's foreign policy behavior. Therefore, it predicts that domestic political dynamics should not undermine efficacy by detracting from consistent messaging by that state's top leadership. However, the LSI messaging during this period was inconsistent and episodic, which probably did undermine the message's effectiveness. This is a phenomenon that does not seem to fit with the image of a perfectly rational foreign policy-making state. The administration did adhere to a steady message that the U.S. would help Israel minimize risks and bear the costs of pursuing peace, but only sporadically did it pair this message with concrete gestures designed to actually persuade the Israeli public that it should stand behind Rabin.

Furthermore, once decisions to pursue LSI were concluded, there appears to have been little opposition from either lower ranking officials in the executive branch or from lobbyists and members of Congress. The fact that neither domestic structural force seems to have done much to obstruct administration messaging seems to contradict theories two and three in favor of Theory #4, which sees top leaders such as the president and secretary of state as masters of their domain when it comes to crafting communicative foreign policies.

7. Suitability of Message:

If the message communicated by the sender state is systematically skewed in

a manner that undermines its ability to persuade voters or political elites in the target polity, LSI should be inclined to fail. Again, the theories offer distinctive predictions for explaining variation on this dimension. Theory #1 expects messaging to always be well-suited to the sender state's goals, theories two and three expect the content of messaging to be undermined by institutional preferences of domestic structural forces, and Theory #4 predicts that the suitability of LSI messaging should be driven by subjective beliefs of top officeholders.

The underlying message the Clinton administration used to bolster Rabin was that the United States would help Israel bear the costs and minimize the risks of pursuing peace with its neighbors. This message to the Israeli public was well-suited to the objective of leadership selection intervention so long as a Labor prime minister held power in Israel. The bureaucracy did little to undermine the coherence of this message, despite its inherent institutional reluctance to grant Israel too many carrots at the expense of Palestinians. For instance, the decision in 1995 to let Rabin postpone withdrawing the IDF from West Bank cities and, therefore, push back Palestinian elections as well, was not the sort of measure designed to win over bureaucrats within the Near East bureaucracy. Instead, it was imposed upon them by the White House. This contradicts the messaging expectations of Theory #3 in favor of Theory #4.

Nor did lobby-legislative forces seriously undermine this message, despite being fundamentally opposed to American LSI in Israel. In part, they may have been hesitant to interfere with the administration's policy initiatives because they were mostly bonus carrots to the government of Israel. But even in instances in which the

two branches seriously differed – such as over whether to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem – the executive branch prevailed, blocking legislators’ ability to undermine the president’s claim that exceptional American backing would come only as a result of pursuing the peace process, not as a matter of course.

Given that President Clinton did not hold beliefs that were at odds with suitable messaging for LSI, the fact that administration’s messaging was generally well-suited to perceptions by the Israeli selectorate fits with either Theory #1 or Theory #4. But, as noted above, the hypotheses of Theory #4 tend to fit even better with certain additional trends in the observed data. Thus, the case evidence during the Rabin-Clinton years seems to provide the strongest support for leadership theory, suggesting that the efficacy and occurrence of LSI was especially driven by the concerns and behavior of top individuals within the sender state.

Given that this period was an incomplete cycle of meddling, moving from full non-intervention to only irregular intervention, the subsequent Peres period in the lead-up to Israeli elections provides an excellent complement to the data from Rabin’s time in office. In comparison to this initial period of sporadic intervention, the data during an all-out U.S. campaign to determine the outcome of elections in Israel provides even stronger support for Theory #4.

Clinton, Case #2:

Peres, the peace candidate (1995-1996)

On the evening of November 4, 1995, Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by an

Israeli right-wing religious fanatic. In his stead, Rabin's foreign minister Shimon Peres was quickly sworn in as prime minister. And although Peres chose to pursue accelerated talks with Syria instead of going immediately to early elections, his government had at maximum another year left in office. Therefore, when it became clear by February of 1996 that talks with Syria probably would not yield results within that time frame, Peres chose to move the elections up to May 29th. Although he initially led by 20% in the polls due to residual sympathy over Rabin's death, a wave of suicide bombings by Hamas and Islamic Jihad in late February and early March put his Likud rival Netanyahu in the lead and the peace process in jeopardy. What followed was perhaps the most blatant instance of American intervention in Israeli politics to date, documented in greater detail here than ever before.

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

And how! American efforts to bolster Peres were deep, broad, and sustained throughout this period, especially once elections had been moved up to take place in May. The peace process appeared to be in mortal danger, along with Yitzhak Rabin's legacy, and President Clinton leapt into action, exceeding the bounds of what even his advisors thought was appropriate.

The governments of Israel and the United States enlisted LSI by other actors during this period as well, including: a concerted if belated campaign by Arafat to rescue Peres, a lavish "red carpet" welcome by Gulf states Qatar and Oman; and a vast, multilateral effort by twenty-eight governments (including thirteen Arab

states) to join hands with Peres against the scourge of suicide bombings.

Also, the 1996 election includes a rare but striking instance of a “marriage of convenience” across ideological lines between an Arab government, Jordan, and a right-wing Israeli political party, by which Jordan’s King Hussein knowingly signaled his preference for Binyamin Netanyahu over Peres.

Finally, there is apparently intelligence data to suggest that the Islamic Republic of Iran engaged in negative LSI to undermine Peres and derail the peace process in 1996. If this was indeed the case, Tehran’s meddling may actually have been the most effective outside influence on the Israeli leadership contest.⁴²

<The American Approach>

Aaron David Miller writes that the six months of U.S. policy between Rabin’s death and Peres’s defeat were suffused with a desire to “frankly do all we could to ensure that Shimon Peres, heir to Rabin’s legacy, won the election. The idea that America doesn’t sometimes interfere in Israel’s politics is about as absurd as the notion that Israel doesn’t meddle in ours. Much of what we did during that period was designed to support Peres and in doing so save Arab-Israeli diplomacy”.⁴³

This desire ran like a live wire through administration efforts to foster peace between Israel and Syria, to help Israel weather both a wave of terror by Hamas and Islamic Jihad and a second wave by Hezbollah in the north, and to reassure Israeli voters about strategic cooperation. Most notable was President Clinton’s speedy effort to organize a “Summit of the Peacemakers” at Sharm el-Sheikh to show a

⁴² N.B. The terms “negative” and “positive” are being used here in the sense defined in my theory chapter and *not* in the pejorative sense. Thus, negative LSI means an effort that aims primarily to undermine a sitting government, whereas positive LSI aims to prop up the incumbent.

⁴³ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 267.

broader multilateral umbrella of support for Peres in the face of terrorist violence.

Managing the Syrian Track. When Clinton visited Israel for Rabin's funeral, he met Peres with two surprises: an unexpected bear hug and word that his predecessor Rabin had asked the U.S. to relay to Damascus a secret offer of full Golan withdrawal in exchange for full peace.⁴⁴ Peres soon expressed his desire to work hard for an agreement with Syria provided that Assad was prepared to "fly high and fast," since this would enable Peres to face elections with a completed deal in hand.⁴⁵ He also received U.S. assurances that physical concessions by Israel could wait until after elections to be implemented, in order to boost his performance.⁴⁶

Although the Israelis and Syrians engaged in intensive talks under American supervision that began to yield measured progress, Peres began to doubt whether they would produce an agreement before November, the latest point at which he could go to new elections. Faced with growing pressures within his own party to call early elections while they were polling twenty points ahead of the Likud, Peres asked the United States to tell Assad he would be unable to avoid early elections unless they could personally meet for a high-profile leaders' summit.

Although Dennis Ross felt that the U.S. should discourage Peres from undermining these productive talks by rushing to elections, Christopher and Clinton both deferred to the prime minister on the matter because of his political considerations at home.⁴⁷ The ever-cautious Assad declined to meet with Peres in person, and the Syrian track was kept at the working level until an attack by Islamic

⁴⁴ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 212–213.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 234.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 242–243.

Jihad, a terror group based in Damascus, led even those discussions to unravel.⁴⁸

Responding to Palestinian Terror Attacks. In early January, Peres was approached by officials from Israeli internal security services with a plan to assassinate Yahya Ayyash, mastermind of numerous suicide bombings and a leader of the Hamas military wing. Even if Peres thought the plan was a bad idea, in reality he had little choice since to disagree could have led to leaks that would have destroyed him politically. Thus, on January 5th Israeli operatives assassinated Ayyash. Although Hamas waited until after PA elections and a prescribed period of mourning were over, in late February the organization launched a series of grisly suicide bombings, reportedly in retaliation for Ayyash's death.

Over the course of nine days, Israel experienced four major suicide bombings, which killed over sixty Israelis and wounded more than a hundred. The first three attacks were by Hamas, striking two buses in Jerusalem and a hitchhiking post in Ashkelon. Finally, the last attack was conducted by Islamic Jihad and struck at school children shopping for Purim holiday costumes in downtown Tel Aviv. The elections shook the country, catapulted Netanyahu into the lead in opinion polls, and put the peace process into serious danger.

The United States first responded by rushing \$40 million of emergency assistance to Israel in cargo planes along with a delegation of counter-terrorism experts to advise Israeli officials. The president attended a memorial service at the Israeli embassy in Washington, exerted visible pressure on Yasser Arafat to crack

⁴⁸ Had the Syrians been willing to condemn the PIJ attack, these talks probably would have continued.

down on terrorist groups, and recorded a videotaped message for Israeli TV.⁴⁹ However, it soon became evident that more help would be required. The result was the U.S.-directed counterterrorism conference at Sharm el-Sheikh.

The March 13th Summit of the Peacemakers projected a multilateral message of solidarity with Israel in the face of terrorism, and the most memorable image from the event was a carefully stage-managed photograph of world leaders joining hands with Shimon Peres front and center (see far above). According to Indyk, the administration saw bolstering Peres as “the be all and end all” of that event.⁵⁰ Miller agrees that “at Sharm... we absolutely conspired to do everything we possibly could for Shimon Peres to help him defeat Netanyahu... if you ask me whether or not we were thinking about ways the support Peres, the answer is ‘yes’.”⁵¹

Clinton took Shimon Peres back to Israel with him on Air Force One and visited Jerusalem and Tel Aviv (with Peres conspicuously at his side throughout) in order to reiterate the depth of his support. The way Indyk describes this visit, “the two of them campaigned for Peres in Israel... he basically made the case for peace” and, while he did not explicitly endorse Peres, “he was trying to use his popularity amongst the Israeli people to boost Peres’s chances”.⁵²

Clinton’s Israel visit included a highly publicized trip to Rabin’s gravesite, where he left a pebble from the White House lawn in commemoration. He also announced plans for \$100 million in new U.S. aid beyond the previous month’s

⁴⁹ Gene Gibbons, “Clinton Sends Bomb-sniffing Equipment to Israel,” *Reuters News*, March 6, 1996.

⁵⁰ Indyk, “Interview with the Author.”

⁵¹ Aaron David Miller, “Interview with the Author”, November 4, 2011.

⁵² Indyk, “Interview with the Author.”

emergency support.⁵³ The aid package would include new equipment and training, joint development of anti-terror technologies, enhanced policy coordination and intelligence sharing. The president announced he had instructed CIA director John Deutsch to remain in Israel after his departure to oversee finalization of the agreement.⁵⁴ Finally, Clinton spoke before a huge gathering of school children in Tel Aviv, urging them to honor Rabin's legacy by not abandoning their hopes of peace.⁵⁵

By the time he left Israel, polls showed that if Clinton were running as a candidate, he would win in Israel's election for prime minister.⁵⁶ However, he could not rest long on his laurels, since a new round of terror soon came from the north.

Responding to Lebanese Terror Attacks. In spite of repeated reassurances from the Syrians that they would restrain Hezbollah, the organization used relatively ordinary friction with the IDF and its proxy, the South Lebanon Army, as a pretext to suddenly escalate the launching of Katyusha rockets against civilians in northern Israel.⁵⁷ After repeatedly asking for help to resolve the conflict through diplomatic means, Peres finally responded to pressure from the IDF and the public after an attack that wounded thirty Israeli civilians by ordering massive air strikes

⁵³ "Background Briefing by Senior Administration Official" (Public Papers of President William Jefferson Clinton, March 14, 1996).

⁵⁴ William J. Clinton, "The President's News Conference with Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Jerusalem" (Public Papers of President William Jefferson Clinton, March 14, 1996).

⁵⁵ William J. Clinton, "Remarks and a Question-and-Answers Session with Students in Tel Aviv" (Public Papers of President William Jefferson Clinton, March 14, 1996). In his speech, Clinton insisted that "the division today in the Middle East is not between Arab and Jew. It is between those who are reaching for a better tomorrow and those who have retreated into the pointless, bloody hostility of yesterday... those who are reaching for the future will prevail... if he [Rabin] were standing here with his partner Shimon Peres he would say that we must have these tragedies move us forward with even greater conviction... never abandon the hope of peace, never lose *HaTikvah LeShalom* [lit. "the hope of peace"]"

⁵⁶ Charles Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams: The Failure of the Peace Process in the Middle East, 1995-2002* (Other Press, LLC, 2003), 35.

⁵⁷ For a more sympathetic interpretation of Hezbollah's rush to escalation, see *Ibid.*, 36. For discussion of Syrian assurances to rein in Hezbollah, see Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 233, 250-251; Uri Savir, *The Process: 1,100 Days That Changed the Middle East* (Random House, 1998), 288-291.

on suspected Hezbollah bases, which the IDF labeled Operation Grapes of Wrath.⁵⁸

The Israeli campaign relied upon the controversial tactic of intentionally seeking to put pressure on the government in Beirut by driving large numbers of Lebanese civilians out of the south. Yet in spite of this questionable approach, the United States hewed to a persistent and intentional theme that Hezbollah was singlehandedly to blame and that the Israeli operation was entirely justified.⁵⁹ On April 18th, Israel accidentally struck a UN facility in Lebanon at Kafr Qana that was full of refugees, killing roughly one hundred and wounding many more. However, Dennis Ross writes that “with the Israeli election looming, we muted our criticism of the Israeli action, striving instead more visibly to produce a cease-fire”.⁶⁰

The IDF was forced to stop fighting before achieving its aims against Hezbollah, but Secretary Christopher provided Peres with a partial salve by confirming in a letter that Washington remained steadfast in its support for Israel’s right to self-defense.⁶¹ According to Washington Post reporter Barton Gellman, the normally laconic Christopher also “made a point... in remarks broadcast live in Israel, to say the cease-fire negotiated by Peres was a ‘significant improvement’ on what his predecessor, Yitzhak Rabin, had achieved in 1993” during an earlier round of fighting with Hezbollah, even though this claim was highly debatable.⁶² The U.S. also sent messages to Tehran via France and Germany that anti-Israel terrorism

⁵⁸ “Israeli Right Slams Peres over Lebanon Attacks,” *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, April 9, 1996; Barton Gellman, “Israel Finds Challenge Impossible to Ignore: Hezbollah, Election Pressure Push Jerusalem to Send Message to Syria,” *Washington Post*, April 12, 1996; Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 250.

⁵⁹ Thomas W. Lippman, “Christopher Contacts Mideast Leaders as U.S. Refrains from Criticism of Israeli Airstrikes,” *Washington Post*, April 16, 1996.

⁶⁰ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 251.

⁶¹ Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams*, 39.

⁶² Barton Gellman, “Truce ‘Bought Some Time’ for Peres in Israeli Election Campaign,” *Washington Post*, April 27, 1996.

must halt immediately.⁶³ The U.S. even made clear to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, that they would prefer no UN reporting at all on the Qana incident because of the threat it would pose to the Peres campaign.⁶⁴

Highlighting Strategic Cooperation. This speedy ceasefire enabled Peres to keep his prior appointment to visit Washington for the annual AIPAC conference at the end of April. The Clinton administration used the prime minister's Washington visit to showcase strategic cooperation in hopes of bolstering his standing after the Hezbollah attack. As Ross describes it:

“on the eve of the mandated thirty-day campaign period [in Israel], Peres visited Washington and we all but endorsed him, with the President lavishing praise on him and pledging additional American assistance. Clinton, a hero in Israel since the Rabin funeral, sought to transfer his own credibility to Peres, and in so doing ‘save’ Labor and the peace process”.⁶⁵

Charles Krauthammer attacked the Washington visit as “an emergency love-in”.⁶⁶

Clinton spoke AIPAC alongside Peres and used the opportunity to lavish praise on his Israeli counterpart. He hailed Peres as “a true and reliable friend” who was carrying forward the legacy of Rabin. He highlighted Arab cooperation at Sharm, Oman and Qatar's unprecedented invitation to Peres, and commitments by the PLO to fight terrorism and to amend its charter. He placed blame for the

⁶³ Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams*, 34.

⁶⁴ In spite of this pressure, Boutros-Ghali filed a report that was especially harsh on the Israelis. He relates that “the Clinton administration wanted no report at all, fearing that any criticism of Israel at that moment would damage Shimon Peres's chances for reelection as Israel's prime minister. Whether or not my report affected the Israeli election is impossible to say, but it had a major impact on the Clinton administration's view of me. Clinton and Christopher were shocked by Benjamin Netanyahu's victory over Peres, which threw the administration's Middle East policy off the rails. They felt that I had defied their clear wishes and damaged Peres's standing”. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished: A U.S.-U.N. Saga* (I.B. Tauris, 1999), 263.

⁶⁵ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 256.

⁶⁶ Charles Krauthammer, “The Case for Netanyahu,” *Washington Post*, May 17, 1996.

Lebanon conflict solely on Hezbollah, and he announced new defense measures agreed earlier that day to help Israel combat that threat.⁶⁷

That afternoon, Peres had held a signing ceremony with Defense Secretary William Perry for a deal on theater missile defense cooperation. Gellman reports that the ceremony was intentionally scheduled for 1:05 PM eastern time to coincide with the start of Israel's evening television news, which jumped straight from the day's headlines to cover the prime minister's signing conference at the Pentagon.⁶⁸

Their agreement included a decision by the United States to spend \$50 million in the first year developing the Nautilus laser system to shoot down incoming rockets, to share satellite intelligence that could give Israel early warning of any regional missile attack within seconds of launch, and to send a team of advisors to Israel for devising protective measures in the interim.⁶⁹

In addition, during his AIPAC speech Clinton said that the United States would help fund Israel's Arrow missile defense batteries, discussed the provision of AMRAAM air-to-air missiles which could be adapted to intercept cruise missiles in flight, and announced that Israel would soon be receiving its first F-15i *Ra'am* (lit. "thunder") fighter jets, which had heightened radar capabilities for detecting hostile missile batteries on the ground.⁷⁰ Acknowledging the political aspect of the missile

⁶⁷ William J. Clinton, "Remarks to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) Policy Conference" (Public Papers of President William Jefferson Clinton, April 28, 1996).

⁶⁸ Barton Gellman, "Rival Criticizes Peres's 'Cynical' Use of U.S.-Israeli Ties to Boost Campaign," *Washington Post*, May 2, 1996.

⁶⁹ Possible interim steps discussed by the U.S. included adaptation of other weapons systems for added protection against rocket attacks, such as creating a land-based version of the U.S. Navy's Phalanx system for defending warships against incoming missiles Philip Shenon, "Boosting Israel's Defenses, U.S. Will Provide Anti-missile Aid," *New York Times*, April 29, 1996; Michael Lee Katz, "U.S. Gives Peres a Needed Boost," *USA Today*, April 29, 1996; David A. Fulghum and Bruce D. Nordwall, "Israel's Missile Defenses Rate U.S. High-tech Boost," *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, May 6, 1996.

⁷⁰ Clinton, "Remarks to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) Policy Conference."

defense agreement, a Pentagon spokesperson justified the measures as a “way of supporting the cease-fire and the larger peace process, if only by convincing the Israeli public that we are searching for ways to guarantee their safety”.⁷¹

Two days later, Peres and Clinton met at the White House to sign a second high-profile defense document, this one focused on formalizing the counterterrorism measures that were announced during the president’s visit to Israel.⁷² Like the Pentagon ceremony, their signing the of U.S.-Israel Counterterrorism Cooperation Accord was again timed for 1:05 PM to allow live coverage by Israel’s evening TV news.⁷³ When Peres left Washington, he waxed lyrical to Israeli reporters that now “the state of Israel... has nothing more to ask for”.⁷⁴ The visit elicited complaints from the Likud that the United States was overly meddling in Israel’s domestic affairs, and both the president and his press secretary were forced during press conferences to deny any desire to interfere.⁷⁵

Last-Minute Messaging. Washington also took steps during final moments of the campaign period that were aimed at bolstering the prime minister. Clinton’s team used at least three different channels to communicate with the Peres camp his domestic needs. The first such channel went from Clinton’s Mideast policy advisors

⁷¹ Shenon, “Boosting Israel’s Defenses, U.S. Will Provide Anti-missile Aid.”

⁷² “United States-Israel Joint Statement” (Public Papers of President William Jefferson Clinton, April 30, 1996). In addition to previously discussed measures, the agreement set up a steering committee led by the Secretary of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs that would focus on enhancing future aid and cooperation; among other tasks, the group was charged with exploring “the possibility of more formal accords”. The joint statement also “reaffirmed... commitment to maintain Israel’s qualitative edge” and declared America’s “unshakable commitment to Israel’s security”.

⁷³ Gellman, “Rival Criticizes Peres’s ‘Cynical’ Use of U.S.-Israeli Ties to Boost Campaign.”

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ “Transcript of White House Press Briefing by Mike McCurry (1 of 2),” *U.S. Newswire*, April 30, 1996; Julian Ozanne, “U.S. Denies Israeli Political Meddling,” *Financial Times*, May 1, 1996; William J. Clinton, “Remarks on Signing the Israel-United States Counterterrorism Cooperation Accord and an Exchange with Reporters” (Public Papers of President William Jefferson Clinton, April 28, 1996).

such as Ross to Peres's close policy advisors such as Uri Savir.⁷⁶ Second, there was regular communication between Martin Indyk, now the U.S. ambassador in Tel Aviv, and Moïshe Theumim, the director of Peres's election campaign.⁷⁷ Third, there was a special back channel between Clinton's political advisors in the White House such as Rahm Emanuel to Peres's secret campaign consultants Zev Furst and Doug Schoen.⁷⁸ Furst and Schoen would occasionally offer advice directly to the prime minister but were not part of the Labor Party's campaign payroll and were instead paid by private donors from the U.S.⁷⁹ Indyk explains that "Clinton used the Schoen-Furst back channel to coordinate his public statements with Peres's campaign needs in the countdown to the election".⁸⁰ In fact, all three channels were used to coordinate public messages in order to maximize political benefits to Peres.⁸¹

Once the official campaign period began, Netanyahu's team bombarded the Israeli public with ads warning that Peres would divide Jerusalem. These different channels of communication therefore relayed a message to the White House in mid-May asking President Clinton to reconsider moving the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in hopes that it might inoculate Peres on the Jerusalem issue. Indyk reports that one request was passed from Theumim and from the Schoen/Furst channel, and Ross reports receiving a similar request from Peres via Savir.⁸² But in

⁷⁶ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 257.

⁷⁷ Indyk, "Interview with the Author"; Moïshe Theumim, "Interview with the Author", July 3, 2011.

⁷⁸ Indyk, "Interview with the Author."

⁷⁹ Theumim, "Interview with the Author."

⁸⁰ Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East* (Simon and Schuster, 2009), 178.

⁸¹ Indyk, "Interview with the Author."

⁸² *Ibid.*; Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 178; Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 257. Ross says that he and Christopher supported the idea but that does not think it was brought to Clinton because Sandy Berger thought it was not worth the president's consideration. Even if Clinton did also receive the request through his own

the end, no such move was made.

One week before the election, Clinton made a direct appeal to the Israeli people during a commencement speech at the Coast Guard Academy. He declared: "I say this to the people of Israel... as Israel takes further risks for peace in the future, it can count on further manifestations of American support... now is not the time to turn back".⁸³ Then, one day before the Israeli vote, Clinton asked his aides for a speech insert on the topic for an unrelated press event. He ultimately went off script, making a far more explicit statement than they thought was wise. He said:

"that election tomorrow is a very important election for the future of Israel and the future of the Middle East... the United States supports the peace process, and... we will stand with the Government and the people of Israel, the leaders of Israel in minimizing those risks... that is the important thing that I want the people of Israel to know".⁸⁴

Dennis Ross reflects that "I felt the President had crossed the line, but Uri [Savir] called me to say it would help and Peres was very grateful".⁸⁵

<The Palestinian Approach>

Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority also took steps designed to bolster Peres in his race against Netanyahu. This included up to five different, complementary measures: (1) boosting security cooperation, (2) accepting a delayed Israeli withdrawal from Hebron, (3) revising the Palestinian National Council's charter, (4) helping the Labor Party reach out to Israeli Arab voters, and

political team, the step would have been a major departure from U.S. policy and elicited outcry from America's Arab allies.

⁸³ William J. Clinton, "Remarks at the United States Coast Guard Academy Commencement in New London, Connecticut" (Public Papers of President William Jefferson Clinton, May 22, 1996).

⁸⁴ William J. Clinton, "Remarks Announcing Agent Orange-Related Disability Benefits for Vietnam Veterans and an Exchange with Reporters" (Public Papers of President William Jefferson Clinton, May 28, 1996).

⁸⁵ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 257.

(5) holding a meaningless opening ceremony for final status talks in early May.

Although Arafat's preferred strategy was to co-opt rather than confront his Islamist opponents, he engaged in a serious confrontation with Hamas and Islamic Jihad after the suicide bombings in February and March, dismantling terrorist infrastructure and arresting nearly 2,000 of their adherents.⁸⁶ Officials across the aisle in Israel look back on the 1996 crackdown by Arafat as a landmark moment for security cooperation with the Palestinians.⁸⁷ Peres later claimed that Arafat went so far in his confrontation with the Islamists to shave off their beards.⁸⁸

Arafat also stood with Peres and other world leaders at Sharm, pledging in his speech to "confront terrorism and uproot it from our land... confronting this terrorism and these extremist and dangerous wings of Hamas and the Jihad".⁸⁹ Coordination behind the scenes was also unusually robust, with secret committees meeting ten times over the course of the following month and reaching secret agreements on information sharing and cooperation against terror.⁹⁰

Of course, it is difficult to pinpoint just how much of this effort was taken with Peres in mind, and there was certainly a more immediate self-interested component to Arafat's efforts. The closure imposed on the territories by Israel after the attacks was devastating for the Palestinian economy, and Arafat came under

⁸⁶ This number was given by former interior security official Yisrael Hasson in Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams*, 34.

⁸⁷ See comments by Likud politician Silvan Shalom and by Hasson in Ilan Marciano, "Shalom: Hamas Win Will Lead to Chaos," *Yediot Ahronot (online)*, January 26, 2006; Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams*, 34.

⁸⁸ "Transcript of Nick Stadlen Interview with Shimon Peres (part I)," *The Guardian (UK)*, June 4, 2007.

⁸⁹ "Arafat Calls on Summit to Coordinate International Efforts for Peace," *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Translated from March 13th edition of Palestinian TV Gaza, March 14, 1996).

⁹⁰ Savir, *The Process*, 295–297.

major pressure by Israel and Washington to be doing more.⁹¹ He also probably viewed the Islamist attacks as a possible threat to his own power.⁹² However, given that he also took other efforts to bolster Peres at this time, it is reasonable to suspect that the surge in counter-terrorism cooperation may also have been motivated in part by the desire to help Peres. For instance, this is Charles Enderlin's interpretation of Arafat's motivation for the security crackdown.⁹³

Second, the PA secretly reached an agreement with Israel to postpone the IDF's evacuation from Hebron until one month after the election. Peres advisor Savir notes that he personally negotiated such an agreement with Abu Mazen, and Abu Alaa later wrote that this was done with Peres's government in mind, with the specific intention "to improve his electoral prospects".⁹⁴

Third, Arafat agreed after meeting with Peres on April 18th to call for a vote within the Palestinian National Council to change the PLO's charter to reflect Israel and the PLO's 1993 letters of mutual recognition and therefore remove elements calling for Israel's destruction.⁹⁵ Again, Arafat did have external encouragement – including pledges of increased U.S. aid and a *quid pro quo* declaration by the Labor Party removing elements of its platform opposed to a Palestinian state – but this encouragement was supplemented by the desire to bolster Peres.⁹⁶ Indeed, to

⁹¹ Wafa Amr, "CIA Presses Arafat to Arrest Hamas Military Leaders," *Reuters News*, March 9, 1996; Ron Kampeas, "Under U.S. and Israeli Pressure, Arafat Cracks down on Militants," *Associated Press*, March 9, 1996.

⁹² Savir, *The Process*, 294.

⁹³ Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams*, 33.

⁹⁴ Savir, *The Process*, 297; Ahmed Qurie, *Beyond Oslo, the Struggle for Palestine: Inside the Middle East Peace Process from Rabin's Death to Camp David* (I.B. Tauris, 2008), 13.

⁹⁵ Joel Greenberg, "Peres and Arafat, After Talks, Agree to Revive Peace Efforts," *New York Times*, April 19, 1996.

⁹⁶ Robert Mahoney, "Peres, Boosted by Arafat, Bedevilled by Assad," *Reuters News*, April 25, 1996; "The Peace Payoff: Arafat to Reap Rewards from Clinton, Peres," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (*Heart*

maximize the symbolic impact on Israeli public opinion, the PNC held its vote the following week on Israeli independence day.⁹⁷

Fourth, PLO leaders helped Peres reach out to Israeli Arab voters, a traditionally stolid constituency of the Labor Party that was currently enraged over the Lebanese casualties caused by Operation Grapes of Wrath. Abu Alaa notes that “we encouraged our brethren inside the Green Line who were Israeli citizens to vote for him [Peres], in order to prevent Netanyahu’s victory”.⁹⁸ Reportedly, in Arafat’s April meeting with Peres, he gave Peres a list of 30,000 likely Arab voters.⁹⁹ When asked about these allegations, a former Peres advisor replied “I don’t want to comment on that”.¹⁰⁰

Fifth, after Arafat held meetings with Peres and with Clinton in Washington, the Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams met in Taba on May 5th to symbolically begin the task of final status negotiations under the terms of the Oslo I agreement of 1993. The implication of the symbolic opening ceremony was that the talks would be resumed the following month, provided Peres won the Israeli election.¹⁰¹

<The Broader International Community’s Approach>

American and Palestinian efforts to influence the outcome of Israel’s 1996

Newspapers), April 30, 1996; Robert Marquand, “Clinton Administration Sharpens War on Terrorism as Israeli Elections Near,” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 2, 1996.

⁹⁷ Thomas L. Friedman, “A Guide to Last Week’s Mideast Winners and Losers: The Big Winner Was Yasser Arafat, and, Conventional Wisdom to the Contrary, Syria’s President Lost,” *The Globe and Mail (Canada)*, April 29, 1996; Savir, *The Process*, 298–299.

⁹⁸ Qurie, *Beyond Oslo, the Struggle for Palestine*, 13.

⁹⁹ Ofira Seliktar, *Doomed to Failure?: The Politics and Intelligence of the Oslo Peace Process* (Greenwood Publishing, 2009), 103.

¹⁰⁰ Interview by the author with a former Peres advisor, October 2011.

¹⁰¹ Serge Schmemmann, “Israelis and Palestinians Open Final Stage of Peace Talks,” *New York Times*, May 6, 1996. Schmemmann writes that “one unspoken understanding was that real negotiations would not start until after the Israeli elections on May 29, and it was clear to both sides that their subsequent shape would depend on whether Mr. Peres, the Israeli architect of the process, was re-elected or not.”

election were perhaps the most prominent gestures but by no means the only ones. It is reasonable to presume that many of the nearly thirty states that sent high-level delegations to Sharm El-Sheikh sought to politically bolster Peres by doing so. Indeed, Savir claims that when “thirty national leaders, half of them from the Middle East, came to say no to terrorism... they were actually joining hands in support of one man: the prime minister of Israel”.¹⁰²

The monarchs of Qatar and Oman went on to welcome Peres on unprecedented state visits, during which he reached new agreements for commercial normalization and was welcomed with “red carpet” treatment including official government bands playing the Israeli national anthem, *HaTikvah*.¹⁰³ Also, the King of Morocco expressed his belief that a victory by Peres was “essential” for the peace process.¹⁰⁴ Egypt’s ambassador to Israel, Mohammed Basiouny, approvingly told the media in late May that “Labor has illustrated more flexibility concerning the peace process than any other Israeli party”.¹⁰⁵ The 1996 election was widely seen as one with crucial repercussions for the fate of peace and stability in the region, prompting an array of actors to try influencing the results.

<The Jordanian Approach>

¹⁰² Savir, *The Process*, 286.

¹⁰³ For the Qatar and Oman visits, see “Peres Gets Red Carpet Welcome on First Visit to Oman,” *Associated Press*, April 1, 1996; David Makovsky, “Oman Is Open to Israel,” *Jerusalem Post*, April 2, 1996; Kedar Sharma, “Qatar Gives Israel’s Peres a Red Carpet Welcome,” *Reuters News*, April 2, 1996; “Door Open to Qatar-Israel Cooperation: Peres,” *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, April 2, 1996; David Makovsky, “Israel, Qatar to Set up Trade Missions,” *Jerusalem Post*, April 3, 1996.

¹⁰⁴ Luc de Barochez, “Peres Wins Foreign Backing but Struggles to Convince Voters at Home,” *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, May 3, 1996.

¹⁰⁵ Luc de Barochez, “Arab Leaders Back Peres, but with Exceptions,” *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, May 22, 1996. However, the Egyptian government also quietly opened contacts with Netanyahu as a failsafe measure and discouraged visits by either candidate to Cairo before the election period was over: “Egypt Reportedly Begins ‘Contacts’ with Likud Leader Netanyahu,” *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Translated from April 30th Al-Hayat Newspaper in London, May 1, 1996).

Just as Jordan tried to influence the Israeli elections in 1988, it also sought to weigh in on the Israeli election in 1996. However, the direction of its support this time was counterintuitive, with the Hashemite Kingdom pursuing a marriage of ideological convenience with the right-wing Israeli Likud Party. William Safire mused at the time that Jordan seemed to prefer a Likud victory over that of the ruling Labor Party, and it seems he may have been onto something in this regard.¹⁰⁶

Itamar Rabinovich writes after the fact that Safire's suspicion was correct:

"Jordan stood in a category by itself. King Hussein and his government were the only Arab party to have supported Netanyahu during his election campaign, being concerned that a victorious Peres would proceed swiftly to a sweeping agreement with Syria and the establishment of a Palestinian state. Netanyahu managed to persuade him that he would keep the peace process going at a level and pace suitable to Jordan's political needs".¹⁰⁷

Despite claims by King Hussein that "I did not interfere in the elections in any form or way," his biographer Avi Shlaim notes that the Jordanian leader "did knowingly display a bias in favour of Netanyahu by inviting him to Amman on the eve of the elections while declining to extend an invitation to Peres".¹⁰⁸ The king let the press know that Peres requested a similar invitation but had been turned down.¹⁰⁹

Shlaim writes that the decision was made on the basis of a number of factors: the king's dislike of Peres over his mishandling of both the 1987 London Accords and negotiations leading up to Israel's 1994 peace treaty with Jordan, fear that Peres would pursue the peace process too precipitously and privilege Palestinian interests

¹⁰⁶ William Safire, "'Ish' Vs. Issues," *New York Times*, May 23, 1996.

¹⁰⁷ Itamar Rabinovich, *Waging Peace: Israel and the Arabs, 1948-2003* (Princeton University Press, 1999), 94.

¹⁰⁸ Avi Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace* (Random House, Inc., 2009), 564. Quote by King Hussein is from an interview cited by Shlaim cited on the same page.

¹⁰⁹ de Barochez, "Arab Leaders Back Peres, but with Exceptions."

over Jordanian ones, frustration over Israel's recent air strikes in Lebanon, and discomfort with the Israeli leader's vision of an economically integrated "New Middle East," which many Arab leaders saw as code for Israeli hegemony through trade.¹¹⁰

The king made his decision over objections by at least some advisors, including his ambassador to Israel, Marwan Muasher. Muasher felt the king underestimated the Likud's ideological resistance to Oslo.¹¹¹ Royal confidante Ali Shukri recalls that "His Majesty wanted Netanyahu to win because he thought this was a man he could deal with... Hussein did not believe for a moment that he would set out to destroy the peace... His Majesty wanted to give Netanyahu a chance".¹¹²

<The Iranian Approach>

A few years later, Dennis Ross reflected back on 1996, telling Charles Enderlin that "we had information to the effect that the Iranians were encouraging this terrorism."¹¹³ Other U.S. officials who had access to classified intelligence at the time such as Ken Pollack and Martin Indyk have also written that the Islamic Republic of Iran intentionally encouraged terrorism against Israel in order to defeat peace at the Israeli ballot box.¹¹⁴

Steve Simon, who served on the NSC in a counterterrorism capacity at the time, said that "the U.S. in this period had very specific information about Iran pressing Palestine Islamic Jihad to do what they were being paid to do... acting

¹¹⁰ Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan*, 564–565.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 565–566. See also the perspective of working-level Jordanian officials cited in Rana Sabbagh, "Jordan Wants Labour to Win Israeli Elections," *Reuters News*, April 9, 1996.

¹¹² Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan*, 565.

¹¹³ Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams*, 34.

¹¹⁴ Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 176–177; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America* (Random House, Inc., 2005), 278–280.

sufficiently vigorously to stymie those peace talks” in advance of the 1996 election.¹¹⁵ Indyk also remarked that “then there was a lot of intelligence, a lot of intelligence, that the IRGC was ramping up its efforts to attack Israeli targets in advance of the election”.¹¹⁶ Despite assurances by Iran’s president, Rafsanjani, that Iran had ruled out “practical interference, executive action, or the physical prevention of developments” in the Oslo process, it seems pretty clear that by 1996 Iran was interfering at the expense of Peres’s reelection campaign.¹¹⁷

American information was also confirmed by Israeli data. After the election, Peres told a reporter that “we had clear documents – I read them – regarding Iran’s involvement with the intention of toppling the (Israeli) government”.¹¹⁸ Even more remarkably, his head of military intelligence, Maj. Gen. Moshe Ya’alon, also told reporters that Iran was behind the assault for fear that Peres’s reelection and pursuit of the peace process could leave Iran isolated in the region.¹¹⁹ Ya’alon commented that “one of Iran’s main assumptions is that a change of governments in Israel will cause a blow to the peace process”.¹²⁰ Given that Ya’alon was then a career military officer and later joined forces with the Likud Party, not Labor (he currently serves as one of Netanyahu’s vice prime ministers), his statements on behalf of Peres should be given added credence.

¹¹⁵ Remarks by Simon to a conference on U.S.-Iran relations during the Clinton administration staffed by the author.

¹¹⁶ Remarks by Indyk to a conference on U.S.-Iran relations during the Clinton administration staffed by the author.

¹¹⁷ “Iran-U.S.: Christopher Calls for ‘Containment’ of Iran,” *Inter-Press Service (IPS)*, July 28, 1994.

¹¹⁸ Dan Perry, “Peres Blames Defeat on Colleagues, Terrorists - and Makeup,” *Associated Press*, July 4, 1996.

¹¹⁹ Ethan Bronner, “For Peres, a Political Gambit in Lebanon Operation,” *Boston Globe*, April 14, 1996; Serge Schmemmann, “Israel and Guerillas Joined Again in Deadly Dance,” *New York Times*, April 14, 1996; Gellman, “Truce ‘Bought Some Time’ for Peres in Israeli Election Campaign.”

¹²⁰ Karin Laub, “Peres Signals That Security More Important Than Peace Talks,” *Associated Press*, April 13, 1996.

Ya'alon also attributed an Iranian role not just to the Hezbollah attacks but even to the earlier suicide bombings by Hamas and Islamic Jihad.¹²¹ Indyk disputes this last claim, suggesting that only the last Palestinian suicide attack, by Islamic Jihad, involved major Iranian direction. Instead, he argues that the Hamas attack was motivated only by revenge for the killing of Yahya Ayyash¹²² However, Savir mentions that Israel received word from Palestinian intelligence services that Hamas detainees reported a similar reading of Iran's intentions.¹²³ Christopher had told the press that "we think Iran is deeply involved in this [the Hamas and PIJ attacks] at various levels – encouragement, funding, and perhaps some direction".¹²⁴

Did the Policy Succeed?

Somewhat counterintuitively, I believe the answer to this question actually yes. Peres failed to win his election, and American officials afterwards concluded that their efforts by the end of the campaign period had begun to work against his cause. However, the prime minister would never even have been able to seriously contest the election without the lavish support he was receiving from Washington. Without such help it is difficult to envision Peres coming as he did within less than one percent of winning the 1996 election, a margin small enough to suggest that there was a good chance he actually could have won.

I believe that Palestinian efforts should also be viewed as a success, while

¹²¹ Nicolas B. Tatro, "Israel Blames Iran - and Others Blame Israel - for Lebanon War," *Associated Press*, April 17, 1996.

¹²² Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 176.

¹²³ Savir, *The Process*, 302.

¹²⁴ Gibbons, "Clinton Sends Bomb-sniffing Equipment to Israel."

Jordanian and broader international efforts should be coded a failure. Finally, the Iranian attempt, if there was one, should be coded a cruel, Machiavellian success. Of course, this analysis relies heavily upon rather complex counterfactual scenarios. However, I know of no other technique for judging the efficacy of the policy that was actually chosen in this instance against possible alternative approaches.

<The American Approach>

My argument here is somewhat at odds with the conventional wisdom on this case. For instance, Peres biographer Michael Bar-Zohar writes that Sharm's "impact on Israel's public opinion was nil. Peres still hadn't understood that international conferences had no influence on Israelis; a single military operation would have been much more effective".¹²⁵ French journalist Charles Enderlin claims that the sad truth of Sharm was that it "will have no impact on Israeli opinion".¹²⁶

Peres advisor Yossi Beilin volunteered that Sharm "had no impact," that the candidate's visits to Qatar and Oman "didn't add anything," and that "the gap between the situation on the ground... and the ceremonies" may have been seen by many Israelis "as something very artificial effort to gain some votes in the last moment".¹²⁷ However, Beilin acknowledged that the basis for his claims was "because he lost in the end," not because "it didn't improve his vote share".¹²⁸

Similarly, Martin Indyk claims that Clinton was simultaneously meddling in Israel and Russia but "in one case it worked, in the other case it didn't". Then again, Indyk also admits that "I've got to be careful about 'worked' because, just because

¹²⁵ Michael Bar-Zohar, *Shimon Peres: The Biography* (Random House, 2007), 467.

¹²⁶ Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams*, 35.

¹²⁷ Former Minister Yossi Beilin, "Interview with the Author", June 26, 2011.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

Peres lost and Yeltsin won doesn't mean [that]".¹²⁹

Yet in order to reach valid inferences in this regard, it is important to parse U.S. efforts over time into separate sub-periods. For instance, Indyk believes that "our efforts were counterproductive at the end, we went too far, Clinton went too far, it became obvious in the later stages of the campaign that it was creating a backlash – it looked like interference and people didn't like it".¹³⁰ Although Dennis Ross recognizes that "at one level everything that Clinton did short of that last interview really did help Peres in a way that might have made him the winner had it not been for the Israeli-Arab backlash over what had happened in Lebanon,"¹³¹ he also rightly points out in his book that Clinton's later efforts to boost Peres in late April and early May did not boost Peres's poll numbers.¹³² However, the administration's earlier efforts – most notably its leading role pulling together the conference at Sharm – do seem to have played a crucial role in resuscitating the prime minister's standing after the wave of suicide bombings that spring.

Whereas one week before the conference Peres was polling three points down from Netanyahu, two weeks afterwards he was six to eight points up, a relative difference of between nine and eleven percentage points.¹³³ It therefore makes sense that, at the end of the Clinton visits to Egypt and Israel, Peres's advisor Uri Savir reportedly responded to Bill Clinton's hug and comment "Uri, I hope I've

¹²⁹ Indyk, "Interview with the Author."

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Dennis Ross, "Interview with the Author," March 23, 2012.

¹³² Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 256. Then again, it is also possible the intervention may have prevented his numbers from falling.

¹³³ "Dahaf Poll Puts Opposition Leader 3% Ahead of Israeli PM," *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Translated from March 8 edition of *Yedioth Ahronot*, March 9, 1996); Patrick Cockburn, "Polls Point to Revival of Fortune for Peres," *The Independent (London)*, March 23, 1996; "Peres Ahead Two Months Before Israeli Election," *Reuters News*, March 29, 1996.

helped somewhat” by saying “more than I can express to you, Mr. President”.¹³⁴ Ross concurs that “the summit served its purpose in Israel. As Shimon Peres stood before the cameras of the world media with Arab leaders, the Israeli public saw a regional transformation”.¹³⁵

Thus, judged by the evidentiary standard set out and defended in the theory chapter of this dissertation – contributory causation – the 1996 case of Peres’s defeat should be viewed as a success for American diplomacy given that it added to political strength of the president’s favored Israeli partner. The fact that Peres ultimately lost the election obscures the fact that American diplomacy strengthened his position as a candidate and enabled him to nearly win the election. Had Peres run a less lackluster campaign,¹³⁶ had Syria kept its promises to discourage Hezbollah from attacking Israel, or had a stray Israeli bomb not fallen on the UN facility at Qana, U.S. support probably could have put Peres over the top. In this sense, the 1996 case should be coded a “narrow success” at the goal of trying to impact Israel’s leadership contest, even if the outcome was not to America’s liking.¹³⁷

The case should also be coded a “broader success” given (A) that a Peres win would have advanced Washington’s hopes for peace and (B) that such partisan intervention was remarkably cost-free in the event of a Netanyahu win. Indyk insists that “if Peres had been elected... we would have finished a Syrian deal, I was

¹³⁴ Savir, *The Process*, 288.

¹³⁵ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 249.

¹³⁶ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 268; Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 256; Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams*, 41–42.

¹³⁷ Obviously, this analysis hinges upon a number of tenuous counterfactuals. However, I know of no other way to judge the policy.

confident of that”.¹³⁸ Ross writes “I am convinced that had Peres been elected in 1996, we would have been able to conclude a Syrian deal within a year’s time”.¹³⁹

Nor does it seem that U.S. intervention deserves blame for spoiling bilateral relations. After the election, both Netanyahu and Clinton faced strong incentives to emphasize their eagerness to work together in good faith. Further, the general consensus in the literature is that the awful tenor of relations during Netanyahu’s first term was attributable to contradictory basic preferences and incongruent policy win sets, not as a result of bad blood from the 1996 campaign.¹⁴⁰

Incidentally, it is also important to address two prominent myths about what drove the outcome of the 1996 election: blank votes cast by Arab-Israeli voters and an autarkist Netanyahu campaign propelled by nationalist resentment at outside meddling in Israeli affairs. For instance, observers frequently suggest that blank Arab ballots singlehandedly tipped the result against Peres, pointing out that this segment of the population comprises about a fifth of Israel’s citizen population and was incensed by Operation Grapes of Wrath.

Clayton Swisher claims that “Peres lost support from the usually pro-Labor Arab Israeli voters – twenty percent of the country’s population – following the Israeli military’s shelling of the UN refugee camp in Qana in southern Lebanon. Outraged at the killing of over one hundred civilians, most Arab Israelis condemned Peres as a ‘war criminal’ and boycotted the elections.”¹⁴¹ Indyk suggested that as a

¹³⁸ Indyk, “Interview with the Author.”

¹³⁹ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 244.

¹⁴⁰ For an article that raises the alternative perspective, see James Zogby, “Cash, Campaigning and Quite a Few Cooks,” *Al-Ahram Weekly*, January 28, 1999.

¹⁴¹ Clayton E. Swisher, *The Truth About Camp David* (Nation Books, 2004), 7.

result of “the loss of the Arab vote, as a result of Operations Grapes of Wrath,” Peres “lost 10%. I think that was decisive... at that point the Arabs represented 10% of the electorate... maybe he got 1% from this 10%”.¹⁴² Dennis Ross concurs that “you had a lot of Arabs cast blank ballots and that probably cost – I think given the small margin of defeat, had that not been the case, Peres would have won”.¹⁴³ This argument was echoed by both Israeli politicians and by scholars.¹⁴⁴

However, this argument rests upon faulty assumptions. Contrary to claims by Swisher, there was not a massive Arab boycott in 1996. In fact, Arab-Israeli turnout in 1996 was 77%, higher than in any other Israeli election to date in the last four decades.¹⁴⁵ Nor was the rate at which Arabs voted for Peres anywhere near as low as suggested by Indyk. In fact, Arabs voted for Peres at a rate of 88%, and, among those who did not spoil their ballots, that figure actually rises to a remarkable 95%.¹⁴⁶ Although the rate of Arab abstention by blank ballot for PM was somewhat high in 1996, 7.3% relative to the national rate of 4.7%, the absolutely number of such Arab ballots was 22,912, not enough to have

¹⁴² Indyk, “Interview with the Author.”

¹⁴³ Dennis Ross, “Interview with the Author”.

¹⁴⁴ Israeli elections specialist Asher Arian said “probably the number of blank votes among the Arabs is bigger than the amount that Peres needed to win. Had they voted for him, he would be prime minister,” a claim echoed by Peres advisor Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, who said that “we received a massive knockout from the Israeli Arab population”. William Quandt writes in his history of the conflict that after Qana “many of Israel’s Arab voters were appalled, and they showed their anger by refusing to vote for Peres when elections were held in May”. Arian quote is from “At the Crossroads: Israeli Elections,” *PBS NewsHour*, May 30, 1996. Ben-Eliezer quote is from Doug Struck, “Arabs’ Wrath Possibly Cost Votes: Peres’ Town Closures, Lebanon Bombings Led to Blank Ballots,” *Baltimore Sun*, June 1, 1996. Quandt remark is from William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967*, 3rd ed. (Brookings Institution Press and the University of California Press, 2005), 338. For another example of a history book making this sort of argument, see also Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (WW Norton & Company, 2001), 561.

¹⁴⁵ Karin Tamar Schafferman, “Participation, Abstention, and Boycott: Trends in Arab Voter Turnout in Israeli Elections” (Israel Democracy Institute, April 21, 2009).

¹⁴⁶ Ilana Kaufman and Rachel Israeli, “The Odd Group Out: The Arab-Palestinian Vote in the 1996 Elections,” in *The Elections in Israel, 1996*, ed. Asher Arian and Michal Shamir (State University of New York Press, 1999), 104.

singlehandedly swayed the result, since Peres ultimately lost by nearly 30,000 votes.¹⁴⁷ Such estimates are especially problematic given that only about 8,000 of those blank Arab ballots were likely cast by conscious choice.¹⁴⁸

Instead, the truth seems to lie somewhere in between. The Arab vote mattered, and Operation Grapes of Wrath seriously alienated likely Arab voters, but blank ballots alone did not sway the election. In reality Peres would have needed a major increase not just in valid ballots but also in Arab-Israeli turnout beyond even the unusually high rate of 77%. Indeed, this was one of the unexpected weak points of Peres's campaign; his policy advisor Savir and campaign director Moishe Theumim both reflected that the campaign's turnout among Arab-Israelis, though high, was still less than they had been anticipating.¹⁴⁹

However, the story of turnout in the 1996 Israeli election would be incomplete without looking at the other side of the equation, given that the Likud's turnout was also much *higher* than had been expected. Part of this was caused by religious right-wing voters who refused to participate in exit polling. However, another part of the story has to do with outside funding and endorsement for Netanyahu beyond Israel's borders. Just as the *Lubavitch Rebbe*, leader of New York-based messianic *Chabad* movement, played a critical role in scuttling Peres's 1990 efforts to form a pro-peace government, in 1996 his longtime aide on Israel

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Author's own estimation. I get this figure by multiplying 22,912 by $[1 - (4.7 / 7.3)]$, since that cuts out the proportion of spoiled Arab ballots that were likely cast by mistake, at a similar rate to the Jewish voting public. For a keen discussion of how to avoid logical fallacies and conduct similar analyses when assessing vote impact estimates, see Brady, "Data-Set Observations Versus Causal-Process Observations: The 2000 U.S. Presidential Election," in *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, ed. Henry E. Brady and David Collier (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 267–271.

¹⁴⁹ Savir, *The Process*, 306; Theumim, "Interview with the Author."

issues, Australian mining tycoon Joseph Gutnick, played a key role in saving Netanyahu two years after the rabbi's death. "Diamond Joe" Gutnick was responsible for an iconic billboard campaign before the vote proclaiming that "Netanyahu is good for the Jews" and directed a massive infusion of international cash that gave Netanyahu unexpectedly high turnout during the election, enabling him to beat U.S. and Labor expectations of the likely election results.¹⁵⁰

Also, Netanyahu's highly effective negative campaign strategy was crafted primarily by an American advisor, Republican consultant Arthur Finkelstein. Israeli journalists report that at one point Bibi told his staff "you all answer to Arthur" now.¹⁵¹ A joint investigation by *Ha'aretz* and the *New York Jewish Week* discovered that Finkelstein had been introduced to Netanyahu and funded to help him by Ron Lauder, a wealthy, New York-based Jewish community activist.¹⁵² Netanyahu might not have received an advance from Random House to write his 1993 book, *A Place among the Nations*, without intervention and a personal guarantee by Lauder, enabling Bibi promote his message before Israel's formal campaign period.¹⁵³

Additionally, Netanyahu probably solicited King Hussein of Jordan's gestures on his behalf. The U.S., Palestinian, and broader international efforts to bolster Peres provoked no small measure of outrage on the right – including accusations by

¹⁵⁰ Paul Heinrichs, "The Midas Touch: Joe Gutnick Takes on the World," *The Age (Melbourne, Australia)*, May 18, 1996; Paul Heinrichs, "Gutnick Strikes Gold in Israel Election Glory," *The Age (Melbourne, Australia)*, June 10, 1996; Swisher, *The Truth About Camp David*, 7; Theumim, "Interview with the Author."

¹⁵¹ Ben Caspit and Ilan Kfir, *Netanyahu: The Road to Power*, trans. Ora Cummings (Birch Lane Press, 1998), 227–233.

¹⁵² Lawrence Cohler-Esses and David Makovsky, "Lauder's Ties to Bibi Raise Questions," *The Jewish Week*, January 29, 1999.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

Netanyahu and others that Washington was violating its ally's sovereignty.¹⁵⁴ However, such claims need to be viewed skeptically as a politically self-serving narrative that is no less opportunistic than Labor's specious claims that U.S. actions had absolutely nothing to do with meddling. Even leaving aside the broader issue of efforts by Tehran to bolster the Israeli right, Likud's victory also rested on outside meddling in its favor – meddling that it welcomed and probably solicited. Netanyahu blasted both Peres and Rabin for being the beneficiaries of Yasser Arafat's political support, but Barak rightly retorted where Peres stayed silent that Netanyahu was probably the favored choice of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the founder of Hamas, whose group's attacks may have also been aimed at spoiling the ballot.¹⁵⁵

<The Palestinian Approach>

Assessing efficacy of other LSI efforts in 1996 – by the PA, for instance – is somewhat more challenging, especially given their chronological overlap with similar U.S. efforts. Certainly, the PA's cooperation on security and other issues was critical for giving Peres a chance to recover from the February and March suicide bombings, so in this regard their contribution should also be viewed as a success. Although measuring specific contributions more precisely is not feasible, it is important to recognize, as Dennis Ross concluded in response to the first wave of terror attacks in 1996, that “without a serious crackdown by Arafat on Hamas and

¹⁵⁴ Robert Mahoney, “Clinton Irks Israeli Opposition by Backing Peres,” *Reuters News*, April 30, 1996; Gellman, “Rival Criticizes Peres's ‘Cynical’ Use of U.S.-Israeli Ties to Boost Campaign”; de Barochez, “Peres Wins Foreign Backing but Struggles to Convince Voters at Home”; “Former Defence Minister Sharon Accuses Clinton of Interfering in Elections,” *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Translated from May 29th edition Voice of Israel Radio, May 30, 1996).

¹⁵⁵ “Labour Leader Baraq Responds to Netanyahu's Remarks About Arafat,” *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Translated from April 8th Voice of Israel radio broadcast, April 10, 1999).

Islamic Jihad, there would be no peace process and no Peres government".¹⁵⁶

<The Broader International Community's Approach>

Similarly, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact contribution of broader efforts to bolster Peres during this period. However, it is likely that their contribution was fleeting because their support was shown to be so flimsy. As noted above, Yossi Beilin remains skeptical that the Qatari and Omani gestures were seen positively by Israel's public because of the gap between words and deeds in a time of terrorism.

Yet it is interesting to ponder whether this might not have been the case had the second campaign of terrorism from the north in 1996 not occurred. The optics of Arab and European backing for Peres were almost immediately undermined by the sudden wave of international condemnation that followed the deaths at Qana. Instead of backing Israel, Qatari diplomats boycotted a peace process meeting later that month in protest, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution condemning Israel for the violence, and European press decried the Israeli campaign as tantamount to war crimes.¹⁵⁷ Boutros Boutros-Ghali even issued a UN report suggesting that Israel may have intentionally attacked the facility at Qana.¹⁵⁸

This Israeli bombing at Qana and the broader context of Lebanese-Israeli violence erased the perceived gains of Sharm and Peres's trip to the Gulf. Otherwise, the massive showing Arab support against terrorism probably would have carried over much more firmly through the election period. But the attacks by Hezbollah

¹⁵⁶ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 244.

¹⁵⁷ "Editorial: War Crimes, Nothing Less," *The Guardian (UK)*, April 19, 1996; Anthony Goodman, "U.N. General Assembly Condemns Israeli Attacks on Civilians," *Reuters News*, April 26, 1996; "Gulf Press Condemns 'Blind' U.S. Military Support for Israel," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, April 30, 1996.

¹⁵⁸ Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 263.

revealed the frailness of multilateral enthusiasm for Israel and therefore weakened their attempts at LSI while bolstering the narrative of the Israeli right. It was only after the second round of attacks on Israel and the massacre at Qana that the politically moderate IDF chief of staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak allegedly complained that “the peace camp just lost the elections”.¹⁵⁹

<*The Jordanian Approach*>

Another observation worth noting is the disastrous nature of King Hussein of Jordan’s temporary flirtation with a marriage of convenience to the Likud. Despite the king’s initial impression that Netanyahu would be better for Jordanian interests than a full term under Peres, the new PM’s provocative posture toward the Palestinians and a botched Israeli assassination plot against Khaled Meshal inside of Jordanian territory soon persuaded Hussein that he had been sorely mistaken to place his trust in the Likud leader.¹⁶⁰ He soon “severed his personal relationship with Netanyahu”.¹⁶¹ As Marwan Muasher later reflects, the king found Netanyahu was “someone who did not keep his word, and he often retreated on commitments made to Jordan without consideration for its delicate situation”; after the Meshal assassination attempt “the king felt that Netanyahu had essentially spit on the Jordan-Israel peace treaty... almost caus[ing] the king to abrogate the treaty”.¹⁶²

Avi Shlaim may be overreaching when he claims that “Hussein’s not-so-subtle support for Netanyahu probably tipped the [electoral] balance in his favor” by enabling Netanyahu “to tell the Israeli public that... he was acceptable as a

¹⁵⁹ Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams*, 39.

¹⁶⁰ Rabinovich, *Waging Peace*, 97.

¹⁶¹ Caspit and Kfir, *Netanyahu: The Road to Power*, 269.

¹⁶² Marwan Muasher, *The Arab Center: The Promise of Moderation* (Yale University Press, 2008), 105.

partner to their favourite Arab leader”.¹⁶³ No doubt, Netanyahu certainly seemed to appreciate the Jordanian gesture, making King Hussein the first foreign leader he called on the phone to consult with after his election victory.¹⁶⁴ However, there is little to support the notion that in hindsight King Hussein would have viewed this effort as beneficial for Jordanian interests. Thus, the attempt by Jordan to back Netanyahu in 1996 should be coded as a narrow success but a broader failure.¹⁶⁵

<*The Iranian Approach*>

Perhaps the biggest “success” story of outside intervention during Israel’s 1996 election should be the alleged attempt by Iran. If indeed some segment of the leadership in Tehran (probably the IRGC with backing from Supreme Leader Khamene’i) decided its interests were served by weakening Peres and encouraged the attacks that spring by Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and/or Hezbollah to achieve this aim, then from their perspective this episode should be judged a remarkably effective, albeit cruel, success.

Combined, these two waves of terror against Israel ultimately enabled Netanyahu to edge out Peres. In so doing, the terror attacks also would have furthered the broader, strategic objectives of those Iranian officials by scuttling the Oslo process between Israel and the PA and ensuring that Damascus remained aligned with Tehran. Although this episode did heighten U.S. threat perceptions vis-

¹⁶³ Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan*, 565–566.

¹⁶⁴ “Jordan Confident Peace Will Continue with Netanyahu,” *Reuters News*, May 31, 1996.

¹⁶⁵ Of course, it seems rather odd to code Jordanian support for a victorious Israeli candidate as a “failure” while coding American support for his defeated rival as a “success”. However, to do otherwise would erroneously conflate dichotomous election results with whether or not an outside state exerted influence on the relative levels of support for candidates in the target state. And, as noted above, thanks to U.S. support Peres very nearly did win the 1996 vote – Washington’s backing was quite consequential for his standing even if he ultimately turn out to have lost.

à-vis Iran,¹⁶⁶ Washington was already engaged in trying to isolate the Iranian regime, and the actors who likely spearheaded this Iranian intervention in Israeli politics actually benefit domestically from prolonged enmity with the U.S.

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

In 1996, the United States went to extraordinary length to salvage Israel's Labor government at the polls. Leadership theory (Theory #4) provides a better explanation for this pattern of behavior than do theories one through three. Lobby-legislative politics (Theory #2) predicts that the U.S. should not have intervened because it should not have seen its interests as being at stake. Thus, the occurrence of meddling in 1996 is not congruent with the predictions of the theory.

Bureaucratic politics (Theory #3) would have predicted meddling because working level officials in executive agencies tend to see American interests at stake in Israeli elections. Thus, the basic outcome is congruent with the theory's predictions. However, the causal processes along the way do not fit with the dynamics of a bureaucracy-driven process. The two main pathways of administration support were symbolic declarations of support and practical actions of support, and both pathways were top-down rather than bottom-up affairs.

Rhetorical gestures of support, such as Clinton's visits to Sharm el-Sheikh and Rabin's gravesite, were matters of flashy high politics not lowly organizational calculations. And almost every concrete action that the United States took to bolster

¹⁶⁶ Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 176–177, 180–181.

Peres came in the form of security assistance above and beyond what bureaucrats had determined was appropriate for meeting Israel's defense needs.

Perhaps the most telling example is the Nautilus laser system. Giving Israel access to the Nautilus meant reinvigorating a weapons program that the Pentagon had all but given up on for being faulty and too expensive. In fact, the Nautilus was eventually abandoned after another decade of wasted money for the same reasons its prospects had originally been doubted.¹⁶⁷ None of these dynamics fit with the predictions of the bureaucratic politics approach. Bruce Riedel acknowledges that "I was at the Pentagon [as a political appointee] at the time, and we were coming up with whatever security help we could give Israel, including this fancy laser system... called the Nautilus... which the Israelis were very enthusiastic about which frankly our own scientists thought was a pipe dream which wouldn't work".¹⁶⁸

National interests theory, which views foreign policy behaviors as the result of rational calculations of state interest from a unitary frame of reference, is also consonant with U.S. backing for Peres. However, it cannot explain his initial support from the broader international community only to abandon his cause after Lebanon.

Regional leaders issued condemnations in ways that undermined their initial gestures of support for Peres at Sharm in the face of terror. If backing Israel against terrorists was in their national interests before, why not after? One probable explanation is that these leaders feared internal threats to their authority if they did not condemn Grapes of Wrath and Qana. However, this involves the incorporation

¹⁶⁷ William J. Broad, "U.S. and Israel Shelved Laser as Defense," *New York Times*, July 30, 2006. For a discussion of the program's prior disfavor at the Pentagon, see also Shenon, "Boosting Israel's Defenses, U.S. Will Provide Anti-missile Aid."

¹⁶⁸ Riedel, "Interview with the Author."

of sub-state sources of threat and a leader-centric frame of reference that fit better with Theory #4 than the national interests approach. Further, one would be hard pressed to find a leader under greater internal threat than Arafat for cooperating with Israel's government that spring, and yet he pursued a path that much more stolidly supportive of Peres than did most of his neighbors.

Just as these non-U.S. cases tend to fit better with leadership theory than the unitary national interests approach, so too do the specifics of America's intervention on behalf of Peres. The idea for Sharm may have secretly originated with Peres,¹⁶⁹ and the president's advisors helped persuade him that "you may not save the process if you go, but if you don't go, I think we are going to lose it".¹⁷⁰ However, from that point forward, President Clinton spearheaded the process, assembling world leaders from twenty-nine countries as well as the Secretary of the UN, including representatives from thirteen Arab countries.¹⁷¹

Further, his actions emerged from a personal conviction that he was obligated to honor Rabin's legacy through the person of Shimon Peres. Dennis Ross explains: "you have got to understand that in my mind Clinton almost reveres Rabin because of everything he embodies, so it's hard to exaggerate his own sense of personal commitment to trying to get Peres elected".¹⁷² This personal sense of duty is widely echoed by other observers of the president's behavior at the time. Miller explains that Clinton was:

¹⁶⁹ Former Minister Yossi Beilin, "Interview with the Author."

¹⁷⁰ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 246.

¹⁷¹ Indyk says that Clinton "orchestrated" ensuring such a massive turnout for the event. Indyk, "Interview with the Author."

¹⁷² Dennis Ross, "Interview with the Author".

“devastated by the assassination. Clinton recalls being told by Tony Lake that Rabin had been shot. He remembers calling Hillary, and she came down from the residence and held him, while they talked about the prime minister. Lake recalls that telling Clinton that Rabin had died was the hardest thing he would ever do: ‘it was as if someone punched him in the stomach.’ Rahm Emanuel told me that, seeing Clinton later, ‘he was white’ and ‘stricken beyond politics’ But Steve Grossman [then chairman of AIPAC] put it best: ‘something in Clinton died when Rabin died’... rarely had the death of any foreign leader affected an American president so deeply”.¹⁷³

Warren Christopher agrees that “I had never seen any news affect Clinton so profoundly”.¹⁷⁴ Indeed, Clinton makes the astonishing statement that “by the time he [Rabin] was killed, I had come to love him as I had rarely loved another man”.¹⁷⁵ Indyk insists that this background helped fuel Clinton’s desire to bolster Peres, since “from Clinton’s point of view this wasn’t just about politics – this was about Rabin’s legacy, which he felt really heavy responsibility to try to fulfill”.¹⁷⁶

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

Given that America’s efforts to bolster Peres began in full force after the first wave of terrorist attacks in February and March, there is a strong empirical basis for the notion that a close contest was brewing in Israeli domestic politics. Peres had already called early elections for the end of May, and the attacks catapulted Netanyahu into a sudden lead in public polling. From that point forward, the U.S. administration remained strongly engaged in trying to shape the outcome of Israel’s election, behavior in fitting with the close state of opinion polling until when the voting finally took place at the end of May.

¹⁷³ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 266.

¹⁷⁴ Christopher, *Chances of a Lifetime*, 208.

¹⁷⁵ Bill Clinton, *My Life* (Random House, Inc., 2005), 679.

¹⁷⁶ Indyk, “Interview with the Author.”

Thus, in this regard the case offers little to distinguish between Theory #1, which anticipates that meddling should always be perfectly attuned with actual opportunities abroad, and Theory #4, which argues that leaders who misperceive opportunities may mistakenly enact LSI either too often or too rarely depending on their personal biases. Given that Clinton correctly perceived that a close Israeli election was obviously brewing, it is difficult to disentangle which theory offers the more appropriate prediction solely on the basis of this episode alone.

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

One of the most striking features of the 1996 case is its informality, a hallmark of my argument for this project. Because LSI is often driven by top leaders, foreign policy meddling tends to bear the imprint of their unique needs and capabilities. In particular, leaders communicate their deliberations and demands for intervention through informal channels to avoid sharing information with other sender state actors in ways that would diminish the effort's effectiveness by producing a foreign backlash or causing personal political harm.

Thus, according to leadership theory we should expect the emergence of informal channels of communication either internally or across borders. Thus, we should take special note of the verbal lines of communication between Savir and Ross, Theumim and Indyk, and Furst/Schoen to the White House. Also, the involvement of the White House political team on a decidedly foreign policy matter is also quite telling – and indicative of the personal salience that this episode held for the president. As Indyk remarks in my interview with him “all of this

background coordination was not in cables” and often “it was done on the political side of the [White House] shop, not the policy side”.¹⁷⁷

On the same note, a top State Department official involved in administration deliberations during this period noted that, in spite of all the enormous efforts the U.S. was exerting in the name of getting Shimon Peres elected “I don’t recall any memo... Christopher would not have wanted anything about that in writing. Conversations on this topic were more likely to be done on the verbal level and very close held within the government in terms of distribution” even though such efforts made it more difficult to coordinate internally.¹⁷⁸

Bruce Riedel agrees that deliberation over meddling was done verbally at the time and was not written down:

“BR: There probably is [sic] not the notes to show that.

DW: Why not?

BR: Because you’re not going to say that our security assistance is linked to a political party.

DW: Even in private?

BR: Not on a memo.

DW: Verbally?

BR: But verbally, yeah. Certainly, Dennis and Martin understood what we were trying to do and were very enthusiastic to help make it work.

DW: And the president was fully onboard with this as well, right?

BR: The president was fully onboard.”¹⁷⁹

Thus, American actions matched a pattern of behavior best explained by Theory #4.

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

The 1996 case offers a strong test for leadership theory over the lobby-

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Interview by the author with a former Clinton administration official, March 2011.

¹⁷⁹ Riedel, “Interview with the Author.”

legislative approach. Not only does the theory call for Congress and lobby groups to be more influential during elections years, but they should be doubly powerful when a president's reelection is at stake. Because these groups tend to oppose meddling in Israel's internal politics, the year 1996 should not have seen American intervention in the politics of the Jewish state. And yet Clinton pulled off not one but two episodes of high-profile and domestically risky meddling simultaneously: he intervened in both Israeli politics and in Russian politics, making unpopular concessions to Boris Yeltsin such as postponing NATO enlargement in order to help him defeat the resurgent Communist Party in Russia's upcoming elections.

Clinton tried to turn meddling in Israel's politics during his reelection year to his own electoral benefit. He used the 1996 AIPAC summit as a communal outreach opportunity for his administration, showcasing his unprecedented backing for Israel's defense in the face of terrorism and garnering soaring praise from Peres at the event.¹⁸⁰ At one point during this visit, Peres even went so far as to feign ignorance when somebody asked him a question about Clinton's Republican challenger, Senator Bob Dole.¹⁸¹

In this regard, Clinton's desire to meddle in Israeli politics helped fuel domestic benefits rather than precluding them. Thus, going into a presidential election, Clinton successfully outmaneuvered domestic political forces who may

¹⁸⁰ Clinton, "Remarks to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) Policy Conference"; Shimon Peres, "Remarks at America Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) Annual Conference" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 28, 1996). Peres praised Clinton as "a true friend of the State of Israel and people of Israel... a president of hope" and said that the "people of Israel... salute you... [for your] deep commitment to the values of peace, justice, and liberty".

¹⁸¹ Hillel Kuttler, "Pacts and Backslaps as Election Nears," *Jerusalem Post*, May 3, 1996. See also Matthew Dorf, "Partisan Politics of U.S., Israel Snake Through AIPAC Conference," *J Weekly (Covering the SF Jewish Bay Area)*, May 3, 1996.

have preferred for him to take a more hands-off approach to Israel's internal domestic politics. Therefore, with regard to cycles of domestic power, the 1996 case provides unusually strong evidence against the lobby-legislative approach.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

There seems to have been very little unauthorized behavior in this case, in part because Clinton was undertaking a popular U.S. policy. The country with the most notable freelancing appears to have been Jordan, where King Hussein was embarking on a policy of favoritism for Netanyahu, an Israeli politician at odds with the prevailing sentiment of the Jordanian public and government bureaucracy.¹⁸²

One poll in Jordan, albeit restricted to university graduates, showed a preference for Peres at 71% versus only 15% decided for Netanyahu¹⁸³ The king's interest in seeing Netanyahu elected did not stop instances of leaks in April and May whereby lower-level officials showed their displeasure with the Likud and revealed a more broadly-held desire for Labor to win the Israeli election.¹⁸⁴

However, these dynamics seem to have been an exception to the rule. Overall, meddling during the 1996 Israeli election was undertaken as a top-down effort. Even the Jordanian case, the one where the most disgruntled freelancing is evident, was driven by the firm preferences of a single top ruler, predicated on the basis of interpersonal relationships and personal – not widely held – beliefs.

¹⁸² Another instance might have been Iran if LSI was pursued without the approval of President Rafsanjani. However, the underlying semantic question in that case would then be whether Iran's president or supreme leader is truly the most authoritative sovereign.

¹⁸³ "Most Jordanians Want Labour Win in Israel - Poll," *Reuters News*, May 20, 1996.

¹⁸⁴ Sabbagh, "Jordan Wants Labour to Win Israeli Elections"; Rana Sabbagh, "Jordan Wants Peres to Win Israel's Election," *Reuters News*, May 28, 1996.

6. Consistency of Message:

Israeli voters could not have misunderstood the Clinton administration's strong preference for Shimon Peres and his pro-peace platform, given how consistently the U.S. hammered home the message. After the attacks by Hamas and Islamic Jihad, Clinton recorded a message for Israeli television, explaining that America would stand beside Israel in its time of need while seeking peace. He repeated the same message at Sharm and in his public appearances in Israel. Then, when Peres visited Washington, the U.S. staged two major signing ceremonies for agreements to fight terror, one with Secretary of Defense Perry on the threat of Hezbollah and one with Clinton on broader counterterrorism issues. Both of these ceremonies were scheduled to allow for live broadcast on Israeli nightly news.

This message came through loud and clear to Israelis who were listening. For example, the news anchor on a popular Israeli television program described Clinton's handling of the prime minister's visit to Washington as "an unprecedented mobilization of support such as has never been known in the past by a U.S. president in favor of an electoral candidate in a democratic country".¹⁸⁵

Eventually, Clinton's consistent favoritism may have elicited a backlash with voters inclined to support the Likud. For example, at one Netanyahu rally even the mere mention of Clinton elicited boos from the audience.¹⁸⁶ This fits with broader research which finds that partisan intervention has differential effects depending on the sub-audience: backers of the favored faction in the target state may respond

¹⁸⁵ Mahoney, "Clinton Irks Israeli Opposition by Backing Peres."

¹⁸⁶ Sarah Honig, "Netanyahu Wows Ra'anana with His English," *Jerusalem Post*, May 3, 1996.

positively to LSI (as do, I suspect, undecided voters in the center), but partisans of the disfavored faction understandably respond more negatively.¹⁸⁷ However, even this negative response confirms that Clinton's message was getting through. Voters there received his message that an Israeli government led by Labor pursuing the peace process could count on American support to help it achieve its objectives. And, as noted above, this U.S. message tended to help the Peres campaign overall.

7. Suitability of Message:

On the other hand, the broader international effort to strengthen Peres fell flat once it became clear that their support would not withstand another round of fighting between Israel and a terrorist group. Granted, Israel could have designed a better operational approach than the misguided effort to instigate refugee flows out of southern Lebanon, but there were limits on how much better another Israeli strategy could have been given that Hezbollah was intentionally placing its forces in areas full of Lebanese civilians. Leaving aside the United States, the broader international reaction to Operation Grapes of Wrath and Qana destroyed the image of solidarity against terror that world leaders had tried to foster at Sharm.

Peres and Clinton had sought to frame Sharm as a breakthrough in Israel's efforts to combat terror, but the events the following month undermined their ability to sell this message persuasively. Peres had gone so far as to claim that the anti-terrorism conference was an "events [sic] that exceeds any normal political achievement," belonging alongside Oslo I, Oslo II, and the peace with Jordan as one

¹⁸⁷ Daniel Corstange and Nikolay Marinov, "Does Taking Sides Encourage Radicalization?: The US and Iranian Messages in the 2009 Elections in Lebanon", January 28, 2010.

of Israel's biggest breakthroughs in regional diplomacy.¹⁸⁸ Certainly, Peres could still count on American backing – unprecedented across a range of issues – but Clinton's declaration that the summit “stands as proof and promise that this region has changed for good”¹⁸⁹ was clearly undermined by the international community falling back into old patterns of condemning Israel for how it fought terror.

There were also limits on how far the U.S. could undermine established public beliefs in Israel that Peres was a wheeler-dealer without much aptitude for security affairs. When Peres formed his government after the Rabin assassination, he kept the defense portfolio for himself and appointed Ehud Barak foreign minister instead, despite the fact that Barak was one of the most decorated soldiers in the history of the IDF. When Peres came to Washington that April, he signed defense memoranda not just with the president but also with the Secretary of Defense, an action undertaken in his capacity as minister of defense.

Highlighting Peres's defense responsibilities aimed to draw attention to his security credentials, both present and past. Clinton stretched these credentials when he claimed that in “his earliest days” Peres “helped establish Israel's military”.¹⁹⁰ The Israeli paper *Ma'ariv* also expressed its surprise that Clinton seemed to offer an unprecedented approval of the prime minister's role in violating U.S. proliferation safeguards in the 1960s, noting that “it is doubtful that an American leader ever applauded on a public stage where the prime minister of

¹⁸⁸ Peres remarks in Clinton, “The President's News Conference with Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Jerusalem.”

¹⁸⁹ William J. Clinton, “Remarks at the Opening of the Summit of the Peacemakers in Sharm al-Sheikh, Egypt” (Public Papers of President William Jefferson Clinton, March 13, 1996).

¹⁹⁰ Clinton, “Remarks to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) Policy Conference.”

Israel was being praised for being the patron of the nuclear facility in Dimona” before the 1996 AIPAC conference.¹⁹¹ However, Peres’s inconclusive war with Hezbollah seems to have spoken far louder than anything a signing ceremony or rhetorical U.S. praise could do for his image as a defense thinker.

In both instances, there seem to have been external limits on the extent to which Clinton could conceivably press certain messages with the Israeli public. No doubt, Clinton’s promises of steadfast U.S. support stuck firmly. However, his claims that Shimon Peres was really Mr. Security or that the Middle East had undergone a lasting transformation in the fight against terrorism tended to ring hollow.

Thus, by the eve of the Israeli election, President Clinton had successfully communicated only half of his message: America would continue to back Israel on the path to peace, but it could not persuasively promise that such support would end Israeli bloodshed at the hands of terrorists. Thus, the Israeli public went to the polls torn about the future of the peace process and their support for Peres. In the end, Netanyahu won the election, but he eked out the smallest of possible victories, with the Labor Party even outpacing his Likud by two seats in the Knesset.

In this instance, the American message was as well-suited to the Israeli public as it possibly could have been, but there were limits on how far that message could be sold on the basis of objective constraints. This provides some support for Theory #1, given the role of objective circumstances, national interests, and old patterns of enmity for constraining international intervention in Israeli politics.

However, Clinton and Arafat’s steadfast efforts to communicate their support

¹⁹¹ “Clinton Is Israel’s Yes-man: Newspaper,” *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, April 30, 1996.

for the peace process, fighting terror, and therefore working with Peres were responsible for giving him a fighting chance to contest that election. Both Clinton and Arafat played a major role in giving Peres a fighting chance in the 1996 Israeli election, despite these upper limits on their influence or their considerable shortcomings at other points in time. Therefore, this also provides some support for Theory #4, highlighting the role of foreign leaders for determining LSI during one of the most important elections in the history of the Mideast peace process.

Finally, the fact that Clinton went above and beyond what most of his advisors thought was judicious in stating an American preference also fits best with an understanding of LSI that is primarily driven from the top down. The content of Clinton's messaging may have gone overboard, rubbing some Israelis the wrong way and giving the Likud a tool for mobilizing voters towards the end of the election period. But the explanation for this potentially sub-optimal approach can only be attributed to the beliefs and preferences of the man sitting in the Oval Office.

Clinton, Case #3:

Netanyahu – “who the fuck does he think he is?” (1996-1999)¹⁹²

There was little love lost between President Clinton and Prime Minister Netanyahu, and allegedly after their first meeting in June 1996 since the Israeli election Clinton vented to his aides, asking “who the fuck does he think he is? Who's the fucking superpower here?”¹⁹³ However, Miller says that believed the best way

¹⁹² Quote is attributed to President Clinton in Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 273.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

to advance the peace process, at least for the foreseeable future, was “working with Netanyahu, not against him”.¹⁹⁴ And yet with time, as Netanyahu accepted two hard-fought, partial agreements with the Palestinian Authority only to abandon them, it seemed that cooperation with Netanyahu had run its course.

Consequently, the United States worked out oust Netanyahu from office. It worked hard to persuade Arafat to postpone a Palestinian unilateral declaration of independence that had been scheduled before the vote, and at least one of Ehud Barak’s foreign campaign advisors assisted him in Israel at the (informal) request of the president of the United States. It publicly laid the blame for Wye’s collapse at Israel’s feet and took every opportunity to make clear the president’s dissatisfaction with Israel’s current leadership.

In the end, Netanyahu was crushed by Barak in a landslide defeat, by one metric the most decisive election in Israel’s history up until that date.¹⁹⁵ Although the size of Barak’s electoral victory makes it difficult to pinpoint areas in which the U.S. made the crucial marginal difference that put him over the top, Washington’s efforts do seem to have contributed to his victory by creating an environment that was generally favorable to his campaign narrative and efforts to win office.

Coding the Dependent Variables

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 272.

¹⁹⁵ Barak beat Netanyahu 56% to 44% in the second direct prime ministerial election in Israel’s history. Until then, election for Israel’s highest office was conflated with a legislative vote according to party lists, so margins of victory bore less directly on a PM’s mandate to rule, and typically these margins were also much smaller. The 1996 election was Israel’s first direct vote, but, as noted above, it was won by less than 1%. The 2001 prime ministerial election, the last in which the country’s leader was directly elected under the reformed rules before they were changed back, would turn out to be an even bigger upset, with Barak losing to Sharon 38% to 62%, a gap twice as large as Barak’s victory in 1999.

(Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

Yes. In 1999, the United States intervened in Israeli politics at the direct expense of Benjamin Netanyahu. Other actors intervened in Israeli politics during this period as well, including the Palestinian Authority, Egypt, Britain, Russia, and others. The following sections outline their efforts according to sender state.

<The American Approach>

Barry Rubin has explicitly argued that America did not meddle in the 1999 Israeli election.¹⁹⁶ He is wrong.

American officials reached the conclusion that their earlier intervention in 1996 was too overt. However, they did not decide that meddling in Israeli politics was unwise, only that it should be less obvious. Thus, the Clinton team again tried to bolster Labor against the Likud, but now they did so in a more circumspect manner.¹⁹⁷ Whereas the *modus operandi* of American meddling in 1996 was active communication of a U.S. preference to the Israeli public, in 1999 their byword was

¹⁹⁶ He argued that “American actions were designed not to defeat Netanyahu but to punish him for disagreements and what the White House saw as his bad faith... given this situation, the feelings of US officials towards Netanyahu and Clinton’s refusal to invite him to Washington or meet him did not constitute interference in Israel’s election process... no doubt, there was a perception of American involvement, but that does not mean this was Clinton’s intention or behaviour”. Rubin, “External Factors in Israel’s 1999 Elections,” 215.

¹⁹⁷ For instance, Wolf Blitzer reported from the White House on the eve of Israel’s election that “from President Clinton on down, officials in Washington, U.S. officials have been very anxious not to do anything that would - - would be seen as interfering in domestic Israeli politics. They acknowledge they made a mistake along those lines in 1996, signaling very strongly their desire for the then-Labor Party leader, Shimon Peres, to emerge as the party victor. They didn’t want to make that same mistake this time. They played a very, very low-key role... that’s what they’ve been trying to do. Behind the scenes, though, they make no secret, though, they would like to see Ehud Barak emerge as Israel’s next prime minister”: “Israel Decides: Barak Looks Likely to Be Elected; White House Hoping for Next Prime Minister to Follow Rabin Model,” *CNN News Day* (Cable News Network (CNN), May 17, 1999). See also Zogby, “Cash, Campaigning and Quite a Few Cooks”; Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 491; Paul Taylor, “U.S. Tries to Quietly Stymie Bibi,” *Reuters News*, April 27, 1999.

“passive communication,” in hopes of avoiding a backlash.¹⁹⁸

Clinton and his team viewed the Wye summit as their final attempt to get Netanyahu to produce on the Palestinian track. When the prime minister returned to Israel and started having second thoughts about implementing the agreement, the administration began to reconsider its strategy of working with instead of against him. Instead, they adopted a mixed strategy of partial LSI, whereby their aim was not to remove him above all else but rather to increase the pressure on him to either implement the memorandum or to vacate his office for somebody who would.¹⁹⁹

For two years prior to Israel’s 1999 election, Barak had been receiving help from American and British campaign specialists, Stanley Greenberg and Philip Gould, who were advising him on how to modernize and rebrand the Labor Party.²⁰⁰ Their call to reframe the Labor Party so it would appear more inclusive seems to have played a key role in Barak’s decision to run under the new banner of a “One Israel” alliance in cooperation with two additional small parties.²⁰¹ As I discuss below, during the lead-up to elections in 1999 both of these individuals worked in Israel at the direction of their own heads of government, Clinton and Blair, and it is reasonable to wonder whether they were there in such a capacity earlier on as well.

Once Netanyahu’s government collapsed in early 1999, moving the elections up to May of that year, the United States engaged in a variety of efforts designed to hurt Netanyahu in the race. Indyk reveals that he was involved in an effort to

¹⁹⁸ Rabinovich, *Waging Peace*, 121.

¹⁹⁹ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 482, 488.

²⁰⁰ Andrew Grice and Mary Dejevsky, “New Labour Helped Barak to Victory,” *The Independent (London)*, May 19, 1999. See also “Blair’s Latest Victory,” *The Guardian (UK)*, May 19, 1999; Leslie Susser, “Barak’s Uphill Battle,” *Jerusalem Report*, January 18, 1999.

²⁰¹ Grice and Dejevsky, “New Labour Helped Barak to Victory.”

reconfigure U.S. aid to Israel in a manner that would have boosted benefits for Israel; the effort was nixed by the White House after Netanyahu's government fell so as to deny him the chance to claim relations with Washington were on even keel:

“MI: There was a moment there after Wye before the elections, during the election period, after his government had come down, Bibi had been negotiating with us a shift in the foreign aid arrangements whereby we would merge grant aid – um, from loans to grants – phase out the economic assistance and increase the military assistance... We had been negotiating for some time. I had been negotiating with Yuval [sic, Ya’akov] Ne’eman, who was his finance minister, a good guy. But we were now in the midst of the campaign, and Bibi suddenly wanted the deal. He was giving up on all the things he had insisted on to make the deal. And because I had been involved in negotiations, I wanted the deal, too. And the word came from the White House don’t do the deal.

DW: Because they had the outcome of the elections in mind?

MI: They did not want to do anything with Bibi to suggest that with the United States that everything was ok...

DW: At a certain point our focus seems to have shifted from “let’s try and move the process forward with Bibi” to “we can’t move the process forward with Bibi” [MI: to “let’s get Barak elected”]. Do you remember the turning point with that?

MI: As soon as the government came down.

DW: So it was the moment the election period started?

MI: Yeah, it was a no-brainer.”²⁰²

At this point, the Clinton administration attacked Bibi by engaging in what one Israeli analyst called “snub diplomacy,” finding ways to criticize Netanyahu or dodge meetings with him to signal American displeasure.²⁰³ Clinton declined to meet with Netanyahu during the election period, even though he had been willing to do so just beforehand when it seemed there was still a chance of implementing Wye.²⁰⁴ Clinton met twice more with Arafat but made it clear to the press that he

²⁰² Indyk, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁰³ NB The hardline nationalist author of the cited article, despite his fantastic first and last name, is of no relation to the author of this dissertation. In addition to having a different middle initial, he and I are of different nationalities and tend to have very contradictory political beliefs. The similarity in names often leads to some confusion. See David M. Weinberg, “Snub Diplomacy,” *Jerusalem Post*, March 21, 1999.

²⁰⁴ For Clinton’s pre-election decision not to meet with Netanyahu, see Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 486–489.

definitely would not be receiving Netanyahu in Washington.²⁰⁵ Meanwhile, PM candidate for Israel's Center Party Yitzhak Mordechai was invited to a White House ceremony honoring Yitzhak Rabin, chatting briefly with Clinton and meeting with national security advisor Sandy Berger and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.²⁰⁶ The president also found time for Shimon Peres and Leah Rabin at the White House event, though he refused to make time for a sitting prime minister.²⁰⁷

This campaign of snubbing Netanyahu was carried out more broadly below the level of the president. Less than two weeks before the Israeli election, Secretary Albright further articulated American displeasure, remarking in a public speech:

“as we await the outcome of the Israeli elections, our focus has been on encouraging compliance with... Wye, and urging both sides to avoid unhelpful unilateral acts. On the Palestinian side, we have seen serious efforts to prevent terrorist strikes, to renounce the [previous] Palestinian Covenant and to avoid a unilateral declaration of statehood. On the Israeli side, implementation has stalled and, unfortunately, unilateral settlement activity has persisted. This is a source of real concern to us, because of its destructive impact on the ability to pursue peace”.²⁰⁸

She also refused a meeting with Netanyahu's foreign minister, Ariel Sharon, when he came to Washington for other meetings.²⁰⁹

Further, the secretary canceled plans to visit the region in January, with her spokesperson Jamie Rubin citing the fact that her trip “was designed to be at the end

²⁰⁵ Leslie Susser, “‘No Way’ Will Clinton See Bibi Before Elections,” *Jerusalem Report*, April 12, 1999; “Netanyahu Says He Won't Angle for White House Invitation,” *Associated Press*, March 23, 1999; Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999* (Random House, Inc., 1999), 650; Swisher, *The Truth About Camp David*, 9.

²⁰⁶ “Clinton Calls on Israel to ‘Take Risks for Peace’,” *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, March 19, 1999; “Press Digest, Israel (March 19),” *Reuters News*, March 19, 1999.

²⁰⁷ Barbara Slavin, “U.S. ‘Officially’ Neutral for Israeli Election,” *USA Today*, April 30, 1999.

²⁰⁸ Madeleine K. Albright, “Pre-taped Video Remarks for the American Jewish Committee Dinner” (U.S. Department of State Archive, May 6, 1999); James Morrison, “Albright to Critics: Nuts...,” *Washington Times*, May 10, 1999.

²⁰⁹ David Millikin, “Breaking with Tradition, Cohen Not to See Netanyahu on Israel Trip,” *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, March 10, 1999.

of the 12-week period that would have involved the implementation in full of the Wye Agreement, which obviously hasn't happened... that purpose of the trip is no longer operative" because "on the Israeli side... nothing has been done to implement the second phase of the further re-deployment or other parts of the Wye Agreement".²¹⁰ Rubin responded to an op-ed by Israel's ambassador to Washington, who accused the PA of breaching the agreement, by defending Palestinian compliance and insisting that responsibility for moving forward lay with Israel.²¹¹

Vice President Al Gore gave a speech to the pro-Oslo Israel Policy Forum calling for the parties to implement Wye "as signed" and "with no new conditions," a statement seen by the Likud "implicit criticism" since Netanyahu had called for additional Palestinian actions upon his return to Israel before he would implement the agreement.²¹² Also, *Ha'aretz* reported that PM Netanyahu would not attend the World Economic Forum in Davos because Gore refused to meet with him there.²¹³

Secretary of Defense William Cohen found himself sucked into the dispute as well. He had plans to avoid Netanyahu during a visit to Israel to meet with the defense minister. However, once it became clear he would come under public pressure to meet with the prime minister, he took the appointment but "in order to maintain neutrality" immediately added meetings to his agenda with Bibi's two biggest competitors, Barak from Labor and Mordechai from the Center Party.²¹⁴ Nor did Cohen shy away from remarking that Netanyahu had asked for their meeting,

²¹⁰ Jamie Rubin, "U.S. Department of State: Daily Press Briefing," *M2 Presswire*, January 14, 1999.

²¹¹ Zogby, "Cash, Campaigning and Quite a Few Cooks."

²¹² "Gore Urges Mideast Parties to Stick to Wye Accord," *Reuters News*, January 12, 1999; Zogby, "Cash, Campaigning and Quite a Few Cooks."

²¹³ "Press Digest, Israel (Feb 1)," *Reuters News*, February 1, 1999.

²¹⁴ Danna Harman, "Cohen 'Maintains US Neutrality' by Meeting All PM Candidates," *Jerusalem Post*, March 14, 1999; Millikin, "Breaking with Tradition, Cohen Not to See Netanyahu on Israel Trip."

contradicting the prime minister's claim that the U.S. had suggested the event.²¹⁵

The U.S. also floated threats that certain aid to Israel would be withheld if Netanyahu were reelected. Allegedly, Undersecretary of State Stuart Eizenstat remarked on a visit to Israel that the \$1.2 billion in additional aid that was pledged to Israel at Wye would be withheld pending implementation of Israel's obligations under the agreement, whereas \$400 million pledged to the PA at Wye would go forward as planned. However, the administration soon denied such allegations, which were leaked to the press by an anonymous Israeli official who accused Washington of using aid to interfere in Israeli politics at Netanyahu's expense.²¹⁶

Whether or not this specific step was a conscious American attempt at LSI, the administration did what it could to preclude any sort of additional aid being disbursed that could be turned to Netanyahu's electoral advantage. Washington rejected an Israeli proposal to provide Israel with a third of the Wye aid in exchange for implementing the first of three territorial withdrawals,²¹⁷ and SecDef Cohen reiterated that "we hope to see full implementation very soon and we hope to see [Congressional] funding that was promised during Wye, but the two go together".²¹⁸

Next, the U.S. exerted a major effort to dissuade Chairman Arafat from unilaterally declaring a Palestinian state on May 4th, a date just two weeks before Israel's election that signified the formal end date for final status negotiations under the Oslo Accords. Netanyahu hoped to use a unilateral declaration of independence

²¹⁵ Ron Kampeas, "Cohen Spends Time with Candidates to Avoid Appearance of Bias," *Associated Press*, March 12, 1999.

²¹⁶ "U.S. May Hold up New Aid for Israel for Wye Deal," *Reuters*, March 5, 1999; Hillel Kuttler, "US: Wye Funding Not Being Help Up," *Jerusalem Post*, March 7, 1999.

²¹⁷ Mark Lavie, "Israel Won't Get Extra U.S. Aid Without West Bank Withdrawals," *Associated Press*, March 5, 1999.

²¹⁸ Arie O'Sullivan, "Cohen: Wye Funding Linked to Implementation," *Jerusalem Post*, March 14, 1999.

(UDI) by the Palestinians to his electoral advantage, citing it as proof of Arafat's bad intentions and threatening to annex West Bank territory in retaliation.

The fact that American officials worked hard to get Arafat to back down from his threats of UDI is no secret, and their efforts throughout that winter and spring have been carefully documented.²¹⁹ However, what has not been previously demonstrated was that the U.S. was especially motivated to delay Palestinian UDI because of the Israeli domestic angle. According to Dennis Ross: "we were really concerned how damaging this would be in the context of the Israeli elections... Arafat declaring a state unilaterally... that was just seen as something that absolutely could roil the election and play to Bibi's benefit... it added urgency to what we were trying to do. But let me be clear: the fact is we were against a UDI not simply for political reasons. It was a bad policy".²²⁰ This was confirmed by Palestinian officials as well.²²¹

Finally, American officials and private citizens worked behind the scenes to bolster Barak's campaign apparatus. As noted above, Stanley Greenberg had been working with Barak for roughly two years to modernize and rebrand the Labor Party. With the start of the campaign, American efforts on his behalf were stepped up. Barak showed off his U.S. "dream team" advisors, including not just Greenberg, but also James Carville and Bob Shrum, all of whom had played a major role in

²¹⁹ Hillel Kuttler, "America's Role in the Declaration That Wasn't," *Jerusalem Post*, May 4, 1999. See also Deborah Sontag, "Arafat's Tightrope: Palestinian Statehood," *New York Times*, March 23, 1999; "Arafat Asks for Official U.S. Proposal to Delay Statehood," *Associated Press*, March 25, 1999; "Clinton Administration Tries to Avert Crises in Israeli/Palestinian Negotiations," *CNN Worldview* (Cable News Network (CNN), April 26, 1999).

²²⁰ Dennis Ross, "Interview with the Author."

²²¹ "West Bank & Gaza Strip: Palestinian Minister on 4 May, Other Issues," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, *Provided by World News Connection* (Translated from London Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, January 29, 1999).

Clinton's own electoral victories.²²² Martin Indyk confirmed that at least Greenberg (and perhaps all three) had been sent to help Barak at Clinton's own direction:

"DW: Greenberg certainly had deep connections to the Democratic campaign establishment, but was he there [in 1996] at Clinton's behest?

MI: Later on, yes, with Barak, but with Peres I don't know... Barak is an interesting example where there was even more involvement by the president. He had all of his people. He sent over them all... Clinton sent his best people to help get Barak elected".²²³

Greenberg told the New York Times himself that he "regularly briefs the president on the progress of the Labor leader's campaign".²²⁴

As in 1996, the behind-the-scenes team of Doug Schoen and Zev Furst provided Barak with outside analysis and operated as a link between Clinton's political advisors and the Barak camp.²²⁵ And unlike Barak's dream team, they were paid by American and European businessmen, not out of the Labor Party budget.

American soft money was also a major issue in the campaign. Whereas Netanyahu had edged out Peres in 1996 with a major infusion of soft money from abroad, this time around the Labor team's strategy relied heavily on fighting fire with fire. Millions of U.S. dollars were donated either to shell organizations that echoed pro-Barak messages or directly to companies from whom the Barak campaign needed services. Although Barak's American consultants were not directly implicated in the effort, the head of their Israeli consulting outfit, the tactic

²²² Uri Dan, "Bibi Battered by Bill's Boys' Barbs," *New York Post*, January 10, 1999; Adam Nagourney, "Sound Bites over Jerusalem," *New York Times (Magazine)*, April 25, 1999; Dafna Linzer, "U.S. Campaign Tactics Helping Barak," *Associated Press*, May 13, 1999.

²²³ Indyk, "Interview with the Author."

²²⁴ David Bar-Illan, "Why Bibi Fell: Netanyahu Is Done in at Last - Not Least by Washington," *National Review*, June 14, 1999.

²²⁵ "Barak Relies on More Than U.S. Hired Guns; Hillary Clinton's Dual Roles Raise Questions; Congress Includes Pork in Kosovo Relief Package," *CNN Inside Politics* (Cable News Network (CNN), May 18, 1999).

was reminiscent of their reliance of soft money in Clinton's 1996 reelection campaign, and the head of their Israeli consulting outfit was later convicted of violating Israeli finance laws by masterminding these foreign gifts in support of Barak.²²⁶ Many of his most prominent donors were also supporters of the president, although there is no evidence they made donations at his personal direction.²²⁷

Again, it is important to recognize that Israeli politicians are traditionally pragmatic about such outside intervention, attacking it when it helps their rivals but encouraging it when it helps their cause. Center Party candidates Yitzhak Mordechai and Amnon Lipkin-Shahak flew to the U.S. and directly raised funds from wealthy American Jews for their campaign, and the party also established a new U.S. charity to bankroll its political projects.²²⁸ A network of pro-Likud charities misappropriated American donations for charity to Netanyahu's campaign, including alms raised explicitly for children's causes.²²⁹ Partisan organizations on both the right and the left paid for roundtrip flights to Israel so expats in America could return to vote in the election.²³⁰ Barak's campaign advisors had their offices

²²⁶ "Editorial: Clintonism in Israel," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 2, 2000.

²²⁷ Individuals either proven or alleged to made large gifts to Barak in 1999 include Charles and Edgar Bronfman, S. Daniel Abraham, and Haim Saban, among others. On foreign donations in the 1996 campaign, see Ofira Seliktar, *Divided We Stand: American Jews, Israel, and the Peace Process* (Greenwood, 2002), 181; Assaf Bergerfreund, "Barak Election Campaign Used Monies Intended for Immigrants, Registrar Charges," *Ha'aretz*, September 10, 2003; "Editorial: Clintonism in Israel"; "Editorial: In Defense of Barak," *The Forward*, February 11, 2000; Andrew Chang, "Israel's Illegal Campaign Funds Problem," *ABC News (online)*, February 5, 2001; Elli Wohlgelemerter, "Backlash Mounts Against Avital for Comments on U.S. Jews," *Jerusalem Post*, January 7, 2001; "Bronfman Questioned over NPO Linked to Barak Campaign," *Jerusalem Post*, August 10, 2000; Tom Tugend, "U.S. Donors Give Generously to Israeli Candidates," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)*, February 27, 2000.

²²⁸ "Israeli Candidates Mine U.S. for Money," *The Palm Beach Post*, May 9, 1999; Lawrence Cohler-Esses, "Centrist Party to Use Charity for Campaign," *The Jewish Week*, March 12, 1999; Matthew Dorf, "Israeli Candidates Go for Gold in Bid for American Contributors," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)*, n.d.

²²⁹ Lawrence Cohler-Esses, "Likud's Tangled Charity Web," *The Jewish Week*, February 19, 1999.

²³⁰ Lawrence Cohler-Esses, "'Left-Wing' Election Flights May Be Illegal," *The Jewish Week*, May 7, 1999.

burglarized, both in Israel and the U.S., presumably by their political rivals.²³¹ As will be explained below, the Likud also used the perks of incumbency to solicit favorable intervention on their behalf from Moscow.

It is even possible that Clinton's team played a role in encouraging Yitzhak Mordechai, candidate from the Center Party, to drop out of the race and endorse Ehud Barak, a move that gave Labor a major boost on the eve of the election. Although Mordechai already bore a grudge against Netanyahu and probably decided to drop out for self-interested reasons, his decision ask voters "to give a chance to Barak" was an unexpected boon for the left.²³² However, when I asked Indyk about whether the U.S. played a role in encouraging Mordechai's action, he replied "I can't say that's what I was doing".²³³

<The Palestinian Approach>

The Palestinian Authority did a number of things during the 1999 election to strengthen Ehud Barak. They even felt they deserved credit for helping him get elected, which contributed to their irritation when his victory speech laid down red lines for final status talks that seemed to go against his pro-peace persona.²³⁴

The Palestinians shelved their plans for unilateral declaration of independence (UDI), despite the fact that Arafat had consistently referred to May 4th as a "sacred date".²³⁵ On April 28th, Arafat called a vote by the PLO Central Council

²³¹ Joel Greenberg, "U.S. Pollster for Opponent of Netanyahu Is Burglarized," *New York Times*, January 14, 1999; Zogby, "Cash, Campaigning and Quite a Few Cooks."

²³² Lee Hockstader, "Netanyahu Faces Defeat in Israel: Withdrawals Aid Barak in Today's Voting," *Washington Post*, May 17, 1999.

²³³ Indyk, "Interview with the Author."

²³⁴ Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 291; Qurie, *Beyond Oslo, the Struggle for Palestine*, 82–86; Ahron Bregman, *Elusive Peace: How the Holy Land Defeated America* (Penguin, 2005), xxvii.

²³⁵ Sontag, "Arafat's Tightrope: Palestinian Statehood."

that decided not to declare independence on May 4th, with the chairman now saying “we don’t have to consecrate our state because we are already practicing it on the ground”.²³⁶ His decision to delay UDI was no doubt influenced in part by pressures and concessions from the international community. Arafat was encouraged to delay this action by Egypt, Britain, France, Germany, Jordan, Japan, and others.²³⁷

However, Palestinian officials were also keenly aware that their action would have implications for Israeli politics. For instance, Jamal Al-Tarifi, a member of the PA cabinet, explained in an interview with the Arabic language newspaper *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* that “we regard the principle of declaring the Palestinian state [on May 4] as a sacred one... but there are discussions with the Europeans, Americans, and our Arab brothers that revolves around the fact that there are Israeli elections and other conditions and events with affect and are affected by the Palestinian decision”.²³⁸

A handful of top Palestinian officials met regularly leading up to this period with Israeli leftists at the home of Egypt’s ambassador to Israel, Mohamed Basiouny. At these meetings, they brainstorm how to get Netanyahu to move on the peace process or to make way for somebody else who would. Occasionally, Dennis Ross or Aaron Miller would touch base by telephone or the American ambassador, Ned Walker, would come by. Saeb Erekat recalls that the meetings entailed “collusion between me and members of the Israeli opposition... a cabal of me and my Israeli sympathizers... we developed certain ideas about how to deal with Netanyahu and

²³⁶ “PLO Body Decides to Put Off Palestinian State,” *Reuters News*, April 28, 1999.

²³⁷ Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 650; Beilin, *The Path to Geneva*, 84–87; “West Bank & Gaza Strip: Palestinian Minister on 4 May, Other Issues”; “Jordanian King Urges Arafat to Postpone State Declaration,” *Associated Press*, March 10, 1999.

²³⁸ “West Bank & Gaza Strip: Palestinian Minister on 4 May, Other Issues.”

we contacted the Americans with it and gave them something”.²³⁹

Historian Ahron Bregman argues that these discussions helped set the stage for Wye by exploring the sort of centrist deal that Netanyahu might face serious pressure to adopt and then encouraging the Americans to call a summit at which he would be forced to make a decisive choice one way or another.²⁴⁰ Bregman points out that another one of the PA in these talks, Hassan Asfour, admitted that, as a result, “we felt... that we had a victory when Barak came to power... because we prepared it... we... the Americans... some Israelis. We felt it was a victory for us”.²⁴¹

Yossi Beilin insists that his only motivation in these talks was to get Netanyahu to move on the peace process, not to oust him.²⁴² However, as I noted in the theory chapter for this dissertation, firsthand admissions of meddling should be taken as more credible than denials because they are “admissions against interest” and therefore less in accordance with the self-interest of the speaker.

Then, on the eve of the Israeli election, Arafat made a public statement calling on Israeli voters “to elect peace”.²⁴³ PLO Executive Committee member Suleiman Najjab elaborated more explicitly that “the elections are an internal Israeli matter but we are partners in a peace process... the Palestinian people, who suffered at the hands of Netanyahu, are hanging their hopes on anyone but him”.²⁴⁴ This echoes an earlier message from a top PA legislator, Hanan Ashrawi, suggesting that:

“we should not directly interfere in these elections... the only interference we can

²³⁹ Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, xxvi.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, xxvi–xxvii.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, xxvii.

²⁴² Former Minister Yossi Beilin, “Interview with the Author”; Beilin, *The Path to Geneva*, 66–67.

²⁴³ “Palestinians Express Qualified Support for Barak,” *CNN News (online)*, May 17, 1999.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

carry out is by raising issues for discussion... we should work to enhance a real peace camp and address the Israeli public during these decisive months to explain to them that Israelis would pay the price for destroying the peace process and warn them against the dangers of the rightwing mentality".²⁴⁵

Lastly, I have heard it argued that Arafat was working overtime to prevent terrorist attacks in the election period, but I cannot prove it without firmer evidence first.²⁴⁶

<*The British Approach*>

Britain exerted a range of efforts to help Barak win the election. First, it worked in coordination with other governments to discourage Arafat from pursuing his proposal for UDI.²⁴⁷ Blair personally met with Arafat in March to dissuade him from going ahead as planned.²⁴⁸ Blair also signed onto an EU-wide effort that gave Arafat a crucial exit ramp, proclaiming on March 25th that Europe would look kindly on Palestinian efforts at independence if they would agree to postpone action by a year and to engage in final status talks in the meantime.²⁴⁹

Additionally, Blair played a key role in giving Ehud Barak campaign support in advance of the elections. As noted above, Blair's own political advisor, Philip Gould, had been working with Barak for nearly two years to help modernize and

²⁴⁵ "PLC Member on Wye River Accord," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Provided by World News Connection* (Translated from Ramallah Al-Ayyam Newspaper, January 28, 1999).

²⁴⁶ For material in fitting with this thesis, see "Arafat Reiterates Commitment to Security Crackdown," *Associated Press*, March 12, 1999. Also, Indyk reiterated the importance of preventing terrorism before the elections in interviews in the Arab world: Uri Dan, "Anti-Bibi Stories Have Clinton Stamp," *New York Post*, March 7, 1999.

²⁴⁷ Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 650.

²⁴⁸ "Arafat Visits U.K. To Begin Tour To Campaign For Statehood," *Dow Jones International News*, March 11, 1999; "Arafat Praises 'Positive' British Position on Middle East," *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Translated from March 13th edition of Al-Hayat, March 15, 1999).

²⁴⁹ Paul Taylor, "EU Calls for Palestinian State Within a Year," *Reuters News*, March 26, 1999. Netanyahu raged against the EU declaration for being devious meddling, proclaiming "it is especially regrettable that it is Europe, where one third of the Jewish nation perished, that deems fit to impose a solution that endangers the Jewish state and contradicts its interests... it is possible that this declaration was aimed at influencing the Israeli elections, but it will backfire". For the quotes, see Marius Schattner, "EU Stance on Palestinians May Help Netanyahu's Re-election Bid," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, March 26, 1999.

rebrand his Labor Party base. My discussions with a well-placed former aide to Blair have confirmed that the prime minister “definitely directed Gould to do it”.²⁵⁰ According to Newsweek, Blair also encouraged Barak to take on Greenberg, who had helped the British prime minister with his successful campaign in 1997.²⁵¹

Another important player in the British decision was Lord Michael Levy, who was a tennis partner and close confidante to Blair – and soon became the British prime minister’s Mideast envoy. Allegedly, the Gould mission was recommended to Blair by Lord Levy at the encouragement of his son Daniel, who currently serves as an analyst at the New America Foundation but at the time worked as an operative within the Israeli Labor Party.²⁵² Lord Levy also donated large amounts of his own money to Israeli organizations established to aid Barak’s electoral campaign, information later leaked by private investigators (presumably at the direction of one of their British or Israeli rivals).²⁵³

<The Egyptian Approach>

The Egyptians also tried to help Barak in the 1999 vote. Although he later soured on Barak, proclaiming there was no difference between him and Netanyahu,²⁵⁴ Egypt’s foreign minister, Amr Moussa, told Clinton in advance of the Israeli election that they should be doing all they could to replace Netanyahu with a

²⁵⁰ Former Advisor to PM Blair, “Interview with the Author”, April 2011.

²⁵¹ Joseph Contreras, Michael Hirsch, and Matt Rees, “The General Takes Charge: Ehud Barak Elected Prime Minister of Israel,” *Newsweek Magazine*, May 31, 1999.

²⁵² Grice and Dejevsky, “New Labour Helped Barak to Victory.”

²⁵³ Nicholas Rufford, “Blair’s Big Fundraiser Bankrolled Israelis,” *The Times (of London)*, February 6, 2000; Douglas Davis, “Blair Admits Major Barak Contributor Is Personal Envoy to Mideast,” *Jerusalem Post*, February 24, 2000.

²⁵⁴ Gilead Sher, *The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Negotiations, 1999-2001: Within Reach* (Routledge, 2006), 10.

more pro-peace leader.²⁵⁵ Yossi Beilin reports Moussa telling him that Egypt would do all it could to prevent a Palestinian UDI; moreover, he says Moussa asked for a secret promise from Barak he would exert early efforts on the peace process as a means of sweetening a UDI deal for the PA.²⁵⁶ Mubarak's foreign policy advisor, Osama el-Baz, told Beilin that he was working hard to help Washington postpone the date for UDI by six months, which would fall long after the Israeli elections,²⁵⁷ and there was some talk that the EU's March 25th Berlin Declaration on the topic came about through a Franco-Egyptian diplomatic initiative.²⁵⁸ Also, as noted above, the Egyptian ambassador to Tel Aviv, Mohamed Basiouny, hosted regular meetings between the PLO and members of the Israeli opposition – meetings which some observers claim were aimed at toppling PM Netanyahu.

<The Russian Approach>

Perhaps the most surprising intervention during the 1999 Israeli elections was that of Russia. Whereas Moscow used to be a dirty word in Israeli domestic politics when the Soviet Union was aligned with the region's radical Arab states, strategic circumstances had changed dramatically. By 1999, Russia was grasping for strategic role in the region, and immigrants from the Soviet Union had come to comprise a new swing vote worth 13.8% of the Israeli electorate.²⁵⁹

That year, political leaders in Moscow chose to endorse the Likud Party

²⁵⁵ Taylor Branch, *The Clinton Tapes: Wrestling History with the President* (Simon and Schuster, 2010), 514.

²⁵⁶ Beilin, *The Path to Geneva*, 84.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 84–5.

²⁵⁸ "Palestinian Radio Reports 'Egyptian-French Initiative' on Statehood," *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Translated from March 22nd Voice of Palestine radio broadcast, March 24, 1999).

²⁵⁹ Vladimir Khanin, "Israeli 'Russian' Parties and the New Immigrant Vote," in *Israel at the Polls, 1999*, ed. Daniel Judah Elazar and M. Benjamin Mollov (Frank Cass, 2001), 101.

under Prime Minister Netanyahu. They engaged in a sudden flurry of back-and-forth state visits, and Russian PM Yevgeny Primakov went so far as to say “I don’t really want to interfere in Israeli politics... but if I were an Israeli citizen, I’d vote for Mr. Netanyahu in these coming elections”.²⁶⁰

These declarations came about through active solicitation by members of the Likud, who used the perks of their incumbency to woo Moscow. As foreign minister, Ariel Sharon undertook three trips two months to the Russian and admitted to a journalist that, although the nominal purpose of his travel was to limit Russian arms sales to Syria and Iran, “two thirds of the Russian Israelis are for Bibi now... if I can get that up to over 70 percent, that’s it”.²⁶¹ Israel urged the IMF to approve a \$4.8 billion loan to Russia, and there were rumors Israel even tried to scale back U.S. sanctions on Russia that they had advocated for only the previous year regarding Iran.²⁶² Sharon’s meetings, ostensibly for military purposes, were pursued over the objections Israel’s minister of defense, Moshe Arens – who felt that the risks of alienating Washington for Moscow outweighed the benefits of such travel.²⁶³

Did the Policy Succeed?

Yes. Overall, the American, Palestinian, and broader international effort to

²⁶⁰ Lee Hockstader, “As Election Nears, Israeli Candidates Cozy up to Moscow: Shift Seen as Bid to Win Immigrant Voters,” *Washington Post*, April 13, 1999.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Jon Broder, “Israel’s Lobbyists in the U.S. Troubled by Netanyahu’s Overtures to Russia,” *Jerusalem Post*, May 10, 1999; Hockstader, “Candidates Cozy up to Moscow.” These allegations were later denied: Bar-Illan, “Why Bibi Fell: Netanyahu Is Done in at Last - Not Least by Washington.”

²⁶³ Ehud Ya’ari, “Dangerous Liaisons,” *Jerusalem Report*, May 10, 1999; Hockstader, “Candidates Cozy up to Moscow.” According to Ya’ari, Sharon also sought to pull a pre-election rabbit out of the Russian hat by reaching major deals with Moscow on facilitating instant withdrawal from Lebanon, a halt in nuclear cooperation with Iran, or a massive economic deal on oil, gas, weapons, and aerospace; however, if such efforts existed, nothing came of them

bolster Ehud Barak went exceptionally well. Barak won by a landslide, despite facing considerable challenges at the start of his campaign.²⁶⁴ He was no doubt aided by surprising (if fleeting) unity on the center-left and fragmentation on the right among PM Netanyahu's governing coalition.²⁶⁵ But the external effort did help facilitate Netanyahu's defeat by denying him a convenient Palestinian crisis and making clear that it was he who bore responsibility for spoiling relations with Washington. Indyk reflects that "what mattered more in the end... it wasn't that Peres had such a great relationship with Clinton, it's that Bibi had such a bad one. And that hurt Bibi... if you do things to screw up the relationship with the United States, that will hurt you in the eyes of the Israeli public".²⁶⁶

Netanyahu even aired television commercials featuring a misleading Clinton quote saying positive things about his leadership style.²⁶⁷ But it was too little too late to dispel the notion that Netanyahu had upset Washington and the relationship had suffered for it. Israelis received the message loud and clear that the U.S. administration felt little other than disdain for their head of government.²⁶⁸

One possible lesson to draw from the 1999 case could be that American intervention succeeds only when it is extremely passive. This argument holds that by acting intently neutral, the U.S. may have denied Bibi a means of mobilizing his base against external intervention. An anonymous U.S. official is quoted as follows:

²⁶⁴ Susser, "Barak's Uphill Battle."

²⁶⁵ Don Peretz and Gideon Doron, "Sectarian Politics and the Peace Process: The 1999 Israel Elections," *Middle East Journal* 54, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 260. Among others, Netanyahu alienated David Levy, Dan Meridor, Ronni Milo, Natan Sharansky, Yitzhak Mordechai, Benny Begin, and Ya'akov Ne'eman.

²⁶⁶ Indyk, "Interview with the Author."

²⁶⁷ "Analysis: Poll Shows Benjamin Netanyahu Is in Danger of Losing Monday's Upcoming Election," *All Things Considered* (National Public Radio (NPR), May 14, 1999).

²⁶⁸ Weinberg, "Snub Diplomacy."

“as long as we keep a low profile and stick to the posture of support the implementation of the Wye agreement and opposing unilateral acts... I think we are on safe ground... we’ve been in a couple of Israeli elections before and we know where the landmines are. If we got into showing a direct preference, we would step on those landmines”.²⁶⁹

However, this would be a misreading of the 1999 case. Washington has tried staying overtly neutral before, including in the 1984 Israeli elections when the Reagan administration sidelined the peace process and avoided expressing a preference in hopes that decreased conflict with Israel would help the left beat out the right.²⁷⁰ The 1984 approach was extremely misguided, enabling the Likud to recover from a massive deficit in the polls since Washington did nothing to demonstrate its displeasure with the right wing’s resistance to the peace process.

The U.S. approach in 1999 was passive in the sense that it sought to avoid a sense of explicit endorsement such as was created in 1996 by President Clinton’s efforts on behalf of Shimon Peres. However, it was not passive in the sense of hoping that total U.S. withdrawal from the peace process and from Israeli political affairs would help advance American national interests.

The importance of this distinction was highlighted by none other than Netanyahu’s own communications director, David Bar-Illan, who wrote a *National*

²⁶⁹ Taylor, “U.S. Tries to Quietly Stymie Bibi.”

²⁷⁰ Indeed, America’s ambassador to Israel at the time, Sam Lewis, reflects that “the late spring, 1984, was devoted to electioneering. Elections always raise problems for American ambassadors in Israel. It is very difficult to escape the Israeli political cross-fires... as a government, we of course had a preference in the election which we did not express... in any case, we all had to be very careful during this election campaign to be seen as behaving in a completely impartial fashion between Peres and Shamir. I hoped that Labor would win because I thought that the Likud had failed miserably in its Lebanon policy and that it would not be very helpful in restarting the negotiations, as called for by Camp David and the Reagan Initiative. Nonetheless I was very cautious and impressed upon my staff the need to act accordingly” Samuel W. Lewis, “Interview with Ambassador Samuel Wingate Lewis”, August 9, 1998, 176, The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), Library of Congress.

Journal article the following month entitled “Why Bibi Fell”. In it, he blames an American “disinformation campaign” for Netanyahu’s defeat, arguing that “hardly a day passed without a Washington story about Netanyahu’s failure to keep his word: on the Wye agreement, building in Jerusalem, and even on Israeli-Russian relations”. Although the U.S. administration stopped short of “outright endorsement of Barak,” he blames it for taking “active measures” at Netanyahu’s expense.²⁷¹

One could also claim that this distinction proves negative LSI is more effective than positive LSI – that is, undermining foreign leaders might be more effective or easier to pursue than efforts to bolster them. However, this interpretation also misses part of the story. Although pressures from Congress or pro-Israel lobbyists did not prevent the U.S. administration from trying to discredit Netanyahu, Clinton certainly had additional levers at his disposal for demonstrating favoritism when Labor leaders were in charge. Thus, positive and negative LSI seem to involve inherent tradeoffs, and neither appears much stronger than the other.

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

The fact that America tried to influence the 1999 Israeli election fits with three of the four theories tested by this dissertation. Theory #1 (national interests) holds that America should carry out LSI whenever its interests are at stake; thus, a major election at the height of the Oslo era should have been especially inviting for U.S. intervention. Theory #2 (lobby-legislative politics) predicts that LSI should not

²⁷¹ Bar-Illan, “Why Bibi Fell: Netanyahu Is Done in at Last - Not Least by Washington.”

have taken place, since these domestic forces tend to prefer America staying out of Israeli political contests. Theory #3 (bureaucratic politics) expects persistent LSI on behalf of the peace process because working-level officials in the executive branch tend to see common cause with Arab moderates and Israeli liberals. Theory #4 (leadership) holds that LSI should occur whenever the top political leaders, especially the president, feel that intervention is warranted.

In this case, theory number two does not fit with the data. It is open to debate whether legislators and lobbyists detracted from the administration's effort to bring down Netanyahu, but they certainly were not driving it. Nor does the bureaucratic politics approach (Theory #3) seem to fit with the case evidence, since intervention was driven much more by administration principals such as Clinton and Albright than by lower level members of the career bureaucracy. Indyk notes:

“MI: Barak is an interesting example where there was even more involvement by the president... you have to understand the agony we went through with Netanyahu, and this was the president's highest priority, to try and make peace... and so there was a great deal of frustration on the president's part with him, and so the switch was immediate once the government came down. It was 'how do we get Barak elected?'

DW: And that was coming from Clinton as well as from others?

MI: Oh, yeah, absolutely”.²⁷²

For Albright, the matter was also personal. Aaron Miller explains:

“we [originally]... sensed that what little progress could be made needed the prime minister's cooperation. Not everyone shared this view, especially the secretary of state. Madeleine Albright... cared deeply about Arab-Israeli peace and worked for over a year to lay the groundwork for the president's successful summit at Wye. I know she felt patronized by Bibi, whom she would have loved to rough up”.²⁷³

²⁷² Indyk, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁷³ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 274.

Beilin agrees that Albright had little patience for Netanyahu, noting that as early as 1998 “I had never seen her so angry. The procrastination [by Netanyahu] had become a personal insult to her”.²⁷⁴ When she met with Barak in 1997, she wondered “wouldn’t it be terrific if we could deal with him as prime minister?”²⁷⁵ The fact that the most critical administration statements came especially from her fits with Theory #4. In fact, nearly every senior member of the U.S. administration was acquainted with Barak and liked what they saw, considering him a possible successor to Rabin for his pro-peace agenda and his airtight security credentials.²⁷⁶

National interests theory is also consonant with the occurrence of American intervention in this case, but it cannot explain why the means and style of LSI was so different in 1999 than it was in 1996. In order to explain this variance, one must take into account the particular, subjective lessons drawn by top American officials from 1996. Because the conventional wisdom at the White House was that the president’s efforts caused a harmful backlash in 1996 by being too overt, they took a more cautious approach in 1999. However, the objective, empirical basis for this change in behavior between cases is highly questionable, which should cast doubt on the validity of Theory #1 for fully explaining behavior in this case.

The 1996 American attempt was actually successful in important regards. Although some rhetorical backlash did emerge from the Likud that year, it is difficult to determine whether that rhetorical backlash actually affected the polls or changed

²⁷⁴ Beilin, *The Path to Geneva*, 68.

²⁷⁵ Madeleine Korbelt Albright, *Madam Secretary: A Memoir* (Miramax Books, 2005), 474.

²⁷⁶ The individuals included Clinton, Albright, Cohen, Berger, Ross, Indyk, and Walker. *Inter alia*, see Beilin, *The Path to Geneva*, 91–92; Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 490; Harman, “Cohen ‘Maintains US Neutrality’ by Meeting All PM Candidates.”

turnout. And despite the more restrained U.S. posture in 1999, we still saw extensive reliance on such complaints by the Likud politicians during their campaign. Despite a more subdued U.S. approach this time around – and clear reliance by the Likud on soliciting outside intervention from Moscow and from pro-Likud individuals in the West – Netanyahu’s team continued to bank on criticizing perceived external meddling as a winning political strategy in 1999.²⁷⁷ Not only is there reason to doubt whether or not this sort of rhetorical backlash actually drives political outcomes – there is also reason to doubt whether it is even truly responsive to the presence or absence of actual American meddling behavior. In short, the change in behavior from 1996 to 1999 has a much clearer subjective basis in the minds of top U.S. officials than it does in verifiable empirics.

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

The fact that American intervention only began in earnest once Netanyahu’s government fell to a vote of no confidence points to the importance of a perceived close contest for bringing about outside intervention. This is an observable implication on which only theories one and four pose clear predictions. However, this case is difficult to parse between those two theories. Theory #1 expects that the closeness of contests should be objectively translated into intervention behaviors, whereas Theory #4 expects that closeness must be filtered through subjective perceptions of top leaders first.

²⁷⁷ Bar-Illan, “Why Bibi Fell: Netanyahu Is Done in at Last - Not Least by Washington”; Weinberg, “Snub Diplomacy”; “Labour Leader Baraq Responds to Netanyahu’s Remarks About Arafat”; Schattner, “EU Stance on Palestinians May Help Netanyahu’s Re-election Bid”; David Millikin, “Israeli Official Accuses U.S. of Meddling in Campaign to Oust Netanyahu,” *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, March 5, 1999.

One fact that seems to support Theory #4 over the national interests approach is that Barak and Netanyahu were actually more closely matched far earlier than when the U.S. actually launched LSI. Although American intervention only really began in the early months of 1999, Barak and Netanyahu were tied in polls as long before that as mid-1998.²⁷⁸

Also, the attention of top U.S. officials might have been an important factor. Clinton was absorbed in an impeachment fight with Congress until February 12th, when he was finally acquitted by the Senate. As observers noted, this personal imperative seriously distracted the president from Mideast issues, and he could not reengage in the matter himself until afterwards, leaving tough decisions to his cabinet members and staff deputies instead.²⁷⁹

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

The theories also offer contradictory expectations with regard to the patterns by which domestic actors in the sender state discuss and undertake LSI. In order for theories two or three to apply, domestic structural forces such as legislators, lobbyists, and bureaucrats must be informed and influential when important decisions about LSI are being made, and these policies should be made through formal decision channels. However, if Theory #4 is correct and leaders tend to intervene of their own accord, meddling should be discussed and deployed via decision channels that are much more informal in nature.

Given that the effort to bring down Netanyahu was intentionally less explicit

²⁷⁸ “Israeli President Wants Elections,” *Associated Press*, June 29, 1998.

²⁷⁹ Beilin, *The Path to Geneva*, 43–44; Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 650.

than past U.S. efforts, it makes sense that the 1999 case best reflects leadership theory in this regard. Snub diplomacy was used by top administration principals to communicate their intended preferences. A whispering campaign was carried out by anonymous administration officials, launching accusations against the Israeli prime minister and acknowledging in private that their preference was for him to lose.²⁸⁰ President Clinton and Prime Minister Blair both quietly urged their own political consultants to go aid Barak, and the work of these consultants were bolstered by indirect donations from some of Clinton and Blair's biggest backers. These patterns fit with the dynamics of Theory #4, but there is little to suggest that domestic structural forces such as Congress, the pro-Israel lobby, or career bureaucrats did anything to lead these various efforts through informal channels.

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

Another observable implication of the theories is that domestic structural forces in the sender state should be especially influential during certain periods of the political cycle. For instance, early in a president's term, the bureaucratic politics approach should be especially powerful, whereas Congress and pro-Israel lobbyists should be strongest before U.S. elections or during periods of divided government.

Mid-term elections had already passed, but President Clinton's ability to pursue LSI still should have been severely constrained in 1999. The results of that election sustained Republican majorities in both the House and the Senate. The only

²⁸⁰ See, for instance, "Israel Decides: Barak Likely to Win as Pollsters Predict 80 Percent Voter Turnout; White House Privately Hopes for Netanyahu Defeat," *CNN Today* (Cable News Network (CNN), May 17, 1999).

time when Clinton presided over a united government was 1993 to 1995, when he was much less engaged in meddling towards Israel. Instead, he pursued his most active campaigns of intervention during divided government, a fact that seems to provide strong evidence against lobby-legislative theory. These periods of divided government offer a simple “hoop test” for Theory #2, and yet the theory fails even to surmount even that especially simple challenge.

Further, executive power should have been perhaps at its lowest ebb in early 1999 given that President Clinton had only recently been impeached by the House of Representatives. Widespread speculation at the time suggested that the executive branch would remain weakened by this bruising battle, even after Clinton was officially acquitted.²⁸¹ Yet even then, at one of the lowest points in executive power in American history, the Clinton administration undertook leadership selection intervention in Israeli politics. This provides even greater evidence against the lobby-legislative approach at a time when its explanatory power should be greatest.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

Efforts below the level of the president to pursue LSI offer evidence for the bureaucratic politics approach (Theory #3) at the expense of leadership theory (Theory #4). However, if such freelancing is conditional on the oversight style of the president, then some explanatory power still remains for leadership theory.

And yet this episode offers firm evidence in favor of Theory #4. In

²⁸¹ Connie Cass, “Did Scandal Weaken the Presidency?,” *Associated Press*, February 5, 1999; John B. Broder, “Clinton Playing Out Presidency In Reveries and a Long Twilight,” *New York Times*, March 19, 1999; Charles Krauthammer, “Op-Ed: A Hollow Presidency,” *Washington Post*, March 19, 1999.

comparison to 1996, the 1999 case was certainly conducted by a much broader array of officials inside the executive branch. Whereas previously it was the president flying overseas and making sweeping statements of support for the Labor Party in Israel, now Clinton gave more responsibility to his advisors to communicate these messages to the Israeli public. However, the president remained actively engaged in the issue, and these efforts were clearly undertaken at his direction, not in contravention of his authority. Thus, in this category as well, Theory #4 provides the most compelling available explanation for the case material, not Theory #3.

6. Consistency of Message:

The volume of Clinton's message for Israeli voters was substantially weaker in 1999 than it had been in 1996. Previously, the president had been almost painfully outspoken for an issue area usually shrouded in smoke and mirrors: recording messages for Israeli television, visiting Israel to address the public, and staging a massive summit Sharm that was geared toward an Israeli audience. This time around, expressions of American discontent tended to be less authoritative and less direct, muttered off camera by his subordinates. They did not deviate from this message of discontent, but it was projected at a much lower level of intensity.

It is difficult to gauge what impact this change had on the efficacy of American intervention. The conventional wisdom within the Clinton camp was that the president's diminished role this time around helped strengthen the effort by precluding a backlash by the Likud. However, as noted above, this claim is seriously debatable. The decreased American profile did little to prevent the Likud from

attacking foreign favoritism as a central campaign theme. It is entirely possible that Washington's more reticent posture may actually have helped Netanyahu by making the its message less firm and authoritative if not less clear.

Either way, this pattern of behavior fits best with Theory #4. In order to explain the variance in means and style between the 1996 and 1999 cases, one must take into account the subjective lessons drawn by top American officials from the 1996 case. Changes in messaging do not make sense according to a national interests theory approach, since whatever strategy was truly optimal should have been pursued in both episodes, not just one of them. Nor does a bureaucratic or lobby-legislative logic for the change in approach make sense, given that the Clinton administration was more concerned with backlash from within Israel than backlash from other actors at home.

7. Suitability of Message:

The strength and severity of Clinton's message to Israeli voters in 1999 was also weaker than it was in 1996. Whereas the previous contest was framed by the president as a good and evil contest for the soul of the Middle East, in 1999 it was about implementation of the Wye Memorandum – and interim deal about yet another interim deal. Although the quality of bilateral relations was under greater strain this time around, in 1996 Clinton had an enormous range of positive gifts at his disposal that he showered upon Israel's Labor government in hopes of persuading the Israeli public that Washington's backing was reliable and essential.

The difference is perhaps most clear in the dispute over Wye aid in early

March of that year. When the Clinton administration was faced with accusations by an anonymous Israeli official that they had been trying to politicize the \$1.2 billion of bonus aid by making it conditional on how Israel voted – an accusation which may or may not have been true – the administration ran from the claim and denied it rather than suggesting that Netanyahu’s behavior disqualified his government from receiving extra foreign assistance, originally earmarked only for good behavior.

Washington’s reticence in this regard was characteristic of the broader passivity in its 1999 approach. Given that Barak ultimately won the election and won it handily, it is tempting to conclude that the American approach must have been calibrated optimally. However, the empirical reality is somewhat more complex than that, and it is quite possible that Washington’s reticence to pose firmer consequences for Netanyahu’s behavior might have actually neutralized some of the effectiveness of America’s role. I remain skeptical of the conventional wisdom on this case, although my ability to disprove it is more limited here than I would like.

Either way, again the difference in approach cannot be traced back to any theory but the leadership approach. Whether or not the Clinton administration’s change in strategy was optimal or suboptimal, it was a result of perceptions at the top echelons of U.S. political leadership, not a result of any sort of pressure from below within the executive branch or from other branches of U.S. government.

In conclusion, this case is best explained by leadership theory. None of the other three theories that stress international or domestic structural forces provide

the sort of explanatory power to persuasively explain the dynamics of occurrence and efficacy in the American effort to bring down Netanyahu during the Israeli elections of 1999.

Clinton, Case #4: Barak, the sinking ship (1999-2001)

Ehud Barak's election victory rekindled hopes in Washington that the Oslo process might yet come to a fruitful conclusion. However, a perverse consequence of the electoral reform that made the selection of Israel's prime minister a direct choice for Israeli voters was that the public felt greater freedom to split their ticket, voting for a broader range of parties in the Knesset even as their choice for prime minister was narrowed. Thus, although Barak won by an impressive margin in his race to become prime minister, his party's margin actually decreased, forcing him to rely on special-interest parties in his coalition to a greater degree than ever before.

Labor slid from 36 to 26 seats (even counting its One Israel alliance partners Gesher and Meimad), while Likud fell from 32 to 19. Whereas in 1981 they held a combined 95 out of 120 seats in the Knesset, by 1999 these two mainstream parties held only 45.²⁸² Barak initially formed a very large coalition, but it simultaneously depended among others on both the seventeen votes of the burgeoning Shas Party and anti-religious parties such as the dovish Meretz (now at ten seats) and Natan Sharansky's Russian party, Yisrael Ba'Aliyah, at six.

Yet somehow, by the summer of 2000, all three of these parties had resigned

²⁸² Peretz and Doron, "Sectarian Politics and the Peace Process: The 1999 Israel Elections," 266.

from the coalition, along with Labor's One Israel alliance partner Gesher, a small Sephardic party.²⁸³ No doubt, Barak was seeking to advance a controversial peace agenda in the context of some very difficult internal tensions within the coalition. However, like Netanyahu before him, Barak exacerbated these tensions by showing a remarkable ineptitude for managing intrapersonal conflicts. Barak's government continued to garner support from the six-member Center Party and some of the smaller religious parties, but he presided over a rump minority government that collapsed in November following a new intifada, with elections for prime minister being set for the following February.

Thus, Barak came into power at the head of one of Israel's largest governments but left power atop one of its smallest. These repeated coalitional difficulties were not lost on his American backers. In 2000 Clinton told his chronicler for the Clinton Tapes that he worried "Barak's political constraints were tighter than Rabin's".²⁸⁴ This concern for Barak's political standing permeated U.S. policy toward Israel for the remainder of the Clinton administration.

Although I argue that American backing benefitted Barak in the short term, it ultimately backfired – albeit not by making Israeli voters upset over meddling. In the narrow sense, administration efforts failed to help Barak save his sinking government, and he went down in a crushing loss to Ariel Sharon that February. In the broader sense, these actions backfired by isolating Arafat such that it spoiled the negotiating process and encouraged him to embrace violence. In the end, efforts to

²⁸³ The leader of Gesher, David Levy, pulled his party out in protest of the prime minister's policies, including multiple back channels that made a mockery of his authority as minister for foreign affairs.

²⁸⁴ Branch, *The Clinton Tapes*, 614.

save the peace process through Barak abetted its destruction via a second intifada.

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

Yes. Washington went to great lengths to bolster Ehud Barak inside of Israel. The most notable element of this effort was the U.S. campaign to intentionally frame and publicize the narrative of what happened at the 2000 Camp David summit in a manner that boosted Barak's standing and rewarded Israel for his purported bravery – at the expense of Arafat and the PA. Although these descriptions of the summit definitely accorded with one possible interpretation of what transpired there, they were part of an ill-advised, conscious campaign by American officials that held Barak's personal standing centrally in mind.

However, the framing of Camp David was not the only American action colored by concern for Barak's domestic position – just the one in which it figured most prominently among other possible goals. U.S. handling of the peace process from late 1999 to early 2001 was also suffused with a running background concern for shoring up the health of Barak's One Israel government. In these less clear instances, it is often difficult to disentangle three mutually complementary strands in U.S. thinking: Clinton's personal empathy for Israeli peacemaking, deference to Barak's tactical judgment, and concern for helping Barak's domestic position. Still, the latter was an element of Clinton's thinking throughout much of this period.

Clinton also permitted Barak to sidestep his political advisors in contravention to protocol. The PM spent inordinate amounts of time on the phone

consulting with Clinton to explain his political needs directly.²⁸⁵ Indyk explains:

“Clinton was incredibly attentive to Barak’s political requirements, and so that meant that whenever Barak called him up and said ‘I need you to do this, I need you to do that,’ Clinton said ‘yes, sir’... and the president was taking his calls... at a certain point, they became the two desk officers! ... they were dealing mostly with each other.”²⁸⁶

Dennis Ross echoes this perspective as well, telling Aaron Miller in an interview for his book that “every time in the last year we wanted to be tough on Barak, he’d just call the president and go around us. I’d say to Sandy, he can’t take every Barak call, and Sandy would answer ‘I can’t stop it’.”²⁸⁷ Throughout much of their remaining tenure in office, Clinton spent a sizeable portion of conversations with Barak focused on the latter’s political constraints.²⁸⁸

I will divide the following discussion into six sections. In it, I discuss U.S. efforts over a handful of periods: (1) during Barak’s initial consultations with Clinton, (2) on the Syrian track, (3) in preparation for Camp David, (4) during that summit, (5) in the summit’s immediate aftermath, and (6) through the next autumn.

<1. Initial Consultations>

When Barak first visited Washington in July of 1999, he explained to Clinton his desire to focus on the Syria track while reaching an agreement with Arafat to put his Wye obligations on a brief hold. Clinton had hoped to move soon on the Palestinian front, but he deferred to Barak’s judgment and even “tried to explain...

²⁸⁵ In addition to the quote below, for this point see also Daniel C. Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle: America’s Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace in the Post-Cold War Era [FORTHCOMING]* (US Institute of Peace & Cornell University Presses, 2012), chap. 3.

²⁸⁶ Indyk, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁸⁷ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 311.

²⁸⁸ Sandy Berger cited in the Telhami chapter of Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*.

Barak's political considerations" to Yasser Arafat.²⁸⁹ This initiative culminated in an agreement on September 5th at Sharm el-Sheikh giving Barak a reconfirmed but delayed schedule for implementing further withdrawals from the West Bank, releasing Palestinian prisoners, and reaching a final status deal. In practice, however, Barak used it to put the Palestinian track on hold even longer so he could court Damascus.

And even though President Clinton knew of Barak's desire to delay implementing Israel's obligations under Wye, he declared during their July meeting that he would urge Congress to expedite the \$1.2 billion in bonus aid that Israel was pledged under the Memorandum – exactly the aid that his government refused to give Netanyahu before those obligations were 100% discharged.²⁹⁰

<2. The Syrian Track>

At key junctures, Miller believes President Clinton was "conditioned to accept the counsel of [Barak] without pushing back," enabling the prime minister to tailor the talks with Damascus to suit his own domestic preferences.²⁹¹ The two sides also discussed a range of measures that the U.S. could take to help Barak sell a Syrian deal to the Israeli public and to bolster his coalition in such a contingency. One such measure that they were exploring was the possibility of a formal mutual defense treaty between the U.S. and Israel, complete with American nuclear guarantees.²⁹²

At the culmination of a series of productive negotiations, Barak backed away

²⁸⁹ John Lancaster, "Clinton, Optimistic for Mideast Peace, Pledges Help," *Washington Post*, September 24, 1999.

²⁹⁰ Charles Babington, "Clinton Wants Aid to Israel Expedited: Barak Promises to Reinvigorate Search for Lasting Peace in the Middle East," *Washington Post*, July 20, 1999. Because of the collapse of Camp David and the subsequent intifada, these are obligations that Israel has still not implemented to date.

²⁹¹ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 284.

²⁹² Bruce Riedel, "Camp David: The US-Israeli Bargain," *Bitter Lemons*, July 15, 2002.

from making a full offer to return the Golan to his Syrian interlocutor, FM Farouq Al-Sharaa. By all accounts, he had become concerned by new signs that the Israeli public and his coalition partners might not support such a deal.²⁹³ Yet afterwards Clinton criticized the Syrians rather than the Israelis, despite long knowing that full Israeli withdrawal would be the price for peace on this particular front.²⁹⁴ To strengthen his hand at home, Barak then leaked a draft U.S. agreement that when viewed in a vacuum incorrectly attributed very large concessions to the Syrian negotiators. Yet this move that elicited no real consequences from an empathic Washington.²⁹⁵ Looking back, Indyk reflects that:

“in hindsight, we shouldn’t have allowed Sharaa to go home empty-handed; Clinton should have pressed Barak to be more forthcoming at that moment, not later. But Clinton had always been particularly sensitive to the political situation in Israel... there was also a predisposition in Clinton’s peace team to avoid second-guessing Israeli leaders who were committed to taking risks for peace”.²⁹⁶

Clinton later blew up at Barak for the time when “I went to Shepherdstown and was told nothing by you for four days”.²⁹⁷

Then, at a make-or-break summit with an ailing Hafez al-Assad, Clinton deferred to Barak’s desire to make an offer to the Syrians that was carefully stage managed in a manner that Clinton later complained made him feel like a “wooden Indian doing your bidding”.²⁹⁸ Albright explains:

²⁹³ Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 284–285. Barak faced opposition over the Syria talks from three coalition partners: Shas, Yisrael B’Aliyah, and the National Religious Party.

²⁹⁴ Quandt, *Peace Process*, 361, 461; Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 285.

²⁹⁵ The leaks caused major damage on the Syrian side and seriously impaired the talks. Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 479; Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 264–265.

²⁹⁶ Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 265.

²⁹⁷ Robert Malley and Hussein Agha, “Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors,” *New York Review of Books* (August 9, 2001).

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

“Always the micromanager, Barak produced a complete script for the President’s use with Assad. In a manner I thought patronizing, he said it would be fine for the President to improvise the opening generalities, but the description of Israel’s needs had to be recited word for word.

“President Clinton went along with this process for several reasons. He had more hope than the rest of us that the initiative would succeed, and certainly Barak’s offer was more forthcoming than any other the Syrians were likely to receive. The President had also promised to support those in the Middle East who were willing to run risks for peace; astute diplomatic strategist or not, Barak led the region in this category”.²⁹⁹

Although this offer was at least a feasible one, more was needed to clinch a deal given that the window of opportunity for peace with Syria was closing for reasons explored below. Yet Clinton and his team oversold the Israeli offer as “very, very serious efforts,” suggested the ball was now solely in Assad’s court, and did nothing to refute Barak’s claim that Geneva proved the Syrian leader did not want peace.³⁰⁰

<3. Back to the Palestinian Track>

Barak then returned to the Palestinian track. However, he argued that the political logic of Oslo was politically unsustainable. Under prior agreements, Israel was obligated to carryout a series of interim concessions that he felt were far too risky. Instead, he proposed jumping straight to final status negotiations to bypass the issue of this steady bloodletting.³⁰¹ Thus, he sought to hold a make-or-break summit on final status issues as soon as possible while dodging even those interim steps he had personally accepted to take at Sharm.

He was still formally obligated under the agreement to release a group of Palestinian prisoners and to transfer three villages on the outskirts of East

²⁹⁹ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 480.

³⁰⁰ Swisher, *The Truth About Camp David*, 103–104.

³⁰¹ Barak described his thinking to UN envoy Terje Roed-Larsen as chopping the tail off of an ugly dog in one fell swoop instead of in a series of tiny chops. Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 278.

Jerusalem to the Palestinian Authority's control, a step formally known as the third further redeployment (FRD). In his eagerness to get to a summit, Barak encouraged Clinton to promise Arafat that he would get Israel would fulfill these obligations before a summit could occur.³⁰² However, after Arafat agreed, Barak reneged on the promise to transfer the villages and released a pitiful three prisoners, an action Arafat rightly argued was probably worse than releasing none at all.³⁰³

Barak made the decision not to carry out the third FRD in response to Palestinian violence on the anniversary of Israel's independence and Palestinian *Naqba* Day that May 15th. Yet he did so in a manner that caused him almost as much damage as if he had carried them out anyway. He went through the challenge of gaining approval from the Knesset and cabinet before declining to transfer the villages, and he forced Clinton to break his own word to Chairman Arafat.

By the time they did go to Camp David, Barak's mishandling of interim issues had needlessly used up goodwill on the Palestinian side. He rushed the parties into a final status summit without having sufficient authorized his negotiators to explore how truly unprepared they were on the issue that would ultimately scuttle the summit: Jerusalem. To be fair, Arafat certainly should have done more to prevent violence that May, and he should have been more tolerant of exploring realistic compromises on Jerusalem. However, Barak's mishandling of Israel's prior commitments did detract from the possibility of success at Camp David, and this pattern of behavior was enabled by a deferential and empathic President Clinton,

³⁰² On this point, see Rob Malley cited in Bregman and also with Hussein Agha: Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 83, 303; Malley and Agha, "Tragedy of Errors."

³⁰³ Sher, *The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Negotiations, 1999-2001*, 46-47; Beilin, *The Path to Geneva*, 148.

who took Barak's domestic needs into consideration so much in the immediate term that they made his job much harder in the final accounting.

Israeli negotiator Gilead Sher believes that the Americans were deeply focused on Israeli domestic politics at the time. He explains:

"When the talks with the Syrians collapsed, that's the famous Geneva meeting between Clinton and Hafez al-Assad, and the speeding up of the negotiations with the Palestinians as a consequence, during that period I believe that the American administration was quite concerned about the capability of the prime minister and his government to deliver the goods once an agreement is hopefully attained"³⁰⁴

<4. Camp David and Aftermath>

Barak arrived at the summit politically weakened. Multiple parties had quit his coalition, and he arrived in the U.S. a day late after having faced an excruciating vote of no confidence in the Knesset. The opposition failed gather the 61 votes needed to bring down his government, but his side garnered even less votes, coming out 52 to 54.³⁰⁵ Barak argued that his mandate came directly from the Israeli people, not the parliament, and he planned to assemble an alternative coalition that would bring pro-peace parties back into the government after the summit, but it was certainly not an encouraging basis for heading off to a make-or-break moment on final status. Clinton incorrectly writes in his memoirs that Barak "had just survived a no-confidence vote in the Knesset by only two votes," but either way he was clearly aware of the Israeli prime minister's difficult domestic situation.³⁰⁶ Bruce Riedel says Barak also brought poll data with him to Camp David showing

³⁰⁴ Gilead Sher, "Interview with the Author," June 7, 2011.

³⁰⁵ "Israeli PM Survives No-confidence Vote," *The Guardian (UK)*, July 10, 2000.

³⁰⁶ Clinton, *My Life*, 911.

how exposed he was in Israel, and he shared these figures with President Clinton.³⁰⁷

At multiple points throughout the summit, Clinton deferred to Barak's political judgment despite misgivings by him or his aides. For instance, just a few days into the summit, the American team was planning to confront both sides with a paper that outlined some possible bridging proposals. However, President Clinton decided over the objections of his aides to shelve the paper in favor of a much softer document listing U.S. understandings of both sides' positions, since he didn't want to "jam" the Israelis too hard.³⁰⁸ Both Israeli and Palestinian negotiators later said that their complaints about the document had been tactical bargaining maneuvers, not genuine objections, and observers have suggested that removing the U.S. bridging plan was a key moment where Camp David went off the rails.³⁰⁹

While at Camp David, the Israeli and American teams discussed possible U.S. measures to bolster Barak's position in the event that a final status deal was clinched at the summit.³¹⁰ Then, as it became increasingly obvious that the summit would fail and that the Palestinian side was leaking many of Barak's biggest concessions, the American and Israeli teams began to consult over what Washington could do to salvage Barak's political position, drawing on previous discussions of what might be done in the event of a successful agreement.

These discussions took place at meetings between Clinton and Barak, between Bruce Riedel and Danny Yatom, and between Dennis Ross and Dan

³⁰⁷ Riedel, "Interview with the Author."

³⁰⁸ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 302–303. Ross says the president insisted on switching papers because "he felt it was still premature to force something down Barak's throat," even though he himself was convinced the Israeli complaints about the paper were tactical in nature. Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 659–660.

³⁰⁹ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 302–303.

³¹⁰ Riedel, "Camp David: The US-Israeli Bargain."

Meridor. During these meetings, Israeli officials laid out a stunningly broad range of suggested American steps, including: praising Israel's boldness at Camp David in the face of Palestinian obstinacy; outreach to Europe and Arab states on the matter; recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and moving the U.S. embassy there from Tel Aviv; a memorandum of understanding on economic and military foreign assistance paid upfront for interest relief; a formal mutual defense treaty with an American nuclear umbrella; weapons transactions including submarines, Arrow missile defense batteries, still-to-be-produced advanced F-22 jets, high-tech intelligence systems, and Tomahawk cruise missiles; an increase in defense acquisitions from Israeli manufacturers; a promise to oppose Palestinian UDI and oppose UN membership for such a state; and *de facto* absolving Israel from its obligation to carry out the third further withdrawal from the West Bank.³¹¹

When a deal had looked more promising, the two sides even discussed a \$35 billion Marshall Plan-style fund for Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians that Clinton agreed to fundraise from the international community. Of this fund, \$15 billion was to be exclusively for Israel's benefit, including modernization of the IDF (early warning aircraft, attack submarines, helicopters, and Arrow batteries) and to finance redeployment of the IDF and settlers from the West Bank and the construction of new infrastructure and border facilities.³¹²

American officials were by and large willing to consider nearly all of these

³¹¹ Gidi Weitz, "Yomnei Meridor: Rega'im Akhronim Shel Dee'alog (The Meridor Diaries: Last Moments of Dialogue, in Hebrew)," *Ha'aretz*, July 30, 2011; Riedel, "Camp David: The US-Israeli Bargain"; Riedel, "Interview with the Author"; Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 709–710. I am also grateful to Dan Meridor for permitting me to read his diary in full in the original Hebrew, including pertinent sections not published in *Ha'aretz*. According to the *Ha'aretz* piece, Meridor also suggested asking for a pardon of Jonathan Pollard, but Barak said he had an understanding with Clinton that to try this after U.S. elections that November.

³¹² Riedel, "Camp David: The US-Israeli Bargain."

measures. Riedel says “basically Clinton’s approach was very simple: he said ‘yes, whatever you need’. And when he would meet with his team after the fact, he would simply say ‘I made the decision, we’re going to do this’.”³¹³ The Israelis even tabled a draft mutual defense treaty, and the two sides began discussions about how to get it through Congress.³¹⁴ Once it became clear a final status deal would not be reached, Clinton told his aides he was actually considering moving the embassy to Jerusalem,³¹⁵ his team gave tacit support for Israel to avoid its obligation for a third FRD,³¹⁶ and they announced a new package of measures to upgrade strategic relations and modernize the IDF.³¹⁷ Perhaps more importantly, they also engaged in the PR offensive requested by the Israelis that selectively framed one possible interpretation of the events at Camp David in a manner I will argue was a risky move that ultimately backfired, to the overall detriment of the peace process.

Barak made an unprecedented decision at Camp David to offer the Palestinians control and even sovereignty over parts of East Jerusalem. Although PA negotiators felt they were entitled to the whole of East Jerusalem under international law, and it turns out Arafat was not prepared to settle for less than full sovereignty over the Temple Mount and the land underneath it, Barak did go farther than most well-informed observers expected any Israeli leader to suggest. The U.S. team, including the president, were very impressed at the time by his proposals and felt that the Palestinian team made a major misjudgment by neither accepting the

³¹³ Riedel, “Interview with the Author.”

³¹⁴ Riedel, “Camp David: The US-Israeli Bargain.”

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ *Inter alia*, Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 121.

³¹⁷ William J. Clinton, “Interview of the President by Israeli Television” (United States Department of State, July 27, 2000).

Barak's proposals nor responding with creative offers of their own. Thus, when the summit finally collapsed after two weeks of intensive debate, the president was furious at Arafat and very concerned that Barak was politically exposed.

It is important to recognize that this understanding of what happened at Camp David is a selective interpretation of the events that transpired there, and certain observers on all three sides take issue with it.³¹⁸ And no doubt the American team clearly did not understand the Palestinian side's red lines at Camp David, a symptom of having jumped into talks on final status issues without sufficiently exploring the positions of both sides on Jerusalem first. Even if one chooses to accept the Clinton administration's narrative of events at Camp David, one can certainly question the advisability of its decision to go public with it.

<5. *The Aftermath of Camp David*>

Towards the end of the summit, Aaron David Miller and Martin Indyk had been tasked with drafting a statement for the president to read at the closing press conference. The draft they wrote was even handed and did not include criticism of

³¹⁸ Rabinovich suggests it is but one of four different prevalent narratives about the events at Camp David. Shlomo Ben-Ami, a top Israeli negotiator at the summit who was soon appointed Barak's foreign minister, wrote that if he were a Palestinian he would not have accepted the Israeli offer at Camp David, even though he believed Arafat's rejection of the Clinton Parameters meant the Palestinian leader was incapable of accepting any deal in the end. Clinton's NSC advisor Rob Malley co-wrote an article with PLO advisor Hussein Agha arguing that acknowledged the detrimental impact of the Palestinian team's refusal to make realistic counter-offers but that the summit collapsed because of a mix of distrust on all sides as well as poor American management and bad interpersonal relations. About Camp David, Ned Walker, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs has reportedly said "there is no way in hell the Palestinians would have accepted this thing," and Martin Indyk said "I can understand why Yasser Arafat said 'no' at Camp David". Some analysts argue that the U.S. and Israel were even heavy-handed and exploitative in their approach to the summit. See Rabinovich, *Waging Peace*, 160–180; "Fmr. Israeli Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben Ami Debates Outspoken Professor Norman Finkelstein on Israel, the Palestinians, and the Peace Process," *Democracy Now!* (National Public Radio (NPR), February 14, 2006); Malley and Agha, "Tragedy of Errors"; Swisher, *The Truth About Camp David*, 353; Martin Indyk, "Sins of Omission, Sins of Commission," in *The Camp David Summit: What Went Wrong?*, ed. Shimon Shamir and Bruce Maddy-Weitzman (Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 100–107; Deborah Sontag, "And Yet So Far: A Special Report; Quest for Mideast Peace: How and Why It Failed," *New York Times*, July 26, 2001; Qurie, *Beyond Oslo, the Struggle for Palestine*; Akram Hanieh, *The Camp David Papers* (Al-Ayyam Newspaper, 2000).

the Palestinian team.³¹⁹ This was in accordance with a prior promise the president had made to Chairman Arafat in order to persuade him to attend in the first place. When Arafat voiced his concerns that the ground was not yet prepared for a summit, President Clinton promised Arafat he would not blame him if they could not reach an agreement at Camp David.³²⁰

Clearly, Arafat had upset the president, and Clinton was not reluctant to make him sweat if it would help Barak politically. On the last day of the summit, the president's staff changed this statement in accordance with his wishes to praise Barak's bravery in the face of a disappointing Palestinian response.³²¹ Thus, the final statement "damn[ed] Arafat with faint praise," in effect, showering Barak with glowing praise while "crediting Arafat for little more than showing up".³²² The statement read as follows:

"Prime Minister Barak showed particular courage, vision, and an understanding of the historical importance of this moment. Chairman Arafat made it clear that he, too, remains committed to the path of peace".³²³

Albright notes that "with Israeli and American negotiators now free to provide background to the press, the imbalance in the President's words gained added weight," and Enderlin heard anonymous remarks from U.S. and Israeli officials

³¹⁹ Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 120.

³²⁰ Ross claims that these promises were conditional upon a proviso of negotiating in good faith while there, although others contest this assertion. See Dennis Ross, Margaret Warner, and Jim Hoagland, "From Oslo to Camp David to Taba: Setting the Record Straight" (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Peace Watch #340: Special Forum Report, August 14, 2001). The alternative perspective is articulated in Malley and Agha, "Tragedy of Errors"; Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams*, 171; Indyk, "Interview with the Author."

³²¹ Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 120; Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 710.

³²² First quote is from Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 337. Second quote is from Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 493.

³²³ William J. Clinton, "Statement on the Middle East Peace Talks at Camp David" (United States Department of State, July 25, 2000).

endorsing this version of events.³²⁴ Clinton acknowledges in his memoirs that his intention in the statement was “to give Barak some cover back home and indicate what had occurred”.³²⁵ Ross also explains that the statement

“would be seen as implicit criticism of Arafat – something his performance at Camp David warranted... something I felt Barak would need domestically. The President was very keen to help Barak, feeling that if we could shore him up politically now, we could keep the process alive. That was uppermost in the President’s mind when he spoke to the press at the White House. He [then] went well beyond the press statement, explaining what Barak had done, how he was motivated by Israeli security needs throughout, how it took great courage to adopt positions, especially on Jerusalem, that were difficult but ultimately visionary in meeting Israeli needs and making peace possible... his target audience was the Israeli public”.³²⁶

When asked how much this concern for Barak’s domestic standing played into Clinton’s decision over how to frame Camp David to the press after the fact, Martin Indyk said “totally – one hundred percent”.³²⁷

The next day, the president expanded on his comments, holding an extended interview with Israeli television that Indyk now reveals was actually done at Barak’s request.³²⁸ In it, Clinton announced that “Prime Minister Barak in no way ever compromised the vital interests of the security of the State of Israel... I don’t think that he will ever do anything that he believes undermines the vital interest of the people of Israel and Jerusalem”. He also noted that “in view of the courageous actions that the Prime Minister and the Israeli team took at the summit... I think some review and strengthening is in order” for the U.S.-Israel relationship, including new funding and technology transfers to help modernize the IDF.

³²⁴ Ibid.; Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams*, 272.

³²⁵ Clinton, *My Life*, 916.

³²⁶ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 710–711.

³²⁷ Indyk, “Interview with the Author.”

³²⁸ Indyk, “Interview with the Author.”

He even proclaimed “you know, I have always wanted to move our embassy to West Jerusalem. We have designated a site there... in light of what has happened, I’ve taken [my prior] decision [not to move the embassy] under review and I’ll make a decision sometime between now and the end of the year on that”. Also, he said that in the event of a deal “I would do whatever I could do to persuade the people to support it” and that a fund for compensating refugees would be open to not just to Palestinians but also Jews who fled from to Israel from Arab countries.³²⁹

For the next two months, Clinton and his aides continued this public relations offensive, telling world leaders from Europe and the Arab world that Barak had been a responsible stakeholder at Camp David but Arafat was not. Some even went so far as to call it a conscious “campaign” directed by Barak and backed by Clinton to control the narrative of what took place at Camp David.³³⁰

Even if their narrative of what happened at Camp David was correct – which is itself debatable – the decision to broadcast it so aggressively was a policy choice that was heavily contingent on concern for the stability of Barak’s government. Clinton could have kept his dissatisfaction and pressure on Arafat private, but instead he chose to openly endorse criticisms of Arafat’s behavior to help Barak look good back home. And, as we all know from the political science literatures on both media studies and on audience costs, “going public” has its benefits but it also runs

³²⁹ William J. Clinton, “Interview of the President by Israeli Television” (United States Department of State, July 27, 2000).

³³⁰ Yossi Ginossar, “Factors That Impeded Negotiations,” in *The Camp David Summit: What Went Wrong?*, ed. Shimon Shamir and Bruce Maddy-Weitzman (Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 57; Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams*, 288; Qurie, *Beyond Oslo, the Struggle for Palestine*, 261.

the risk of stiffening political positions on both sides of a dispute.³³¹

<6. *The Fall of 2000*>

An especially problematic aspect of this public relations campaign was the suggestion by Barak that he went to Camp David not to reach a final agreement with the Palestinians but to expose Arafat for an extremist who was not interested in making peace. This stylized description of history was at stark odds with Barak's actual behavior, let alone Arafat's, but he endorsed the message on the recommendation of his pollsters, over the objection of his policy team.³³² His advisors actually continued final status talks with the Palestinian Authority on a near-daily basis although the outbreak of the intifada threw those negotiations into disarray.³³³ At first, negotiators on all three sides hoped that a second summit was a matter of time, although they hoped to reach a basic understanding on Jerusalem before committing to such a visible second attempt at a deal.

Even the outbreak of large-scale violence did not actually kill the negotiating process, at least not immediately. Despite his claim to have ripped the mask off of a deceitful Arafat, Barak had gambled his political survival on the peace process, and he was not yet ready to abandon it. In effect, he was betting that a peace deal would be his salvation. Although Clinton's advisors told him that the violence needed to

³³¹ For examples of the former, see M. A. Baum, "Going Private: Public Opinion, Presidential Rhetoric, and the Domestic Politics of Audience Costs in US Foreign Policy Crises," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 5 (2004): 603–631; Samuel Kernell, *Going Public: Mew Strategies of Presidential Leadership* (CQ Press, 2007). For examples of the latter, see J. D. Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," *American Political Science Review* (1994): 577–592; K. A. Schultz, "Looking for Audience Costs," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 1 (2001): 32–60; M. Tomz, "Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations: An Experimental Approach," *International Organization* 61, no. 04 (2007): 821–840.

³³² For instance, this was the perspective of the head of Ehud Barak's negotiating team, Gilead Sher, "Interview with the Author", June 7, 2011.

³³³ Sher, *The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Negotiations, 1999-2001*, 122–123; Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 714.

stop before final status concessions could realistically be tenable again, “ultimately he [Clinton] was prepared to defer to Barak because it was Barak’s political life that was on the line. He didn’t agree with him often” at that point.³³⁴

Thus, the United States engaged in extensive efforts to help him reach a deal despite increasing waves of Palestinian terrorism and harsh Israeli retaliation measures. U.S. diplomatic efforts at this point included crisis summits in France and Egypt that mixed final status issues with damage control, as well as the announcement of President Clinton’s parameters for peace in December.

At that point, the Israelis agreed to Clinton’s proposal, but Arafat squandered the opportunity. Under heavy pressure from the U.S. to declare whether or not he accepted the parameters as the basis for further negotiation, Arafat said both yes and no – while at the same time endorsing a list of fundamental objections that vitiated the parameters of any real content. From the American perspective, his answer was effectively a “no”. Barak still went through the effort of making one last stab at a deal in the form of negotiations in Taba that January, but he simultaneously pursued grandstanding and military measures that undermined the talks, and he claimed that his negotiators were not authorized to do anything but demonstrate Arafat’s true nature. In the end, the talks closed some gaps but achieved no formal agreements, and Barak was clobbered by Ariel Sharon during February elections.

Did the Policy Succeed?

Temporarily, yes; overall, no. For a brief period of about two months,

³³⁴ Indyk, “Interview with the Author.”

Clinton's endorsement of how Barak handling of Camp David actually did strengthen the Israeli leader, granting his government a new lease on political life. Unfortunately, however, this was done in a manner that unnecessarily put too much pressure on Arafat and made an explosion of violence in the territories more likely. This miscalculation helped bring about the end of both Barak's premiership and the broader Oslo peace process. Earlier efforts to defer to Barak's judgments on the Syrian track backfired there as well because they were done in a manner that indulged his poor tactical judgment on how to actually pursue peace.

On the Syrian track, sensitivity to Barak's immediate political needs backfired in the form of failure on two fronts: at either strengthening his own political standing or at advancing the peace process. Assad was unwilling to make a deal at Geneva, and Clinton attributes this final setback with Damascus to the way that Barak, with American backing, mishandled his genuine opportunity at Shepherdstown. Clinton notes that "we tried for two hours to get some traction on the Syrians, all to no avail. The Israeli rebuff in Shepherdstown and the leak of the working document in the Israeli press had embarrassed Assad and destroyed his fragile trust. And his health had deteriorated even more than I knew. Barak had made a respectable offer. If it had come at Shepherdstown, an agreement might have emerged. Now, Assad's first priority was his son's succession".³³⁵

In the end, these efforts to shield Barak's domestic popularity actually harmed his position more than it helped him. It exposed him to critics at home for being willing to give up most of the Golan without giving him the actual prize of a

³³⁵ Clinton, *My Life*, 903.

peace treaty with Syria. His standing in the polls plummeted, and his coalition began to fray.³³⁶ In the absence of a treaty, Barak withdrew unilaterally from Lebanon to keep his campaign promise of getting out within a year, but this fed into Hezbollah's narrative of victory through violence. It also set the stage for violence in the Palestinian territories later that year and narrowed Arafat's negotiating space at Camp David. Arafat vented both before and during the summit about the difficult position he had been put in by freezing the Palestinian track in favor of the Syrian one and then withdrawing from Lebanon without a deal.³³⁷

The American efforts after Camp David did give Barak an important boost. Even though Barak and his advisors feared their government was in for an imminent collapse,³³⁸ he actually survived a final vote of no confidence in the Knesset just before a three month parliamentary recess, giving him substantial breathing room to reach an agreement with the PA.³³⁹

Dennis Ross agrees that the president's efforts made a real difference, at least until the outbreak of the Intifada:

DW: Do you think that these efforts to shore up Barak had consequences of any sort? Or benefits?

Ross: I think it definitely helped Barak in the immediate aftermath of Camp David. Without a doubt. The problem is once the intifada began, then... we lost whatever impact we were going to have, it was trumped by that. Had it not been for the intifada, I think that what the president did would have made a huge difference....

³³⁶ William A. Jr. Orme, "Barak's Governing Coalition Faces Revolt by 2 Ministers," *New York Times*, December 16, 1999; Deborah Sontag, "Religious Faction Says It Will Quit Barak's Cabinet," *New York Times*, December 28, 1999.

³³⁷ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 626–628; Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 295–296.

³³⁸ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 692, 705, 709.

³³⁹ Mark Lavie, "Barak Survives No-confidence Vote: Peres Loses Presidential Selection," *Associated Press*, July 31, 2000. His ally, Shimon Peres, did lose a presidential ballot in the Knesset, but this should be seen as less of a mark against his peace program than the no confidence vote. The eventual victor, Moshe Katsav, was aided by a fortuitous dream by one of the Shas Party's spiritual mentors that the Sephardic Katsav was favored by the heavens.

We weren't in the first instance decisive, but I think the president's posture was definitely helpful. You know, he did a lot. He went out and I said he did an interview with Israeli TV. In the way he presented things and cast them, I think it did a lot to shore Barak up in the aftermath of Camp David...

Likud members were just in a state of despair because their attitude was 'the public's ready for it, there's nothing we can do to stop it, and it's going to happen'. This was the attitude a month after Camp David and a month before the intifada. So if there was no intifada, I think the attitudes in Israel... backed whatever Barak would have signed up to. This was Arafat's historic strategic blunder".³⁴⁰

The effort to shore up Barak was pursued at the direct expense of Chairman Arafat, a move that would prove to be not just unnecessary but also costly. As a result, Yasser Arafat both isolated and very upset, and he felt that Clinton had broken a specific promise not to blame him. The negotiators held high hopes that meetings between the leaders at the UN General Assembly that September would yield enough of an understanding to allow for a second summit. However, a flustered Arafat was in no state to hold substantive talks and blew up at Albright as well as other Americans, such as journalist Christiane Amanpour.³⁴¹ Indyk explains:

MI: Clinton reneged on that commitment because he wanted to help Barak, but, yes, in the process, Arafat felt that the United States and Israel were ganging up on him, and that became even more clear after Camp David, as I described, and this was all under Barak's urgings, and then we tried to corner him after Camp David, and he decided that the intifada was very convenient for him.

DW: When he blew up at the UN, Arafat, at UNGA, was it because of this feeling of being cornered?

MI: For Arafat? Oh yeah, absolutely. Arafat was also a performer. He would use his anger when it suited him. But he was clearly under a lot of pressure."³⁴²

By alienating Arafat at a critical turning point in the process, Clinton's actions may have contributed to Arafat's willingness to turn to violence to achieve his aims.

³⁴⁰ Dennis Ross, "Interview with the Author."

³⁴¹ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 494.

³⁴² Indyk, "Interview with the Author."

This is not to suggest that Arafat would have been ready or willing to agree to a realistic final status deal that fall, or that he should be absolved of grave moral culpability for encouraging the Second Intifada. However, the Oslo process might not have been destroyed by violence if the U.S. was not so quick to push Arafat's back against a wall. In time, both sides might have seen their interests in a reasonable partial deal on final status issues, one that postponed insoluble issues such as the Temple Mount but codified many of their common understandings on issues such as territories, borders, and perhaps even refugees in the form of a major framework agreement for peace between Israel and a provisional State of Palestine.

Retrospectively, experts have noted that even if one considers Clinton's effort to lay the blame at Arafat's feet empirically correct, "he would have been better advised, as a mediator, to reserve his judgment for a later time".³⁴³ As a result of this miscalculation, Clinton's efforts backfired in a manner that likely undermined the peace process, the very same ultimate goal he was originally seeking to advance by choosing to bolster Barak. Indeed, Aaron Miller argues the following:

"I can't help thinking our behavior in blaming the Palestinians and facilitating Barak's campaign to delegitimize Arafat as a partner was immature and counterproductive. [Barak's negotiator] Sher now admits that whether or not Arafat deserved it (and in Sher's view he did) 'the finger pointing' at the end of the summit was 'completely contrary to what was needed then'... Looking back now, the only course of action that might have preempted the violence would have been a decision by Clinton, Arafat, and Barak at the summit to develop a coordinated strategy and pursue Israeli-Palestinian negotiations for the next six months, including attending to the bubbling tensions on the ground".³⁴⁴

Consequently, at key junctures after the summit – most notably the new UN General Assembly session in September – Arafat appeared personally alienated

³⁴³ Dajani, "The 'Blaming Game' Is Wrong," 87.

³⁴⁴ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 307.

regarding the process and angry at Washington.³⁴⁵ Arafat found himself defeated in advance “everywhere he went,” even finding himself cut off from usually sympathetic such as Jacques Chirac, which Indyk thinks make Arafat “more angry and paranoid as the pressure mounted”.³⁴⁶ Further, Barak made things worse by bragging to the press on his way to the UNGA that

Further, this is the period in which Arafat’s strategic calculus was likely crystallized in the lead-up to the intifada that soon broke out. Although he probably did not precipitate the initial violence, it seems quite clear that Arafat chose to ride the tiger of public anger against Israel rather than tamping down violence lest it scuttle ongoing talks. Political analyst Yezid Sayigh agrees that:

“The eruption of the *intifada* in autumn of 2000 offered Arafat [an] opportunity. The killing of unarmed Palestinian demonstrators, including children, by Israeli fire appeared instantly both to restore his international standing, energise [sic] vociferous Arab support and reverse the political tables on Barak. Arafat’s instinctive reaction was to maintain this advance, which in a crude sense required a daily death toll”.³⁴⁷

Miller agrees that it is difficult to know for sure whether a different handling of the end of Camp David might have held off the intifada, but he insists that Arafat fed the intifada once it broke out to salvage his own standing because he was cornered.³⁴⁸

Further, the effort to isolate Arafat in the short-term had long-term consequences for the balance of power within Israeli politics. Israeli negotiator Gilead Sher reflects that “assigning the blame was correct... but not to assign the

³⁴⁵ Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams*, 270–290.

³⁴⁶ Quotes are from Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 344 and 351. For a transcript of Arafat’s difficult meeting with Chirac, see also Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams*, 281.

³⁴⁷ Yezid Sayigh, “Arafat and the Anatomy of a Revolt,” *Survival* 43, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 49.

³⁴⁸ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 308.

blame on camera without leaving any space for further negotiations, and by putting this tag of non-partner on the Palestinian side this actually had a side-effect of crushing the peace camp in Israel. This became an axiomatic outcome of the Camp David conference, which was not at all conducive to the peace process”.³⁴⁹

Thus, although the U.S. approach to bolstering Barak did yield some short-term benefits, they caused deeply negative consequences for the broader American goal of promoting the peace process. They also resulted in an immediate failure as well by undermining Barak as well. The unfolding crisis forced Barak to call early elections, and he was crushed at the polls by Ariel Sharon, losing by nearly 25%.

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

The different theories offer distinct predictions about when and how leadership selection intervention should occur on the basis of how different relevant actors in the sender state perceive national interests being at stake. For instance, the lobby-legislative approach (Theory #2) is not congruent with the fact that LSI occurred because pro-Israel lobbyists and sympathetic members of Congress generally do not tend to believe that American interests are at stake in internal Israeli political contests. National interests theory and the bureaucratic approach (theories one and three) fit with the occurrence of LSI in this case but for the wrong reasons. Rather, I believe that leadership theory (Theory #4) offers the best explanation for the causal processes that produced intervention in this case due to

³⁴⁹ Sher, “Interview with the Author”.

how leaders subjectively perceived U.S. national interests at the time.

The context in which meddling took place was remarkably top-down, and it was systematically colored by President Clinton's desire to help aid Barak's domestic situation. Indyk's stark claim that Clinton and Barak spoke so frequently they became *de facto* desk officers on the issue helps highlight their personal interest and involvement in the issue. And the context in which most of the actual measures that comprised LSI were pursued involved not the permanent bureaucracy but rather the president and his top political appointees.

The packages of U.S. handouts for Barak that were first explored on the Syrian track, then the Palestinian track, and then in the absence of a final status agreement were initiatives spearheaded by the president and Barak and then carried out by key aides such as Ross and Riedel. It was not done at the executive agency level, possibly for fear of leaks, possibly because the measures under consideration were being pursued for their political optics, not objective necessity. The weapon systems under consideration, for instance, were not being proposed because the Pentagon judged them necessary for Israeli security.

Similarly, the president's framing of the events at Camp David were not something that legislators, lobbyists, or bureaucrats could really influence. The retelling was a matter of how the top folks experienced events, and, judging by later dissents from Malley and others, even this was a subjective interpretation by the president. Anyway, the president's end-of-summit message involved re-writing a neutral statement at his direction, and he elaborated on it even further in his remarks for the question and answer session, as well as in his interview with Israeli

television the following day at Barak's request.

At the core of this element in the American meddling were Clinton's personal relationships, a factor that should not matter under national interests theory. If Clinton was not so personally caught up in Barak and frustrated with Arafat, it is likely that he would not have approved the sort of zero-sum media message after the summit that the United States decided to propagate. An objective interpretation of national interests probably would not have produced the sort of LSI attempt that the president's personal relationships and passions brought about.

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

The theories also differ with regard to LSI timing on the basis of whether or not there was an objective close contest brewing in the politics of the sender state. National interests theory expects that meddling attempts should only occur when objective circumstances abroad merit them, whereas leadership theory predicts that such attempts should be skewed by subjective readings of such foreign goings-on.

Indeed, Barak's government was a sinking ship from day one of his tenure in office, but if anything the American administration overestimated his vulnerability in a manner that both increased the frequency with which it tried to shore up his standing and made it more difficult to do so once he really needed help. At the root of these decisions was Washington's underestimation of the amount of ruin left in Barak's hold on power.

For instance, this sort of thinking facilitated the decision to support Barak's ridiculous proposal to Sharaa at Shepherdstown and then to support his middling

offer at Geneva during Assad's last days. These decisions let him pursue the Syrian track aggressively but then chicken out at the last minute, causing irreversible damage to his coalition relationships while decreasing his odds of being able to take back home a peace treaty with Syria and a package of American rewards that might actually strengthen the prime minister's standing in domestic Israeli politics. Clinton's inclination to defer to Barak's judgment and his concern for pushing Barak to hard in the short term against his perceived domestic constraints actually made his domestic straightjacket even tighter in the long run and missed one of the best chances in the history of the process to forge peace between Israel and Syria.

Similar damage was also caused by the less off-base but still erroneous belief that Barak's government could not sustain carrying out the third FRD and release of Palestinian prisoners as per Clinton's promise to Arafat as well as Israel's obligations under Sharm and Wye. Yes, Barak's coalition government was seriously fraying at this point, but what was the point of going to a final status summit if the prime minister was truly so weak that he did not have the legitimacy to make good on comparatively small, overdue obligations on the interim process? In the end, these subjective interpretations of Barak's domestic standing seriously impeded the administration's desire to bolster his standing after the summit collapsed in failure.

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

The theories also differ over the extent to which domestic actors in the sender state are included in the deliberation process for LSI. Leadership theory predicts that the president and his top advisors should exclude bureaucrats,

legislators, and lobbyists from discussions of meddling and therefore pursue their deliberations through informal decision channels. Meanwhile, theories two and three expect for these domestic structural forces to be included, informed, and influential in the course of such deliberation.

So to what extent were these other actors in the loop during this period? In reality, not much at all. Yes, the administration faced pressures from Congress on some tangentially related issues, but its efforts to shower Israel's government with bonus aid were generally looked on with favor by legislators and the pro-Israel lobby. Nor was the career bureaucracy particularly outspoken on suggested U.S. concessions to shore up Barak's government.

Congress did pressure Clinton to endorse a threat to cut off U.S. aid to the PA should it pursue another shot at unilateral declaration of independence that fall, and Hillary's senate campaign even broke with Bill to say that she endorsed the bill. But he just dodged the issue and said it would be dealt with in time. Similarly, President Clinton did discuss his frustration with Congress on the Jerusalem embassy issue, but he announced that he was reconsidering his opposition to such a move to aid Barak the day after Camp David, not in response to any impending Congressional initiatives on the topic. And when it became clear that circumstances in the region did not warrant such a new policy move, Clinton shelved the idea without fear of much pressure from Congress.

Instead, American deliberations about meddling were exceptionally informal during this period. Offline discussions between top Israelis and top Americans helped frame the possible packages of goodies for Barak's government in the wake

of talks on the different peace tracks. And Clinton's decision to pursue a propaganda offensive after the summit to make Barak look good was taken at the last minute and pursued through his revision of his public press statements as well as through a series of private communications to foreign leaders and an anonymous whisper campaign to the press.

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

Theory #2 predicts that the power of legislators and lobbyists should be preponderantly high at the end of the election cycle or during periods of divided government, since the president must face greater domestic accountability. Under these criteria, American LSI toward Israel during 2000 serves as an especially easy test for the lobby-legislative approach that it fails due to the occurrence of any LSI that year, let alone of the most consequential episodes of it in U.S.-Israel relations.

The fact that the effort was pursued via carrots no doubt made such an end run around the legislative branch easier for the president. Yes, his proposals would cost the U.S. a great deal of money as well as access to advanced weaponry and extension of new U.S. commitments. However, he expressed with confidence to his aides that he felt he could outmaneuver any possible opposition in Congress on these issues, and the fact that these measures were carrots probably helped.

Clinton did feel loyalty to his party, his intended successor, and his wife running for senate. Indeed, he chose the date for Camp David in large part to avoid stealing any of Gore's spotlight during the Democratic Convention at the end of that summer. However, what interested Clinton even more than these issues was his

legacy, and the Mideast peace process had become his core legacy project by the end of his presidency. Thus, the end of his term mattered, but less so because it increased the leverage of Congress and the pro-Israel lobby over his decisions than because it forced him to step up efforts on the process to beat the ticking clock.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

Theory #3 anticipates that often meddling should be driven by working level officials in executive agencies. Leadership theory, on the other hand, expects that such intervention should be the province of higher-level officials, primarily the president; at the very least it expects that freelancing in the executive agencies should be relatively uncommon and subject first to lax oversight from above.

In this case, the president was actively involved in overseeing this issue, and no freelancing took place. When there were messages being given to the press on background or to foreign leaders, the messages were given in accordance to the president's command that Barak should come out as the hero of Camp David. These messages amplified the president's theme; they were not communicated in contravention to his authority. Therefore, theory #4 provides a better explanation of this data than does the bureaucratic politics approach.

6. Consistency of Message:

President Clinton remained consistent in his framing of Camp David and in what he argued should be the legacy of that summit for U.S.-Israel relations, to Barak's benefit. One thing that undermined this message somewhat, however, was

the end of Clinton's term and the Supreme Court's declaration that George W. Bush was the victor in that November's presidential election. As will be explored in the following chapter, Bush had criticized Clinton for getting too involved in Israeli politics and the peace process, and he also had close relations with Barak's opponent, Ariel Sharon. Arafat also may have rejected the Clinton Parameters – which were probably Barak's last, best hope to stay in office – based on the misguided belief that Bush would be firmer towards Israel in the manner that his father had been over settlements and loan guarantees. To the extent that these issues mattered at all, they were most germane to the expectations of Theory #4, which holds that the individuals who hold the highest offices in the land matter for the occurrence and efficacy of LSI. Then again, perhaps the suitability of messaging mattered much more – had Clinton been able to remain in office another few months, it is difficult to envision it making the difference in Barak's election effort.

7. Suitability of Message:

One of the main reasons the president's message to the Israeli public failed to ultimately rescue Barak was that it was skewed in a direction that did not suit Barak's eventual needs. Although the narrative of Barak as hero in the face of a stubborn Arafat did help in the immediate term, it was compounded in a problematic manner by the outbreak of violence between Israelis and Palestinians.

If Barak really believed in his corollary claim that Arafat's comportment at Camp David proved that he was not a partner, he should have formed a national unity government and cut off all peace talks – if not immediately, then at least at the

outbreak of violence. However, Barak's desire to have it both ways made him extremely vulnerable to criticisms from the Israeli right that he was not tough enough on the Palestinians. By continuing to green-light actions that treated Arafat as a partner from Camp David all the way through Taba, including crisis management meetings and ongoing talks between negotiators on final status issues, Barak's own message made him look more like a *frier*, or "sucker", than a bold, heroic leader. Although this element of the Israeli message was not as central to the American messaging at the time, at the very least it was facilitated by the American message claiming that Arafat was an obstacle at Camp David.

Not only was this message not suitable to ultimately helping Barak, it was contradictory to U.S. national interests. It was neither a product of pressure from lobbyists and legislators, nor the result of some organizational process or bureaucratic self-interest from below. Rather, it was a message that was selected by President Clinton at the encouragement of Barak in an attempt to shore up the Israeli prime minister on the basis of the president's subjective emotions and beliefs, perhaps with input from top political appointees but not from any further below on the bureaucratic totem pole. In short, messaging biases in this case provide better support for leadership theory than any of its structural competitors.

Conclusion

With the end of Bill Clinton's second term as president, a great deal changed for LSI. Clinton cared deeply about achieving a final Mideast settlement and had been prepared to exert personal effort and political capital until his final moments

in office to achieve one. And, as Indyk suggests, Clinton was a “political junkie” when it came to Israeli politics.³⁵⁰ No longer would the person in the Oval Office watch Israeli politics as a matter of intense, personal interest.

Furthermore, the violence on the ground that emerged during his last year in office skewed the political playing field against moderates in both Palestinian and Israeli politics for some time to come. His personal efforts to isolate Yasser Arafat as a means of both exerting pressure on the chairman and of helping Ehud Barak backfired, feeding into a right-wing mantra that Israel need not make sacrifices for peace because it has no partner. In his fury of the moment, Clinton may have unintentionally aided this dynamic by “ranting” to his successor and his principals during the transition – including on Inauguration Day – that Arafat was singlehandedly responsible for ruining the peace process.³⁵¹

³⁵⁰ Indyk, “Interview with the Author.”

³⁵¹ Quote is from Powell in Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 321. See also Janine Zacharia, “Clinton Blamed Arafat for Failure – Cheney,” *Jerusalem Post*, January 16, 2004; Dick Cheney, “Remarks by the Vice President to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council Followed by Brief Question and Answer Session (Beverly Hills, California)” (White House website archives, January 14, 2004).

Chapter VII.
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The George W. Bush Years
(2001-2009)

George W. Bush spoke out against Clinton's heavy involvement in Israeli policy, and he pledged on the campaign trail that "America will not interfere in Israeli elections when I'm president".¹ However, he did not keep this promise: during his two terms as president, the United States engaged leadership selection intervention (LSI) toward Israel multiple times, including during two Israeli election campaigns. Still, Bush's natural inclination was to disengage from the peace process, except at moments of great crisis or obvious opportunity, a tendency that affected the timing, direction, and efficacy with which his government pursued LSI.

In 2002 and 2003, President Bush took a number of measures that helped Sharon win reelection, partly in appreciation for Israel keeping a low profile in the lead-up to the Second Iraq War. Because of the low priority that Bush attributed to the peace process at this time, he was willing to back an incumbent right-wing Israeli leader, who had not yet given proof of his claimed desires to advance the two-state solution, over a Labor candidate with much clearer credentials in that regard. Further, Bush's beliefs about the peace process decreased the perceived cost of using methods to strengthen Sharon that involved giving Israel a free pass settlement expansion and the Road Map. This decreased the broader efficacy of

¹ Terry M. Neal, "Bush Alleges U.S. Wasn't Neutral on Israeli Vote," *Washington Post*, May 23, 2000.

American LSI by diminishing the likelihood that its efforts would yield a net benefit for U.S. interests and the peace process.

In 2004 and 2005, Bush stepped up his efforts to support Sharon in light of the prime minister's plan for unilateral Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip and a few isolated settlements in the northern West Bank. Most notably, the President Bush drafted a public letter to Sharon that was consciously designed to strengthen his hand within Israeli politics and within the Likud Party by granting Israel concessions on final status issues such as refugees, borders, and settlements. There were definite down-sides to such measures, given that they upset U.S. allies and ultimately failed to keep disengagement from undermining Mahmoud Abbas. On the other hand, there was now a stronger case to be made that American LSI might now be aiding a two-state solution, provided one believes that disengagement was a step in this direction, since LSI helped enable Sharon's withdrawal from Gaza.

During this same time period, the United States government also engaged in a drawn-out battle to get certain Israeli officials fired for their allegedly lying about sensitive arms sales to China. Because of the president's disengaged style of management, this instance of low-level LSI took place as a result of bureaucratic freelancing, something that did not happen under Bush's predecessor.

Finally, after Sharon's death President Bush struggled to form the same sort of relationship with Ehud Olmert as he had had with Ariel Sharon. Whereas he helped Sharon win reelection in 2003 and strongly backed Sharon in the lead-up to disengagement from Gaza, Bush could not evince similar enthusiasm for Olmert's proposal for a second round of Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank, and Olmert

felt as though he came away from Washington empty handed.

Belatedly, in 2007 and 2008 Bush warmed up to the idea of bolstering Olmert once it became clear that the parties were prepared to reengage on final status issues. He praised Olmert's leadership at Annapolis and visited Israel twice thereafter with an eye toward helping boost the Israeli premier, but his detached approach to managing the issue eventually caused the effort to fray and to fail, among other reasons because the negotiations could have benefitted from American bridging proposals. Rice sought to help Tzipi Livni win the Israeli elections in early 2009, but at that point the American effort was too little, too late.

Throughout Bush's presidency, Rice was the president's key advisor on the Israel file, especially when it came to matters of leadership selection intervention. Because the president could not buy into Secretary of State Colin Powell's approach, which called for greater U.S. engagement with the Palestinian Authority even while Yasser Arafat remained in power, Condoleezza Rice was increasingly authorized to act on the issue – such that her biographer Glenn Kessler claims that she was secretly given the administration's Israel file as far back as 2002.²

Along with the president, no individual shaped American LSI toward Israel from 2001 to 2009 more than Rice. She argued for U.S. backing of Sharon in advance of the 2003 Israeli elections, and she negotiated Bush's letter on final status issues used to bolster Sharon during disengagement. She pushed for the Annapolis process that helped build Olmert up, and her rapport with Livni led to a last-minute effort to affect the 2009 elections on the last day of Rice's term as secretary of state.

² Glenn Kessler, *The Confidante: Condoleezza Rice and the Creation of the Bush Legacy* (Macmillan, 2007), 124.

No doubt, George Bush came to office having been dealt an inordinately bad hand on Arab-Israeli issues. However, his instincts to disengage from the issue detracted from his effectiveness in the region, both with regard to leadership selection intervention and broader peace process issues.³ This tendency indelibly marked his approach to leadership selection intervention in Israeli politics.

George W. Bush, Case #1:

Sharon: A soulmate in the war on terror, 2001-2005⁴

Although it remains in dispute whether Sharon's legacy advanced or hindered the prospects for a two-state solution, he undoubtedly underwent a transformation in his attitude towards cooperation with Washington. In the 1980s he made a name for himself as an anti-American provocateur within Israel's right-wing camp, making him a repeated target for negative instances of LSI.

The prime minister's instincts sometimes returned to the provocative, especially towards the Palestinians – especially with his infamous September 28, 2000 visit to the Temple Mount – but he came to approach cooperation with Washington as a prerequisite for successful governance. Perhaps having learned from the downfall of Likud prime ministers Shamir and Netanyahu before him, he now gave serious attention to cultivating relations with the American president and

³ For the latter argument, see Aaron David Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace* (Bantam Books, 2008), chap. 9; Dennis Ross, *Statecraft: And How to Restore America's Standing in the World* (Macmillan, 2008), chap. 12; Dennis Ross and David Makovsky, *Myths, Illusions, and Peace* (Penguin Group, 2009), chap. 4; Daniel C. Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle: America's Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace in the Post-Cold War Era [FORTHCOMING]* (US Institute of Peace & Cornell University Presses, 2012), chap. 4 & 5.

⁴ The phrase "soulmate in the war on terror" is from Kessler, *The Confidante*, 123.

minimizing conflict in bilateral relations. Of course, he remained a hardliner on security issues and governed for most of his premiership at the head of the Likud, but within these constraints his strategy toward the U.S. focused on conciliation.⁵

Thus, although he had been treated as *persona non grata* under President Bush's father, now Sharon was well-positioned for a strong personal relationship with the American president. The younger Bush had met Sharon on a memorable first visit to Israel in 1998. Serving as foreign minister at the time, Sharon took the governor from Texas on a helicopter tour that left a strong impression of Israel's strategic vulnerability and Sharon's status as a war hero from a savage frontier.⁶

The Al Qaeda attacks on 9/11 only heightened Bush's sense of commitment to Sharon, leading him to view the prime minister, in the words of *Washington Post* reporter Glenn Kessler, as a "soulmate in the war on terror".⁷ From Colin Powell's vantage point, the attacks seemed to heighten Bush's instinct of "Sharon good, Arafat bad".⁸ Bush felt an affinity bold leaders who did not shy away from unilateralism, and his low estimation of the peace process helped pave the way for a close relationship between the two leaders, even as Sharon used the IDF to try and crush the second Palestinian intifada.

⁵ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 322; Nahum Barnea and Ariel Kastner, *Backchannel: Bush, Sharon and the Uses of Unilateralism*, Saban Center for Middle East Policy Monograph #2 (Brookings Institution, 2006), 11–12; Aluf Benn, "Sharon Tiptoes Gingerly with Washington," *Ha'aretz*, January 5, 2003.

⁶ George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (Random House, 2010), 399–400; Bruce O. Riedel, "Interview with the Author", April 9, 2011; Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (Random House, 2011), 51; Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 323.

⁷ Kessler, *The Confidante*, 123.

⁸ Quote from Powell is cited in Karen DeYoung, *Soldier: The Life of Colin Powell* (Random House, 2007), 356.

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

Yes, in three different regards. During the Israeli election campaign in late 2002 and early 2003, the Bush administration took steps to strengthen relations between Israel and the United States in ways that were intended to ease Sharon's battle for reelection. In 2004 and 2005, the U.S. then made gestures designed to strengthen Sharon's hand internally as he sought to promote a plan for unilateral disengagement from Gaza. And, finally, during this same time period the U.S. government also undertook a lower-level effort to squeeze out a handful of senior officials from Israel's Ministry of Defense.

Thus, during the Bush-Sharon years, America pursued three attempts at LSI: (1) positive, authoritative intervention to bolster Sharon, which should be coded as "grand" in the sense that it aimed to affect the content of the Israeli government through an election, not just the internal strength among its members; (2) positive, authoritative intervention again on behalf of Sharon, coded as "petit" in the sense that it aimed to affect the internal balance of power within a fixed coalition; and (3) negative, non-authoritative intervention against certain Israeli officials in the defense sector, pursued in a context of detached oversight by the president.⁹ The

⁹ The distinction between "grand" and "petit" intervention laid out in my theory chapter and applied here gets somewhat fuzzy for two reasons. First, the flex-term nature of the Israeli election system blurs the distinction between times when an LSI attempt aims to change the content of a governing coalition versus times when it aims merely to affect the internal balance of power. Indeed, it is a matter of semantics, but one could argue that, had the U.S. *not* pursued LSI in 2004 and 2005 to help Sharon carry out disengagement, (and had Sharon decided to still disengage) the shape of the coalition probably would have changed. Second, the terminology of "grand" and "petit" should only be taken to refer to the scope of the sender state's intentions for meddling, not the means by which it chooses to do so. One could reasonably argue that the concessions that Bush granted Israel as part of LSI were actually greater in 2004 and 2005,

following sub-sections will be organized to address these three cases in order. I also briefly explore efforts by other countries to affect Israeli politics during this period, including apparent attempts by Egypt, the European Union, and Britain in particular.

<Sub-Case 1: Sharon Faces Reelection>

Condoleezza Rice writes in her memoirs it was clear from the start that Ariel Sharon “came to power to defeat the Palestinians resistance, not to negotiate”.¹⁰ Further, Sharon feared being sold out by a United States so eager for Arab allies that it would pressure Israel to accept an agreement with the PA in spite of the ongoing violence. Indeed, his concern was so great that a month after 9/11 he publicly warned Bush not to repeat Munich 1938 by abandoning Israel like Britain and France abandoned Czechoslovakia.¹¹ Although the seeds of a possible confrontation between the U.S. and Israel were certainly present, cooperation ultimately won out. Sharon’s eagerness to build a working relationship with Washington dovetailed well with the fact that the administration’s goal – except perhaps excluding Powell – was to “calm the region,” not to restart negotiations.¹²

President Bush’s outreach to Sharon began in earnest in April of 2002, less than a month after the IDF launched Operation Defensive Shield, reoccupying most of the West bank in response to a major suicide bombing that struck a Passover celebration at the Netanya Park Hotel. In response to a question from a reporter,

the years in which the scope of American intervention should be coded as “petit”. However, given the complexity of the conceptual matter at hand, the present terminology still seems the best possible solution for the time being.

¹⁰ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 53.

¹¹ The incident produced enormous pressure from American officials until Sharon issued a public apology. The American ambassador to Washington, Daniel Kurtzer, even urged Israeli Labor Party leaders Shimon Peres and Benyamin Ben-Eliezer to attack Sharon for his statements until an apology was issued – a possible act of LSI freelancing. Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 20.

¹² Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 54.

Bush said “I do believe Ariel Sharon is a man of peace,” language that shocked even Rice and Powell.¹³ And although he occasionally urged Sharon in private to live up to the title, Kessler notes that Bush “never publicly backed off that statement”.¹⁴

For a second time later that year, Sharon responded to a terror attack by besieging Arafat’s Ramallah compound, the *Muqataa*. However, when it became clear that the siege was causing diplomatic difficulties for Washington as it assembled a coalition for war with Iraq, Sharon chose to back down – purportedly as a favor to Bush.¹⁵ Rice met with Sharon’s chief of staff and informal envoy to the American administration, Dov “Dubi” Weissglas, and explained her concerns: “we are in the middle of building support for a very tough operation in Iraq. It is extremely important for there to be a coalition... President Bush is the best thing to ever have happened to you – he looks at Sharon as a partner. You don’t do this to a partner”. Weissglass went down the street to phone Sharon from a Cosi sandwich shop, and returned to Rice explaining that “I know the man. He will never hurt a partner”.¹⁶ The siege ended the next day.

When Sharon visited the White House the following month, Iraq figured prominently on the agenda. According to *Washington Post* editorial writer Jackson Diehl, the prime minister gave assurances he would be flexible on Iraq, and he received Bush’s gratitude:

¹³ Ibid., 140; Peter Slevin and Mike Allen, “Bush: Sharon a ‘Man of Peace’,” *Washington Post*, April 19, 2002; Ron Fournier, “Bush Stumbles with Mideast Rhetoric,” *Associated Press*, April 19, 2002.

¹⁴ Kessler, *The Confidante*, 262 n. 4.

¹⁵ For indications of the administration’s concern over Iraq coalition-building as a consideration for U.S. Israel policy at this point in time, see, *inter alia*, DeYoung, *Soldier*, 387; Aluf Benn, “Sharon Asked U.S. for a ‘Diplomatic Recess’ Until After Primaries in Likud,” *Ha’aretz*, November 12, 2002.

¹⁶ Quotes are from Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 40–41. For a mostly-similar set of quotes on the incident – which also cite the Iraq coalition concern and the personal Bush-Sharon angle – see Kessler, *The Confidante*, 125.

“Bush asked Sharon to avoid disturbing an American campaign against Iraq, either by staging sensational operations such as the recent siege of Yasser Arafat, or by jumping into the war itself. Sharon promised to cooperate... the old general emerged beaming... in effect, Sharon and Bush had worked out their own road map, one that supplanted the paper distributed by the United States to the European Union, Russia and United Nations [where] Sharon has basically ignored that initiative”.¹⁷

Sharon’s national unity government with Labor soon collapsed on October 30th when the left-wing party’s leader, Benyamin “Fuad” Ben-Eliezer, refused to support the government’s budget over the major financial subsidies it gave to settlements. Elections were set for January 28th, 2003, and Sharon called in his political capital with Bush by explicitly sending envoys to ask that the Road Map’s release be delayed until after it was more politically convenient for Sharon.

First, he sent Weissglas to Washington with a request that the Road Map’s release be postponed until after the Likud’s primaries on November 28th, along with administration calls for Israel to transfer tax revenues to the Palestinian Authority that it had withheld since the early days of the intifada.¹⁸ Then, he sent a message through Danny Ayalon, the Israeli ambassador in Washington, asking for the administration to delay release of the Road Map even further until the Israeli election itself had taken place.¹⁹ Marwan Muasher, who was Jordanian foreign minister at the time, confirms that the Israelis had asked Washington to postpone the Road Map’s release until after the Israeli elections scheduled for January.²⁰

The American response was favorable. The senior NSC staffer for Mideast affairs, Flynt Leverett, objected to the proposal, but Rice, the vice president, and

¹⁷ Jackson Diehl, “Editorial: Back Door to Bush,” *Washington Post*, November 4, 2002.

¹⁸ Benn, “Sharon Asked U.S. for a ‘Diplomatic Recess’ Until After Primaries in Likud.”

¹⁹ Ahron Bregman, *Elusive Peace: How the Holy Land Defeated America* (Penguin, 2005), 243.

²⁰ Marwan Muasher, *The Arab Center: The Promise of Moderation* (Yale University Press, 2008), 170.

president disagreed with him:

“Condoleezza Rice and Vice President Dick Cheney bought the Israeli’s logic. Rice said to Leverett, chief drafter of the roadmap, ‘We can’t go through with it,’ insisting that releasing the plan would amount to US intervention in Israeli politics. Leverett argued back ‘if we pull the roadmap simply because Ariel Sharon has called for an early election, and we don’t want to make life politically difficult for him, then we *are* intervening in Israeli politics. We’re just intervening in a different direction.’ But the president was persuaded, and the roadmap was put on hold.”²¹

Powell’s biographer, Karen DeYoung, explains that in subsequent diplomatic with Europe, “Bush refused to sign off on its [the Road Map’s] release, arguing that no new demands should be made of Prime Minister Sharon until after the Israeli elections scheduled for late January. Powell, who had assured the other Quartet members, the Palestinians and Arab allies that publication of the document was imminent, was left to explain the delay”.²² On December 18th, just days before a Quartet meeting where the Road Map was previously intended to be unveiled, Colin Powell told the press that “we think it would be wiser in this instance for us to continue work on the road map and wait until after the Israeli election is over”.²³

Meanwhile, Sharon continued to tamp down on possible points of friction with the administration (although continuing to promote settlement expansion). These measures included minimizing daylight between Israeli and American positions in public statements, agreeing after the Likud primary to transfer tax revenues to the PA, putting a halt to Israeli officials muttering to the press about retaliating in the event of an Iraqi missile strike during the war, and delaying

²¹ Quote is drawn from Bregman, retelling events on the basis of his interview with Leverett: Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 243.

²² DeYoung, *Soldier*, 425.

²³ “U.S. Puts the Brakes on the Road Map,” *Middle East Economic Digest*, December 20, 2002.

authoritative criticisms of the Road Map until after the election.²⁴

Sharon sent Weissglas to Washington yet again in January, with a request for American loan guarantees to help Israel weather an economic slump caused by the intifada. In advance of Weissglas's visit, Sharon's team made it clear to the press that their objective for the visit would be a positive statement from the administration indicating it would look favorably on loan guarantees and would not demand a settlement freeze as a prerequisite. *Ha'aretz* reporter Aluf Benn mused that "the results of the delegations talks about U.S. assistance this week in Washington will clarify whether the Bush administration remains behind Sharon and is ready to issue a statement to help him in the elections".²⁵

In stark contrast with his father, who had firmly refused to grant Israel loan guarantees until it committed in advance to a broad settlement freeze, George W. Bush used seems to have used loan guarantees as a means of bolstering, rather than undermining, a Likud prime minister. In a statement that was read by the Israeli press as a nod of support for Sharon that "could not have come at a better time for the Likud," Bush's NSC spokesperson, Sean McCormack, issued a statement after the Weissglas visit indicating support for the Israeli request for \$8 billion in loan guarantees in \$4 billion in supplementary aid.²⁶

Even after the elections had taken place and Arafat had agreed to appoint an empowered PA prime minister (which had become another condition for release of

²⁴ Benn, "Sharon Tiptoes Gingerly with Washington."

²⁵ Benn also reported that "officials in Sharon's office expect the Bush administration to issue a positive statement tomorrow after the talks with the Weisglass delegation tomorrow [sic]. Such a declaration, officials in Jerusalem hope, will feature vows that U.S. security aid and loan guarantees are on the way to Israel": see *Ibid*.

²⁶ Nathan Guttman, "A Warm Relationship: Bush Has Received Sharon in the White House Seven Times. Clearly, the President Favors the Prime Minister," *Ha'aretz*, January 27, 2003.

the Road Map), Bush “still held the road map back, apparently to give Sharon time to form a new coalition government,” at least according to historian Ahron Bregman.²⁷ Although some of these actions viewed in isolation might have seemed innocent enough, the broader picture was that the Bush administration was “made every effort not to create the impression that there might be a problem of any kind in Jerusalem-Washington relations” and even “that the U.S. will step forward to save Israel’s economy”.²⁸ Sharon had survived two years of war against the Palestinians “without a single significant crisis with the Americans, without a single dollar of American aid being placed in danger”.²⁹ Instead, he emerged with the clear backing of Washington.

<Sub-Case 2: Sharon Considers Disengagement>

On April 14th, 2004, President Bush made a major gesture of support for Sharon, releasing a letter that seemed to grant Israel unprecedented concessions on final status issues. Bush released the letter by reading it aloud at their joint press conference pictured above, and he also announced that “I’ve been proud to call the Prime Minister my friend... I commend Prime Minister Sharon for his bold and courageous decision to withdraw from Gaza and parts of the West Bank. I call on the Palestinians and their Arab neighbors to match that boldness and courage”.³⁰

On refugees, the letter stated that “a solution to the Palestinian refugee issue

²⁷ Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 248.

²⁸ Guttman, “A Warm Relationship”; “White House Announces Talks with Israel on Request for Special Aid,” *Associated Press*, January 23, 2003; Yoni Ben-Menahem, “Israel ‘Very Encouraged’ by US Announcement on Aid,” *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Translated from January 25th edition of Voice of Israel Radio, January 23, 2003).

²⁹ Guttman, “A Warm Relationship.”

³⁰ George W. Bush, “President Bush Commends Israeli Prime Minister Sharon’s Plan: Remarks by the President and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in Press Availability” (White House website archives, April 14, 2004), <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2004/04/20040414-4.html>.

as part of any final status agreement will need to be found through the establishment of a Palestinian state, and the settling of Palestinian refugees there, rather than in Israel". On borders and settlements, the letter pronounced that "in light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949".³¹

According to the U.S. ambassador to Israel at the time, Daniel Kurtzer, the letter was solicited by Sharon himself as a means to strengthen his hand within the Israeli cabinet on disengagement.³² Kessler notes that "Sharon also drove a hard bargain. Weissglas told Rice that the plan would be difficult to sell to the Israeli public because... the government could not point to any concessions from the Palestinians. Israel needed something from the United States. 'In the absence of the Palestinians, it is you guys,' he told Rice".³³

According to Rice, "to make this advance toward peace, Dubi said, Sharon needed to assure the public that a few of the most established settlements in the West Bank would remain intact in any future peace agreement... to signal that those big population blocks... would be included in Israel".³⁴

Nor were these concessions trivial, although the administration could claim that any commitment was subject to a mutually agreed-upon solution between the parties. The IDF's own international law expert could not believe his eyes when he

³¹ George W. Bush, "Letter from President Bush to Prime Minister Sharon" (White House website archives, April 14, 2004), <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2004/04/20040414-3.html>.

³² Former US Ambassador to Israel Daniel C. Kurtzer, "Interview with the Author", June 2011.

³³ Kessler, *The Confidante*, 127.

³⁴ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 280–281.

read the draft letter, convinced the Bush would never agree to such changes in longstanding American public positions.³⁵

Although such efforts at “petit” LSI tend to be tied in with helping encourage a particular policy initiative in the target state – in this case, disengagement – by definition they also involve a conscious effort to influence the internal balance of power within that country’s sitting government, partly as a means toward that policy end. In this instance, the intent to meddle in Israeli domestic politics was part of the Sharon team’s thinking, and it was also clear on the American side.

For instance, Kastner and Barnea report that “some in the White House... argued that Sharon would require strong U.S. political backing to overcome the inevitable domestic opposition to Gaza Disengagement,” and such voices ultimately prevailed.³⁶ Further, the Americans made clear that the extent of disengagement would condition the level of domestic backing that Bush would extend to Sharon, with Hadley telling his Israeli interlocutors that “we will return boldness for boldness”.³⁷ Still, tough Israeli bargaining was important for eliciting the American concessions; Sharon even delayed his flight to Washington until the wording of the letter was finalized in a draft considered suitable to his political needs at home.³⁸

It took until August of 2005 for the government of Israel to actually implement its plan for unilateral disengagement, and in that time the U.S. administration’s concern for Sharon’s domestic standing continued to influence its foreign policy behavior. The authors of an upcoming study on the Bush

³⁵ Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 42–43.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 40–41.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 42–43.

administration's diplomacy on the peace process conclude that "as domestic opposition in Israel grew, the Bush administration became more and more preoccupied with Sharon's political problems and what could be done to strengthen his hand. The 'illegal outposts' which Israel had previously committed to remove, but did not, virtually disappeared from the agenda... once the administration became obsessed with bolstering Sharon's political fortunes" and that this preoccupation emerged mainly from the priorities and concepts of the administration's top principals.³⁹

This concern also contributed to the administration's lackluster efforts to persuade Ariel Sharon to discuss disengagement with the new Palestinian president, Abu Mazen. Kessler explains that Rice did not put much effort into encouraging Israel to negotiate or coordinate its actions with the Palestinians in part because she "wanted to protect Sharon. She felt the venerable Israeli prime minister was taking a tremendous gamble, potentially breaking up the Likud... this left the Palestinians with the sort end of the stick".⁴⁰ Miller quotes a U.S. official intimately involved in these efforts as saying that he or she "doubts that the president would have pressured Sharon at a time when he was undertaking such a bold and costly course at home".⁴¹

Meanwhile, the administration continued its efforts to build Sharon up with a steady flow of positive public statements. In April of 2005, President Bush

³⁹ Besides, the thinking went that removing settlements was a more valuable deliverable and that therefore it did not make sense to simultaneously pressure the Israeli government to do both during a period in which it was facing a considerable internal crisis. The quote above is from Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 329.

⁴⁰ Kessler, *The Confidante*, 127–128.

⁴¹ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 355.

welcomed Sharon to his family ranch in Crawford, Texas, and declared that “Prime Minister Sharon is showing strong visionary leadership by taking difficult steps to improve the lives of people across the Middle East -- and I want to thank you for your leadership. I strongly support his courageous initiative to disengage from Gaza and part of the West Bank”.⁴²

When Israel was actually carrying out the disengagement effort in August of that year, Rice called the event “really quite a dramatic moment in the history of the Middle East” and praised the prime minister for showing himself to be “enormously courageous”.⁴³ At the same time, White House Press Secretary Dana Perino told the media that “the President continues to support Prime Minister Sharon and what he has called a very bold initiative; it’s very courageous... we agree that the disengagement will only make Israel stronger. We agree with Prime Minister Sharon on that. And the President has also said that this will bring our two countries together”.⁴⁴ In short, the Bush administration set out to strengthen Sharon’s domestic standing when he proposed disengagement as well as when he finally set out to implement it.

<Sub-Case 3: The Yaron Affair>

In 2004 and 2005, the United States government also worked at a lower level to “interven[e] directly and bluntly in Israeli domestic policy” in hopes of getting certain Israeli officials removed from office.⁴⁵ Allegedly, Israeli officials at the

⁴² George W. Bush, “Remarks with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (at Prairie Chapel Ranch, Crawford, Texas)” (State Department website archives, April 11, 2005), <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rm/44499.htm>.

⁴³ Joel Brinkley and Steven R. Weisman, “Rice Urges Israel and Palestinians to Sustain Momentum,” *New York Times*, August 18, 2005.

⁴⁴ Dana Perino, “Press Gaggle with Dana Perino - White House Daily Press Briefing” (White House Press Releases and Documents, Office of the Press Secretary, August 18, 2005).

⁴⁵ Yossi Melman, “Defense Ministry Continues to Ban Security Exports to China,” *Ha'aretz*, August 21, 2008.

Ministry of Defense had carried out an arms deal with China (and then deceived the Pentagon it) that involved transferring advanced technology that would significantly boost Chinese anti-radar capabilities against the U.S. in the event of a war over Taiwan. The PRC had purchased approximately 100 Harpy unmanned aerial vehicles from Israel in 1999, and in late 2004 the Pentagon concluded that Israel was giving those drones' a major technological upgrade rather than just repairing them in Israel as the MoD had claimed.⁴⁶

In response, the Americans demanded the resignation of the ministry's top civilian employee, Director General Amos Yaron, as well as three of his aides who were involved in hammering out the new Harpy deal with China in 2003.⁴⁷ In order to keep the conflict contained and perhaps to limit backlash, U.S. officials publicly denied that this was their aim, enabling the Israelis to claim that no such demand was being made. However, repeated media stories on the issue quoting anonymous sources kept the conflict festering.⁴⁸

As the dispute lingered on, Washington also issued a number of threats and even imposed targeted sanctions. In addition to shunning Yaron for the remainder of the dispute, the Pentagon insisted that the Harpy drones should not be returned to China in their current state.⁴⁹ The U.S. government suspended Israeli participation in certain military co-development projects, most notably, the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft, and froze the delivery of certain equipment to the IDF,

⁴⁶ Ze'ev Schiff, "The Americans Are Going Too Far," *Ha'aretz*, November 3, 2005.

⁴⁷ Yitzhak Benhorin, "Crisis with U.S. over Arms Sales," *Yediot Ahronot (online)*, June 12, 2005. Somewhat confusingly, Director General Yaron also holds the rank of retired Major General in the IDF, making him a director general major general.

⁴⁸ "Israeli Envoy Predicts Swift Resolution of Arms Deal Row with U.S.," *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Translated from December 16th edition of Voice of Israel radio, December 16, 2004).

⁴⁹ Ze'ev Schiff, "Don't Return Drones to China, U.S. Tells Israel," *Ha'aretz*, December 22, 2004.

including night vision goggles.⁵⁰ Perhaps more notably, it quietly suspended the joint strategic dialogue that had been an institutionalized component of the bilateral relationship since the Reagan administration, according to the logic that Amos Yaron co-chaired these talks.⁵¹

In short, Washington pursued a policy of aiming to influence Israeli leadership selection in a normally domestic matter – albeit at a technocratic and somewhat non-political working level. As will be discussed below, this attempt at meddling came from a similar level in the American bureaucracy and was more a bottom-up initiative than a top-down one. It depended upon official approval or at least forbearance from Bush administration principals, but it is a much more pronounced instance of bureaucratic freelancing than was ever witnessed under, say, President Clinton, who had a much more active approach to oversight and management on peace process issues than Bush ever did.

<Sub-Case 4: Non-U.S. Attempts>

The United States was not the only government prepared to meddle in Israeli politics during this period. Indeed, Egypt, Britain, and the EU all tried their hand at influencing Israeli politics under Sharon. However, as might be expected, they took sought a different intermediate objective than the Bush administration did, seeking to undermine Sharon rather than empower him at the expense of the left.

Israeli political scientists Jonathan Rynhold and Gerald Steinberg claim that

⁵⁰ Conal Urquhart, “U.S. Acts over Israeli Arms Sales to China,” *The Guardian (UK)*, June 12, 2005; Aluf Benn, “U.S. Keeping Israel Out of Prestigious Fighter Plane Program,” *Ha’aretz*, October 12, 2005.

⁵¹ Benn, “U.S. Keeping Israel Out of Prestigious Fighter Plane Program”; Carol Migdalovitz, “CRS Report for Congress - Israel: Background and Relations with the United States” (Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, Report RL33476, June 6, 2008), 30, 32. Confusingly, Migdalovitz agrees that these dialogues were suspended over the Harpy deal but dates the suspension as taking place in 2003, but Urquhart and Benn date the start of U.S. sanctions to late 2004 and early 2005, which makes more sense.

Bush's partisan intervention on behalf of Sharon "was in stark contrast to the behavior of the other major powers involved in the peace process," who preferred to see Mitzna win in 2003.⁵² Jackson Diehl at the *Washington Post* also argued that Europe and the Arab states tried, unsuccessfully, to give Labor a boost.⁵³

Rynhold and Steinberg imply that the European Union and other Quartet members were especially upset about the American decision to delay releasing the Road Map because they hoped to use the event to influence the election. Indeed, Per Stig Moeller, the Foreign Minister of Denmark (which held the rotating presidency of the EU at the time), expressed his frustration over the American decision, noting his preference that the Road Map be released in time to shift the Israeli vote, no doubt in favor of the left: "it is very important, in the EU's opinion, that the voters of Israel know what the world thinks about the situation... being an enlightened voter means that you have the information on which to build your vote".⁵⁴

Rynhold and Steinberg claim that "the Egyptian government tried lamely and failed miserably to assist the Israeli left in the elections".⁵⁵ Most notably, they invited leading members of two leftwing Israeli opposition parties, Labor and Meretz, to Cairo for high-profile consultations but not MKs from the Likud.⁵⁶ The Egyptians did receive Sharon's national security advisor a few days later, but oddly enough even this visit was discussed in the press as an effort to help Labor by

⁵² Jonathan Rynhold and Gerald Steinberg, "The Peace Process and the Israeli Elections," *Israel Affairs* 10, no. 4 (Summer 2004): 181–204.

⁵³ Jackson Diehl, "Editorial: Axis of Inaction," *Washington Post*, January 27, 2003.

⁵⁴ "U.S. Puts the Brakes on the Road Map."

⁵⁵ Rynhold and Steinberg, "The Peace Process and the Israeli Elections," 193.

⁵⁶ The MKs received in Cairo were Yossi Sarid, Yossi Beilin, and Ephraim Sneh. The visits are noted in: "Two Israeli Politicians in Egypt for Rare Talks," *Reuters News*, January 5, 2003; "Sharon Adviser in Egypt for Talks on Peace Efforts," *Reuters News*, January 8, 2003.

demonstrating that Israel's neighbors were willing to be responsible stakeholders in helping to clamp down on terrorist violence; anyway, the Egyptians did not shy away from criticizing Sharon's policies in their discussions about the Halevy meeting.⁵⁷ Additionally, the Egyptians convened a conference of Palestinian factions where they hoped to reach an accord that would call off terrorist attacks in advance of the Israeli election. The effort failed, but Diehl argues that it nonetheless revealed how "pathetically, the Egyptians and moderates among the Palestinians fancied that the proposed cease-fire statement would somehow sway voters toward Mitzna".⁵⁸

Perhaps the most blatant effort to bolster Mitzna came from the United Kingdom, where Blair "effectively endorsed... Amram Mitzna, by receiving him at Number 10 [Downing Street] during the course of the campaign".⁵⁹ Blair announced his intention to invite Mitzna in early December, soon after the former general was selected as the Labor Party's candidate for prime minister.⁶⁰

His team claimed that the invitation was for a routine meet-and-greet with the leader of a fellow labor-movement party and that such meetings had happened before as a routine diplomatic matter of course, citing the fact that he also met with Ehud Barak before the Israeli campaign in 1999.⁶¹ However, a number of facts belie this pretense. As noted above, the intention behind British actions in 1999 really was to bolster Barak. Also, Blair had less than one week earlier turned down a

⁵⁷ "Sharon Adviser in Egypt for Talks on Peace Efforts"; "Egypt FM Blasts Israel During Meeting with Sharon Aide," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, January 8, 2003.

⁵⁸ Diehl, "Editorial: Axis of Inaction."

⁵⁹ "Blair's Middle East Blunder," *Daily Telegraph*, January 30, 2003.

⁶⁰ Nigel Morris, "Blair Says Meeting Will Not Interfere with Israeli Election," *The Independent (London)*, December 5, 2002.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*; Chris McGreal, "Angry Sharon Snubs Blair's Peace Summit," *The Guardian (UK)*, January 6, 2003.

request to meet with Sharon's new foreign minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, when Netanyahu came to London that November. In the words of a disgruntled spokesperson from the Israeli foreign ministry, "a fortnight ago it was made clear to us very pointedly that Mr. Blair would not meet with Mr. Netanyahu... yet now he is happy to invite Mr. Mitzna".⁶²

Blair had originally hoped to bring together a conference of Israeli and Palestinian advocates of peace in advance of the Israeli election as well, although the idea encountered too many obstacles to go forward.⁶³ However, he tried to salvage from it a separate event in London just for Palestinian officials, designed to highlight PA reforms that had already been carried out in the areas of finance and governance.⁶⁴ However, Sharon seized on the fact that Blair had invited Arafat to determine the makeup of the PA's delegation to attack the plan for appeasing terrorism, and in the wake of dual suicide bombings in Israel, Sharon's cabinet announced that it would deny PA ministers the travel permits required for them to fly to London.⁶⁵ Rynhold and Steinberg believe that the Palestinian reform conference was also aimed in part at influencing the Israeli vote in 2003, although obviously it was more directly aimed at internal Palestinian dynamics and energizing further PA reform.⁶⁶

Did the Policy Succeed?

⁶² Alan Philps, "Blair Under Attack for 'Bias' over Israeli Poll," *Daily Telegraph*, January 6, 2003.

⁶³ Morris, "Blair Says Meeting Will Not Interfere with Israeli Election."

⁶⁴ Arafat had not yet appointed Abu Mazen as prime minister. McGreal, "Angry Sharon Snubs Blair's Peace Summit."

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*; Chris McGreal, "Israeli Anger at Talks with Sharon Rival," *The Guardian (UK)*, January 9, 2003.

⁶⁶ Rynhold and Steinberg, "The Peace Process and the Israeli Elections," 193.

Yes and No. In the narrow sense, all of the American efforts to influence Israeli politics during the Sharon period succeeded at their intended objective, be it bolstering Sharon or, in isolated case of the China arms fiasco, getting Amos Yaron fired. Efforts by the UK and other members of the international community to bolster Labor during the 2003 Israeli election probably failed at their objective.

On the other hand, the question of broader efficacy is much more difficult to answer persuasively in the affirmative. Although U.S. efforts to bolster Sharon seemed effective at strengthening his hand within Israel, they did so by means of shortchanging vigorous U.S. diplomacy on behalf of the peace process. To the extent that the two-state solution was the ultimate objective of U.S. policy – and both Bush and Rice are quite outspoken about this, including in their memoirs – bolstering Sharon in the immediate term came at the expense of other elements of pushing for such a solution. Of course, Sharon’s bold scheme for disengagement from Gaza and parts of the West Bank could have yielded major progress in this direction, but the way in which the Bush administration tried to bolster him contributed in small part to its failure to do so, allowing Hamas instead of the PLO to fill the security vacuum created by disengagement.

<Sub-Case 1: Evaluating 2002 and 2003>

American backing for Sharon seemed to help his hand internally in 2002 and 2003. For instance, Rynhold and Steinberg conclude that “the support demonstrated by the U.S. government and President George W. Bush for Sharon’s policies... was a central factor in his domestic political standing”.⁶⁷ When the

⁶⁷ Ibid., 191.

administration in Washington decided to shelve the Road Map until after the 2003 Israeli elections, it was clear to observers in Israel that Sharon was getting “full back-up from Bush” and that “with Bush siding with the Likud, Mitzna will find it difficult to demonstrate to the public that his political plan is better,” despite the fact that its main element was unilateral Israeli withdrawal provided talks with the PA were unproductive.⁶⁸

When Sean McCormack suggested before the elections that America would look favorably on emergency aid and loan guarantees, it was seen as a sign that

“throughout the election campaign in Israel, the American administration made every effort not to create the impression that there might be a problem of any kind in Jerusalem-Washington relations, and the latest declaration makes it clear that not only is everything A-okay, but that the U.S. will now step forward to save Israel’s economy... [Bush] is making sure to remove any evidence of friction”.⁶⁹

In the lead-up to elections, Sharon campaigned, even within the Likud, on the basis of his strong relations with Bush.⁷⁰ New York Times reporter James Bennet explained that delaying release of the Road Map would help Sharon because he would otherwise be “expected to either give it the thumbs-up or thumbs-down... it would force him to essentially endorse, accept these very specific steps including a settlement freeze... which would be extremely unpopular with the base of his

⁶⁸ Aluf Benn, “Full Back-Up from Bush,” *Ha’aretz*, December 22, 2002.

⁶⁹ Guttman, “A Warm Relationship.”

⁷⁰ Ferry Biedermann, “Sharon Now Leftist of the Right,” *Inter-Press Service (IPS)*, November 27, 2002.

support on the right and could possibly even cost him the election”.⁷¹

However, it is much less clear whether backing Sharon actually yielded benefits for the two-state solution. In June of 2002, Sharon had previously suggested he was prepared to make “painful concessions” without elaborating what that meant,⁷² and then that December he indicated his acceptance of a Palestinian state in his remarks at the Herzliya conference, a statement at odds with the Likud Party’s official position.⁷³ However, he remained unwilling to implement American proposals for getting there, including the Mitchell Commission’s plan for ending the violence or even Israel’s likely obligations under the draft Road Map.

When Bush called Sharon a man of peace, it was seen by some as a gaffe rather than a statement of official policy.⁷⁴ Rice recalls that Colin Powell was not the only one among the president’s advisors who were worried by the action: “I fully agreed at the time that the President had made a mistake” and that “I thought we’d done long-term damage to our relations in the Arab world,” while Powell cried out “do you have any idea how this plays on Arab TV?”.⁷⁵

Although Rice eventually came around to believing that the vote of confidence encouraged Sharon to moderate,⁷⁶ Bush complained to Sharon at least once in the year that followed that “I’ve taken a lot of shit for calling you a man of

⁷¹ “Interview: James Bennet Discusses Middle East Violence, Upcoming Elections There and a Possible U.S. War with Iraq,” *Fresh Air* (National Public Radio (NPR), December 19, 2002).

⁷² “Sharon Declares He’s Prepared to Make ‘Painful Concessions’,” *Baltimore Sun*, June 12, 2002.

⁷³ Itamar Rabinovich, *The Lingering Conflict: Israel, the Arabs, and the Middle East, 1948-2011* (Brookings, 2011), 151–152.

⁷⁴ Fournier, “Bush Stumbles with Mideast Rhetoric.”

⁷⁵ Quotes are from Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 140.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

peace”.⁷⁷ Although Sharon’s ultimate turn toward disengagement persuaded Bush and Rice that the prime minister had earned the moniker, at this point there was little evidence to indicate that he would do so. Rice cites Sharon’s stated willingness to grant “painful concessions” as proof he was ready to moderate, but the remarks are only truly salient in hindsight, starting in the end of 2003.⁷⁸ Then again, if Bush’s support did indeed encourage Sharon to moderate, it could be considered a very positive development. Also, allowing Sharon to delay responding to the Road Map probably elicited a more positive response from him in the end, although it may also have decreased Labor’s ability to serve as a check on his party’s preferences in the Knesset and the coalition.⁷⁹

Backing Sharon did come at the expense of American relations with other allies, however. Although it does not appear that any European and Arab states actually scaled back their relations with Washington, the threat was actually there. In August of 2001 the Saudis had already threatened to sever their alliance if Bush did not do more press for Israeli restraint,⁸⁰ and days after the “man of peace”

⁷⁷ There is some disagreement over the timing and content of this follow-up remark. Miller says that Bush said to Sharon at the Aqaba summit in 2003: “I’ve taken a lot of shit for calling you a man of peace... we’ve got to find a way to move ahead”. Meanwhile, Kessler says “Bush publicly never backed off that statement, but in 2002 he privately rebuked Sharon when the Israeli leader began to repeat the comment to the president. Bush interrupted Sharon when he began to say he was a ‘man of peace and security,’ according to a witness to the exchange. ‘I know you are a man of security,’ Bush said. ‘I want you to work harder on the peace part.’ Then, adding a bit of colloquial language that at first seemed to baffle Sharon, Bush jabbed: ‘I said you were a man of peace. I want you to know I took immense crap for that’. See Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 352; Kessler, *The Confidante*, 262 n. 4.

⁷⁸ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 219.

⁷⁹ Labor chose not to join the government – and Mitzna promised not to, just prior to the vote – but the thinking among many in advance of the early 2003 vote was that Labor would probably return to the coalition as a junior partner, constraining extremists within the Likud. *Inter alia*, see John H. Aldrich et al., “Coalition Considerations and the Vote,” in *The Elections in Israel, 2003*, ed. Asher Arian and Michal Shamir (Transaction Publishers, 2005), 143–166.

⁸⁰ Allegedly, the Saudis had warned “starting today, you’re from Uruguay, as they say. You go your way, I go my way”. Robert G. Kaiser and David B. Ottaway, “Saudi Leader’s Anger Revealed Shaky Ties: Bush’s

statement the Saudis nearly abandoned a summit with the president at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, when they decided he was not inclined to rein Sharon in.⁸¹ Bush saw the Saudi stunt in April as a sign “America’s pivotal relationship with Saudi Arabia was about to be seriously ruptured”.⁸²

Similarly, the Jordanians felt that the American decision to repeatedly delay, and eventually water down, the Road Map verged on an out and out “betrayal”; Marwan Muasher, the point man for the plan, complained that Washington was “leaving me and others who had supported the Administration out in the cold”.⁸³ Overall, America’s allies in the Arab world and the European Union were dismayed, believing that “thanks to the American president’s coddling, Israel’s leading hawk will now entrench himself for another term”.⁸⁴ The EU foreign ministers were so frustrated when Powell informed them about the Road Map’s delay that they canceled a joint news conference they had planned with the secretary in protest.⁸⁵

<Sub-Case 2: Evaluating 2004 and 2005, re: Sharon>

Once again, the Bush administration’s efforts to bolster Sharon were relatively successful in the narrow sense and more mixed in the broader sense. Rice concluded that “we’d helped Sharon immensely with President Bush’s letter of April 2004”.⁸⁶ Expert observers Barnea and Kastner feel that the letters filled a crucial need for Sharon, since “for political and diplomatic reasons, he needed a needed a

Response Eased a Deep Rift on Mideast Policy, Then Came Sept. 11,” *Washington Post*, February 10, 2002.

⁸¹ DeYoung, *Soldier*, 385–386; Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 140–141.

⁸² Bush, *Decision Points*, 402.

⁸³ Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 244. For the latter quote, see also Muasher, *The Arab Center*, 173.

⁸⁴ Diehl, “Editorial: Axis of Inaction.” See also

⁸⁵ Benn, “Full Back-Up from Bush.”

⁸⁶ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 332.

strong return on the considerable investment of political capital that Gaza Disengagement required. Within Israel, Sharon needed robust U.S. support to help him win his battle with the right-wing of his own Likud Party,” and that sort of backing is exactly what he got.⁸⁷ Although even full-fledged American support was not enough to enable Sharon to get the plan endorsed by a party referendum internal to the Likud, he was ultimately able to get the cabinet’s endorsement. The administration helped boost Sharon’s hand in that vote by indicating that its April 2004 commitments would not apply if Netanyahu and Sharon’s other rivals had their way and were able to pass a seriously watered down plan for disengagement.⁸⁸

However, again these gestures on behalf of Sharon alienated America’s allies in the Arab world and in Europe. When Rice asked Bill Burns, director for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, what the reaction was like to Bush’s letter in April of 2004, he implied that all hell was breaking loose in the region.⁸⁹ The King of Jordan cancelled an upcoming White House visit in protest of the letters and only agreed to reschedule when the president agreed to a Jordanian exchange of letters in which Bush promised that none of his concessions to Sharon would be allowed to prejudice final status negotiations.⁹⁰ European reactions to the letters were extremely harsh. Allegedly, Solana described the letter as a stab in the EU’s back, and the firm protest issued by EU members left a lasting impression that was

⁸⁷ Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 39–40.

⁸⁸ A press release from the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv emphasized quite firmly that the president viewed Sharon’s original proposal “as a bold initiative that could advance the cause of peace, and it is this plan he supports, and no other”. Greg Myre, “Sharon Is Confident Cabinet Will Pass His Gaza Plan,” *New York Times*, June 3, 2004; Megan Goldin, “Israel’s Sharon Gets Lifeline from U.S., Egypt,” *Reuters News*, June 3, 2004.

⁸⁹ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 283 (in reference to p. 145).

⁹⁰ King Abdullah II, *Our Last Best Chance: The Pursuit of Peace in a Time of Peril* (Penguin Books, 2011), 270–271.

recalled with concern by some on the Bush team.⁹¹

The exchange of letters also came with mixed results on the issue of settlement activity. On one hand, the American concessions elicited in return a set of understandings with Sharon's advisors that the Israeli government would restrain itself in the future by restricting settlement growth, removing unauthorized outposts, lifting some roadblocks, and ensuring that the West Bank barrier was built only according to security and not political considerations, as well as transferring tax revenues to the PA.⁹² However, because the administration was so focused on helping disengagement move forward, it repeatedly let the Israelis violate these understandings, meaning that these understandings were of considerably less value than initially might have seemed to be the case.⁹³ For instance, virtually no illegal outposts were ever removed by the Sharon government, and, according to the Bush team's ambassador in Tel Aviv at the time, "the Bush administration did not regularly protest Israel's continuing settlement activity".⁹⁴

Arguably, if disengagement itself had seriously advanced the two-state solution, these concerns could perhaps be brushed aside. However, that does not appear to have been the case. Because of Sharon's insistence on framing the action as a wholly unilateral move, it weakened Abu Mazen's ability to claim that the way of negotiations could truly deliver for Palestinian national aspirations.

Sharon was so focused on getting out of Gaza with a minimum of settler

⁹¹ Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 45.

⁹² "Letter from Dov Weissglas, Chief of the PM's Bureau, to National Security Adviser, Dr. Condoleezza Rice" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, April 18, 2004).

⁹³ Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 46.

⁹⁴ Daniel Kurtzer, "The Settlement Facts," *Washington Post*, June 14, 2009.

violence that the IDF left three days earlier than the PLO had been led to expect, exacerbating the security vacuum on the ground.⁹⁵ This enabled Hamas supporters to flood the settlements, destroy greenhouses preserved for Palestinian usage, and launch rockets from Gaza with impunity over the years that followed – something that would have been impossible had the security transition followed the phased model in West Bank cities such as Jenin that the IDF pursued in later years under Olmert. By overdoing unilateralism in 2005, Sharon undermined the enthusiasm in Washington and in Israel for further steps of this sort. Although Washington welcomed the Israeli withdrawal in late 2005 as a major step forwards for peace, it had no stomach for further Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank months later.

The responsibility for mismanaging withdrawal in 2005 primarily rests with Sharon himself. However, the Bush team’s approach was clearly not sufficient to elicit better behavior, and this discrepancy seems attributable to Bush’s detachment and desire to build Sharon up. The United States decided not to push Sharon to really negotiate the withdrawal and instead tried to encourage him to “coordinate” with Abu Mazen, but even that effort was lacking in buy-in from the president. In such a context, there was only so much American bureaucrats could do to elicit suitable Israeli behavior.

Clearly, Sharon was reluctant. Observers note that “Sharon was... unwilling to talk with the Palestinians about disengagement” and “wanted the withdrawal defined entirely as an Israeli move made for Israeli interests”.⁹⁶ Rice and Danin explain that they worked hard to press Sharon to at least coordinate his efforts with

⁹⁵ Abdullah II, *Our Last Best Chance: The Pursuit of Peace in a Time of Peril*, 272.

⁹⁶ Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 367.

Abbas,⁹⁷ but when Rice did raise the issue with Sharon, she says he “assured me that he would but reminded me that he had a lot of work to do in Israel first”.⁹⁸ As noted above, Bush and Rice did little to seriously push Sharon on the matter, in part because of their interest in strengthening him to pursue withdrawal. In the end, these low-priority efforts achieved very little: “only by pulling teeth did we get him to agree to allow some technical discussions that took place 3 or 4 months before on things that needed to be done, ‘where’s the key to the barn?’ type stuff.”⁹⁹

Thus, the administration’s approach of giving Sharon a relatively free hand to help him pursue disengagement certainly helped Sharon, but its impact on furthering the two-state solution is more questionable. The effort was clearly successful in the narrow sense, but broader efficacy is much more mixed.

<Sub-Case 3: The Yaron Affair>

The bureaucratic dispute known as the Yaron Affair was resolved in a manner that furthered American objectives in both the narrow and the broader sense. Narrowly speaking, America had its way by getting Amos Yaron fired from his position as director general at the Israeli Ministry of Defense. It had, at one point, floated a demand to have three other officials tied to the China deal fired as well, but the Yaron dismissal was Washington’s core objective.¹⁰⁰

Further, the U.S. was able to impose some lasting changes on how Israel conducts arms sales with China or other states of military concern. The Harpy drones were not returned to China in their upgraded state, and the Israelis were

⁹⁷ Robert Danin, “Interview with the Author”, June 26, 2012; Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 333, 381.

⁹⁸ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 333.

⁹⁹ Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 367.

¹⁰⁰ Benhorin, “Crisis with U.S. over Arms Sales.”

forced to cancel the deal – to Beijing’s great dismay. In fact, Israel’s defense ties with China have taken nearly half a decade to begin recovering from the dispute.¹⁰¹ As part of resolving the dispute, Israeli Minister of Defense Shaul Mofaz signed a classified memorandum of understanding with Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld in which they committed to consult more extensively in advance of future Israeli arms exports.¹⁰² In response to American pressure, the Israeli government agreed to abide in the future by guidelines set forth in the Wassenaar Arrangement export control regime, the successor to COCOM, although Israel did not formally sign the agreement.¹⁰³ Finally, the ministry of defense established a special bureau specifically to provide oversight for military exports in response to American pressure.¹⁰⁴ On a whole range of issues, “Israel... capitulated completely to American dictates”.¹⁰⁵

<Sub-Case 4: The Other Guys>

Clearly, Arab and European efforts to build up Sharon’s rival, Amram Mitzna, in the 2003 Israeli elections did not get the Labor candidate elected. The question of whether it contributed at all to the ability of his campaign is another matter. The best answer is probably that the impact of these efforts was negligible because they did little to persuade the Israeli public that Mitzna’s program would be able to succeed by finding a viable partner on the Palestinian side with whom to cooperate.

¹⁰¹ Melman, “Defense Ministry Continues to Ban Security Exports to China”; Christopher Bodeen and Josef Federman, “Israel Steps up Security Ties with China,” *Associated Press*, May 24, 2012.

¹⁰² Steve Weizman, “Top Israeli Defense Official at Center of Israel-U.S.-China Crisis Resigns,” *Associated Press*, August 30, 2005.

¹⁰³ Jeremy Pressman, *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2008), 117.

¹⁰⁴ Melman, “Defense Ministry Continues to Ban Security Exports to China.”

¹⁰⁵ University of Haifa-based China expert Yitzhak Shichor, quoted in *Ibid*.

Sharon attacked the British effort to intervene in the election head on, complaining about the prime minister's invitation to Mitzna and attacking his PA reform conference as "legitimising terrorists".¹⁰⁶ As noted above, a spokesperson from Israel's foreign ministry pointed out the inconsistency of inviting Mitzna after just having spurned a request to meet with Netanyahu. Some suggest that Blair knew Mitzna would probably not win and was therefore aimed instead to boost Labor's hand within a National Unity Government that might be formed, but this was probably too subtle a scheme, even if it might have been a fall-back strategy.¹⁰⁷ In the end, Blair felt driven by realities on the ground to close ranks with Sharon after the election by congratulating him on his political victory.¹⁰⁸

Although the British attempt at meddling seems to have provided Israel with a pretext to block Blair's conference showcasing Palestinian reforms,¹⁰⁹ the British did not seem to suffer lasting consequences for the earlier dispute; as one Israeli official observed: "it's business as usual. Nobody is looking for a *broiges* [Yiddish for row]. There are skirmishes but we're not getting worked up about it".¹¹⁰

Rynhold and Steinfeld suspect that the European and Arab efforts to help Mitzna may have backfired because the Israeli public harbors longstanding suspicions about the trustworthiness of these actors.¹¹¹ However, they offer no evidence to demonstrate that this blanket trend was an important causal factor in the case. Probably closer to the truth, Jackson Diehl claims that these efforts failed

¹⁰⁶ McGreal, "Angry Sharon Snubs Blair's Peace Summit."

¹⁰⁷ McGreal, "Israeli Anger at Talks with Sharon Rival"; "Blair's Middle East Blunder."

¹⁰⁸ "Blair Offers Olive Branch to Re-elected Premier," *The Telegraph (UK)*, January 30, 2003.

¹⁰⁹ McGreal, "Israeli Anger at Talks with Sharon Rival."

¹¹⁰ "Blair Offers Olive Branch to Re-elected Premier."

¹¹¹ Rynhold and Steinberg, "The Peace Process and the Israeli Elections," 193.

because they “only show[ed] that Israeli voters know the difference between real Palestinian reform and meaningless conferences”.¹¹²

In short, these third-party efforts to build up Amram Mitzna and undermine Sharon probably did little to nothing to influence the Israeli vote. Although the magnitude of external impact by these actors is typically low already, their influence was further diminished in this case for two important reasons. First of all, they were pushing for a position that was widely discredited at the time within Israel. Mitzna was running on a peace platform in the midst of the second intifada, in an era when roughly 70% of Israelis were telling pollsters that they felt the Palestinians were not genuine in their professed desire for peace – a figure up by more than 20% relative to previous years.¹¹³ Second, they were pushing for a point of view that was consistently undermined by the actions of Washington. In the face of contrary actions by Israeli public opinion and Israel’s number one patron, the ability of Arabs and Europeans to foster an alternative perspective was further undermined.

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

The four theories tested by this dissertation pose mutually exclusive predictions across a range of observable implications. Those theories are national interests theory (Theory #1), lobby-legislative politics (Theory #2), bureaucratic politics (Theory #3), and leadership theory (Theory #4). One category in which

¹¹² Diehl, “Editorial: Axis of Inaction.”

¹¹³ Rynhold and Steinberg, “The Peace Process and the Israeli Elections,” 182.

they pose contradictory expectations is the area of perceptions of sender interests.

Theory #1 expects that interpretations of sender interests should be faithful reflections of objective reality – thus, LSI behavior should occur in periods when objective opportunities are indeed greater. Theory #2 expects that LSI should generally not occur towards Israel because members of the pro-Israel lobby and of Congress tend to see American interests as equally identified with both sides of the aisle in Israel, not with a particular faction within Israeli politics. Theory #3 expects that LSI should occur frequently and in a consistent manner because the main bureaucratic body on these issues, the State Department’s Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, tends to identify the Israeli left and an active peace process with being the best hope for American interests in the region. Finally, Theory #4 predicts that the occurrence of LSI should vary according to subjective beliefs of top leaders in the sender state: their assessments of counterparts, their expectations for leadership contests in other polities, and their personal priorities for regional politics.

Theory #2 does a poor job of explaining American meddling behavior on the basis of perceived sender interests. For one thing, the theory expects America not to meddle in Israeli politics at all; LSI should simply not occur on this dyad. Further, it mis-ascribes American motivations for related behavior at the time. Walt and Mearsheimer suggest that “the Bush administration decided in the summer of 2002 that the Road Map was the best way to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But little progress was made in implementing it until the spring of 2003,” at which point the heads of pro-Israel lobby groups pressured the administration to accept Israeli

reservations to the plan.¹¹⁴

However, their narrative of events, which relies primarily upon the lobby-legislative approach for explaining U.S. behavior, misses the fact that the American administration was initially disinterested in the Road Map at high levels, part of why Bush was so willing to part with it until after Israeli elections had taken place. It is not that the Bush administration was deterred from imposing the Road Map but rather that the president cared so little about the effort that he was willing to negotiate its delay as a favor to his Israeli partner. As of the morning of December 18th, 2002, when Bush had already agreed to postpone releasing the Road Map, the president confessed to staff that he had not yet even read the document.¹¹⁵ Powell obviously cared about the measure, having spearheaded revisions of the text with America's partners in the Quartet, but the president remained ambivalent.

Walt and Mearsheimer understand Bush's 2004 letter as a gesture of domestic pandering during an election year and sign of the president's subservience to pro-Israel lobbyists, forcing him to give up on the Road Map in favor of unilateral Israeli measures.¹¹⁶ However, there is little evidence to support these claims, and it seems the Bush team genuinely believed Sharon's measures would help achieve the Road Map rather than seeing them as counterproductive but necessary concessions to domestic political forces. The initial private reaction within the White House to Sharon's plan was actually quite enthusiastic, and the Bush letter came about as a result of extensive bargaining with the government of Israel, not the pro-Israel

¹¹⁴ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Macmillan, 2007), 212 as well as 213–214.

¹¹⁵ Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 245.

¹¹⁶ Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 217–218.

lobby.¹¹⁷ Rice describes feeling “the pending Israeli withdrawal offered the potential to jump-start movement toward a two-state solution”.¹¹⁸ Even Arab heads of state were described as more actively involved in debating the letter with the administration than members of the pro-Israel lobby.

Nor does Theory #3 provide a persuasive explanation for how perceived sender interests may have produced American LSI behavior during the Sharon years. Working level officials at the State Department may have sought intervention in Israeli politics during this period but certainly not on behalf of Sharon.

Allegedly, the American ambassador in Tel Aviv, Daniel Kurtzer, urged members of the Labor Party to attack Sharon publicly for his comments in 2001 comparing America and Israel to Britain and Czechoslovakia at Munich in 1938.¹¹⁹ This may have been an instance of pro-Labor freelancing on his part, but it certainly contradicted administration policy to support Sharon in the years that followed.

In late 2002, David Satterfield, a deputy assistant secretary at NEA, assured the Jordanians that the administration had no intention to delay release of the Road Map beyond its scheduled December release date.¹²⁰ Satterfield urged the Jordanians to continue requesting Bush’s public endorsement of the Road Map, since it was evident that the White House remained less enthusiastic about the proposal.¹²¹ In the end, the White House’s perspective on the Road Map trumped the preferences of the bureaucracy.

¹¹⁷ Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 39–44; Charles Enderlin, *The Lost Years: Radical Islam, Intifada, and Wars in the Middle East 2001-2006*, trans. Suzanne Verderber (Other Press, LLC, 2007), 228–229, 232–235; Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 281–283, 332–334, 381–383, 413–414.

¹¹⁸ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 381.

¹¹⁹ Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 20.

¹²⁰ Muasher, *The Arab Center*, 171.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

Again, in 2004, State Department officials resisted the Bush letter to Sharon. The State Department's Deputy Legal Adviser, Jonathan Schwartz, who had been the main point person for the nexus of legal and policy issues on the peace process going back to the Clinton administration, tried to get the president to scale back concessions in his April letter to Sharon to the point where Sharon felt the letter would have provided him no real domestic benefits back in Israel.¹²² At the last minute, Powell and Burns also worked with the Jordanians and others to try to scale back language of the letter as well but were unable to produce results.¹²³

Meanwhile, the strong personal beliefs of top American officials – particularly, assessments of their Israeli counterparts – seem intricately bound up with Washington's reasons for pursuing LSI. These dynamics provide strong evidence in favor of Theory #4 as well as evidence against the expectations of Theory #1, the national interests approach.

In time, Bush and Rice had come to feel personally invested in Ariel Sharon's success. Bush writes that "I've always wondered what might have been possible if Ariel Sharon had continued to serve... I believe he could have been part of a historic peace".¹²⁴ He felt that "Sharon made clear – at Aqaba and later in his landmark Herzliya speech – that he had abandoned the Greater Israel policy, an enormous breakthrough".¹²⁵ Rice says that "we'd come to see Sharon as crucial to peace, a view that would have been unthinkable in the dark days of 2001".¹²⁶ She writes that

¹²² Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 42–43.

¹²³ Muasher, *The Arab Center*, 205.

¹²⁴ Bush, *Decision Points*, 407.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 406.

¹²⁶ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 413.

they saw the creation of the Kadima Party in late 2005 as an act “identified with finalizing Israel’s borders... I was confident and so was the President that Sharon was willing to take the remaining ones toward the establishment of Palestine”.¹²⁷ Upon hearing of Sharon’s stroke, she says that both of them prayed for his well-being; after hearing that Sharon had passed away, Rice says that she cried.¹²⁸

A stark indicator of the subjective nature of these perceptions was the considerable variation within the American administration, especially early on. When Bush called Sharon a man of peace, even Rice disagreed with the choice. And Colin Powell felt even more strongly at the time. His biographer, Karen DeYoung, writes that the very same month, April of 2002, Secretary Powell seemed to feel “it was becoming increasingly clear that neither leader [in the conflict] was capable of constructing a lasting peace – Arafat would never take the first steps to get the process under way, [but] Sharon would never make the territorial concessions necessary to complete it”.¹²⁹ It also appears that Powell felt the Road Map should have been released in December of 2002 but was overruled by the White House.¹³⁰

It was clear that Bush and Sharon felt a tight bond, what drives Glenn Kessler to describe Sharon as “a soulmate in the war on terror”.¹³¹ They communicated through an empowered channel of their main deputies, spearheaded by Weissglas on the Israeli side and Rice on the American one.¹³² Bush received Sharon at the White House more than any other foreign leader – seven times in just two years by

¹²⁷ Ibid., 414.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 413–414.

¹²⁹ DeYoung, *Soldier*, 382.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 425; Muasher, *The Arab Center*, 174.

¹³¹ Kessler, *The Confidante*, 123.

¹³² Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*.

the point the prime minister was up for reelection.¹³³ Sharon's visit to the White House for the April 2004 Bush letter was his tenth.¹³⁴

It makes sense that this tight personal bond felt by Bush influenced his LSI choices. For example, his NSC Mideast advisor, Elliott Abrams, recalls that "the President had his closest relations with foreign leaders who in his view took risks, were strong leaders, used their power to do something: Koizumi, Blair, John Howard, Sharon... the huge opposition in Likud, losing votes in Likud organs, having to split the party he was a founder of, all of this really impressed the President, so he wanted to help. That's what led to the April 14, 2004 letter".¹³⁵

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

Another area where the theories diverge is the perception of close leadership contests in the target polity. Although theories 2 and 3 are relatively agnostic on this dimension, theories 1 and 4 pose clear, contradictory predictions. Theory #1 suggests that states should pursue LSI behavior that accurately reflects objective empirical features of the impending leadership shaping up abroad but should not be influenced by sub-state dynamics within the sender state, which is supposed to be unitary. Theory #4 on the other hand emphasizes the finite attention and political capital that leaders in the sender state have to allocate according to their subjective personal priorities. If Theory #4 is correct, we should therefore expect to see rates

¹³³ Diehl, "Editorial: Back Door to Bush."

¹³⁴ Enderlin, *The Lost Years*, 233.

¹³⁵ Abrams interview quoted in Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 322–323. Technically, these events took place after the April 2004 letter, not beforehand, but presumably Abrams was talking about Sharon's prospective willingness to take on these risks.

of LSI increase when leaders see strong personal benefits to pursuing such behavior but that such effects can be overpowered when leaders in the sender state face more pressing immediate distractions such as a war or political scandal.

The best explanation for why leadership theory seems to provide a better fit for the data in these cases than national interests theory can be traced back to the contradictory positions sketched out by President George Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair in the lead-up to Israeli elections in January of 2003. Both pursued LSI, but the contradictory directions in which they did so can in part be traced back to their subjective interpretation of the impending contest in Israeli politics.

Bush had long been disinterested in Israeli politics or peace process affairs, and he was notably focused on preparations for the Iraq war at the time. This increased the possible benefits of Sharon's goodwill in Bush's estimation – including diminishing risks of another high-profile siege on Arafat and hushing up talk of Israeli retaliation in the event of an Iraqi missile strike – while decreasing the likely costs of failing to promote peace talks with the Palestinians.¹³⁶

On the other hand, Blair's attention to the conflict and his preference for Labor Party politicians in Israel was longstanding, going back at least to the Netanyahu and Barak days. Blair was criticized by some for piling on during the Likud's corruption scandal by choosing to back Amram Mitzna,¹³⁷ but in reality he had been laying the groundwork to reach out to Mitzna since before that scandal broke, at a time when Mitzna was faring even more dismally in Israeli polls (one poll

¹³⁶ Benn, "Sharon Asked U.S. for a 'Diplomatic Recess' Until After Primaries in Likud"; Guttman, "A Warm Relationship"; DeYoung, *Soldier*, 387; Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 40–41; Kessler, *The Confidante*, 125; Diehl, "Editorial: Back Door to Bush."

¹³⁷ Philips, "Blair Under Attack for 'Bias' over Israeli Poll."

that week predicted Labor would take 20 Knesset seats compared to 40 for the Likud).¹³⁸

In short, Blair's decision to back Mitzna at the time was probably driven more by personal convictions than objective assessments of whether or not the Israeli Labor candidate stood a likely shot of winning the premiership. As Israeli journalist Shmuel Rosner reflects, the British effort to help Mitzna was "pathetic... misreading the political context, reading too much *Ha'aretz*... letting ideological differences win over strategic thinking... letting ideology win over cold calculation of cost-benefit and chances to have impact".¹³⁹

Some other observers surmised that Blair also had his own internal concern at the time – winning domestic plaudits for promoting the Road Map in a visible exchange for pledging Britain's backing for a war on Iraq – but again this motivation was a sub-state factor more germane to leadership theory than the unitary national interests approach.¹⁴⁰ The route to Bush's intervention on behalf of Sharon was through concessions that the president cared surprisingly little about, in part due to his coincidental preparation for the invasion of Iraq at the time; the route to Blair's intervention on behalf of Sharon's opponent traced back to the his own unrealistic hopes for Mitzna's success. The gap in behavior across the two LSI attempts is best explained by reference to Theory #4.

¹³⁸ For the earlier efforts by Blair, see Morris, "Blair Says Meeting Will Not Interfere with Israeli Election." For the 20-to-40 poll numbers, see Timothy Heritage, "Israeli Dove Plots How to Close Election Gap on Sharon," *Reuters News*, December 2, 2002.

¹³⁹ Shmuel Rosner, "Interview with the Author," June 15, 2011.

¹⁴⁰ "Blair's Middle East Blunder."

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

Another pertinent type of observable implication is the structure of deliberation leading up to leadership selection intervention. The arguments that focus on domestic structural forces – theories 2 and 3 – expect lobbies, Congress, or the bureaucracy to be both informed and influential when important decisions about LSI are being made. However, if top leaders are able to undertake LSI while leaving these stakeholders in the dark, that would seem to support Theory #4 instead, as would consultations through informal channels by these leaders with their favored protégés in the target state.

In this regard, the episodes of American intervention into Israeli politics during the Sharon years fit the expectations of leadership theory much better than the bureaucratic or lobby-legislative approaches. Meddling was often discussed through unusual channels between U.S. and Israeli officials as well as among officials within the American government, usually with little or no consultation with other officials in Washington.

American communications with Israeli officials on the matter were handled through extremely unusual channels. Barnea and Kasnter wrote an entire volume predicated upon the argument that Sharon “valued secrecy and did not trust the standard channels of communication” for dealing with Washington, therefore operated in a manner that cut out both pro-Israel activists in the U.S. and diplomatic intermediaries. He “appointed an emissary who would bypass not only... [the] Ministry of Foreign Affairs but also the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, the Israeli Embassy in Washington DC, and the American Jewish leaders who had mediated between

past Israeli governments and U.S. administrations”.¹⁴¹ When he appointed Silvan Shalom to be Israel’s minister of foreign affairs, the prime minister informed him that he could have the whole world as his portfolio except for the White House and certain parts of the State Department.¹⁴²

In an especially notable instance, when LSI was being deliberated by the U.S. and Israel in late 2002 Sharon actually cancelled a visit by Efraim Halevy, the head of his national security council, in order for his personal envoy, Weissglas, to lead the meetings. *Ha’aretz* correspondent Aluf Benn wrote that the more technocratic Halevy was being sidelined so that LSI-related discussions would be confined to more political channels:

“Sharon chose to send Weisglass instead of Halevy with the message so as not to entangle Halevy in partisan political issues. Government sources said he preferred Halevy to be free to deal with strategic issues like the coming war with Iraq. Officially, the PMO [Prime Minister’s Office] said Weisglass was going to Washington to ‘continue the prime minister’s discussions about raising financial aid for Israel.’ But he traveled alone, without any professional consultations prior to the trip, nor any prior talks with either the treasury or the defense ministry, which needs U.S. aid because of budget cutbacks. The treasury’s own staff work on the aid request to Washington is not finished”.¹⁴³

Further, the deliberations being held within the American government on LSI toward Israel during the Sharon period were also quite irregular and informal. Powell was formally Bush’s point person for the region, but instead he was increasingly cut out of real decision-making in favor of Rice. As Kessler puts it “Rice had secretly taken over the Israeli-Palestinian account in 2002... for the rest of the first term, Powell’s State Department largely became irrelevant to U.S.-Israel

¹⁴¹ Both quotes are from Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 8.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁴³ Benn, “Sharon Asked U.S. for a ‘Diplomatic Recess’ Until After Primaries in Likud.”

relations as Rice and Weissglas dealt directly with each other at the behest of Bush and Sharon".¹⁴⁴

Not only was the State Department bureaucracy frequently cut out of decision-making on these issues, but so was Congress and the pro-Israel lobby. For instance, the administration made preliminary decisions on the Road Map and on emergency aid plus loan guarantees for Israel at the end of 2002 in order to bolster Sharon. Yet they only got into substantial give-and-take with Congress and lobbyists on these issues in the spring of the following year, once a draft text for the Road Map was more widely available and the administration was fine-tuning conditions for the new financial aid to Israel.¹⁴⁵ When it was actually deliberating what to do about LSI in advance of Israel's elections, the administration had a relatively free hand from pressures on behalf of these domestic forces.

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

To the extent that domestic structural forces are salient factors for decision-making, we should expect LSI behavior to be almost wholly driven by these factors during certain periods of the sender state's political calendar. If Theory #2 is correct that lobbies and legislators matter greatly for American LSI, then meddling should be totally driven by these groups' preferences during periods of divided government or in the lead-up to elections in the United States. If Theory #3 is

¹⁴⁴ Kessler, *The Confidante*, 124.

¹⁴⁵ Gail Russell Chaddock, "In Congress, Sharp Debate on Foreign Aid; Some Lawmakers Want to Punish Nations Like Turkey and France While Aiding Israel," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 3, 2003; Jim VandeHei, "Bush Meets Resistance on Mideast Plan; Key Hill Allies Call for Greater Commitment to Israel's Concerns About Road Map," *Washington Post*, April 4, 2003; Alan Cooperman, "Jewish Leaders Back 'Road Map'; Bush Plan Called Opportunity for Israel to Live in Peace," *Washington Post*, April 30, 2003.

correct that bureaucrats are very important for determining LSI, then bureaucratic preferences should be preponderant at the start of first presidential terms. However, if meddling behavior fails to meet one or both of these criteria, then it would appear that one or both of these domestic structural explanations has failed an easy hoop test in a critical case, which should also give us confidence in alternative models, such as leadership theory or the national interests approach.

It seems as though both domestic structural theories fail to produce consistent, persuasive results in this regard. The bureaucratic politics approach expects high rates of meddling, and according to the cycles of domestic power argument these rates should be almost certain when bureaucratic input over outcomes is especially high – meaning at the start of presidential terms, before political appointees are fully settled in place. However, the instances of American LSI toward Israeli politics took place in every year *except* Bush’s first year in office, suggesting that the bureaucratic politics approach in this episode should be treated with increased skepticism.

Further, LSI behavior seems relatively impervious to the U.S. electoral calendar or dynamics of divided government during the Sharon period. Democrats controlled the Senate (albeit by a razor-thin margin) for most of Bush’s first two years in office, but LSI seems no rarer then relative to his second two years when government control was totally united under the Republican Party. LSI took place both before an American election in 2004 and just after a U.S. election in 2002, suggesting that the timing of elections also has little impact on the president’s behavior in this arena. And, as noted above, Walt and Mearsheimer’s claim that

Bush backed Israel on unilateral withdrawal during a reelection year primarily to win votes or for fear of the pro-Israel lobby does not seem to fit with the data. And, although it is tough to envision him saying otherwise, Bush seemed confident when he insisted in private to the Jordanian and Palestinian delegations at Aqaba that he did not fear the lobby or the Christian right when promoting the Road Map.¹⁴⁶

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

Instances of bureaucratic freelancing, in which working-level officials pursue LSI without the express authorization of the president, provide possible support for Theory #3. However, the leadership approach expects that this support should be tempered by the extent to which freelancing is first conditional on presidential styles of management and oversight. If bureaucratic freelancing occurs in all administrations, then that would seem to provide much stronger evidence for the bureaucratic approach than if freelancing is only contained to those instances in which the president exercises a lax overall style of management and exhibits a disinterested approach to overseeing the execution of bilateral relations with the target state.

This case does include at least one clear episode of bureaucratic freelancing – the Yaron Affair – and that episode fits with the tempered, leadership-contingent framework for working level behavior. Like Reagan before him, President Bush demonstrated a very removed approach to formal decision-making and a strong disinterest in handling the Israel or peace portfolios on a regular basis. Indeed one

¹⁴⁶ DeYoung, *Soldier*, 472.

observer of Arab-Israeli issues called Bush “the disengager” and characterized his decision-making as reducible to “many ‘if I do this on the peace process, don’t bother me again’ moments”.¹⁴⁷ It should come as little surprise that the notable episodes of bureaucratic freelancing in this dissertation on the U.S.-Israel directed dyad occurred only under the presidencies of Reagan and Bush 43.

This mindset seems to have translated into administration behavior on the Yaron Affair itself. The demand that Yaron be fired allegedly originated with Doug Feith and was supported by Paul Wolfowitz.¹⁴⁸ Although it seems as though Rice and Rumsfeld signed off on the penalties demanded by these officials, administration support seems to end there.¹⁴⁹ Barnea and Kastner report that “Neither President Bush and his staff, nor Prime Minister Sharon and his staff wanted to involve themselves in this issue, and because of this neglect, the ‘Chinese Affair’ started to have a noticeable impact on bilateral relations... Bush’s advisors chose to distance themselves from the affair: they regarded the matter as the Department of Defense’s problem. In the end, the ‘Chinese Affair’ was allowed to rumble on”.¹⁵⁰ Also, a few members of Congress echoed Feith’s message by threatening that arms firms doing sensitive business with China would lose access to the U.S. market, but the odds of a Congressional embargo against Israel’s defense manufacturing flagship were probably low, since this arms sales are an area in which the pro-Israel lobby’s influence on the legislative branch is quite effective.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 321, 333.

¹⁴⁸ Schiff, “Don’t Return Drones to China, U.S. Tells Israel”; Schiff, “The Americans Are Going Too Far.”

¹⁴⁹ Urquhart, “U.S. Acts over Israeli Arms Sales to China.”

¹⁵⁰ Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 12–13.

¹⁵¹ Pressman, *Warring Friends*, 116–117.

6. Consistency of Message:

The effectiveness of LSI is likely to depend upon whether the sender state acts in a manner that validates the campaign narrative of one political faction in the target polity at the expense of its rivals. Thus, LSI should be more effective when messaging is consistent and clear, a condition for which the theories offer divergent predictions. Theory #1 anticipates that consistent messaging should be unproblematic, since foreign policy by the sender state is made in a relatively unitary and consensual manner. Theory #2 expects lobbyists and legislators to be in a strong position to undermine the government's LSI message, as does Theory #3 for bureaucratic actors. Finally, Theory #4 argues that the consistency and clarity of messaging – and therefore the effectiveness of American LSI, should be conditioned by the coordination and commitment of top U.S. officials.

To what extent was the American administration reliable in its messaging when it came to LSI? According to *Ha'aretz* journalist Nathan Guttman, in advance of the 2003 Israeli elections the Bush team's message came through quite effectively: "the bottom line is clear – for the first time since the 1990s, the American administration is not trying to help the Labor candidate to win the election, and many believe that Bush is doing just the opposite... he is making sure to remove any evidence of friction or problems from the field".¹⁵² To the extent that Powell advocated a different line, he was marginalized from handling the Israeli file and was not in a position to undermine the administration's attempts at meddling.

¹⁵² Guttman, "A Warm Relationship."

Although Powell and others at the State Department, as well as Flynt Leverett at the NSC, may have wanted to release the Road Map in December of 2003, they said nothing in public to contradict the president's position. On instructions from Bush, Secretary Powell reluctantly conveyed to his European partners from the Quartet that the Road Map would simply have to wait.

7. Suitability of Message:

Finally, there is the question of the message expressed by officials in the sender state. To the extent that it suits political mindsets among the selectorate in the target polity and validates the campaign narrative of the sender's favored protégé, LSI efforts are likely to succeed. Theory #1 anticipates that this should always be the case, but theories 2 through 4 expect that this appropriateness of message should be conditioned by biases imposed either by institutional or personal preferences.

For instance, it is difficult to explain efforts by Tony Blair or Hosni Mubarak to bolster Amram Mitzna and the Israeli left in the 2003 elections as anything but wishful thinking, given how poorly Mitzna was polling. Especially given that America was throwing its lot in with Sharon, the message being conveyed by the pro-Labor leaders was starkly at odds with both Israeli public opinion's distrust of the Palestinians and the prevailing international environment.

Further, it is difficult to envision America projecting the same message it did in during this period had somebody other than Bush been president. For instance, had Gore been crowned the victor of America's election in 2000, it may have backed

Israel during the intifada, but it likely would not have specifically strained to minimize disagreements with Israel in order to ease Sharon's race for reelection.

Given that Bush did seek to bolster Sharon, however, the message communicated by his actions was in fact well-suited to this objective. Pledging emergency aid in advance of Israel's elections reassured Israeli voters in 2003 that their concerns about the economy could be addressed under Sharon, as did assurances that the U.S. would not peg loan guarantees this time around to a freeze in settlement construction, something the Likud would not likely accept. Bush's backing in 2004 was somewhat less effective, however, because the selectorate that mattered was less open to his influence. His indication that America would reward disengagement helped Sharon with domestic opinion and probably in the cabinet, but it could not help him win the Likud Party referendum because Likud voters cared less about American backing than continued retention of the territories.

George W. Bush, Case #2:

Olmert, the weak politician, 2006-2008

After Ariel Sharon suffered two strokes in December of 2005 and January of 2006, the Israeli leader was permanently incapacitated. He was therefore replaced by his designated successor, Ehud Olmert. Olmert was named the new head of the Kadima Party and ran as the party's leader in the elections already scheduled for March of that year. The party won considerably fewer seats than expected (29 mandates as opposed to the 40 previously projected), and he formed a coalition

government in which Labor was the main junior partner.¹⁵³ On one hand, the new prime minister's party held fewer seats than his predecessor had won in 2003, but on the other he now served at the head of a government more clearly committed to setting Israel's final borders, having brought in Labor and jettisoned the remaining members of the rump Likud Party. He also ran on a platform of pursuing a second round of unilateral Israeli withdrawals, this time pledging to remove most of the far-flung settlements located deep inside of the West Bank, a proposal that ultimately became known as Olmert's plan for "realignment".¹⁵⁴

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

No, then yes. During the first half of Ehud Olmert's term in office, the American government generally declined to bolster his standing internally within Israel. His team sought strong endorsement of realignment upfront in order to give him a boost so that he could implement this controversial plan, aimed at setting Israel's final borders. Yet Olmert was rebuffed by Washington.

The administration strongly backed Israel's 2006 war against Hezbollah but it continued to take a number of steps that suggested LSI was still not part of its agenda toward Israel. These steps included focusing much more on bolstering the

¹⁵³ Rabinovich, *The Lingering Conflict*, 164.

¹⁵⁴ Harvey Morris, "Olmert Weighs Options After Slim Win: The New Kadima Party Faces a Difficult Time Building a Coalition to Back Its Plan to Redraw Israel's Borders," *Financial Times*, March 30, 2006; Anne Barnard, "With Lead in Israel's Polls, Kadima Lays Out Plans," *Boston Globe*, March 10, 2006; Scott Wilson, "Olmert, Sworn In, Restates Goal: Evacuation of West Bank Settlements to Proceed, Israeli Premier Confirms," *Washington Post*, May 5, 2006.

government in Lebanon rather than the one in Jerusalem during the war, subsequently discouraging Olmert from restarting talks with Syria, and rejecting his request for a U.S. military strike on Syria's nuclear reactor at al-Kibar.

By mid-2007, however, the administration perceived a major strategic opportunity that led to reconsideration of LSI on behalf of the Kadima Party and its leaders. Rice saw Hamas's coup in Gaza as a major clarifying moment that lay the groundwork for a major final push on the peace process. As such, the pro-peace leaders at the head of Israel and the PLO, Olmert and Abbas, came to be seen as crucial assets for Washington's policies and interests in the region. Thus, the administration soon took a number of steps that seem in part to have been aimed at building up Olmert as well as his foreign minister and successor, Tzipi Livni. These gestures included: public rhetoric filled with glowing praise, the Annapolis Conference, two presidential visits to Israel, and a memorandum of understanding trumped up to make Livni look good before Israeli elections in early 2009.

<Sub-Case 1: LSI Non-Occurrence>

When Olmert came to office as prime minister in 2006, his reputation and his agenda were staked on realignment. And, like Sharon before him, he approached the idea of unilateral disengagement with the hope that Washington would fill the gap caused by leaving the Palestinians out of the equation. In place of formal Palestinian concessions, he sought American ones to compensate Israeli sacrifices and to help offset some of the plan's inherent risks. The specific concessions being sought by Olmert's team included: formal American endorsement with strong diplomatic backing, formal recognition of Israeli lines after withdrawal (including

controversial, major settlement blocks Ariel, Ma'ale Adumim, and Gush Etzion), and support for footing the bill for moving settlers and certain IDF installations (estimated at \$10 to \$18 billion).¹⁵⁵ Allegedly, Olmert was so focused on securing American backing for the plan that one of his first questions for his staff after the March elections was something along the lines of “so when can we go to Washington?”.¹⁵⁶ The trip happened within a month of him being sworn in.

However, the administration made clear both publicly and in private that such backing would not be forthcoming on the prime minister's visit to the White House.¹⁵⁷ Olmert dropped his requests for aid or recognition of specific settlement blocks in advance of the trip, and, in the words of one analyst, before the meeting “both sides had lowered expectations below the Dead Sea”.¹⁵⁸ Although the president praised Olmert's thinking as “bold ideas,” he steered clear of endorsing specifics or suggesting that the time was right for implementing them yet.¹⁵⁹ Olmert was discouraged from pursuing realignment before first trying talks with Abu Mazen and the PA, all this in the context of Hamas's victory in the 2006 PLC

¹⁵⁵ Barnard, “With Lead in Israel's Polls, Kadima Lays Out Plans”; Leslie Susser, “Pulling Back from Withdrawal,” *Jerusalem Report*, June 26, 2006; Anne Gearan, “Israel Plan Divides U.S. Conservatives,” *Associated Press*, May 20, 2006; Joshua Mitnick, “Olmert Asks for a Word with Bush,” *Washington Times*, May 22, 2006; Yochi J. Dreazen, “Israeli Premier Wants U.S. Help On Border Plan: Olmert Goes to Washington Amid Wavering Consensus On Dealing With Hamas,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 23, 2006; Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 51.

¹⁵⁶ Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 51.

¹⁵⁷ Matt Spetalnick, “Bush to Take Cautious Tack on Israel's W. Bank Plan,” *Reuters News*, May 18, 2006; Amy Teibel, “Israeli Leader Expected to Leave Meeting with Bush Without Support for West Bank Pullout,” *Associated Press*, May 22, 2006; Gearan, “Israel Plan Divides U.S. Conservatives.”

¹⁵⁸ David Makovsky, quoted in Peter Baker and Glenn Kessler, “Israel Has ‘Bold Ideas,’ Bush Says: President's Endorsement of West Bank Strategy Steers Clear of Specifics,” *Washington Post*, May 24, 2006. See also Gearan, “Israel Plan Divides U.S. Conservatives.”

¹⁵⁹ George W. Bush, “President Bush and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel Participate in Joint Press Availability” (White House website archives, May 23, 2006).

elections – suggesting the plan would be a non-starter for the near future.¹⁶⁰

In short, the reception for Olmert's realignment plan was lukewarm. The Bush team was open to the idea in the longer term but were unwilling to support it without Israel first building the groundwork for an international consensus around the plan by trying out talks with the Palestinian Authority first.¹⁶¹ U.S. backing was not out of the question, but it was basically withheld for the time being. As the New York Times foreign desk put it, the official reaction was "2 cheers for Olmert in Washington".¹⁶²

In public, Olmert tried to put a positive face on the result, remarking at the end of their press conference that "I am grateful to the President... for his willingness to examine together with me these new ideas – as he called them, bold ideas" and later declaring that "I am very, very, very satisfied with the president's comments".¹⁶³ However, it was clear that, by the standards his team had set for the visit in advance, the prime minister had "returned home almost empty handed"¹⁶⁴ Multiple observers described the American response to Olmert's solicitation of LSI as a "cold shoulder,"¹⁶⁵ "cold support,"¹⁶⁶ or "pour[ing] cold water"¹⁶⁷ (though to be

¹⁶⁰ Nathan Guttman, "Work with Abbas, Bush to Tell PM: U.S. Upset at Olmert's Belittling of PA Leader," *Jerusalem Post*, May 23, 2006; Glenn Kessler, "U.S. Uneasy About Israel's Plans for West Bank; Withdrawal Without Negotiation Could Pose Problems for Bush Administration, as Well as Arab Neighbors," *Washington Post*, May 23, 2006; "A Dry Run for a Wet Disaster; President Bush Prepping for First Meeting With New Israeli Prime Minister," *CNN American Morning* (Cable News Network (CNN), May 23, 2006).

¹⁶¹ Nathan Guttman, "U.S.: International Consensus Crucial for Olmert Plan," *Jerusalem Post*, May 24, 2006.

¹⁶² Steven Erlanger, "2 Cheers for Olmert in Washington," *New York Times*, May 25, 2006.

¹⁶³ First quote is from Bush, "President Bush and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel Participate in Joint Press Availability." Second quote is from Jeffrey Heller and Matt Spetalnick, "Bush Cautiously Welcomes Olmert's West Bank Plan," *Reuters News*, May 23, 2006.

¹⁶⁴ Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 52.

¹⁶⁵ Former Sharon and Olmert advisor Col. (res.) Miri Eisin, "Interview with the Author", July 2011. The same characterization also was employed in "Israeli Premier Said Downplaying Border Plan Due to US

fair, a former State Department official disputed this characterization).¹⁶⁸ Dennis Ross explains that Olmert “needed something from America... to show that, as he evacuated seventy settlements... he garnered meaningful commitments from the United States,” but this support was not forthcoming.¹⁶⁹

The debate over realignment was quickly overtaken when Israel was launched into war after three of its soldiers were taken hostage by Hamas and Hezbollah in the summer of 2006. Indeed, after the war Olmert said that he was putting aside the plan for Israeli withdrawals in order to focus on rehabilitating the home front in the wake of rocket attacks on Israel’s north.¹⁷⁰ Yet during the period that follows, there are three indicators that the Bush administration continued to operate without the desire to bolster Olmert as part of its agenda for the region. First, the administration’s approach to the 2006 war – or at least its recollection – has been littered with considerations of LSI towards Lebanese politics without comparable discussions of LSI towards Israel. Second, the administration declined to provide support for Olmert’s decision to restart negotiations with Syria, something it likely would have done if LSI was one of its priorities. And, third, the administration rejected Israeli appeals to launch an American military strike on the Syrian nuclear reactor at al-Kibar.

In his memoirs, President Bush describes his thinking toward the 2006 war

‘Cold Shoulder’,” *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Translated from May 21st edition of Israel TV Channel 1, May 22, 2006).

¹⁶⁶ Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 51–52.

¹⁶⁷ Susser, “Pulling Back from Withdrawal.”

¹⁶⁸ Danin, “Interview with the Author.”

¹⁶⁹ Ross, *Statecraft: And How to Restore America’s Standing in the World*, 269.

¹⁷⁰ Doug Struck, “Israel Shelves Plan to Pull Out Of Settlements In West Bank,” *Washington Post*, August 23, 2006.

as follows: “in the short run, I wanted to see Hezbollah and their backers badly damaged. In the long run, our strategy was to isolate Iran and Syria as a means to reduce their influence and encourage change from within”. As the war dragged on, he admits that “I started to worry that Israel’s offensive might topple Prime Minister Siniora’s democratic government”.¹⁷¹ Rice agrees that the president was “very worried that the Siniora government might be in real danger of collapsing” and that he gave his aides a handwritten strategy memo insisting that ‘we couldn’t abandon democratic forces and their foothold in Lebanon’.¹⁷² She says that the NSC agreed “to press the Israelis on all fronts to restrain from attacks that punished our allies in Beirut” and explains that she envisioned UNSCR 1701 as “one step toward strengthening our allies in Beirut”.¹⁷³

Although Rice describes recognizing that Olmert would face domestic pressures to make a strong response to the terrorist kidnappings,¹⁷⁴ there is little else in their writings to suggest similar concern for the domestic standing of perceived pro-peace or democratic allies in Israel. Of course, this does not disprove LSI, but the discrepancy is one piece among many that seem to paint a fuller picture of American intentions at the time. In fact, most American leaders seem to have been horrified with Israeli mismanagement of the war efforts, especially in light of the fact that Washington had expended considerable diplomatic capital in order to

¹⁷¹ All quotes are from Bush, *Decision Points*, 414.

¹⁷² Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 488, 491.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 481–482.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 476.

enable the Israeli military campaign.¹⁷⁵ Additionally, Rice reports having especially infuriating interactions with both Olmert and even more so with his minister of defense from the Labor Party, Amir Peretz.¹⁷⁶ For her, the war was “my most frustrating time because every time you thought you had it done, it would unravel”.¹⁷⁷

The war hobbled Olmert politically, ending far short of its proclaimed objective of destroying Hezbollah. A board of inquiry was formed to investigate mismanagement of the war, the Winograd Commission, and its shadow hung over the government for almost a year and a half, releasing a preliminary report in April of 2007 and a final report in January of 2008. The report posed major criticisms of both Olmert and Peretz, the latter of whom was forced to leave the cabinet in June of 2007 when defeated by Ehud Barak for leadership of the Labor Party. Olmert’s own political survival was also thrown into question by the report.

When the preliminary findings were released in April of 2007, many observers thought it would spell the end of his career. Over a hundred thousand protesters called for him to step down, his popularity had fallen to single digits, and even Livni called for him to leave office.¹⁷⁸ However, he refused to step aside, and since both Kadima and Labor were polling poorly having been tarnished by the war,

¹⁷⁵ Cheney, perhaps not surprisingly, being the main exception. For descriptions of the general sense of shock and frustration, see Danin, “Interview with the Author”; Bush, *Decision Points*, 413–414, 422; Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 487–488, 490, 492–494.

¹⁷⁶ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 487–488, 492.

¹⁷⁷ Elisabeth Bumiller, *Condoleezza Rice: An American Life* (Random House, 2007), 295.

¹⁷⁸ Scott Wilson, “Calls Mount for Olmert to Step Down: Blistering Critique of Israel’s Role in Lebanon War Shakes His Governing Coalition,” *Washington Post*, May 2, 2007; Samuel Sockol and Scott Wilson, “Israeli Protesters Demand That Prime Minister Resign,” *Washington Post*, May 4, 2007; Fania Oz-Salzberger, “The Weekend Interview with Tzipi Livni: Move Over, Olmert,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 5, 2007; Shlomo Avineri, “After the Winograd Report, Will Olmert Survive?,” *Daily Star (Lebanon)*, May 4, 2007.

neither party was willing to force new elections.¹⁷⁹ Although Bush's spokesperson stated that the president considered Olmert "essential in working toward a two-state solution,"¹⁸⁰ perhaps more telling was Secretary Rice's decision to cancel a trip to Israel, which her own spokesperson admitted was due to effect the Winograd report's findings were having on the domestic situation within Israel.¹⁸¹ Doubtless, Olmert would have liked to use Rice's visit to highlight the cachet he held with Washington, but the secretary (who, as will be discussed further below, had very close ties with Livni) denied him that opportunity.

The Bush administration also demonstrated a marked reluctance to embrace the Olmert government's approach to Syria issues as well. By early 2007, Olmert had approached Bush with a request for help restarting peace talks with Syria; however, the president indicated he opposed the idea and, while he would not block the Israeli effort, he would not himself participate.¹⁸² This was a major blow to Olmert's endeavor because initially the Syrians insisted on public American mediation of the talks, since one of their main objectives was to lift the diplomatic *cordon sanitaire* imposed on the regime by Washington.¹⁸³ Instead, Olmert initiated mediation and conveyance of private messages through Turkish intermediaries

¹⁷⁹ "Israel Labour Party Could Sink Olmert's Government," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, May 9, 2007; Lawrence Joffe, "Election Shakeup but Olmert Remains: The Israeli Elections Last Month Threw up Some Surprising and Interesting Results," *The Middle East*, July 1, 2007.

¹⁸⁰ Tony Snow, "Press Gaggle by Tony Snow," *White House Press Releases and Documents - Federal Information & News Dispatch*, April 30, 2007.

¹⁸¹ Anne Gearan, "Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice Will Visit Russia but Skip Israel for Now," *Associated Press*, May 7, 2007; "Rice Puts Off Visit to Israel as Olmert Battles Political Woes," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, May 7, 2007; "Rice to Visit Middle East in 'Not-too-distant' Future," *Xinhua News Agency*, May 8, 2007; "Editorial: Condoleezza Baker," *New York Sun*, May 10, 2007.

¹⁸² Rabinovich, *The Lingering Conflict*, 172.

¹⁸³ Aluf Benn, "Converging Interests: Essential, but Not Enough," *Strategic Assessment (Institute for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University)* 11, no. 1 (June 2008); "Olmert Plays down Chances of Israeli-Syria Peace Talks," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, June 19, 2007; Andrew England, "Olmert Signals Readiness for Talks with Syria," *Financial Times*, July 11, 2007.

starting in February of 2007 and only built up to five rounds of acknowledged, indirect proximity talks with Ankara's assistance starting in May of 2008.¹⁸⁴ In addition to Bush's discouragement, Rice has also warned the Israelis against pursuing talks with Syria in the wake of Olmert's first outreach to Damascus through the Turks in early 2007.¹⁸⁵ Given that both the Israelis and Syrians were looking to Washington to play a key role in the talks, however, one might have Bush to be more open to the idea if bolstering Olmert figured prominently on his agenda for the region.

Finally, the last main example of this trend was the administration's response to an Israeli request for an American military on Syria's suspected illicit nuclear reactor at al-Kibar. According to Vice President Cheney, Olmert came to Washington in June of 2007, begging for a U.S. strike against what he viewed as a possible existential threat to Israel, and threatening to take military action if Washington did not.¹⁸⁶ Bush also recalls fielding a phone call from Olmert in which the Israeli leader said "George, I'm asking you to bomb the compound".¹⁸⁷ However, when the president asked his advisors for a show of hands at an NSC meeting later that month, the vice president was the only one who advocated doing as Olmert asked.¹⁸⁸ Rice argued that denying Olmert's request would probably force him to take the diplomatic route of pressuring Syria with American help at the United Nations and

¹⁸⁴ Itamar Rabinovich, "Damascus, Jerusalem, and Washington: The Syrian-Israeli Relationship as a U.S. Policy Issue" (Brookings Institution, March 2009), 17–18; Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 391.

¹⁸⁵ Amos Harel, Ze'ev Schiff, and Yoav Stern, "U.S. Hardens Line on Israel-Syria Talks, J'lem Obeys," *Ha'aretz*, February 23, 2007. See also Nathaniel Popper, "Calls for Talks with Syria Increase in U.S., Israel: Olmert Says Not Now, Bush Also Seen as Being Opposed," *The Forward*, August 25, 2006.

¹⁸⁶ Dick Cheney, *In My Time: A Personal and Political Memoir* (Simon & Schuster, 2011).

¹⁸⁷ Bush, *Decision Points*, 421.

¹⁸⁸ Cheney, *In My Time: A Personal and Political Memoir*, 471–472.

IAEA, and Bush decided to counsel Olmert on pursuing the diplomatic route.¹⁸⁹

As we now know, on September 6th the Israelis would decide to go it alone, using military force to take out the reactor at al-Kibar themselves.¹⁹⁰ The episode stands as yet another moment in which Bush's behavior seems to suggest that fulfilling Olmert's domestic needs was not a pressing concern for him. However, this decision, made in June of 2007, came at a turning point, at which the president and secretary of state's strategic thinking began to reconsider how Olmert factored into American interests.

<Sub-Case 2: LSI Occurrence>

The month of June in 2007 imposed a massive shock on the administration's strategic thinking toward the region. Whereas Fatah and Hamas had been trying to hold together a Palestinian unity government since the Mecca Accords concluded in March, the Hamas takeover of Gaza that June changed Palestinian politics and, in turn, how the administration viewed prospects for peace. Whereas the previous comingling of Palestinian factions since Mecca and perhaps as far back as the PLC elections in January of 2006 had served to discourage American involvement, the Islamic Resistance Movement's military vigor precipitated a crisis that was seen by Washington as a call to action. Some observers predicted that American involvement in the peace process would only decrease (since Hamas's capture of the Gaza Strip obviously complicated certain aspects of trying to forge peace), but such

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.; Bush, *Decision Points*, 421.

¹⁹⁰ Neither Syria nor Israel admitted what had transpired, which minimized pressure for blowback and allowed the Syrian-Israeli talks to resume soon thereafter.

analysts were proven wrong, at least for the remainder of Bush's second term.¹⁹¹

As will be discussed in the next chapter of this dissertation, the Bush administration inaugurated a strategy that outsiders labeled "West Bank First" (WBF), aiming to marginalize Hamas by boosting the appeal of the Palestinian Authority leadership in the West Bank under Mahmoud Abbas and Salam Fayyad. The plan focused on improving quality of life for West Bank Palestinians while simultaneously trying to jump-start negotiations between Israel and the PLO. Whereas only one month earlier Olmert's political future had been in question, and the agenda of discussions with Washington focused mainly on areas of disagreement (for instance, both negotiations with Syria and military strikes against its reactor at al-Kibar), he was now positioned to be a key partner in U.S. plans.¹⁹²

Relations between Olmert and Abu Mazen had been fraught since Mecca and the talks between them had been confined largely to fighting over confidence-building measures instead of addressing core issues. Now, they held a quadrilateral summit at Sharm el-Sheikh at the end of June in which they announced plans to move forward with substantive negotiations, while Olmert handed over hundreds of millions of dollars in withheld Palestinian tax revenues and released 250 Palestinian prisoners as a gesture to Abbas.¹⁹³ When Olmert went to meet Bush at the White

¹⁹¹ See, for example, Adam Entous, " Hamas Takeover in Gaza Would Short-circuit U.S. Plans," *Reuters News*, June 13, 2007.

¹⁹² To be fair, Olmert's June visit to the White House was scheduled at the end of May, shortly before the Hamas coup in Gaza. However, the visit initially seems to have been aimed to focus on Syrian, Iranian, and Palestinian affairs (with considerable disagreement on roadblocks and Syrian issues) but probably would not have showcased the sort of cooperation over Palestinian issues that the visit achieved in the end. "Israeli Leader Olmert to Visit Bush," *Associated Press*, May 31, 2007.

¹⁹³ Steven Erlanger, "Backing Fatah and Abbas, Egypt Organizes Summit Meeting for Palestinian Leader," *New York Times*, June 22, 2007; Ellen Knickmeyer, "Olmert Makes 'Gesture of Goodwill'; At Summit in Egypt, Israeli Leader Pledges to Seek Release of 250 Palestinian Prisoners," *Washington Post*, June 26,

House a week earlier, he praised the new PA emergency government led by Fayyad as a partner for peace and pledged to improve Palestinian freedom of movement in the West Bank.¹⁹⁴ In effect, Olmert granted many of the concessions to Abbas upfront that they had only recently been arguing over.

Rice says they even agreed at Sharm to begin tackling final status issues in Israeli-Palestinian talks, although Olmert refused to acknowledge this in public, presumably for reasons having to do with the stability of his domestic coalition.¹⁹⁵ Still, she believed the ground was now ripe for a major push on core peace process issues and had been urging the president since early June to call for a major international conference that she hoped “would help sustain the good guys [meaning Olmert and Abbas] by giving international momentum to the process”.¹⁹⁶

Wary of multilateral diplomacy or raised expectations, Bush asked if they could call it an “international meeting” instead of a conference, to which Rice quickly assented (ironically enough, Bush either glossed over or forgot his prior objections and called it a “conference” in his memoirs).¹⁹⁷ He announced the administration’s plan in July, although he made clear from the start that what would become the

2007; Ellen Knickmeyer and Scott Wilson, “Israelis, Arabs Meeting to Shore Up Abbas; Portion of Tax Revenue Unfrozen to Aid Fatah,” *Washington Post*, June 25, 2007.

¹⁹⁴ “Olmert: New Palestinian Government a Peace Partner,” *Reuters News*, June 16, 2007; “Israeli PM, Top US Officials to Discuss Revitalizing Mideast Talks,” *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, June 18, 2007; Jennifer Loven, “Bush and Olmert Seek to Bolster Abbas After Palestinian Split.pdf,” *Associated Press*, June 19, 2007.

¹⁹⁵ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 581. Kershner points out that Olmert refused to do so in public; see Isabel Kershner, “Mideast Leaders Show Support for Abbas as Hamas Releases Tape of Israeli,” *New York Times*, June 26, 2007. Olmert’s reluctance was presumably due to coalitional concerns and continued through even the Annapolis period. Two of his secondary coalition partners, Shas and Yisrael Beitenu, were resistant to the idea, and he hoped to avoid provoking a domestic crisis, while the fact that he was discussing issues such as Jerusalem, borders, security, and refugees eventually became an open secret.

¹⁹⁶ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 600–601.

¹⁹⁷ The memoirs point is from Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 450. Bush, *Decision Points*, 408; Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 601.

Annapolis gathering was Rice's project, as he played a distant, supervisory role.¹⁹⁸ In lieu of firm agreements between the parties, Rice shifted focus toward on getting strong turnout for the symbolic event, garnering roughly 50 delegations in attendance.¹⁹⁹

The administration also bumped up rhetoric in support of Olmert and his government. For instance, Rice gave a speech in the weeks before the conference to a gathering in Jerusalem, where she expansively lauded Olmert's role:

"This nation has a proud tradition of leaders... who used their position of strength to extend their hand confidently to historic enemies and to seek peace... we think of Menachem Begin... Yitzhak Rabin... Ariel Sharon and of course, I think now of my good friend and your great leader, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert... The Prime Minister has spoken eloquently about Israel's concern for, in his words, the feelings of indignity and hardship that Palestinians feel and about the need for Israeli leaders, as Yitzhak Rabin did, to take chances, great chances for peace. This is the path that Ariel Sharon laid out at Aqaba... that is why we intend to hold a serious and substantive meeting in Annapolis... that is what great leaders do. They make hard decisions confidently for the sake of peace... and I believe we have two democratic leaders in Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas who know that the best way to serve their citizens is to build a basis for peace".²⁰⁰

At the Annapolis welcome dinner, Rice lauded Olmert and Abbas, proclaiming that "without your leadership and your courage, we wouldn't be here tonight".²⁰¹ Bush argued in his address to the summit that the time was right for a push on the peace process first and foremost:

¹⁹⁸ George W. Bush, "President Bush Discusses the Middle East" (White House website archives, July 16, 2007). In the initial announcement, Bush explained that "Secretary Rice will chair the meeting". For subsequent discussions of this element, see also Glenn Kessler and Michael Abramowitz, "Eyes Will Be on Bush At Talks on Mideast: Delegates to Gauge President's Support For Rice's Efforts," *Washington Post*, November 24, 2007.

¹⁹⁹ Steven Erlanger, "With Issues Unsettled, U.S. Pushes for Full Turnout at Conference on Middle East," *New York Times*, November 19, 2007.

²⁰⁰ Condoleezza Rice, "Remarks at the Saban Forum Dinner" (State Department website archives, November 4, 2007).

²⁰¹ Condoleezza Rice, "Remarks at Dinner for Annapolis Conference Delegations - Benjamin Franklin Room at the U.S. Department of State" (State Department website archives, November 26, 2007).

“because Palestinians and Israelis have leaders who are determined to achieve peace... Prime Minister Olmert has expressed his understanding of the suffering and indignities felt by the Palestinian people. He’s made clear that the security of Israel will be enhanced by the establishment of a responsible, democratic Palestinian state. With leaders of courage and conviction on both sides, now is the time to come together and seek the peace that both sides desire”.²⁰²

He also commended Olmert and Abbas, saying “congratulations for your strong leadership”.²⁰³

Perhaps most striking was the president’s decision to conduct not one but two state visits to Israel in the following six months, in January and May of 2008. The visits are especially striking not just for their frequency but for the fact that he had thus far visited Israel not once in his seven years since becoming president in 2001.

Many observers alleged that the visits were photo opportunities designed to shore up Olmert, especially given that the Winograd Commission was set to issue its final report that January and that Olmert faced a mounting corruption scandal by May. Daniel Levy argued as much, telling the *New York Times* that Bush’s January visit “an act of fidelity to Olmert”.²⁰⁴ Calev Ben-David wrote in the *Jerusalem Post* that “there can be little doubt that President Bush’s decision to join in Israel’s 60th anniversary celebration here next week, just five months after making his very first trip here, was designed in part to boost Olmert’s depressed public standing as he overseas a post-Annapolis process that Washington has invested much effort and

²⁰² George W. Bush, “President Bush Attends Annapolis Conference - U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland” (White House website archives, November 27, 2007).

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Steven Erlanger and Steven Lee Myers, “Bush Begins Mideast Peace Effort Bonded with Olmert,” *New York Times*, January 10, 2008.

prestige in getting under way”.²⁰⁵

Bush continued to praise Olmert’s leadership. During his January visit, at a news conference with the prime minister, Bush said

“I want to thank you for being a partner in peace... I’m so please to have – to watch two leaders, you and President Abbas, work hard to achieve that vision... I wouldn’t be standing here if I did not believe that you, Mr. Prime Minister, and President Abbas and your negotiators were serious... our job is to help you seize that... I’ve come away impressed by your steadfast desire to not only protect your people but to implement a vision that will lead to peace”.²⁰⁶

When questioned by a reporter about the limited visible progress achieved in the post-Annapolis negotiations and whether greater U.S. pressure might be helpful, Bush lashed out at the reporter in defense of Olmert, insisting that “you just heard the man talk about their desire to deal with core issues”.²⁰⁷

In advance of his return visit in May, the president told reporters that “I have great relations with the Prime Minister. I find him to be a frank man, an honest man, and open man, a guy easy to talk to, and somebody who understands the vision necessary for Israeli security”.²⁰⁸ But when asked further whether Olmert was essential for peace talks to proceed, given that he might have to step down, one of the journalists in the room reported that “Bush stressed that these were government processes and observed that the likes of Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni

²⁰⁵ Calev Ben-David, “This Time Around, a Bush Visit Might Come Too Late,” *Jerusalem Post*, May 9, 2008. He is technically incorrect in stating that Bush’s January visit was “his very first trip here,” since Bush had visited once before becoming president, in 1998.

²⁰⁶ George W. Bush, “The President’s News Conference With Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel in Jerusalem” (The Presidential Papers of George W. Bush, January 9, 2008).

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ George W. Bush, “Interview of the President by Jacob Eilon and Gil Tamari, Channel 10 TV, Israel” (White House website archives, May 12, 2008).

and Defense Minister Ehud Barak were also intimately involved”.²⁰⁹ Although he technically said that Olmert and Abu Mazen were “necessary to get a good deal,”²¹⁰ the media read his comments in the opposite direction, interpreting his statements to mean that “peace does not depend on Olmert” and that Livni and Barak were “possible replacements”²¹¹.

Rice makes clear that they approached their trip to Israel that May with a concern in mind about “the need to bolster Olmert against the growing storm clouds of legal and political trouble” that he was now facing.²¹² As I will discuss below, this sentiment was aided by the fact that by this point Bush and Rice were extremely impressed by Olmert’s desire to reach a deal and therefore sought to work with him as much as possible for as long as he might remain in power. Also, Olmert’s advisors told the media that they were leaning towards giving the Americans a wish list for high-tech weapons sales during the visit and that they had been told by the Bush team that they should expect to be pleasantly surprised by the American reaction.²¹³ Senior diplomatic sources in Israel were quoted claiming that a main objective of

²⁰⁹ David Horovitz, “Bush to ‘Post’: Abbas Is a Viable Partner for Peace: President Tells Israeli Journalists There Must Be a Palestinian State, Says PM Olmert Is ‘an Honest Guy’, Calls Iran ‘the Biggest Threat’,” *Jerusalem Post*, May 13, 2008.

²¹⁰ George W. Bush, “Interview of the President by Lukman Ahmed, BBC Arabic” (White House website archives, May 12, 2008).

²¹¹ Laurie Copans, “Bush Tells Israeli Media Peace Does Not Depend on Olmert,” *Associated Press*, May 13, 2008.

²¹² Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 655.

²¹³ Barak Ravid, “Olmert to Hand Bush a Weapons Wish List,” *Ha’aretz*, May 14, 2008. Also, see Yediot Ahronot article from May 14, 2008 on same topic. For what is likely a continuation of this discussion, see additionally Roni Sofer, “Olmert to Leave for Washington: Prime Minister to Leave for Week-long U.S. Visit Monday Night to Facilitate Latest F-35 Fighter Jets Purchase,” *Yediot Ahronot (online)*, June 2, 2008; Roni Sofer, “Official - US-Israel Strategic Alliance Strengthened During PM’s Visit: Members of Olmert’s Delegation to Washington Say US Agreed to Equip Israel with F-35 Fighter Jets, Connect Country to Missile Alert System,” *Yediot Ahronot (online)*, June 5, 2008.

Bush's visit was to give PM Olmert an infusion of moral support.²¹⁴

Facing a difficult battle to retain leadership of the Kadima Party in the wake of his growing legal problems, Olmert pledged at the end of July not to contest the primary and to resign once a new party leader was chosen. True to form, he resigned in September after Livni was chosen to head the party. However, under Israeli law Livni could not be named prime minister without forming a renewed coalition agreement, which she was unable to achieve.²¹⁵ Thus, Israel went to new elections, which were set for February 10th, 2009.

At the end of December, violence escalated coming from Gaza, and Olmert's caretaker government ultimately decided that it had no choice but to engage in a full-scale military operation against Hamas. As Operation Cast Lead came to a close that January, Condoleezza Rice took gestures that were intended to bolster her friend and colleague Tzipi Livni. Rice explains that "Tzipi Livni, who would stand for election as prime minister in a few weeks, called" and asked for America not to endorse the resolution it had been negotiating in the UN Security Council. Rice says she asked Livni " 'would it help if the U.S. abstains?' 'Yes, it would,' she answered". Rice claims this influenced her decision to abstain instead of voting for the resolution, even though Olmert brags that he persuaded President Bush to impose

²¹⁴ Uri Yablonka, "Bush Khozer La-Aretz U-Bi-Yerushalayim Mitkonenim Le-P'kakim (Bush Returns to Israel and in Jerusalem They Are Preparing for Traffic, in Hebrew)," *Ma'ariv*, May 14, 2008.

²¹⁵ In part this was because Livni refused to seek Shas's support by claiming that Jerusalem issues would be off limits for discussion by her government in talks with the Palestinians. Erekat remarks in the Palestine Papers that "to Livni's credit, she did not become prime minister because she refused to say that Jerusalem was not on the table": Clayton E. Swisher and Ghada Karmi, *The Palestine Papers: The End of the Road?* (Hesperus Press, 2011), 221.

this decision on his secretary of state.²¹⁶

Then, on Rice's second to last day as secretary, Livni called and asked for another favor, insisting that they codify existing U.S.-Israel understandings about security arrangements for the end of the war as a memorandum of understanding. Rice describes the remainder of the episode as follows:

"Tzipi Livni was on the phone. 'I need to come there and sign the document. We need a visible demonstration that the U.S. will guarantee these arrangements,' she said. 'Tzipi, there isn't time. I'm leaving office tomorrow. Why don't we just make an announcement in our respective capitals?' But she persisted. 'I'm leaving tonight, and I'll be there tomorrow morning.' I realized that the Israelis needed this one last show of support and that Tzipi, because of her bid to become prime minister, needed it most of all. I guess I can do this one more time, I decided. And so, one hour before I said good-bye to the State Department, I sat in the Treaty Room and signed a memorandum of understanding... I said good-bye to Tzipi at the seventh-floor elevator. 'Thank you,' she said, 'for your friendship and your support of Israel. Come visit. You'll always be welcome.' I hugged her, thanked her for all we'd done together, and wished her good luck in the elections."²¹⁷

After the ceremony, Livni got emotional in response to a reporter's question on the matter; she did not get flustered when one questioner accused her of war crimes, but a reporter from Al Jazeera asked her if the MOU and her visit were a pre-election gimmick on her part, she got worked up, responding "nonsense... there are four-letter words that I don't want to use".²¹⁸

Did the Policy Succeed?

Not really. The administration's record on LSI issues was mixed in every period, with some pluses and minuses in the immediate term but few lasting

²¹⁶ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 726; Tabassum Zakaria, "U.S. Says Remarks on Olmert-Bush Call Inaccurate," *Reuters News*, January 13, 2009.

²¹⁷ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 717-728. Original emphases removed.

²¹⁸ Hilary Leila Krieger, "Israel and US Sign Memorandum of Understanding to Fight Gaza Smuggling: Agreement Calls for Increased Intelligence Cooperation and Funding," *Jerusalem Post*, January 18, 2009.

benefits for peace. In each period, the administration seems to have undermined the efficacy of its efforts by operating as though time was on its side, except for a temporary exception in the end of 2007. Thus, the administration never quite exerted enough political capital to push through results that would be really lasting – for the two-state solution and for the position of peacemakers in Israeli politics. In each sub-case, the administration seemed to postpone tough choices for another day, pulling its punches in ways that lowered the efficacy of LSI. This was the case with regard to realignment, Syria, Annapolis talks, and the 2009 Israeli election.

Shortly after Olmert was elected prime minister, the American administration missed an opportunity to help him pursue realignment. He solicited American LSI in the form of overt diplomatic backing, recognition of specific Israeli settlement blocs, and financial support to backstop Israeli actions. Although these requests were quite substantial, so was the possible up-side. Whereas Sharon's disengagement called for the removal of approximately 9,000 settlers from settlements, mainly in the Gaza Strip, Olmert's plan aimed to remove as many as 90,000 settlers from most of the Israeli settlements deep in the West Bank.²¹⁹ If Bush and Rice really believed, as they have written, that Sharon's disengagement plan represented a major step toward a two-state solution, then Olmert's proposal should have been seen in comparison as a giant leap forward.

However, the administration applied the brakes to Olmert's planning and acted as though it had all of the time in the world in which to address the process.

²¹⁹ For the 9,000 figure, see "Israel's Disengagement Plan: 2005" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, 2008); Jonathan Saul, "Israel's Sharon: No More Unilateral Pullouts," *Reuters News*, September 29, 2005. For the 90,000 figure (which seems to have been an upper bound, although most other estimates seem have been on a similar order of magnitude), see Mitnick, "Olmert Asks for a Word with Bush."

Instead of giving the prime minister a green light and public signs of encouragement (i.e. concessions) in order to turn his ideas into concrete Israeli withdrawals from territory in the West Bank, they pushed him to negotiate with Abu Mazen first – either to achieve something through negotiation with moderates in the PA instead of by Israeli fiat or to at least build up broader diplomatic backing for the plan from American allies in Europe and the Arab world.

These were exactly the sorts of critiques to which Bush and Rice were subjected for their support of Sharon’s disengagement plan in 2004 and 2005, so it is important to at least be consistent in judging the Bush administration’s actions. It would be unfair to criticize them for giving concessions to Israel, ignoring PA moderates, and upsetting America’s allies in Europe and the Arab world in one instance and then criticize them for missing out on a chance for Israeli withdrawals by doing just the opposite in the other instance.

In this episode, the Bush team did take into consideration the importance of trying to negotiate a deal with PA moderates and it did take into consideration the reaction it would get from Europe and the Arab world. Rice recalls that right after Sharon was incapacitated and Olmert was made acting premier, he “reminded me that Sharon had sent him to the United States the year before to outline plans for further ‘separation’ from the Palestinians. I didn’t like the sound of that term but thought that it could be shaped to mean a negotiated solution – not a unilateral one – to the Palestinian question”.²²⁰ And numerous news reports stress the concern

²²⁰ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 414.

American officials had in mind for European and Arab reactions this time around.²²¹ Kastner and Barnea claim that administration officials remembered the outraged EU response to Bush's 2004 letter encouraging Sharon to pursue a unilateral disengagement and that it discouraged them from encouraging Olmert to pursue a second round of withdrawals in 2006.²²²

As a result, the Bush team forced Olmert to shelve realignment for the time being by denying him the LSI he sought from the United States. It can be argued whether this was good or bad for the two-state solution. As noted above, Dennis Ross believes that greater American backing would have elicited positive results for peace. On the other hand, the argument for consistency provided here might justify exactly the approach the Bush administration took to urging Olmert to pursue withdrawals in the context of a negotiated solution.

However, this policy's likely effect on Olmert's standing is less complicated to deduce. That is, while the broader efficacy implications of American actions were rather ambiguous, the implications for narrow efficacy seem logically quite straightforward. Denying Olmert the backing he sought undermined his ability to pursue his main policy program for addressing the conflict and demonstrated that he had a comparatively weaker relationship with Washington than his predecessor, Sharon. One of his main political rivals, former foreign minister and Likud MK Silvan Shalom told the *Jerusalem Post* upon Olmert's return from Washington that

²²¹ Kessler, "U.S. Uneasy About Israel's Plans for West Bank; Withdrawal Without Negotiation Could Pose Problems for Bush Administration, as Well as Arab Neighbors"; "A Dry Run for a Wet Disaster; President Bush Prepping for First Meeting With New Israeli Prime Minister"; Guttman, "U.S.: International Consensus Crucial for Olmert Plan"; Susser, "Pulling Back from Withdrawal."

²²² Barnea and Kastner, *Backchannel*, 45.

the visit was “you can’t hide the discord” between him and Bush and that the visit was “far from successful” considering that the prime minister’s main objective for the visit had been to obtain American endorsement for realignment.²²³ Numerous journalists, in both Israel and the U.S., commented on the gap between the prime minister’s goals and the Bush administration’s response during the visit.²²⁴

The second main area where the administration’s approach to LSI seems to touch on peace process issues is Israel’s relations with Syria. The U.S. position was clearly deleterious for a negotiated peace, strongly discouraging Olmert from reaching out to the government in Damascus to talk peace, a position that may not have been so severe had LSI been part of the U.S. agenda toward Israel. By refusing to participate in the talks and even discouraging the Israelis from engaging with Syria, the Americans made it much harder to launch peace negotiations. It took another year until talks were moving in full force, and even then they never got beyond proximity talks, arguably in large part because of Syria’s unsatisfied interest in U.S. carrots. And, while Bush never entirely warmed up to the idea of Israeli talks with Damascus, the U.S. changed its posture by the end of 2007 from a right light to a yellow one, right around the time when it shifted from non-LSI to LSI.²²⁵ However, Washington continue to be wary of the talks for reasons unrelated to LSI, mainly

²²³ Anshel Pfeffer, “Shalom: No Way to Hide the Discord Behind the American Hug,” *Jerusalem Post*, May 25, 2006.

²²⁴ For Israeli reactions, see “Israeli Premier Said Downplaying Border Plan Due to US ‘Cold Shoulder’”; Guttman, “Work with Abbas, Bush to Tell PM: U.S. Upset at Olmert’s Belittling of PA Leader”; Guttman, “U.S.: International Consensus Crucial for Olmert Plan”; Susser, “Pulling Back from Withdrawal.” For American reactions, see Spetalnick, “Bush to Take Cautious Tack on Israel’s W. Bank Plan”; Gearan, “Israel Plan Divides U.S. Conservatives”; Teibel, “Israeli Leader Expected to Leave Meeting with Bush Without Support for West Bank Pullout”; Erlanger, “2 Cheers for Olmert in Washington.”

²²⁵ Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 391.

involving the regime's domestic issues and its misbehavior in Lebanon and Iraq.²²⁶ Again, the administration emphasized other near-term priorities instead of seeking to seize promising openings for cementing progress on the peace process.

Next, there is the question of Olmert's standing and how it intertwined with the Annapolis process. This was the administration's main endeavor related to LSI during the Olmert years. It is easy to dismiss the administration's efforts as a failure solely on the grounds that it never extracted any sort of agreement between the parties from the Annapolis talks. However, it is important to evaluate efficacy in terms of the criterion set forth in the theory for this dissertation – that is, contributory causation rather than necessary-and-sufficient causation. It is also important to recognize where opportunities were created that might not have existed before, even if those opportunities were not ultimately utilized.

In terms of narrow efficacy, the administration's backing for Olmert did contribute to his standing, even if its help was not decisive in the end for keeping him in office. To be fair, as one journalist points out, "Olmert [was] the most unpopular prime minister in Israel's history," giving the U.S. a rather tough set of circumstances with which to work.²²⁷ On the other hand, this domestic weakness probably gave Olmert much greater incentive to make bold moves on the peace process because his political outlook was so endangered.²²⁸

²²⁶ Jay Solomon, "Divisions Surface Between U.S., Israel on Strategy: Jerusalem's Talks With Damascus Highlight Tensions," *Wall Street Journal*, May 23, 2008; David Horowitz, "Like Much of the Israeli Public, Bush Wonders Whether PM Knows What He's Doing: President Let the Syrian Cat Out of the Bag Last Week, When He Spoke Warily of the 'Decision Made' by Olmert," *Jerusalem Post*, May 23, 2008.

²²⁷ Linda Gradstein, "Israelis See Annapolis Summit with Hope, Skepticism," *All Things Considered* (National Public Radio (NPR)), November 22, 2007).

²²⁸ Dan Williams, "Analysis: Bush, Olmert, Abbas: Too Weak for Annapolis to Work?," *Reuters News*, November 21, 2007.

Still, American efforts probably boosted his domestic standing. Whereas in May of 2007 Olmert's approval rating hit as low as 3% (with some Israelis joking that the margin of error might put this figure into the negatives), his popularity gradually rose through the time of the peace meeting at Annapolis to the point where his approval rating now range from 22-41%, depending on metrics.²²⁹ Although some of this bump was attributed by observers to public discussions of his fight with prostate cancer and his handling of the strike on the Syrian reactor at al-Kibar,²³⁰ the timing of this bump suggests that his involvement in the Annapolis process was probably its main source, in spite of some public skepticism about what sort of lasting effects the conference itself would actually produce.

A plurality of Israelis thought that Bush's January visit to Israel would strengthen Olmert politically,²³¹ and during this period Kadima finally closed a yawning gap with the Likud, provided Livni ran instead of Olmert - probably on the basis of the party's perceived role on the negotiating process.²³² Although a majority of voters still seemed to think that Olmert should resign, now there was also a majority in favor of either no resignation or having a different Kadima leader take over the reins.²³³

²²⁹ "Israel PM Ratings Rise over Cancer Diagnosis," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, October 30, 2007; Ilene R. Prusher, "Once Hawkish, Olmert Pushes Peace," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 7, 2007; "Israelis Support, but Pessimistic on Revived Peace Push: Poll," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, November 30, 2007.

²³⁰ See also "Mysterious Airstrike in Northern Syria Boosts Olmert's Popularity: Poll," *Associated Press*, September 18, 2007; Jeff Barak, "Olmert's Cancer News Boosts His Popularity," *The Jewish Chronicle*, November 2, 2007.

²³¹ "Israelis Sceptical Bush Visit Will Advance Peace Talks," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, January 10, 2008.

²³² "59% of Public Believe Olmert Should Resign," *Yediot Ahronot (online)*, May 12, 2008.

²³³ "Most Israelis Still Favour Olmert, Baraq Resignation, but Opposition Declines," *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Survey of "Polls published by the Israeli media on 1 February on the findings of six Israeli institutes after the January 30 release of the Winograd Committee report," February 1, 2008).

Of course, Olmert was eventually brought down by factors beyond Washington's control. His domestic standing was consistently tarnished by two sources of weakness that outside supporters generally could not ameliorate: the 2006 war and perceptions of corruption. The public was deeply dissatisfied with him after the war,²³⁴ and the Winograd Commission's subsequent investigation was a Sword of Damocles, menacingly dangling over his head. Although he survived both rounds of reporting by the Commission and the second one turned out to be less critical than anticipated, a majority of the public still thought he should resign when asked each time, both in April of 2007 and in January of 2008.²³⁵

Similarly, his growing file of corruption cases seriously detracted from his domestic standing, both within the coalition and with the public at large. Olmert faced allegations corruption from his first days on office as prime minister. Just as one case against him was closed in November of 2007, two new cases were opened. In the end, the May 2008 testimony of a onetime supporter, U.S. businessman Morris Talansky finally broke the camel's back, when he admitted giving about \$150,000 to Olmert over 15 years and that Olmert had tried to aid one of his business ventures.²³⁶ Talansky's testimony finally drove the Labor Party to push Olmert into

²³⁴ Yossi Verter, "Poll: Olmert, Peretz Approval Ratings Hit New Low Following War: PM's Rating Dips to 22 Percent, Defense Min.'s to 14," *Ha'aretz*, September 21, 2006.

²³⁵ "Poll: Israelis Want Olmert Out: Most Israelis (72 Percent) Believe Prime Minister Olmert Should Not Be the One to Implement Winograd Report Lessons, and 65 Percent Say Prime Minister Should Resign Immediately, According to Yedioth Ahronoth Poll," *Yedioth Ahronot (online)*, May 2, 2007; Richard Boudreaux, "Israeli Panel Faults 2006 War Effort: The Report on the Conflict with Lebanon's Hezbollah Doesn't Case Blame on Olmert or Other Leaders," *Los Angeles Times*, January 31, 2008; "Polls: Most Israelis Want Olmert to Resign," *Associated Press*, January 31, 2008.

²³⁶ Ofra Edelman and Tomer Zarchin, "Talansky: Olmert Got \$150,000 from Me, Introduced Me to Tycoons," *Ha'aretz*, May 27, 2008; Daniel Levy, "Is Israel's Prime Minister Going Out on a High Note?," *Prospects for Peace (weblog)*, May 27, 2008.

resigning and making way for a new head of Kadima.²³⁷ When Livni came to the fore, Labor was willing to join a new government with Kadima at the helm, but Shas would no longer oblige.²³⁸ In the end, there was little Washington could do to prevent the judicial inquiry from proceeding or Olmert's coalition from collapsing.

Still, the administration's efforts to bolster Olmert did seem to strengthen his hand, enabling and encouraging him to pursue serious talks with the Palestinian Authority under Abbas. One could argue that these efforts were a total failure in the broader sense of efficacy, since no negotiated agreement ever came out of these talks. However, it is highly likely that the American support Olmert was receiving enabled and encouraged him to pursue the first substantive negotiations, even on core issues, in nearly a decade of deadlock between Israelis and Palestinians. The parties narrowed gaps considerably on a range of issues, including administration of holy sites in Jerusalem, arrangements for safeguarding Israeli security from within the West Bank, and specific proposals for territorial swaps along the 1967 line.²³⁹

Also, the effort created opportunities that the parties might then have done a better job of seizing. Olmert made a major, comprehensive proposal to Abbas when he was nearly on his way out, that the Palestinian leader might have been wise to

²³⁷ For a chronology of Olmert's corruption battles and a discussion of how this led for the Labor Party to call for his resignation, see Asher Arian and Michal Shamir, "Introduction," in *The Elections in Israel, 2009*, ed. Asher Arian and Michal Shamir (Transaction Publishers, 2011), 4–5; "Israel's Olmert Averts Early Poll," *BBC News*, June 26, 2008; Ezra HaLevi, "Poll: PM Olmert Is Israel's Most Corrupt Politician," *Arutz Sheva*, November 8, 2007; "59% of Public Believe Olmert Should Resign."

²³⁸ Jonathan Marcus, "The 2009 Israeli Election: A Bump in the Road to Peace?," *The Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (2009): 58.

²³⁹ Bernard Avishai, "A Plan for Peace That Could Still Be," *New York Times (Magazine)*, February 7, 2011; Gil Ronen, "Abbas 'I Agreed to a United Jerusalem': PA Chief Says He Agreed with Olmet on an Open Jerusalem with Two Municipalities," *Arutz Sheva*, January 23, 2011; Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, sec. "What the Talks Achieved," pp. 417–425.

respond to more substantively if not accept.²⁴⁰ And when it became clear that Abbas would not accept the Olmert proposal, the U.S. administration might have been wiser to try and codify the existing understandings between the parties in the form of a major interim agreement on a range of core issues that would have moved the parties closer to a two-state solution and created more momentum for peace.

But none of these opportunities would even have been available without encouraging and bolstering Olmert to pursue substantive talks in the first place. Additionally, much of the progress made in talks between the parties – although not accepted as a basis for negotiation by Netanyahu – will probably inform future negotiations at some eventual point down the road. Thus, if any effort in the realm of LSI should be judged a particular success in terms of efficacy, it should probably be the administration’s Annapolis push, from late 2007 through early 2008. However, even then the administration probably should have done more to ensure that these opportunities bore fruit – but this would have required an investment of political capital beyond what President Bush seemed willing to consider: for instance, a leadership summit with Olmert and Abbas, American parameters as bridging proposals, or pressuring the parties to conclude an interim agreement.

What U.S. officials did try to do was to bolster Livni in the lead-up to the impending elections in Israel by framing the outcome of Operation Cast Lead. However, they did so in a manner that was insufficient for achieving American aims and actually helping to get her elected. Thus, they may have helped boost her

²⁴⁰ Ethan Bronner, “Olmert Memoir Cites Near Deal for Mideast Peace,” *New York Times*, January 27, 2011; Gregg Carlstrom, “The ‘Napkin Map’ Revealed,” *Al Jazeera (English)*, January 23, 2011; Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 650–656, 723–724.

standing but nowhere near enough. The effort was moderately successful in the narrow sense but not successful enough to be decisive or to have any sort of benefits in the broader sense for advancing the peace process.

Although Livni ultimately failed to become Israel's next prime minister, there is a good chance American support raised her standing. Carol Migdalovitz, an analyst for CRS, concludes that Livni "may have been aided by her efforts to project strength and determination during the Gaza conflict, when she held her own beside an array of foreign interlocutors seeking an early end to the fighting".²⁴¹ Jonathan Marcus writes in the *Washington Quarterly* that Livni's close relationship with Rice was seen as an asset at least in her primary battle in September of 2008, a race she won by only one percent.²⁴² Members of the opposition attacked her for failing to completely stop the Security Council Resolution criticizing Israel during the war, so it is likely that America voting for the measure would have made her look even worse to Israeli voters, undermining one of the main elements of her appeal – strong diplomatic relations with Washington.²⁴³ The MOU may have helped repair Livni's image some in this regard. However, even though the Israeli public was very satisfied with the government's conduct in the war, it is generally agreed that the main beneficiary of the conflict was the Israeli right.²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ Jim Zanotti, "Israel and Hamas: Conflict in Gaza (2008-2009)" (Congressional Research Service (CRS), Library of Congress, Report R40101, 2009), 29.

²⁴² Marcus, "The 2009 Israeli Election," 58; Arian and Shamir, "Introduction," 5; Chris Otton, "Israel's Barak Back from the Brink After Gaza War," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, January 18, 2009; Marius Schnatter, "Israeli Right Set to Win Elections on Back of Gaza War," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, January 23, 2009.

²⁴³ Gil Hoffman and Herb Keinon, "Olmert, Foreign Ministry Officials Support Livni over UN Vote. Likud, Labor Pledge, However, They Will Make 'Campaign Fodder' Out of Failure to Obtain US Veto," *Jerusalem Post*, January 12, 2009.

²⁴⁴ Zanotti, "Israel and Hamas: Conflict in Gaza (2008-2009)," 29; Arian and Shamir, "Introduction," 7–8.

Tzipi Livni and Kadima received twenty-eight seats in the 2009 Israeli elections, one more than Netanyahu's Likud. However, the right-wing bloc grew to sixty-five out of 120 seats in the Knesset, which destroyed Livni's ability to form a government of her own and enabled Netanyahu to become the next prime minister. Thus, although framing the war's conclusion may have helped Livni at least contend the election, the war itself probably harmed her more than helped. Voters emerged much more concerned about "the security situation" than "the political issues of a Palestinian state and the Golan Heights".²⁴⁵ As a result, the campaign narrative of the Likud and its partners, such as Yisrael Beiteinu, appeared more salient to Israeli voters than the narratives of Kadima, Labor, and Meretz which focused on a negotiated solution mediated by Washington. Perhaps a more effective strategy for boosting Livni and therefore the two-state solution would have been to invest American political capital in signing some sort of interim agreement or, in lieu of that, publishing some suggested U.S. parameters in advance of the Israeli vote. The Bush administration's approach of not wanting to push for peace harder than the parties were willing to go themselves in retrospect may have aided Bibi's election.

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

The various theories tested by this dissertation offer mutually exclusive predictions across seven dimensions of observable implications. The first category is perceptions of sender interests. National interests theory (Theory #1) expects

²⁴⁵ Arian and Shamir, "Introduction," 12.

that the timing of LSI occurrence should be driven primarily by objective, unitary national interests of the United States. The lobby-legislative approach (Theory #2) anticipates that occurrence should vary according to the institutionally-driven preferences of (pro-Israel) lobbyists and members of Congress and that LSI should therefore tend not to occur, since these groups tend to oppose intervention into Israeli domestic affairs. The bureaucratic politics approach (Theory #3) expects that meddling should be consistent and frequent given the high priority that working-level officials, especially in the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, attribute to advancing the peace process. Finally, the agency-based approach of leadership theory (Theory #4) predicts that occurrence should be driven by the subjective beliefs of the very highest levels of political leaders in the government of the sender state.

Given that LSI occurred at some times but not others during the Olmert years, it is difficult to make a persuasive case for either Theory #2 or Theory #3. One of them, the lobby-legislative approach, predicts LSI should never happen, whereas the other one, the bureaucratic approach, expects it to occur almost constantly. Instead, the best contenders for fitting the data in this observable implications category seem to be the national interests and leadership-based approaches.

However, the national interests based approach is comparative weak for a number of reasons. First of all, it is difficult to explain why the Bush administration strongly endorsed unilateral disengagement in one period (2004-2005) but saw it as an obstacle to peace in another period (2006). Second, one might easily have

expected the U.S. government to disengage further from the peace process after Hamas firmly entrenched itself in part of the Palestinian territories – clearly an obstacle to peace – but this expectation was also proven wrong. Third, it is hard to explain why Washington would support pulling Syria into a pro-Western orbit through peace negotiations in the 1990s but oppose doing so when the opportunity presented itself in the late 2000s, with Israel finally seeking to engage Damascus in talks once again.

Taking up just the last example for heuristic purposes, it becomes quite clear that individual-level factors were important for explaining the divergent paths taken by Israel and the U.S. in this regard. In fact, it seems Bush and Olmert took diametrically opposite lessons from the previous year's Lebanon war: Bush took it as proof of Syria's terrorist nature, part of an evil axis with Hezbollah and Iran; Olmert took it as proof of Syria's strategic importance and focused on the possible benefits of peeling Syria away from these allies.²⁴⁶ Similarly, the Bush team resented Syrian meddling in Lebanon and Iraq and pointed to human rights issues internal to the country; Olmert's government did not particularly care about these American concerns.²⁴⁷ Also, some saw Olmert's Syria gamble as a cynical bid to save his own skin rather than a genuine strategic endeavor, when in fact the plan seems to have had the full backing of the national security establishment within Israel.²⁴⁸ And other American leaders, such as Nancy Pelosi and Barack Obama saw

²⁴⁶ Bush, *Decision Points*, 414; Rabinovich, *The Lingering Conflict*, 171.

²⁴⁷ "U.S. 'Unlikely' to Want Israel-Syria Negotiations - Israel Radio," *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Translated from June 18th edition of Voice of Israel Radio, June 18, 2007). For a retrospective discussion of these areas of disagreement, see also Solomon, "Divisions Surface Between U.S., Israel on Strategy: Jerusalem's Talks With Damascus Highlight Tensions."

²⁴⁸ Rabinovich, "Damascus, Jerusalem, and Washington: The Syrian-Israeli Relationship as a U.S. Policy Issue," 17.

negotiations with Syria in a very different strategic light than did President Bush.²⁴⁹

It also turns out to be quite difficult to explain the shift from non-LSI to LSI during the Olmert years without looking at the subjective perceptions of President Bush and Secretary Rice. Probably the main reason why the American administration shied away from endorsing disengagement à la Olmert was because Rice herself now saw better prospects for a negotiated solution.²⁵⁰

Also, Bush and Rice's perceptions of their counterparts seem to have carried important causal weight. The president's own relationship with Olmert was "cordial" but not warm at the start.²⁵¹ His enthusiasm for the prime minister only picked up later on. Bush writes in his memoirs that the low-key, self-assured unilateral Israeli strike on al-Kibar "made up for the confidence I had lost in the Israelis during the Lebanon War".²⁵² Then, Rice reports that, "during the President's trip in January [of 2008 to Israel], we'd both been impressed by Olmert's desire to get a deal".²⁵³ Then, when Olmert explained to her his personal bottom lines, she was quite taken with him, asking Hadley to "tell the President he was right about Olmert. He wants a deal... frankly he might die trying to get one".²⁵⁴ Then, in advance of their May return visit to Israel, allegedly Bush said "it sounds like he's serious – really serious," to which Rice replied "Yes, he is... and he knows he's

²⁴⁹ "Pelosi Says Gave Syria Israeli Peace Message," *Reuters News*, April 4, 2007; Hilary Leila Krieger, "Obama to 'Post': I Support Israel-Syria Talks, No One Should Block Such Dialogue," *Jerusalem Post*, May 23, 2008.

²⁵⁰ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 414.

²⁵¹ Rabinovich, *The Lingering Conflict*, 164.

²⁵² Bush, *Decision Points*, 422.

²⁵³ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 650.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 652.

running out of time”.²⁵⁵

Rice also reports that her relationship with Tzipi was full of warmth and mutual admiration, explaining that “ending the conflict between Arabs and Israelis was her mission in Israeli politics” and she “spoke movingly” about giving up the Revisionist dream of a Greater Israel.²⁵⁶ Rice felt that “the good thing about Tzipi is that she is a problem solver and we’d developed a relationship of trust”.²⁵⁷

In short, it seems difficult to explain American behavior in first rejecting LSI and then pursuing it without consideration of individual-level variables, particular the subjective perceptions of American interests on the parts of Bush and Rice. Thus, Theory #4 seems the most persuasive in this particular regard.

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

The next area where the theories diverge is perceptions of close contests in the target state. Although theories 2 and 3 do not offer clear predictions in this regard, theories 1 and 4 do. If attempts at intervention are timed according to objective opportunities abroad, then that should increase our confidence in national interests theory. If attempts at intervention are spaced less rationally, skewed by the perceptions that top leaders hold in the sender state about political contests in the target state, then that should raise confidence in Theory #4.

However, the Olmert years do not give us much in the way of data with which to compare the theories. The only objective political contest in which American

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 655.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 282.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

officials seemed to get involved was the lead-up to the 2009 Israeli elections. In that instance the U.S. intervention was not particularly proactive; rather, Rice's actions that we are aware of seemed to be prompted by her friend Tzipi Livni's solicitation of U.S. support. Thus, American intervention was carried out on an individual basis and was timed according to the secretary's personal attention span rather than on the basis of a proactive, government-wide effort to muster American assets in a way that would maximize the chances of influencing the outcome of Israel's elections. This provides some weak, tentative support for Theory #4, but it is rather limited evidence for claiming anything broader than that.

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

The theories offer divergent predictions with regard to the patterns of decision-making within the sender government leading up to LSI. Theories 2 and 3 expect other sections of government in the sender state to be well-informed about plans for intervention and to be influential in shaping the content or direction of those plans. Theory #4 expects top leaders in the sender state to leave other domestic actors – Congress, lobbyists, and bureaucrats – basically in the dark, so that they can avoid domestic criticism for their actions and so that they can prevent leaks that would undermine the effectiveness of meddling abroad.

Again, evidence is somewhat sparse in this regard, perhaps because the era in question is so recent. However, one particularly suggestive episode was the administration's cold shoulder response to Olmert when he sought speedy endorsement for unilateral disengagement from the West Bank. On the same week

he visited the White House, he gave a joint address to both chambers of Congress, in which he was given a heroic welcome with more than a dozen standing ovations.²⁵⁸

That gathering would have given Olmert anything he wanted were it up to them. And the lobby group they were most responsive to on these issues, AIPAC, had already chosen to endorse unilateral disengagement when Ariel Sharon pursued the policy exactly one year before.²⁵⁹ Both groups cooperated to pass a bill through the House of Representatives the week of Olmert's visit to choke off the flow of U.S. aid to the Palestinian Authority, drawing the ire of the Bush administration.²⁶⁰ It is striking that the Bush administration that very same week prevailed in the area of blocking West Bank disengagement (and avoiding LSI), on the basis of reasons that would have held almost no sway with actors in Congress: buy-in from European and Arab allies, not wanting to legitimate large settlement blocs, and trying to build up Abu Mazen and moderates in the Palestinian Authority. It appears that in the sub-area of LSI, the dynamics of U.S. decision-making toward Israel were unusually weighted toward top leaders in the White House and Foggy Bottom, ignoring the desires of pro-Israel lobbyists and members of Congress.

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

The political calendar in the sender state also offers some areas for inferential leverage over the theories. Theory #2 expects that lobbyists and

²⁵⁸ The number is pegged at between sixteen and eighteen. See Erlanger, "2 Cheers for Olmert in Washington"; Nathan Guttman, "Olmert 'Very Pleased' with US Support. Bush Congress Applaud West Bank Pullout Plan," *Jerusalem Post*, May 25, 2006.

²⁵⁹ Ron Kampeas, "Sharon Triumphs: Disengagement Wins Ringing Endorsement," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)*, May 27, 2005; James Besser, "AIPAC and Sharon Get What They Need," *Jewish Journal*, May 26, 2005.

²⁶⁰ Jill Abrams, "House Votes to Cut Aid to Palestinians," *Associated Press*, May 23, 2006.

legislators should be especially predominant during periods of electoral politics in which the government is divided or when America is about to undergo another round of elections. Theory #3 expects that LSI should be especially common in the first year of a president's term because he is only just beginning to impose his political appointees on the bureaucracies, giving working level officials even greater leeway to imprint their preferences on national policy outcomes.

Both of these theories do a relatively poor job of explaining variation in LSI behavior across the episodes according to cycles of domestic power. For instance, LSI did occur during the first year of Bush's second term, something that fits with the expectations of Theory #3, when he went to bat for Sharon, but his efforts were actually more concerted in this attempt in 2004 than in 2005, a period in which bureaucratic preferences should have been relatively less influential on the outcome, not more. Bureaucratic preferences were reflected in the Yaron Affair during those same years, but the effort started in 2004 rather than 2005. Nor can cycles of bureaucratic power do anything to explain the shift from non-LSI to LSI in Bush's second to last year in office.

Meanwhile, we should expect American LSI to be much rarer in the last two years of Bush's presidency according to Theory #2, but this is simply not the case. The Democrats took both the House and the Senate, imposing the strongest divided government constraints that Bush had to face any time in his two terms as president, and yet during that period his government shifted away from non-LSI and pursued a policy of reengaging in Israeli domestic politics in favor of the incumbent party and its leaders. Under Theory #2 and the cycles of domestic power

framework, we should have expected LSI to be unusually difficult in 2007 and 2008, not more likely to occur.

One could argue that Bush was freer to pursue LSI in his last two years in office because he no longer feared removal from power. However, one could make a similar argument about midterm elections in 2006, when he was avoiding LSI. Further, 2006 could have been a great opportunity for him to pursue LSI because the means to do so would have been relatively popular at home with Congress and supporters of the pro-Israel lobby – in short, allowing Olmert a free hand to pursue disengagement with an American imprimatur. To do so could have been smart electoral strategy if employed properly, but to their credit Bush's team seems to have had other, more policy-relevant, concerns in mind. Thus, Theory #2 finds only limited support, even with regard to periods of the domestic calendar when the theory should hold an especially powerful sway over the data.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

Another area in which some of the theories offer different observable implications is in the area of bureaucratic freelancing. If efforts at LSI are undertaken by working-level officials in the sender state on a very frequent basis, then that should provide some rather strong evidence for Theory #3. However, if these freelance attempts at LSI are relatively rare and heavily conditioned upon lax executive control by the president, then that should provide some mitigating evidence for Theory #4.

The fact is that the Olmert years offers us very little evidence for adjudicating

between the theories in either direction, since freelancing by U.S. officials does not seem to have taken place. Perhaps the most logical explanation fits with the approach of leadership theory, but that is circumstantial evidence at best. That is, freelance LSI may have stopped during the Olmert years because the president finally had an empowered secretary of state on these issues, to whom he could look as a designated enforcer for administration objectives toward Israel. Whereas Powell was disenfranchised from being the president's point person on Israel issues as early as 2002, Rice was only put into a formal position of authority at the State Department in 2005. One instance of freelancing did occur in 2004 into 2005, the Yaron Affair, but that was more of a Pentagon issue than a State Department one, and once Rice was settled in at Foggy Bottom the freelancing basically stopped. From then on, the president had an empowered enforcer for managing Israel issues on a day-to-day basis, so his detached manner may not have mattered so much. In this regard, the dynamics of Bush 43's second term on Israel policy resembled that of his father's, when James Baker served as the administration's point person both for pursuing LSI and, implicitly, for ensuring that freelancing did not occur.

6. Consistency of Message:

In order for LSI to be effective at achieving its intended objectives, it must articulate some sort of message in a clear and consistent manner to members of the target state's selectorate. Theory #1 anticipates that this should be a relatively unproblematic task, since the sender state should behave in a unitary manner when crafting foreign policy. Theories 2 and 3 expect the institutional preferences of

lobbyists, legislators, or bureaucrats to foul up the consistency of messaging when LSI is being pursued. Theory #4 argues that the consistency and clarity of messaging should only be sub par and detract from efficacy when top leaders in the sender state are having a difficult time coordinating amongst themselves.

The administration did at times send confusing signals to Israeli voters in contradiction to its intended message. For instance, when the administration had particularly low regard for Olmert and had reason to expect he might be replaced after the first Winograd Commission report was released, Bush's spokesperson said that the president thought Olmert was "essential" for peace – something that might have suggested that the administration was pursuing LSI at the time, even though it was not. And yet when the administration really was seeking to bolster Olmert in May of the following year, the president speculated to reporters that Olmert could be replaced by Livni or Barak without damage being done to the two-state solution – something that might have suggested that the U.S. was not backing Olmert, when in fact it sought to do so. These confusing comments from the White House certainly did not reinforce the administration's intended message.

Given that Rice admits that she and the president approached the May 2008 state visit to Israel with the objective of bolstering Olmert in mind, the president's speech to the Knesset on that visit stands as a particular striking sign that the administration's message coordination was beginning to fray. In what was probably intended as a backhanded swipe at candidate Barack Obama's calls for engagement with Iran and Syria, the president proclaimed the following:

"Some seem to believe we should negotiate with terrorists and radicals, as if some

ingenious argument will persuade them they have been wrong all along. We have heard this foolish delusion before... We have an obligation to call this what it is – the false comfort of appeasement, which has been repeatedly discredited by history”.²⁶¹

However, the remark was also interpreted by some as a dig against Olmert’s negotiations with the PA and especially Syria, since the Israeli government went public about its secret ties to Damascus later that week.²⁶² Also, the Bush’s speech was a “complete identification with Israel and its threat perceptions... and was virtually silent on the very peace process over which he was allegedly presiding”.²⁶³ Even Rice thought noticed this about the speech and thought it was a mistake:

“I had reviewed and approved the speech. Now, listening to it, I thought it should have done more. Somehow the President should have used the moment to challenge the Israelis to make tough decisions – the peace process wasn’t even mentioned. *How did I let that happen?* I wondered. I’m certain that there would have been no objection to language about Annapolis – but somehow it didn’t get done. It was a missed opportunity for diplomacy”.²⁶⁴

These mixed messages seem to have been mainly an issue intra-administration coordination in support of LSI and probably resulted from the fact that the president was much less engaged and disciplined on Israel issues than his secretary of state. Thus, even when he devoted enough attention to conduct two state visits to Israel in less than six months, the coordination was less than ideal.

²⁶¹ George W. Bush, “President Bush Addresses Members of the Knesset” (White House website archives, May 15, 2008).

²⁶² For instance, a New York Times editorial remarked that “Everybody knew President Bush was aiming at Senator Barack Obama last week when he likened those who endorse talks with “terrorists and radicals” to appeasers of the Nazis. But now we know what Mr. Bush knew then -- that Israel is in indirect peace talks with Syria, a prominent member of Mr. Bush’s list of shunned nations -- and it seems as if the president was going for a two-for-one in his crack about appeasement.”: see “Editorial: Talking with the Enemy,” *New York Times*, May 23, 2008. See also Yitzhak Benhorin, “Will U.S. Back Syria Talks?: Syria Represents Everything Bush Opposes, America Sitting on Fence for Now,” *Yediot Ahronot (online)*, May 22, 2008; Ethan Bronner, “Israel Holds Peace Talks with Syria,” *New York Times*, May 22, 2008.

²⁶³ Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 415.

²⁶⁴ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 655.

The United States was not preemptively abandoning Olmert, but some of its signals unintentionally may have relayed this notion. Thus, it becomes quite difficult to explain the dissonance in American messaging without considering that they might have been mix-ups on the executive side, evidence that fits best with Theory #4.

7. Suitability of Message:

In addition to questions of consistency, the theories also offer leverage over the matter of whether messages conveyed by LSI are actually suitable to the political needs of the protégé faction in the target state. Theory #1 anticipates that messaging should always be suitable to the protégé's needs, given that there should be little in the way of domestic constraints in the sender state keeping its leaders from projecting an appropriate signal. Theories 2 through 4, however, expect that the suitability of messaging should be conditioned by the institutional biases or personal beliefs of actors within the sender state.

When it came to realignment, observers in Israel certainly got the message that Washington was not willing to go to bat for disengagement and their new prime minister in the way it had done under Sharon. As noted above, Olmert was attacked by leading Likud MK Silvan Shalom for failing to win Washington's support. And, as noted above, Israeli observers commented at the time on the "cold shoulder" and "cold water" with which Washington was responding to Olmert's requests.

The impact of Washington's posture was also affected by questions of suitability when it came to promoting Olmert during the Annapolis process. The message that America would reward the positions of Olmert and Livni came through

quite clearly. However, Bush did little to suggest that the relationship would be in trouble if somebody opposed to this program, such as Netanyahu, came to power. Nor did the administration's actions do much to dispel popular skepticism about whether the Kadima program could actually deliver tangible rewards on the question of peace.

For example, around the time of the Annapolis meeting, the Israeli public was torn between hope and doubt. Afterwards, only 16% of voters believed the parties would reach their objective of an agreement by the end of Bush's term, and a large plurality of them thought that the summit was a failure.²⁶⁵ In advance of the event, roughly 70% of Israeli voters supported holding the conference, but roughly the same numbers believed that it would not tangibly advance the peace process.²⁶⁶ In advance of Bush's January 2008 visit to Israel, only 21% of respondents polled thought that his visit would advance negotiations (although admittedly this figure may have been conditioned by statements that he would not be holding a trilateral meeting during his visit).²⁶⁷

When Bush called Olmert an "honest guy," the statement generated similar doubts. Israeli voters had long viewed their prime minister as the most corrupt politician in the country, and so the statement strained credibility. For instance, a write for the magazine *Commentary* mused that the statement was a good reminder "why international politics is so often a swamp of dissimulation".²⁶⁸ One Israeli

²⁶⁵ "Polls Show Israeli Skepticism over Annapolis Peace Summit," *Associated Press*, November 29, 2007.

²⁶⁶ Mohammed Daraghmeh, "Weary Israelis and Palestinians Pessimistic Ahead of U.S.-sponsored Mideast Conference," *Associated Press*, November 23, 2007.

²⁶⁷ "Israelis Sceptical Bush Visit Will Advance Peace Talks."

²⁶⁸ David Hazony, "Blah Blah Blah with Bush," *Commentary Magazine*, May 15, 2008.

magazine wrote that the president's statements were a clear sign that "Bush [was] tr[ying] to prop up Olmert," but singled out his surprising praise for the prime minister's ethics and strategic sense. It went on to argue that Bush's praise for Olmert as a "strategic thinker" was "another title most Israelis would find absurd considering... his abysmal handling of the Second Lebanon War".²⁶⁹

Short of demonstrating sort of concrete deliverable to show that the Annapolis process was working, the American support for Olmert and Livni eventually ran up against the serious doubts of the Israeli public. The administration's message that the parties were free to agree or not agree as they saw fit and that Washington would not pressure them or offer bridging proposal was not just a poor mediating strategy, it also had costs as a diplomatic posture. Without some sort of tangible achievements for Kadima to highlight, the Likud was given a powerful weapon against the ruling party in the campaign. Thus, as noted above, a large proportion of the public thought that the security situation was an extremely pressing problem at the time of the 2009 elections, but very few voters surveyed thought that the political negotiations with the Palestinians or Syria were of similar priority.

Ironically enough, the Bush administration left office doing exactly the sorts of things with regard to LSI for which the president and his allies had attacked the Clinton team. As a candidate, Bush had attacked Clinton for using LSI against Israel and pledged that "America will not interfere in Israeli elections when I'm

²⁶⁹ "Bush Tries to Prop up Olmert and Abbas," *Israel Today Magazine*, May 13, 2008. For what it is worth, it is not clear that Bush actually said these words – the language seems to be a quote from a journalist at the press conference, not a quote by the president himself. See Horovitz, "Olmert 'Honest Guy'."

president”.²⁷⁰ The first years of his presidency were defined by a mindset toward Israel policy characterized as ABC, standing for “anything but Clinton,” and his team instructed bureaucrats at the State Department to stop using the word “peace process” in official communications.²⁷¹ And Bush’s backers attacked Clinton’s summitry for – among other reasons – being mere photo opportunities.²⁷²

Yet in the end Bush did almost exactly these things with regard to his use of LSI toward Israeli politics. He and his secretary of state conducted leadership selection intervention in Israeli politics, trying to bolster the standing of the Kadima Party at the expense of its rivals, including in the run-up to the 2009 Israeli elections. They endorsed the mission of final status talks on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and they took on much of the pageantry associated with this process. And they held both a high-profile summit at Annapolis and an entirely symbolic MOU signing in an effort to build up moderates on both sides – without actually then producing any sort of deliverable product from those efforts.

Many of these trends were the product of objective circumstances, the domain of the national interests approach (Theory #1). For instance, it is difficult to explain why Bush and Rice came to endorse the sort of Clintonesque approach that their administration had originally opposed without pointing to fundamental,

²⁷⁰ Neal, “Bush Alleges U.S. Wasn’t Neutral on Israeli Vote.”

²⁷¹ For the ABC mindset, see Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 324–333. For removal of the phrase “peace process” from the State Department’s lexicon, see Dennis Ross, “Taking Stock,” *National Interest* (Fall 2003); Marin S. Indyk, “‘Next Steps in Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process’ - Testimony Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia”, February 14, 2007.

²⁷² For instance, McCain attacked Clinton for conducting a “feckless photo-op foreign policy”. *Inter alia*, see “McCain Says Mideast Summit’s Failure Shows Failed Clinton Policy,” *CNN News (online)*, July 26, 2000; Charles Krauthammer, “Op-Ed: Middle East Madness,” *Washington Post*, January 12, 2001; Robert L. Bartley, “Editorial: A Photo-Op Presidency: The Finale; Clinton’s Governing by Photo-op Has Reached Its Peak,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 7, 2001.

underlying American interests in Israeli-Palestinian talks and a two-state solution. Similarly, it is difficult to explain why their efforts at LSI were ultimately so unsuccessful without taking into consideration the constraints of their objective circumstance – particularly, the deep skepticism of Israeli voters, especially since the collapse of the Oslo peace process.

However, elements of this effort and the relatively suitability of America's projected message were distinctively Bush or distinctively Rice. Bush's tendency to misspeak or misjudge Israeli politics came to the fore with his jarring praise for Olmert's honesty and strategic acumen, as it did with his Knesset speech that lashed out against those who would appease evil while completely forgetting to mention the ongoing peace process that his administration was trying to shepherd. Similarly, the administration's reluctance to nudge the parties, at least in private, to bridge their remaining gaps or to put out American parameters for peace, something Bush's predecessor and successor both were willing to do – seems reflective of Bush's distinct personal disposition on these issues. Secretary Rice's willingness to get involved in the 2009 Israeli elections but only in response to direct solicitation by her friend Tzipi Livni, also seem to reflect Rice's own attention span and personal stakes in the Israeli electoral contest.

Thus, although the pressures of objective international circumstances seem to be more pronounced with regard to this particular observable implication of the theories, there is considerable support for the leadership approach (Theory #4) in this area as well. Therefore, looking across the board, variation in Washington's approach to meddling in Israeli politics during the Olmert years seems to fit best

with an approach that emphasizes the agency of top American leaders. The suitability of American messaging for the needs of the Kadima Party was influenced by both objective constraints and the idiosyncratic, subjective dispositions of President Bush and Secretary Rice, but only leadership theory holds persuasively across all seven categories of observable implications.

Conclusion

In all, George W. Bush demonstrated an ambivalent approach toward internal Israeli leadership contests. He had pledged on the campaign trail that his administration would not meddle in Israeli politics, and indeed he did not try to prop up the Israeli peace camp while the second intifada was raging. However, in time he was sucked into Israeli affairs on the side of the right-wing incumbent, Ariel Sharon, who soon convinced the president that he too had the two-state solution in mind as an ultimate objective. Yet the measures that he requested to prop up his standing came at direct expense of the peace process, temporarily sidelining the Road Map and granting one-sided concessions to Israel on final status issues.

Similarly, Bush sought to have it both ways after Sharon had departed from the political scene. He rebuffed Ehud Olmert's request for help so he could pursue a second round of unilateral Israeli disengagements that might have advanced the cause of peace in more lasting ways than Sharon's disengagement from primarily the Gaza Strip. Then, when Gaza truly fell into Hamas's hands, Bush finally warmed to the idea of brokering Israeli-Palestinian negotiation process and embracing PM Olmert as a means to reaching a lasting deal. However, his ambivalence about

getting too engaged in the actual process, either by suggesting U.S. bridging proposals or pushing hard on the parties for an interim agreement, put limits on the sustainability of such a process. And, although he gave Secretary Rice a relatively free hand to innovate policy in this area, his lack of interest to provide concrete, specific backup on Israeli-Palestinian issues may have weakened her hand.

President Bush's overriding focus on giving Israel a free hand to fight terror won him the admiration of many Israelis, and his general approach meant that bilateral ties grew friendlier as the years went by. However, at the same time, the prospects for a two-state solution seemed to grow more remote over his two terms in office. Nor were these improved bilateral ties sustainable: Bush's policies let the peace process continue to unravel in ways that ultimately boosted Benjamin Netanyahu's ability to return to power in early 2009. While security coordination between the United States and Israel has continued to expand since Bush left office, what has followed in the diplomatic realm has consequently been one of the frostiest periods in public ties to date.

Part II.

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WASHINGTON'S MEDDLING FOR PEACE IN PALESTINIAN POLITICS

Just as the United States has sought to engineer leadership outcomes in Israeli domestic politics, so has it been meddling for decades in the political affairs of the Palestinian people. The Palestine cases are often intricately bound up in the Israeli cases, and together they provide a comprehensive history of American meddling for peace in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This section represents the other side of that coin. It begins with American efforts to undermine the PLO prior to the Oslo peace process and then explores efforts to bolster or undermine various PA leaders such as Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas, and Salam Fayyad, examining up through the end of the George W. Bush administration.

Studying the U.S.-Palestine directed dyad also yields benefits for nomothetic reasons. Although this dissertation devotes much greater attention to internal validity than external validity because of the rudimentary state of the research agenda on LSI at this point in time, I hope to at least pose tentative claims with regard to generalizability of the arguments contained in the prior Israel chapters.

I pursue a three-pronged approach for exploring generalizability. This strategy includes: (1) documenting attempts to meddle in Israeli politics by senders other than the U.S., (2) studying American attempts to meddle in Palestinian politics, and (3) noting similar U.S. interventions in Iranian politics as part of a much shorter

set of shadow cases contained in the conclusion of this dissertation. The present section, which focuses specifically on the Palestine cases, therefore represents only the second element of this three-pronged approach.

Studying Palestine takes us a good distance beyond what we would be able to claim from only looking at episodes of LSI within Israel alone. The Palestinian people have had a different, if related, historical experience from Israeli Jews; they are overwhelmingly drawn from a different ethnic and religious grouping; and they have much less favorable relations with Washington. Further, the Palestine cases allow us to compare U.S. meddling in an established democracy with intervention in a quasi-authoritarian polity where electoral institutions are much less consolidated and Washington deeply fears the alternative to continued rule by the incumbent.

Some Tentative Similarities:

Overall, I find that most of the patterns from the U.S.-Israel directed dyad carry over to the Palestine cases as well. The best explanation for variation in America's leadership selection intervention behavior in bilateral relations over the years continues to be the role of top leaders in the sender state. This applies to matters of both occurrence and efficacy. For instance, the best explanation for why Jimmy Carter was open to working with the PLO yet George Shultz sought to replace it comes down to staffing and personal beliefs, not changes in American structural interests or behavior by bureaucrats, lobbyists, and legislators. Similarly, personality provides the best explanation for why James Baker was more effective at marginalizing the PLO than his predecessor, Shultz.

Generally speaking, the tendency toward pretenses applies to the Palestinian cases as well. Officials were much more willing in private to admit that their goal was to build up or break down support for Palestinian leaders than they were inclined to say so in public. Rather than saying “vote for Fatah” in 2006, American officials mainly tried to use covert financial aid and campaign consulting to benefit the PLO in its electoral efforts against Hamas. Even when American officials went so far as to drop hints that aid might be revisited in the event of a Hamas victory – a comparatively smaller component of the U.S. effort at LSI – it did not come in the form of an explicit statement urging voters not to vote for Hamas. Often, American officials receive Abu Mazen with new pledges of foreign assistance and lofty rhetoric praising the PA’s courageous man of peace, but they generally do not explicitly call for the Palestinian to support him as a condition for future American backing. The message is no doubt there, but it is communicated implicitly and by insinuation.

Overall, American officials also tended to avoid implementing or debating LSI in a highly public arena, continuing a trend from the Israeli case I have chosen to refer to as the “paper paradox”. Instead, they prefer irregular decision channels where communication is off-line and verbal, or at least on a very restricted, limited access basis. Thus, for instance, the top USAID official in charge of Palestinian affairs described being aware of a general West Bank First strategy following the Gaza coup in 2007, but that he never once saw a memo to prove it.¹

Some Tentative Differences:

¹ Howard Sumka, “Interview with the Author”, November 3, 2011.

There are definitely a few differences across the cases, most of which are objective structural constraints. I believe that these help explain some major background variation across dyads but typically not within them over time. Thus, they provide relevant scope conditions for the theory: it seems to matter much more for fine-grained, variation within dyads than it does for coarser variation when comparing dyads.

First of all, American presidents have much fewer assets at their control for effectively influencing Palestinian politics due to the overall edifice of American diplomacy toward the conflict. There is much less an American president can do within the constraints of traditional U.S. foreign policy toward the region, Israel, and the Palestinian people that will realistically make Palestinian voters or elites happy in the manner they can towards Israel. This does not, however, mean that American LSI toward Palestine never succeeds or never involves the mustering of substantial political or fiscal assets.

Second, the paper paradox seems to be bounded by an important scope condition: it tends not to apply when referring to terrorist groups that are perceived as being outside the bounds of ordinary politics. Variations in how observers perceive these groups in the sender state and the target polity may lead to instances in which the sender explicitly admits trying to marginalize a group like the PLO pre-1993 or, in recent years, Hamas, may result in LSI being much less effective due to a rally-around-the-flag effect. However, within the realm of competitive politics – including bolstering the moderate leaders who face these extremist factions – the tendency is still to deny LSI and couch it in fantastical pretenses remains.

Americans rarely admit in public that a desire to rig Palestinian politics *in toto*, even if they admit that they want to keep extremists such as Hamas out of power.

Third, America's LSI behavior seems to fit with an established problematique from the fields of dictatorship and democratization studies. Whereas in the Israel cases Washington felt free to intervene in some episodes but not in many others, support becomes somewhat more frequent when the sender state fears the occurrence of "one man, one vote, one time," allowing perceived radical extremists to seize power and to prevent future contests (what I henceforth refer to as the "one vote problematique," or OVP for short).

In turn, this seems to contribute to long-term resentment of the sender state, decrease returns over time to sender state meddling attempts, increase risks of revolutionary change due to the obstruction of gradual reform, and degrade democratic institutions in the target polity. On the other hand, this approach is not always suboptimal, especially is only temporary and prevents the target from shifting global blocs and political directions dramatically. This dynamic is a long-recognized pattern in certain areas of IR and comparative politics,² and scholars are just beginning to apply it to the area of leadership selection intervention as well.³

² For the (mostly critical) literature on this phenomenon, see Mark J. Gasiorowski, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah: Building a Client State in Iran* (Cornell University Press, 1991); Noam Chomsky, *Deterring Democracy* (Macmillan, 1992); Julia Sweig, *Friendly Fire: Losing Friends and Making Enemies in the Anti-American Century* (Public Affairs, 2006); Gavan McCormack, *Client State: Japan in the American Embrace* (Verso, 2007); Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert Owen Keohane, *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2007); Hilton L. Root, *Alliance Curse: How America Lost the Third World* (Brookings Institution Press, 2008); Jason Brownlee, *Democracy Prevention: The Politics of the U.S.-Egyptian Alliance [Forthcoming]* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

³ These issues emerged during discussions of LSI behavior at a conference at Yale University in which the author recently participated, sponsored by the Leitner Program in International and Comparative Political Economy in the Macmillan Center for International Studies. The theme emerged in papers presented by myself, by Jason Brownlee, and by the conference organizer, Nikolay Marinov. Marinov's work in progress makes the most explicit connection between these behavior and the dynamics of LSI in a certain

Why these Differences are Limited:

No doubt, this trend, when it applies, is a major sign of evidence in favor of national interests theory, since it suggests that perhaps objective institutions and political circumstances in the target polity do exert a major, background effect on rates of occurrence and efficacy for episodes of LSI. However, this finding comes with a number of caveats.

First, this generalized pattern of behavior only seems to occur in those cases where the one vote problematique pertains. That is, officials in the sender state hold a consensus opinion that the opposition would seize power and ravage the political system if given the chance. Thus, it applies in the Palestine cases only when such an extra-systemic contender for power exists, such as the PLO before Oslo or Hamas since 2006. However, the dynamic is somewhat less pertinent for the Palestine dyad in other periods. It also applies to the Iran cases before 1979 but not any of the post-revolutionary Iran cases or any of the cases on the Israel dyad.

Second, the tendencies identified in the other dyads may still apply, just more weakly. For instance, even in rare instances when American LSI behavior verged on being explicit instead of implicit, such as Bush's 2002 speech calling for new leadership in the PA, the language was couched in generalities instead of calling out Arafat by name, and prominent administration dissent (Powell) worried that being so explicit would backfire.⁴

sub-set of global LSI cases, although I feel he be writing off the broad range of LSI cases that do not display this sort of pattern: <http://www.yale.edu/leitner/democracyEdge.html>

⁴ Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (Random House, 2011), 144.

Third, one of the biggest determinants of success or failure of these attempts continues to be a question of American leaders' political will. Variation in efficacy across the various episodes seems to depend considerably on whether or not the president (or secretary of state) is willing to expend the political capital required to have a genuine impact in Palestinian affairs, something that is very often quite personal. For instance, Clinton was more willing to invest efforts to pursue genuine peace talks than George W. Bush, something that repeatedly undermined Bush's ability to bolster perceived Palestinian moderates within the PA. Similarly, he did more to strengthen Salam Fayyad than Abu Mazen in 2002/03 in part because of the strong Texas bond between the two leaders – and also because it was easier for him to deliver the sort of support that would help Fayyad than the sort of aid that would have helped Abu Mazen. Indeed, the baseline for success may be tougher in the Palestinian cases due to the domestic costs of reaching out to the PA and prevailing skepticism among the Palestinians, but the variation in who succeeds versus who fails across the cases seems to be a matter of personal will and commitment.

Indeed, even in directed dyads during periods when this problematique applies, there is still considerable variation in intervention behavior over time. The history of American intervention in Palestinian politics demonstrates that U.S. officials do not pursue objectively comparable interventions in objectively comparable circumstances. The OVP serves as an extremely powerful background factor for explaining variation across dyads and even within dyads over very, very long spans of time. Yet it fails to explain fine-grained variation when the basic health (or lack thereof) of democratic institutions is held constant., which is most of

the time. Provided polities are not undergoing major earthquakes in the fundamental nature of political contestation within them, in all other times the best explanation for LSI behavior on that dyad still seems to be the agency of top leaders. Even in those rare moments of regime type change-over, such as in 1993/94 for Palestine or 1978/79 for Iran, the role for top leaders remains crucial.

Thus, the following section notes the differences between the Israel dyad and the Palestine dyad attributable to the OVP but goes on to document the substantial remaining variation attributable only to the dynamics of leadership theory. Although it focuses mainly on American efforts to determine the leadership of the Palestinian Authority, which was established only in 1994, it briefly considers prior efforts to undermine the PLO for additional analytical leverage.

Chapter VIII.

Palestinian Politics, Pre-Oslo **(1986-1993)**

U.S. foreign policy-makers have had strong opinions on Palestinian politics since at least the 1970s, when Arab leaders anointed the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in 1974. One former advisor to Henry Kissinger reflected that the secretary “believed [the PLO] could never become participants in the peace process; he thought that they would always play the ‘spoiler’ role”.¹ Kissinger then proceeded to promise Israel that America would not negotiate with the PLO, but this seems to have been intended as a gesture toward Israel, not a means of shaping the intra-Palestinian balance of power. Jimmy Carter was extremely eager to engage the PLO, but this was because he felt they were a stakeholder that could not be ignored, not out of a desire to bolster the group’s authority.

Palestine, Case #1:

Shultz and Baker look for local leadership, 1986-1993

Yet U.S. officials did not enact these preferences into policies intended to shape the balance of power within Palestinian politics until the 1980s. In 1986, George Shultz embarked on a campaign to help Israel and Jordan marginalize the

¹ Robert B. Oakley, “Interview with Ambassador Robert B. Oakley”, July 7, 1992, 38, The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), Library of Congress.

PLO in favor of pro-Jordanian elites living in the West Bank. His successor, James Baker, also tried to empower local elites in the territories at the expense of the PLO in Tunis.

In retrospect, Baker's effort was much more effective than Shultz's. Whereas Baker's endeavor brought about the landmark conference at Madrid in 1991, Shultz had virtually nothing to show for his attempts to engineer outcomes in internal Palestinian politics. In the sections that follow, I argue that this was largely attributable to the personal differences separating Baker and Shultz. Shultz's resistance to the PLO was strongly rooted in ideology, while Baker's attitude was based on pragmatic and tactical grounds. Shultz's hopes for the endeavor were rooted in wishful thinking and not matched with comprehensive follow-through, but James Baker was tenacious in his dogged pursuit of getting local Palestinian elites to negotiate on their own without the PLO.

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

Yes, in both periods. Shultz tried to nurture an alternative, pro-Jordanian leadership on the West Bank in order to marginalize the PLO. Baker sought to empower local Palestinian leaders to negotiate for themselves at the expense of the PLO. However, Baker tempered his effort by seeking to get Yasser Arafat's tacit acceptance that the PLO could not participate in official peace talks and would have to be represented instead by local leaders from the territories. Baker also invested a great deal more in terms of political capital and diplomatic effort than did Shultz.

<Sub-Case 1: Shultz versus the PLO>

When King Hussein engaged in an effort to win the backing of Yasser Arafat and the PLO for peace talks with Israel, Israeli officials under Peres began exploring ways to bolster the king's influence in the West Bank in order to boost his leverage relative to the PLO. Peres's aides described their effort under a number of telling titles, calling it a plan for an Israeli-Jordanian "condominium" or "functional compromise" over the West Bank, envisioning the "re-Jordanization" of the area through Israeli "devolution".² Consultations between the two governments regarding how to promote the condominium idea began in late 1985 during secret consultations between the king and Peres about how to get the peace process moving again. This resulted in new forms of cooperation on the ground, such as Israel's appointment of a pro-Jordanian mayor at Nablus as a pilot project in place of Israeli military administration.³

What got American attention was when King Hussein's negotiations with Arafat fell through in February of 1986. The king gave a rambling three-and-a-half hour speech denouncing the PLO and began to hint at his intention to displace the organization in the West Bank.⁴ Observers began to wonder whether his statements signaled a broader move by Jordan against the PLO's authority in the West Bank,

² For "devolution," see Henry Kamm, "Israelis Expect Effort by Hussein to Woo West Bank Palestinians," *New York Times*, February 25, 1986; Judith Miller, "Peres Says He'll Foster Palestinian Self-Rule," *New York Times*, February 27, 1986. For the other titles, see Yossi Melman and Daniel Raviv, *Behind the Uprising: Israelis, Jordanians, and Palestinians* (Greenwood Press, 1989), 188.

³ Adam Garfinkle, *Israel and Jordan in the Shadow of War: Functional Ties and Futile Diplomacy in a Small Place* (St. Martin's Press, 1992), 123.

⁴ "Hussein Drops a Yearlong Effort to Join in a Peace Bid with Arafat," *New York Times*, February 20, 1986; Judith Miller, "Hussein Questions Who Should Speak for Palestinians," *New York Times*, February 23, 1986; John Rice, "Hundreds Of Palestinians From West Bank Hear Hussein In Amman," *Associated Press*, February 27, 1986.

and the Israeli government under Peres expressed its intentions to move ahead swiftly with boosting Jordanian influence in the area, including the appointment of additional mayors in Ramallah, al-Bireh, and Hebron.⁵

The king also expressed his desire to “liberate” both the Palestinians and the PLO, hinting at efforts he would pursue in coming months to back an anti-Arafat insurgency within Fatah through a faction led by former Fatah intelligence czar Atallah Atallah (aka Abu Zaim).⁶ The kingdom also pledged to reduce military operations by the group against of Israel, and in July of 1986 it moved against the PLO’s representation in Jordan, closing down 25 Fatah offices throughout the country and expelling the PLO’s top representative, Khalil Wazir (aka Abu Jihad), from the country.⁷ (Ironically, the king’s justification for expelling Wazir was that the PLO had tried to conduct LSI against the monarchy’s interests, meddling in a Jordanian by-election by giving payments aimed at boosting a pro-PLO candidate’s chances).⁸ The Jordanians and Israelis cooperated on West Bank infrastructural projects, and the king even began to extend development aid and passport services to Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip, even though Gaza had been occupied before 1967 by Egypt, not the Jordanians.⁹

⁵ Kamm, “Israelis Expect Effort by Hussein to Woo West Bank Palestinians”; Miller, “Peres Says He’ll Foster Palestinian Self-Rule.” See also Allyn Fisher, “Israeli Prime Minister Says More Autonomy In Store For West Bank,” *Associated Press*, February 9, 1986.

⁶ Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 588; Rice, “Hundreds Of Palestinians From West Bank Hear Hussein In Amman”; “PLO Summons Rebel Officer,” *Associated Press*, April 9, 1986; Charles P. Wallace, “Relations With PLO Worsen as Jordan Closes 25 Fatah Offices,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 8, 1986; “Report: Palestinian Military Leader Wants Arafat Ouster, Israel Peace Talks,” *Associated Press*, July 11, 1986.

⁷ Avi Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace* (Random House, Inc., 2009), 440; John Rice, “Jordan, PLO Struggle for Heart of West Bank,” *Associated Press*, July 9, 1986.

⁸ Tony Walker, “Hussein Says PLO Tried To Affect Jordan Election,” *Financial Times*, July 16, 1986.

⁹ Charles P. Wallace, “Hussein Gets Support from Palestinian: Ex-Gaza Mayor Joins King in Break With PLO Over Peace Effort,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 1986.

In July, the king floated plans for a major West Bank Development Plan, hoping to raise \$1.3 billion with the help of foreign donors to win public support for Jordan through economic development and to bolster the position of pro-Jordanian elites, although the program was framed in terms of humanitarian and demographic justifications.¹⁰ American backing for the plan, including an initial installment of \$4.5 million, was announced before the plan had even been made final, co-announced by a spokesperson at the State Department and an advisor on Vice President George Bush's visit to the region at the end of July.¹¹ Also during Bush's visit, America's East Jerusalem consulate arranged a reception of Palestinian notables to meet with the vice president, among whom pro-Jordan mayors and West Bank members of the Jordanian parliament figured prominently.¹²

Shultz had been seeking to boost Palestinian quality of life since 1983, but the initiative took on real momentum as a campaign of LSI when the Jordanians volunteered to take on a more active role with an eye toward creating a new political presence on the ground.¹³ Shultz spearheaded the reenergized American initiative, promoting a West Bank Quality of Life (QoL) plan that was now privately intended to boost monarchists in the territories. In order to enable the \$4.5 million pledge to Hussein's West Bank plan, the Secretary also hunted down a pot of unused

¹⁰ Tony Walker, "Jordan Offers West Bank Aid: Analysis of Five-year Economic Development Plan for Palestinians in Israeli-occupied Territory," *Financial Times*, July 15, 1986.

¹¹ Barry Schweid, "U.S. Channeling Aid To Palestinians Through Jordan For First Time," *Associated Press*, July 31, 1986; Gerald M. Boyd, "Jordan to Funnel U.S. Aid to West Bank," *New York Times*, August 1, 1986.

¹² W. Dale Nelson, "Bush Holds Reception For Palestinians, Some Stay Away," *Associated Press*, July 29, 1986; Gerald Boyd, "Bush in 'Spirited' Session with Palestinians, Is Firm on the PLO," *New York Times*, July 30, 1986.

¹³ George Pratt Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: Diplomacy, Power and the Victory of the American Ideal* (Scribner's, 1993), 443-444.

USAID funds that could be redirected for the purpose.¹⁴

In the following two years, the administration continued to allot QoL money directly to Jordan in order to help finance its West Bank Development Plan. Given the tight fiscal climate on the Hill,¹⁵ Shultz himself worked to help free up money for the fund, obtaining another \$14 million in 1987 and \$5.7 million in 1988 for the project.¹⁶ American officials also stepped up to help mediate an agreement between Jordan and Israel to allow the first bank from an Arab country to open a branch in the West Bank since 1967.¹⁷

Files from the Reagan Library fit this interpretation of administration actions. In advance of a visit by Hussein to the White House in June of 1986, Shultz explained to the president that one of “our basic goals” for “what... we want from this visit” was to “encourage more active Jordanian role on West Bank and seek details of the steps he wants Israel to take”.¹⁸ Shultz explained that “what... the king want[s] from this visit” was, among other goals, to “seek support for his new

¹⁴ Schweid, “U.S. Channeling Aid To Palestinians Through Jordan For First Time”; Boyd, “Jordan to Funnel U.S. Aid to West Bank.”

¹⁵ Sara Fritz, “Plans for Extra Foreign Aid Elicit Outrage in Congress: White House to Seek Additional \$1.3 Billion While Domestic Programs Are Being Cut,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 30, 1986; Bernard Gwertzman, “Shultz to Press Congress for Increase in Current Foreign Aid Budget,” *New York Times*, January 1, 1987.

¹⁶ Charles P. Wallace, “Jordan’s West Bank Plan Faltering: Only \$20 Million in Aid Raised Toward \$1-Billion Goal,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 4, 1987; Dan Fisher, “Israeli Protests Block U.S. Plan for Aid to West Bank,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 3, 1987; Allistair Lyon, “Jordanian Bank to Open Two More West Bank Branches,” *Reuters News*, September 15, 1987; John Rice, “Official Defends Aid Program, Promises Larger Projects,” *Associated Press*, January 30, 1988; Rana Sabbagh, “Jordan to Continue West Bank Development Program,” *Reuters News*, July 4, 1988; Barry Schweid, “US To Maintain Aid To Palestinians Despite Jordan’s Abandonment Of Fund,” *Associated Press*, July 29, 1988.

¹⁷ Garfinkle, *Israel and Jordan in the Shadow of War*, 113–114, 131. For more on the bank, see Andrew Whitley, “Israel Approves Arab-Owned Bank In Nablus,” *Financial Times*, September 19, 1986; Morris Draper, “Interview with Ambassador Morris Draper”, February 27, 1991, 64, The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), Library of Congress.

¹⁸ “Your Meeting with King Hussein of Jordan, June 9-10, 1986 - Memorandum for the President from George P. Shultz”, June 5, 1986, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 5, Folder “Chron File-June 1986, Dennis Ross (3 of 3),” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

strategy of building an Arab consensus that will eliminate the PLO's veto over a renewed peace process," to "urge that we press the Israelis for rapid agreement to appointed Arab mayors, expanded Arab municipal boundaries and reopening of Jordanian bank branches in West Bank," and to "seek financial help for GOJ's West Bank efforts".¹⁹ Shultz argued that "what can be achieved from this visit" was "West Bank: achieve agreement on precise steps to raise with the GOI and on what Jordan can do independently".²⁰

The talking points for the president that Shultz sent over read as follows:

-- ...of course we support your view that an alternative Palestinian leadership is necessary.
--strengthening the West Bankers' ability to control their own lives offers the best chance of developing a Palestinian leadership able to move with you toward peace.
--to that end, we agree it is time to move on quality of life issues on the West Bank. We want to be helpful and wish to concentrate our efforts on practical steps which can be achieved quickly.
--I have asked Secretary Shultz to explore with you how we can help you move forward on appointing local Arab mayors, expanding Arab municipal boundaries and establishing a bank on the West Bank.
--I am very interested in additional thoughts you might have on how we nurture an alternative Palestinian leadership and what your game-plan is for doing so".²¹

Ross's suggested talking points for the president for the same meeting noted that "you are clearly taking steps to bolster your position on the West Bank and to cultivate such a partner" and asked about "your next steps on the West Bank as you try to cultivate a Palestinian partner".²²

After the meeting, a draft memo entitled "Hussein Follow-Up" was written by

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "Talking Points for the President's Meeting with King Hussein (June 9, 1986) - Memorandum for the President from George P. Shultz", June 5, 1986, Collection "Ross, Dennis Files", Box 5, Folder "Chron File-June 1986, Dennis Ross (3 of 3)," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²² "Talking Points for Your Meeting with King Hussein, Monday, June 9, 5:00 PM", n.d., Collection "Ross, Dennis Files", Box 5, Folder "Chron File - June 1986, Dennis Ross (1 of 3)," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

Dennis Ross for national security advisor John Poindexter to George Shultz summarized findings from the meeting. It was designated “privacy channel,” presumably due to the sensitivity of talking about such deliberations openly. The text reads as follows:

“I feel strongly about being responsive to King Hussein. I know you do as well. During his visit, the King asked us to provide money for his efforts to build the moderate-Jordanian position on the West Bank, and I know you have been trying to come up with additional monies to be helpful in that regard. (We are also looking into additional funding sources). In addition, the King asked us to help him politically in his efforts to ‘close all doors’ to Arafat. That means following up with the Israelis, Saudis, Egyptians, Europeans, and others. Here the follow-up seems less well developed and also less coherent. I think we need an agreed posture on what and how much we will do and say to each.

I realize that supporting the King’s efforts to undermine Arafat and nurture an alternative leadership may be controversial. Some may feel that the King will fail or that there can be no alternative to Arafat. I am concerned that if we look lukewarm in our support we will guarantee his failure, and I am convinced that Arafat is incapable of ever negotiating peace with Israel.”²³

In January of 1987, the president signed a National Security Study Directive on the Middle East peace process in which the number two item was: “How can we strengthen Jordan’s role in the peace process and its efforts to assert leadership on the Palestinian question? What further steps could we take, e.g., in the Quality of Life area or in our bilateral relations, to strengthen the King’s hand?”²⁴ At the planning group that March for the NSSD that would result, Shultz led discussions of the West Bank and his QoL idea.²⁵

When the president received Yitzhak Shamir at the White House in February

²³ “Hussein Follow-Up - Memorandum for John M. Poindexter from Dennis Ross”, June 23, 1986, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 5, Folder “Chron File - June 1986, Dennis Ross (1 of 3),” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²⁴ Ronald Reagan, “National Security Study Directive, Number 4-87”, January 22, 1987, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 7, Folder “Chron File, March 1987,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²⁵ “National Security Planning Group Meeting: US Policy in Middle East”, February 12, 1987, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 7, Folder “Chron File, February 1987,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

1987, he urged the prime minister in their plenary meeting that “it’s very important that we build on the progress taking place in the West Bank. That will help keep alive the prospect for peace. We must keep moving in that direction”.²⁶ The talking points for his private meeting with the prime minister read “we must press ahead and build on the concrete progress that is being made in the West Bank and Gaza. The appointment of Arab mayors, the opening of the bank in Nablus, the expansion of municipal boundaries, are important steps in the right direction. The must continue and be followed on by other measures”.²⁷ However, it is clear from the limited-distribution pre-briefs for that meeting that Shultz remained the point person for the Quality of Life initiative and that NSC officials felt the program was directed toward the objective of “show[ing] that moderates can deliver”.²⁸

In March of 1987, as the president authorized Shultz to seek additional money in the foreign assistance budget for Hussein’s development plan, Robert Oakley suggested Frank Carlucci tell the secretary that “the president was very much taken with your plan for moving ahead... [and] he believes strongly that an essential first step is getting additional monies for the West Bank to demonstrate our seriousness and to make clear that life can and will improve for the

²⁶ “Memorandum of Conversation: Plenary Meeting with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of Israel”, February 18, 1987, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 7, Folder “Chron File, February 1987,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²⁷ “Talking Points for the President’s Meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Shamir”, February 18, 1987, 2, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 7, Folder “Chron File, February 1987,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²⁸ “Pre-Brief of Shamir Visit, February 18, 11:00 Am - Memorandum for Frank C. Carlucci from Robert B. Oakley”, February 17, 1987, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 7, Folder “Chron File, February 1987,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

Palestinians”.²⁹ However, the impression over at the NSC was that Shultz needed to do more to follow up within the State Department to make his request for a second year of funding for Hussein’s West Bank plan a reality.³⁰

That summer, officials explored the possibility of Shultz going to the region again in the fall in order to “explain importance we attach... of doing more in territories, developing plan, putting together U.S.-Jordanian team to monitor and shape progress” along with perhaps a U.S.-Israel team as well.³¹ However, by that point attention had mostly shifted toward futile diplomatic efforts trying to reconstruct the April 1987 London Accords with Shamir’ support.³²

When the first Palestinian intifada broke out in December of 1987, the U.S. continued to promote the idea of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and to promote Hussein’s development plan until the king severed all ties to the West Bank in July of 1988.³³ Receiving two Palestinian leaders from the territories in late January, Shultz dismissed when “the two talked of the PLO’s leading and essential role,” chiding them that “the PLO has a reality problem”.³⁴

Shultz reflects that “the PLO was not in the lead in this uprising and chances

²⁹ “Draft Memorandum for the Honorable George P. Shultz from Frank C. Carlucci (attached to ‘Middle East Peace - Memorandum for Frank C. Carlucci from Robert B. Oakley’),” March 14, 1987, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 7, Folder “Chron File, March 1987,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

³⁰ “\$30 Million for the West Bank - Memorandum for Frank C. Carlucci from Robert B. Oakley”, March 11, 1987, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 7, Folder “Chron File, March 1987,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

³¹ “Secretary Shultz Trip to the Middle East - Schedule 1, Scenario 1 for Secretary Trip”, July 31, 1987, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 7, Folder “Chron File, July 1987,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

³² “Shultz Agenda for Today’s Meeting with the President - Memorandum for Frank C. Carlucci from Robert B. Oakley”, July 29, 1987, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 7, Folder “Chron File July 1987,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

³³ Barry Schweid, “Shultz Urges Palestinians to Form Delegation with Jordan,” *Associated Press*, March 3, 1988; Schweid, “US To Maintain Aid To Palestinians Despite Jordan’s Abandonment Of Fund.”

³⁴ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 1020. See also David K. Shipler, “Shultz to Meet 2 Prominent Palestinians on Unrest,” *New York Times*, January 27, 1988; Barry Schweid, “Palestinians Urge Shultz to Support International Peace Force,” *Associated Press*, January 27, 1988.

were, I thought, that it would never fully regain its earlier monopoly over Palestinian politics... the intifada bore the promise of a new generation of Palestinians, with new leaders trying to take hold of their own affairs".³⁵ When the PLO ultimately met the administration's explicit criteria for recognition, he and the president opened a dialogue with the PLO in December of 1988. And, although Shultz felt obligated to engage the group after it had fulfilled stringent U.S. requirements for recognition, he also turned down repeated chances to pursue this possibility much earlier until events forced his hand.³⁶

<Sub-Case 2: Baker versus the PLO>

Like its predecessor, the new American administration was hard pressed to do something to address the intifada and perceived an opportunity to engage with Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza. However, rather than pursuing LSI as an inherently desirable objective, the Bush administration pursued it on pragmatic grounds, mainly as a means to an end. It imposed limits on its dialogue with the PLO, but it also recognized the limits of what could realistically be achieved without the buy-in of the PLO's leadership. Thus, the Bush administration observed self-imposed limits on its efforts to marginalize the group. It also did more than Reagan's team to enlist support from friendly Arab capitals forcing the PLO to accept a format at Madrid where Palestinian representation was handled by individuals living within the West Bank and Gaza, rather than by PLO officials from Tunis.

Even when the administration pursued a dialogue with the PLO in 1989 and early 1990, it pursued the Israeli plan for Palestinian elections in a manner that

³⁵ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 1017.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1034–1045.

aimed to marginalize the official organization based in Tunis. For instance, Dennis Ross recalls that when he met with a group of Palestinians from the territories, he still sought to discourage them from deferring to the PLO and “hoped to build pressure on Arafat and the PLO by letting those in the territories know what they had to gain”.³⁷ He reports hoping to determine whether “the ‘internal PLO’ [would] be prepared to engage in the search for a political solution without the external PLO’s sanction”.³⁸ The U.S. continued to insist that the participants in multilateral peace negotiations leading up to the elections could not be official members of the PLO in order to assuage remaining Israeli concerns about the organization.

Baker reports that his thinking at the time was influenced by his Mideast advisors, who argued that

“The Intifada demonstrated a divergence between the PLO in Tunis and Palestinians living in the territories... this simple reality raised the possibility that Palestinians within the territories might be willing at long last to negotiate their own destiny instead of waiting for the PLO to act. If the Palestinians from within decided to do something for themselves, the PLO’s authority would be diminished.”³⁹

And, although the U.S. maintained a dialogue with the PLO until 1990, its objectives and extent were consciously quite limited:

“In Tunis, Robert Pelletreau, had been conducting a dialogue with low-level officials of the PLO. Yasir Arafat was pointedly excluded from this endeavor. His reputation as a terrorist was so ingrained in American public opinion that no administration could deal with him openly. No solution was possible, however, without at least his private acquiescence to a separate dialogue between Israel and Palestinians from the territories. We would continue the inherited U.S.-PLO dialogue at a low level, but the Egyptians would be available to talk directly with Arafat. Our primary tactical objective was to persuade him to accept negotiations between Israel and

³⁷ Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* (Macmillan, 2004), 56.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.

³⁹ James A. Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace, 1989-1992* (G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1995), 117.

Palestinians in the territories. *In effect, we were asking Arafat to disenfranchise himself on the grounds of political expedience: there was no way a Shamir-led government would ever negotiate with the PLO*".⁴⁰

Thus, in the secretary's May 1989 speech to AIPAC, he announced that "it is... high time for political dialogue between Israeli officials and Palestinians in the territories to bring about a common understanding on these and other issues. Peace, and the peace process, must be built from the 'ground up'. Palestinians have it within their power to help define the shape of this initiative".⁴¹

This effort fell apart with the end of Israel's national unity government in the spring of 1990, since the NUG's termination meant that Shamir now backed away from the Palestinian elections initiative that previously bore his name. However, in early 1991 after the end of the Gulf War, Baker felt obligated launch his own program for the peace process, since he had promised Arab and European coalition members that the United States would give the peace process its due attention after the defeat of Iraq.⁴²

At this point, he resumed the effort to marginalize the PLO and empower local leaders, perceiving the empowerment of local elites as the only way to launch a peace conference that the Shamir government in Israel would accept. He also felt that Arafat's bad bet – throwing the PLO's lot in with Saddam Hussein – would boost American leverage for getting the organization to assent to a conference without its

⁴⁰ Ibid., 118. Emphases added.

⁴¹ James Baker, "Address by the Honorable James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State Before the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee, Washington, DC, May 22, 1989 - 'Principles and Pragmatism: American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict' - Speech Text, Memorandum from Richard Haass for Nicholas Rostow and Peter Rodman", May 23, 1989, 5, Folder "Arab-Israel [10]", Box "OA/ID CF01059", Series "Rostow, Nicholas, Files", Collection "National Security Council," George H. W. Bush Presidential Library.

⁴² Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 414.

direct participation. No doubt, the PLO had been weakened by siding with the losing side in the Gulf War, but Baker's decision to launch an initiative at this time took advantage of the PLO's financial and diplomatic weakness in order to consolidate its marginalization by forcing it to accept representation from within the territories.

In advance of Baker's first trip to the region after the war, Ross recalls that the secretary's strategy memo called for America's Arab partners to "help promote credible Palestinian leaders in the territories as negotiating partners with Israel".⁴³ He recalls that Baker then reassured the Israelis that the language required for participation in the conference would "fence out the PLO".⁴⁴ As a result, the eventual Palestinian delegation to the conference was comprised of individuals from the territories such as Hanan Ashrawi, Haidar Abdel Shafi, Ghassan Khatib, and Saeb Erekat, who were close to the PLO but did not have a formal affiliation at the time.

Baker's account also reflects these objectives. He met with local Palestinian leaders from the territories a whopping eleven times in the run-up to Madrid, mostly in the region but also in Washington or Amman in order to negotiate the modalities for Palestinian participation.⁴⁵ In his first such meeting, he told his counterparts that "I have sat with leaders of eight Arab states, and all said they will not support your leadership [i.e. the PLO]... you are moderate people of good sense. You have to realize that we're not going to renew a dialogue with the PLO in the face of Arafat's embrace of Saddam Hussein".⁴⁶

⁴³ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 66.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁴⁵ For a listing of these meetings, see Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 423, 445, 450, 465–466, 491, 496, 499–501, 507–508.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 423.

Baker says that he asked the leaders of Arab states to help him “fence out the PLO,” including King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, President Mubarak of Egypt, King Hussein of Jordan, and even President Assad of Syria.⁴⁷ He also made clear to Shamir that he would not accept Israeli claims that Palestinians from the territories were too close to the PLO or demands that they sign some sort of document disavowing the organization.⁴⁸ He also worked to assuage the concerns of frightened or frustrated Palestinian negotiating partners leading up to the conference, arranging for their bodyguards to get extra training from the Secret Service and setting up a White House meeting with the president for Faisal al-Husseini, who had played a major role in sorting out Palestinian participation but was never going to be approved by the Likud leadership in Israel to attend.⁴⁹

Did the Policy Succeed?

Yes for Baker, no for Shultz. James Baker’s LSI effort was largely successful, but George Shultz’s bid at leadership selection intervention was an outright failure. The PLO was never fully of one mind or fully in control of events in the territories, but throughout this period it remained the single most powerful actor in internal Palestinian politics. Shultz took on too ambitious a goal— changing the internal balance of forces in Palestinian society – whereas Baker focused on the more realistic tactical objective of getting to a conference without the PLO included.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 447, 450–451, 453, 464, 491, 504.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 446, 500.

⁴⁹ For the bodyguards anecdote, see Ibid., 496. For Hussein’s White House visit, see Ibid., 492; Thomas L. Friedman, “U.S. Said to Give Israel and Syria Private Assurances to Get Them to Talks,” *New York Times*, July 31, 1991.

Further, he did much more to harness American assets to advance his plan, while Shultz did comparatively little to achieve a much more difficult goal.

<Sub-Case 1: Shultz versus the PLO>

At the time, some observers argued that the plan the condominium plan backed by Shultz was yielding benefits. For instance a journalist for the *Wall Street Journal* reported being told by Morris Draper, the American consul general in East Jerusalem at the time, that “efforts to develop an alternative leadership to the PLO ‘have so far not been wildly successful.’ Still, he insisted, ‘now there are Palestinian figures publicly critical of the PLO’.”⁵⁰ American mediation did play a major role in helping wrap up the Jordanian-Israeli agreement for a Jordanian bank to open up in the Palestinian territories, and this helped bind Palestinian commerce and finance to Amman while PLO leaders were still forced to carry money into the West Bank by hand.⁵¹ Shimon Peres concluded that after the American, Jordanian, and Israeli efforts had allowed “a recognizable change in the orientation of Judean and Samarian inhabitants from pro-PLO to pro-Jordanian,” but Adam Garfinkle aptly points out that the prime minister’s claims may have been shaped by his political needs at the time rather than being a true assessment of events on the ground.⁵²

Although it is not clear how big a role the U.S. played in the appointment of pro-Jordanian mayors (it clearly supported the idea later in the year), the Israeli military commission in the West Bank following through with the appointment of a

⁵⁰ Suzanne Garment, “Can Quality Of Life Affect Mideast Peace?,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 7, 1986.

⁵¹ Garfinkle, *Israel and Jordan in the Shadow of War*, 113–114, 131; Melman and Raviv, *Behind the Uprising*, 195–197; “Israel, Jordan Sign Formal Agreement on Nablus Bank,” *Associated Press*, October 2, 1986.

⁵² Quoted in Garfinkle, *Israel and Jordan in the Shadow of War*, 132–133.

number of new mayors in major Palestinian cities who were privately affiliated with the Jordanian, monarchist cause to undermine the appeal of the PLO. For instance, the Jordanian foreign minister's uncle, Zafer al-Masri, was appointed mayor of Nablus and presented as a hopeful standard bearer for the new political movement.⁵³ However, al-Masri was assassinated in March of 1986 by members of the PLO in an act that was seen as a setback to the plan, and his funeral was turned into a PLO rally, making a mockery of King Hussein's efforts.⁵⁴ Draper notes that similar problems were experienced by the new mayor of Bethlehem, Elias Freij, as well: "he was considered as an 'Uncle Tom' by a lot of the Palestinians and then when American would show up at his house regularly that added to his woes. Sometimes that increased the threats on his life".⁵⁵

Tom Friedman went so far as to decry that "the murder... of Nablus Mayor Zafer el-Masri, apparently by Palestinian extremists, appears to have destroyed – for now – whatever remained of the so-called Middle East peace process. It has also cut off abruptly recent attempts to cultivate a 'legitimate,' 'pragmatic' Palestinian leadership in the West Bank that could counterbalance the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)".⁵⁶ And, while Friedman's claim was overwrought, the act did

⁵³ Thomas L. Friedman, "In West Bank, Israeli Policies to Improve the 'Quality of Life' Get Mixed Reviews," *New York Times*, January 5, 1986; Ruth Sinai, "West Bank Mayor Is Israeli Test Case, Palestinian Hope," *Associated Press*, January 19, 1986.

⁵⁴ "Editorial: The Murder of More Than a Mayor," *New York Times*, March 16, 1986; Thomas L. Friedman, "The Three Sides of the Palestinian Side," *New York Times*, March 9, 1986; Arthur Max, "Peres Going to the U.S. with Ideas for Peace," *Associated Press*, March 29, 1986; Ian Murray, "Moderates Scared Off by Killing: Palestinian Mayor al-Masri Murder Aftermath," *The Times (of London)*, March 5, 1986; Rice, "Jordan, PLO Struggle for Heart of West Bank"; "Two Arabs Get Life Terms for Murder of Palestinian Mayor," *Associated Press*, October 21, 1987; Yehuda Lukacs, *Israel, Jordan, and the Peace Process* (Syracuse University Press, 1997), 170; Madiha Rashid Al Madfai, *Jordan, the United States and the Middle East Peace Process, 1974-1991* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 182.

⁵⁵ Draper, "Interview with Ambassador Morris Draper," 70.

⁵⁶ Friedman, "The Three Sides of the Palestinian Side."

scare off other moderate Palestinian elites. Immediately afterwards, both men under consideration to be appointed mayor of al-Bireh dropped out of the race, and one of them even took out a advertisement in an East Jerusalem newspaper to draw attention to his decision. A candidate for mayor of Ramallah told journalists at the same paper he had never even asked for the job.⁵⁷

The act also stood as a sign that the PLO would not be cowed. And later on when Shultz went to meet with a hand-picked group of local Palestinian moderates, the PLO forbid the meeting and forced his moderates to cancel.⁵⁸ When the intifada broke out, Shultz privately remarked that “what Shamir fails to understand is that Hussein’s position as a spokesman for the Palestinians is eroding with each passing day,” but he never formulated a viable strategy to get Shamir onboard for his diplomatic solution, nor did he do much to step up his foreign assistance budgeting for rescuing the Jordanian option through the development plan.⁵⁹ In fact, at this point, economic development in the territories was fraying terribly, and the newly empowered resistance leadership was avowedly anti-Jordanian.⁶⁰ The chance to fully buy into Jordan’s West Bank plans was probably long past.

Furthermore, the administration’s weak financial commitment to Hussein’s West Bank plan undermined its effectiveness. Administration efforts to follow the

⁵⁷ Murray, “Moderates Scared Off by Killing: Palestinian Mayor al-Masri Murder Aftermath”; Max, “Peres Going to the U.S. with Ideas for Peace.”

⁵⁸ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 1024–1025; Glenn Frankel, “Palestinian Mistrust Mars Shultz Tour: West Bank, Gaza Leaders Plan to Boycott U.S. Peace Mission,” *Washington Post*, February 26, 1986.

⁵⁹ Quote is from “Jerusalem, April 5, 1988: My Meetings in Israel and Syria - Memorandum for the President from George P. Shultz”, April 5, 1988, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 3, Folder “Peace Process: Shultz 1988 Trip [Feb 25-March 5] (1 of 2),” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

⁶⁰ Glenn Frankel, “Uprising Casualty: The Quality of Life - Hardships Grow as Israelis, Palestinians Step up Economic Conflict,” *Washington Post*, July 25, 1988; Melman and Raviv, *Behind the Uprising*, 199–200.

initial \$4.5 million in July of 1986 with an additional \$30 million fell through the following March.⁶¹ By July of 1987, administration officials were still trying to get approval for the line item \$30 million and were now forced to think in terms of trying to “breathe new life into efforts there” rather than to ensure their bold and comprehensive success.⁶² Even as late as September of that year, officials were having difficulty nailing down a source for another round of U.S. funding. NSC files describe a “need to appoint person to take charge of efforts to improve cooperative and developmental steps on the ground in West Bank/Gaza. \$30 million must be tied to plan for next 6-12 months. Shamir, Hussein and Palestinians must see our commitment here”.⁶³ Bureaucrats and Palestinians both were becoming skeptical about how much the QoL program was actually going to achieve, something I explore in greater detail below. The Jordanians were increasingly forced to scale back the program for lack of outside funds.⁶⁴

Overall, the plan failed to achieve its objectives. As Yehuda Lukacs writes in his book on Israeli-Jordanian relations, Jordan’s five-year development plan “failed to materialize owing to a lack of enthusiasm by the potential donors,” the Masri assassination was “the first concrete signal that there were limits to the imposition of the Israeli-Jordanian condominium ideas,” and that the parties “failed in their

⁶¹ Fisher, “Israeli Protests Block U.S. Plan for Aid to West Bank.”

⁶² “Meeting with Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, July 2, 11:30 Am - Memorandum for Frank C. Carlucci from Robert B. Oakley”, July 1, 1987, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 7, Folder “Chron File, July 1987,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

⁶³ “Key Provisos on Green Light for Shultz Trip”, September 23, 1987, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 7, Folder “Chron File, September 1987,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

⁶⁴ Charles P. Wallace, “Jordan Seeks Funds for West Bank Plan,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 9, 1986; Rice, “Official Defends Aid Program, Promises Larger Projects.”

hope to inflict a fatal blow to the PLO through the condominium scheme”.⁶⁵ Avi Shlaim writes that when “the discussion... turned to Jordan’s West Bank Development Plan... the Israelis promised to use their influence in Washington, but the American response was disappointing”.⁶⁶

<Sub-Case 2: Baker versus the PLO>

James Baker’s efforts to empower local Palestinian leaders to speak for their people at the expense of the PLO basically succeeded. He was unable to achieve this result in 1989 and 1990, and the Oslo Accords sidelined local leaders by bringing the PLO front and center, but arguably this never would have been possible without Madrid building up the peace camp in Israel and persuading many in Israel that the PLO was isolated enough to be eager to cut a deal.

Dennis Ross blames the policy’s initial failure in 1990 on the staunch position of the Israeli prime minister at the time, Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir. He argues that the effort in which Israel also took part

“to circumvent and weaken the PLO in Tunis was defeated by [Shamir’s] inability to hold the line against the Israeli right. Had he permitted the Palestinians in the negotiations to demonstrate that they were producing increasing Palestinian independence, had he stopped the Israeli actions that most outraged Palestinians – land confiscation, continued settlement activity, daily humiliations at checkpoints – he might have truly empowered the Palestinians from the territories and made it possible for the ‘internal PLO’ to become an alternative to Yasir Arafat’s PLO in Tunis. But he did not. His insensitivity to Palestinian needs and concerns mirrored Arafat’s insensitivity and indifference to Israeli needs a decade later”.⁶⁷

However, with the push for a multilateral conference after the Gulf War, Baker got another shot.

⁶⁵ Lukacs, *Israel, Jordan, and the Peace Process*, 170.

⁶⁶ Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan*, 441.

⁶⁷ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 82.

Of course, the PLO continued to be supported by “the vast majority of Palestinians”.⁶⁸ However, Baker found an opportunity to parley support from Arab capitals and the grudging acceptance of Shamir into an initiative to get a Palestinian delegation composed of empowered local elites instead of PLO officials. What was important was that he did not try to push this gambit too far, squeezing the PLO beyond what the group itself would accept, albeit reluctantly. For instance, Faisal al-Husseini, who coordinated the meetings and later joined the talks as another member of the local leadership insisted that “the meetings with James Baker... were decided by the PLO. Both the United States and Israel know this perfectly well”.⁶⁹ But their willingness to finesse the difference enabled them to empower local Palestinian leaders to the point where they could attend without the PLO and return home to a heroes’ welcome.⁷⁰

The PLO showed itself reluctant but ultimately willing to permit the peace push to proceed as planned without its direct involvement. There were numerous opportunities to block the effort, but they chose not to do so. Baker notes that at many of his meetings with local Palestinian elites, they mentioned having received specific letters of blessing or encouragement from the PLO for their meetings, in contrast to when the PLO vetoed Shultz’s meeting with Palestinian leaders years

⁶⁸ Emad Fraitakh, “Intifada: Now the War Among the Palestinians: The Secular-Fundamentalist Schism on the West Bank,” *Washington Post*, November 24, 1991.

⁶⁹ Faisal Husseini, “Palestinian Politics After the Gulf War: An Interview with Faisal Husseini,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 20, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 106.

⁷⁰ Robert Mahoney, “Palestinians Home to Hero’s Welcome, Prepare for Israeli Talks,” *Reuters News*, November 10, 1991.

before.⁷¹ The PLO signed off on Baker's September meeting with Ashrawi in Amman, something particularly helpful because it helped move ahead Palestinian-Jordanian talks on the specific modalities for their joint delegation.⁷² The PLO's National Council also held a full vote in Algiers to green light participation in the conference at Madrid; Arafat faced considerable pressure to say no and preclude a non-PLO role, but he pushed for a positive, if vague, official answer instead.⁷³ Despite having earlier insisted on naming the conference delegates himself, Arafat eventually relented.⁷⁴ Even certain PLO hardliners such as Farouq Qaddoumi signed off on sending the local delegates to Madrid instead of PLO officials because they had concluded that the latter option was not a realistic choice.⁷⁵

Thus, Baker's effort should be termed a narrow and a broader success. They bolstered local Palestinian leaders a moderate but significant amount, and in so doing he was able to bring about a major landmark event in the history of the peace process. For a time, Madrid helped break the taboo on direct negotiations between Israel, the Palestinians, and their neighbors, and it launched a series of multilaterals meetings which helped begin to socialize the parties to the needs of the other side

⁷¹ Baker recalls that "they gave me a letter from Yasir Arafat stating that he had empowered them to represent his interests. (And I received a similar pro forma letter at every subsequent meeting I had with them.)" Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 423.

⁷² Wafa Amr and David Hirst, "PLO Sends Single Emissary in Protest at Peace Plan," *The Guardian (UK)*, September 21, 1991.

⁷³ William C. Mann, "Arafat Woos Both Sides Among Divided Palestinians in Peace Search," *Associated Press*, September 23, 1991; "Palestinians to Meet Baker for U.S. Talks on Peace Drive," *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1991; William C. Mann, "Palestinians Compromise to Aid Peace Effort," *Associated Press*, September 26, 1991.

⁷⁴ Paul Lewis, "Arafat Wants to Choose Delegates to Middle East Peace Conference," *New York Times*, August 7, 1991.

⁷⁵ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 643.

on a range of core issues.⁷⁶

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

The four theories studied by this dissertation predict a range of mutually exclusive observable implications, which enable researchers to use the data to test the theories against each other. These theories are national interests theory (Theory #1), lobby-legislative politics (Theory #2), bureaucratic politic (Theory #3), and leadership theory (Theory #4). For instance, the theories pose divergent predictions vis-à-vis how actors in the sender state perceive their interests and, in turn, how this bears upon variation in the occurrence of LSI behavior.

Theory #1 expects that actors in the sender state should interpret their interests uniformly and in line with objective national interests; thus, variation in LSI occurrence should consistently reflect objective opportunities over time. Theory #2 expects that LSI toward Palestinian politics should be relatively rare, since members of Congress and the pro-Israel lobby should expect Palestinian leaders to adhere to unrealistically high standards of friendliness to Israel. Because of their tendency to identify with Israeli positions over Palestinian ones, these actors should tend to ignore differences between Palestinian hardliners and Palestinian moderates, making it much harder to elicit a policy of support for the latter over the former. Theory #3 expects that LSI toward Palestinian politics

⁷⁶ For what Madrid achieved, see Daniel C. Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle: America's Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace in the Post-Cold War Era [forthcoming]* (US Institute of Peace & Cornell University Presses, 2012), 81–83.

should be near-constant, since members of the bureaucracy who work on these issues full-time should tend to over-emphasize rather than under-emphasize differences between Palestinian moderates and Palestinian hardliners, calling for a policy of backing the former over the latter. Finally, Theory #4 expects that the occurrence of LSI should vary according to the subjective beliefs and idiosyncrasies of top leaders in the sender state. This includes their assessments of counterparts, their expectations for leadership contestation in Palestinian affairs, and their personal priorities for regional politics.

Theory #2 offers a reasonable model of Congressional preferences during this period, but it does not provide a persuasive model for LSI behavior, suggesting that the link between the two factors is rather weak. Members of Congress were determined to marginalize the PLO and occasionally outflanked the administration on the issue, but they were not particularly engaged in efforts to nurture an alternative leadership in the territories. For instance, Ted Kennedy called for administration backing of Jordan's West Bank development plan, but there does not seem to be much Congressional interest in the matter beyond this event.⁷⁷ Rather than seeking to promote King Hussein's development plan, AIPAC displayed a stance tended toward skepticism and neutrality.⁷⁸

Yet for reasons discussed below, the lobby seems to have played little role in the executive branch's main difficulty with Congress regarding the plan – that is, efforts to elicit funds for supporting Jordan's efforts in the West Bank. This difficulty

⁷⁷ John Rice, "Senator Backs West Bank Aid Plan," *Associated Press*, December 13, 1986.

⁷⁸ For AIPAC discussions of the issue, see "West Bank Realities," *Near East Report* 30, no. 27 (July 7, 1986); "Editorial: What Do They Want?" *Near East Report* 30, no. 28, (July 21, 1986); "Jordanian Plan Lacks Funds," *Near East Report* 31, no. 9 (March 2, 1987).

emerged from the camp of fiscal conservatives, not from backers of Israel.

And although Baker worked to build up local nationalist elites at the expense of the Tunis-based official PLO, the pro-Israel community took a dim view of these activists. For instance, AIPAC's weekly newsletter bashed Hanan Ashrawi as a "media darling" with extremist views and highlighted her case as proof of "the difficulty Israel faces in finding responsible Palestinians it can negotiate with".⁷⁹ Other articles by *Near East Report* throughout that year took a similarly dim view of these activists' true preferences.⁸⁰ Further, the simple fact that LSI occurred during both periods, while Theory #2 predicts that LSI should be relatively unlikely, seems to contradict the expectations of the theory.

Meanwhile, Theory #3 does not fare much better. Although its prediction of very frequent LSI is congruent with basic outcomes in the data, the causal processes leading to this overlap do not fit with the expectations of the bureaucratic approach. Theory #3 cannot explain why Shultz's effort to marginalize the PLO was so much more severe than Baker's subsequent attempt. Further, the executive branch's decision to marginalize the PLO in 1989 and 1990 when it had a functioning dialogue with the group was more an expression of presidential interests than bureaucratic desires. As Baker recalls, the PLO dialogue was kept at a low level and studiously avoided engaging Arafat because of political considerations, since "his reputation as a terrorist was so ingrained in American public opinion that no

⁷⁹ "Hanan Ashrawi: Media Darling," *Near East Report* 35, no. 16 (April 22, 1991).

⁸⁰ "The Peace Agenda: The Palestinians," *Near East Report* 35, no. 40 (October 7, 1991); "No Concessions to the PLO," *Near East Report* 35, no. 48 (December 2, 1991).

administration could deal with him openly”.⁸¹ As is noted below, it also cannot explain why assistant secretary Dick Murphy’s long-suffering attempt to meet with moderate Palestinian delegates from the territories was vetoed at the last minute by President Reagan, who felt strongly that no individual even remotely associated with the PLO should be allowed, even if the ultimate effect of such a meeting might be to undermine the PLO overall by empowering individuals from the territories.

The best explanation for why Shultz pursued more ambitious goals with regard to Palestinian politics than Baker comes down to personal beliefs. Shultz pursued goals that were unrealistic (especially relative to the limited amount of resources he was willing to commit to their fulfillment) compared to Baker because of how he felt about the PLO. This offers evidence in favor of Theory #4 that the national interests approach of Theory #1 cannot incorporate or explain. American efforts to marginalize the PLO should have been relatively consistent across administrations, since the group continued to be rejected by the ruling Israeli government and still engaged in terrorism (especially if one focuses on behavior Baker’s in 1991 and excludes 1989 and early 1990, which I am largely doing here).

Whereas its predecessor had looked for an active role that would involve for the PLO in the peace process, the Reagan team felt that the group was simply irredeemable, at least until its final days in office when the PLO accepted U.S. terms for recognition. This sentiment was personal, and it was visceral. For instance, Philip Wilcox, a deputy assistant secretary covering Palestinian issues for Near Eastern Affairs and later a consul general in Jerusalem, argues that Shultz’s policy

⁸¹ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 118.

toward the area was heavily shaped by his beliefs about Palestinian leaders, especially Arafat at the PLO. He recalls that “George Shultz had a kind of a visceral loathing of terrorism, and he identified Yasser Arafat and the PLO with terrorism”.⁸² Shultz writes in his memoirs that he even surprised his counterparts in allied nations with the vehemence of his opposition to terrorism.⁸³

At an AIPAC dinner in 1987, Shultz – normally rather reserved – even led the crowd in an impromptu chant of “PLO, hell no!”.⁸⁴ However, Wilcox believes that the reason Shultz took this unexpected departure had more to do with the secretary’s visceral loathing for the PLO than it did with any sort of pressure from the pro-Israel lobby.⁸⁵ Shultz’s main deputy for Mideast affairs, assistant secretary of state Richard Murphy, insisted that “when there was the issue of, what was very hot in the 80s, when would we talk to the PLO, Shultz was rock hard on honoring the 1975 pledge... was he quote-unquote afraid of the Congress, afraid of AIPAC? I don’t think, I wouldn’t describe him in that way... Shultz just said, look, the position has been clear since ’75... foreswear violence”.⁸⁶ Shultz himself reflects that “whether the PLO was strong or not, I did not regard the PLO as reliable or moderate”.⁸⁷ As is explored in more detail below, Shultz had considerable cachet with the pro-Israel community, and his policies reflected their views because they shared a common worldview, not because of transactional bargaining between the two sides.

⁸² Former US Consul General in East Jerusalem, Ambassador Philip Wilcox, “Interview with the Author”, February 14, 2011.

⁸³ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 688.

⁸⁴ “For the Record - From the State Department’s Text of an Address by Secretary George Shultz Before the American Israel Public Affairs Committee on May 17,” *Washington Post*, June 4, 1987.

⁸⁵ Former US Consul General in East Jerusalem, Ambassador Philip Wilcox, “Interview with the Author.”

⁸⁶ Former Assistant Secretary for Near East Affairs Richard Murphy, “Interview with the Author”, March 11, 2011.

⁸⁷ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 92.

Baker's thinking on the issue was much less a matter of principle and more an issue of practicality. He sat down with Palestinian leaders from the territories in July of 1991 and explained that, while the United States was not seeking to determine who should rule them, it did believe that overt insistence on a role for Palestinians from the diaspora or from East Jerusalem at this point would kill the process. Baker insisted that "it's not a question of fairness or what is right. It's a question of reality," since the Israelis would never accept a dialogue with the PLO so long as the Likud was in power.⁸⁸

These two secretaries of state may also have been influenced by the role played by their boss, the president. Like Shultz, Reagan had strong feelings about the PLO, whereas Bush was inclined to defer to Baker's instincts. President Reagan evinced such strong opinions on the PLO that he had already blocked efforts to create a joint Jordanian-Palestinian negotiating team in 1985 if the Palestinian participants were even indirectly connected with the PLO. Shultz recalls at first that

"for all my frustration with King Hussein, I knew that the problem of Palestinian representation was a legitimate one for him, and a big one... I saw the president again on September 5, just to make sure our views were in alignment. He was unwavering: there should be no ambiguity about our refusal to deal with anyone genuinely associated with the PLO. Murphy could meet, but only with Palestinians from the occupied territories. And we should press the king toward direct negotiations with Israel. Ronald Reagan was taking a personal stand on this, and he was steadfast".⁸⁹

Even though Shultz thought "that we should let Murphy meet with Palestinians who were not tainted with terrorism or extremism, even if they had a slight association with the PLO," but he said ultimately Reagan "did not want us to meet with anyone

⁸⁸ Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 42–43.

⁸⁹ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 453–454.

even *remotely* associate with the PLO... that was all the running room I could get".⁹⁰

Meanwhile, Baker was aided by the fact that his boss, President Bush, did not care strongly enough about Palestinian politics to interfere or trip up his efforts in the manner he sometimes had on Israeli politics. Bush's personal feelings about Israeli conduct sometimes led him to blurt out comments that were unhelpful to Baker's diplomacy – such as his remarks labeling Jewish construction in East Jerusalem illegal settlement behavior in March of 1990 discussed in Chapter 4. However, there were no such public comments that went off-message from Bush on the Palestinian representation issue. Also, Baker recalls that he and the president were both extremely reluctant to terminate their dialogue with the PLO, even though they had kept it at intentionally low levels, but that Arafat's refusal to condemn the PLF terrorist attack forced their hands.⁹¹

Counterpart relationships and assessments also may have played an important role in the relative efficacies of these two American efforts. Reportedly, King Hussein evinced a rather dim view of the Reagan team's competency, and Shultz recalls feeling that "the king acts like a spoiled child".⁹² Conceivably, this may have diminished room for effective coordination among the two sides and fostered the Shultz program's failure. Meanwhile, Baker's willingness to meet a stunning eleven times, mostly in region, with his intended Palestinian counterparts no doubt helped bolster their visibility and rapport between the two sides. He found his

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 130.

⁹² For the former point, see Garfinkle, *Israel and Jordan in the Shadow of War*, 108–110; Emile Sahliyeh, "Jordan and the Palestinians," in *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David*, ed. William B. Quandt (Brookings Institution Press, 1988), 301. For the latter, see Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 457.

meetings with his Palestinian counterparts extremely frustrating at times, but he also seemed to hold both Ashrawi and Hussein in high regard.⁹³

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

Another area in which some of the theories offer divergent predictions involves their predictions about close political contests in the target polity. Although theories 2 and 3 are somewhat agnostic on this dimension, Theory #1 anticipates that individuals' subjective biases in the sender state should not shape their predictions about political struggles in the target, while leadership theory takes the opposite position. In this regard, Theory #4 provides a better explanation of the data than does national interests theory.

Shultz pursued his strategy for Palestinian politics on the basis of questionable empirical assumptions about how viable the PLO's rivals actually were on the West Bank. His wishful thinking about the weakness of the PLO and the viability of boosting substitute for the group suggest that Theory #4 offers the best explanation for American behavior during this period.

For instance, in March of 1987, approximately a year after Hussein's split from Arafat and more than half a year after announcement of Jordan's West Bank Development Plan, a strategy document bouncing around in the U.S. government's national security bureaucracy cast Shultz's assumptions under deep suspicion. The draft report (a joint National Security Study Document and National Security Decision Document) responding to President Reagan's request for a strategy review

⁹³ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 492, 500–501.

on the Mideast peace process writ large, raised major concerns about the idea that Shultz's efforts might actually sideline the PLO. The excerpt is somewhat long, but it is really worth reading in full:

“Another way to do this [sort out Palestinian representation to Mideast peace talks] is to rebuild Jordan's assets on the West Bank and to demonstrate to the Palestinians in the occupied territories that improvement of their material circumstances and political prospects depend more on Jordan than the PLO. [But] the chances that such a strategy alone -- i.e. in the absence of an active political process -- can yield continuing, tangible benefits are low. Furthermore, it is far from certain that Jordan can muster the requisite bureaucratic savvy, political sensitivity (in the occupied territories) and financial backing (in the international community) to deliver an effective development program. Even if over time Amman succeeds in putting an effective program in place, it may not be able to parlay economic benefits to West Bankers and Gazans for the political credit necessary to ease the way for Hussein to negotiate on their behalf. Finally, the development of an indigenous leadership in the occupied territories able and willing to carry its weight in negotiations with Israel, is a realistic prospect only over much longer term”.⁹⁴

Although the NSSD called for continuing Quality of Life programs, it took a narrower view of what could realistically be achieved, focusing much more on humanitarian objectives and boosting the environment for peace talks rather than Shultz's dream of forging an alternative leadership to replace the PLO.⁹⁵ It also argued that the U.S. would not achieve success at even these limited objectives unless it could also “find ways to upgrade the political content of our interventions with Israel by addressing such politically symbolic and potentially sensitive areas as water and land, by “addressing more strictly political issues such as treatment of Palestinians in the territories,” and “look for ways to develop incipient political structures (e.g., Council of Mayors, manufacturers, or professional associations) that

⁹⁴ “Draft NSSD on Middle East Peace Process”, March 17, 1987, 2, Presidential Directives, Part II, Digital National Security Archive.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 8–9. See also page three of the draft decision document being paired with the study directive at the time: NSSD “Draft NSDD on Middle East Peace Process”, March 17, 1987, 3, Presidential Directives, Part II, Digital National Security Archive.

will add to a sense of movement and build the impression that Quality of Life offers a real prospect for Palestinians to gain control over their own lives”.⁹⁶

Evidently, others within the American government bureaucracy seemed to think that Shultz’s strategy for undermining the PLO was unlikely to yield the sort of results he had previously been imputing to it. In short, he pursued a policy based upon a misreading of Palestinian politics, perceiving an opportunity that may not have actually been there.

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

Another area where the theories diverge has to do with the structure of deliberation leading up to the pursuit of leadership selection intervention. Theories 2 and 3, which focus on domestic structural forces, expect lobbies, Congress, or the bureaucracy to be both informed and influential when important decisions about LSI are being made. However, leadership theory anticipates that top leaders should be able to undertake LSI while leaving these other internal stakeholders in the dark.

America’s failure to undermine the PLO via the QoL plan under Reagan and Shultz cannot be attributed to lobby-legislative pressures under Theory #2. Shultz faced considerable difficulty finding money on the Hill for the Hussein’s West Bank development plan, but it was more due to fiscal hawks than because of the influence of the pro-Israel lobby. In the era of Gramm-Rudman, money for foreign assistance

⁹⁶ “Draft NSSD,” 9.

was tight all around.⁹⁷ When Shultz asked for \$30 million for the Jordanian West Bank development plan's second year of U.S. support, it turned out that "NEA is looking at FY87 money, and there is none available".⁹⁸

But when the government came up with a plan for funding the program through reprogramming other existing funds, they expected the Hill actually be quite obliging. NSC staffer Robert Oakley wrote in private channels that "\$23 million could be reprogrammed -- with some authorizing legislation -- for use in Jordan. (Congressional support for money for West Bank development is quite strong. The appropriate House and Senate committee are planning to earmark \$20-30 million for the West Bank in the FY 88 budget.)".⁹⁹

Although opposition to military aid or advanced arms sales were high, probably a mark of AIPAC's influence with Congress, this did not translate into perceived opposition on backing Jordan in the West Bank, provided that available funds could be found somewhere and repurposed. Oakley writes that "Congressional support for West Bank assistance is strong; opposition to I-HAWK [sales] and military assistance is equally strong".¹⁰⁰

Similarly, the role of the pro-Israel lobby cannot be explained for the low level of U.S. effort exerted in support of Shultz's West Bank program. Oakley wrote in private at the time that that "the Secretary... is admired, indeed revered, by

⁹⁷ Fritz, "Plans for Extra Foreign Aid Elicit Outrage in Congress: White House to Seek Additional \$1.3 Billion While Domestic Programs Are Being Cut"; Gwertzman, "Shultz to Press Congress for Increase in Current Foreign Aid Budget."

⁹⁸ "\$30 Million for the West Bank - Memorandum for Frank C. Carlucci from Robert B. Oakley."

⁹⁹ "\$30 Million for the West Bank - Memorandum for Frank C. Carlucci from Robert B. Oakley", April 1, 1987, Collection "Ross, Dennis Files", Box 7, Folder "Chron File, April 1987," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

AIPAC, and its leaders are reluctant to take him on directly”.¹⁰¹ When National Security Advisor met with trustees of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a think-tank associate with the pro-Israel community, his remarks trumpeted Shultz’s program as something positive the administration was doing in the region and did not seem to approach it as an item of likely opposition. His written talking points for the meeting proclaimed the following:

“We need to counter an image of drift; work in ways that demonstrate that moderates can deliver; and that fundamentalists don’t succeed... We will try to help Hussein’s development plans on the West Bank, the one active thing going on that is concrete and can build a moderate Palestinian base in time. Shamir-Peres-Rabin all agree with this.”¹⁰²

If anything, it seemed the NSC expected opposition from the group regarding specific Israeli concern and the idea of an international conference in the region but not on using Jordan to bolster Palestinian moderates as an alternative to the PLO. When asked if the State Department under Shultz ever had “any problems with Congress” on Palestinian affairs and whether the bill would “get into the act at all,” the secretary’s troubleshooter on peace process issues, Wat Cluverius, said “No. The tendency is to get involved when things are very high visibility. This was a period of very low visibility”.¹⁰³

Meanwhile, in Baker’s work with local Palestinian leaders, he barely

¹⁰¹ “Shultz’s Meeting with the President, June 26 - Memorandum from Robert B. Oakley for Frank C. Carlucci”, June 25, 1987, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 7, Folder “Chron File June 1987,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

¹⁰² “Meeting with Board of Trustees, Washington Institute for Near East Policy (with Introduction, Draft Remarks, and Talking Points for Q&A) - Memorandum for Frank C. Carlucci from Robert B. Oakley”, April 6, 1987, Collection “Ross, Dennis Files”, Box 7, Folder “Chron File, April 1987,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

¹⁰³ Cluverius, “Interview with Ambassador Wat Tyler Cluverius IV”, May 31, 1990, 53, The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), Library of Congress.

encountered any resistance from Congress. The biggest legislative-executive issues during the push to Madrid were first, debates over whether to restart aid to Jordan despite the king having sided with Saddam in the Gulf War, and second, the tough struggle over housing loan guarantees to Israel in the months just before the conference.¹⁰⁴ However, the issue of Palestinian representation did not even really emerge as a major bone of contention. Nor did administration officials seem to seek out Congressional approval for the plan. Thus, U.S. behavior in these cases fits much better with Theory #4 than the lobby-legislative approach.

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

The domestic structural theories (number two and three) expect that these factors should be especially predominant during certain periods of the political calendar in the sender state. Thus, if theory #2 is correct we should expect to see meddling be especially unlikely during periods leading up to an election in the sender state – or in periods in which the sender state is under divided government. In short, because Congress is exceptionally influential during these periods, contrary preferences from the executive branch should be largely irrelevant. And if theory #3 is correct, the preferences of bureaucrats should predominate most notably during the beginning of presidential administrations (especially first terms), when political appointees are not yet in place to hem in an unruly bureaucracy. Theories 1 and 4 on the other hand do not permit these variations in the sender state's domestic calendar to drive behavior in LSI occurrence or efficacy.

¹⁰⁴ For the former, see Adam Garfinkle, "How Can Jordan Thaw the Ice?," *Washington Times*, April 1, 1991. For the latter, see chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Neither of the domestic structural theories fares particularly well during this period. In both episodes, secretaries of state pursued major interventions in Palestinian politics during periods of divided U.S. government, something which Theory #2 expects should be extremely unlikely. And, while the timing of those episodes is somewhat consonant with the lobby-legislative approach's predictions vis-à-vis the American election calendar, the data is consonant for the wrong reasons. True, neither Shultz nor Baker pursued as much intervention in Palestinian politics during their last year in office – Shultz's intervention peaked in 1986, and Baker's peaked in 1991. However, Shultz's peak occurred during a midterm election year, something that should have been unlikely under Theory #2.

Also, their reasons for scaling back intervention in 1988 and 1992 respectively could be plausibly traced to other factors. The perceived strategic underpinnings for Shultz's approach were collapsing at the time, first with the outbreak of the first intifada and then with King Hussein's decision in July of 1988 to sever his country's political with the West Bank. Arguably, Shultz moved marginally closer to accepting the PLO during this period, not so much against Palestinian nationalism that he refused to deal even with Palestinian moderates in the territories, as Congressional preferences probably would have dictated at the time. Nor did electoral politics seem to influence his thinking according to speech evidence at the time. When Reagan's chief of staff, Ken Duberstein, argued in 1988 that the U.S. couldn't recognize the PLO because it might hamper George Bush's race for the presidency, Shultz replied that "we really have no choice... if the PLO meet

our conditions we have to honor our commitment to start a dialogue”.¹⁰⁵

Nor does the logic of the lobby-legislative approach explain variation in Baker’s behavior over time. During the first half of 1992, his attention toward the region was consumed with political intervention in Israeli politics over housing loan guarantees – an even more sensitive instance of LSI. Then in the second half of the year his attention was consumed with domestic issues after he was pulled back into the White House to supervise Bush’s reelection effort as his chief of staff.

Nor does the bureaucratic approach provide a compelling explanation for the timing of LSI during the Bush 41 and later Reagan years. In 1985, at the start of Reagan’s second term in office, U.S. intervention in Palestinian politics was less pronounced rather than more frequent in the manner Theory #3 would predict. And although James Baker did undertake to empower local Palestinian moderates during President Bush’s first year in office, his efforts were much more pronounced during 1991 than in 1989. Although he met eleven times with local Palestinian elites during the lead-up to Madrid, most of which were held in East Jerusalem or the West Bank, the secretary’s never met with Palestinian moderates on the ground until his third year in office.¹⁰⁶ The timing of his engagement in Palestinian politics cannot be explained on the basis of the relative power of the American bureaucracy during Bush and Baker’s early days in office.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

The predominance of bureaucratic freelancing, in which working-level

¹⁰⁵ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 1035.

¹⁰⁶ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 423.

officials in agencies of the executive branch undertake LSI against the wishes and without the authorization of the administration's principles, would serve as evidence in favor of Theory #3, the bureaucratic approach. However, it seems there were no instances of bureaucratic freelancing during the two periods covered by these episodes.

James Baker writes that he was persuaded to overcome his initial hesitance to engage in the quagmire of Arab-Israeli peacemaking when his advisors convinced him in 1989 that the intifada provided an opportunity to help empower local Palestinian leaders at the expense of the PLO. However, American efforts to seize this opportunity were much more concerted in 1991 than in 1989 or 1990, once the secretary perceived a strategic opportunity and decided to throw himself into the effort. Nor was the initial effort being pursued against his wishes – he chose to remove himself from the effort somewhat, but it occurred with his full approval.

Nor was American intervention in Palestinian politics during the Reagan period pursued without the approval of George Shultz. In fact, if the point of view articulated in the draft NSSD/NSDD documents quoted above were at all representative of the U.S. bureaucracy, it would seem that these officials were more skeptical of the QoL endeavor than the secretary himself was. Thus, there are little grounds for suggesting that bureaucratic freelancing was responsible for America's intervention in Palestinian politics at the time.

Nor was either effort pursued by the secretary of state against the express wishes of the president. In 1986, the internal paper trail indicates that Shultz was keeping the president and his advisors fully informed about his plan to pursue LSI in

Palestinian politics.¹⁰⁷ In 1987, the president's staff sought to inform the secretary that Reagan felt his West Bank strategy was appealing and that he should move ahead with seeking additional money to backstop King Hussein's development plan.¹⁰⁸ As noted above, Baker also had presidential backing for his effort to undermine the PLO in the territories.

The Reagan administration did encounter one instance of *Congressional* freelancing toward Palestinian politics in which legislators sought to undermine the PLO in a manner that the executive branch felt contradicted its initiatives toward Palestinian politics, but this was a rather distinct and unrelated episode. Toward the end of the Reagan administration, members of Congress pushed hard to pass a bill that would forcibly close the PLO's offices in Washington and at the UN in New York. Although Shultz left open the possibility of executive action at a later date to close the group's DC office, he argued that its New York site was subject to America's treaty obligations related to the United Nations. He therefore argued in a letter to Congress that closing it would probably result in an international legal setback for the government and a "propaganda gain" for the PLO.¹⁰⁹ He insisted that the bill "does not serve our shared aim of reducing the political influence of the PLO".¹¹⁰

Ultimately, the legislation passed and went into force over objections from the administration. Shultz complained that the attorney general "will go forward with the law, as he must" but that "my opinion remains that it's a very bad piece of

¹⁰⁷ "Your Meeting with King Hussein"; "Talking Points for the President's Meeting with King Hussein"; "Hussein Follow-Up - Memorandum for John M. Poindexter from Dennis Ross."

¹⁰⁸ "Draft Memorandum."

¹⁰⁹ Charles R. Babcock, "U.S. Considers Closing PLO Office Here: Legislation to Shut U.N. Site Opposed," *Associated Press*, August 8, 1987.

¹¹⁰ Ruth Sinai, "Shultz Tells Senators He Opposes Bill to Close PLO Offices," *Associated Press*, August 5, 1987.

legislation". He even said that it was "one of the dumber things that the Congress has done lately".¹¹¹

This episode suggests that the PLO was so unpopular in the United States at the time, either with the general public or with the attentive pro-Israel issue public, that members of Congress sought to outflank the executive branch towards it and that the government felt comfortable laying out its general dislike for the group. This is one instance in which the beyond-the-pale nature of a faction in the target polity – in this instance, the PLO pre-Oslo – led actors in the sender state to publicly acknowledge their preference against the disfavored group.

However, this episode does not vitiate the strong pressure for practitioners of leadership selection intervention to still couch their intentions behind elaborate pretenses, nor does it suggest that Congress was calling the shots when it came to the administration's (much more important) pursuit of LSI of its own accord. Indeed, once the intifada broke out, Shultz did not shy away from meeting with Palestinians who were sympathetic to the PLO, either from the territories or from the United States, even though he could easily have anticipated the opposition he would encounter from Congress and the pro-Israel community. These actors registered their protests after the fact but do not seem to have been a relevant part of the decision process at the time.¹¹² Nor did he cave to their pressure on the PLO office issue, since he thought it would strengthen rather than undermine the organization. And there is certainly no evidence to remotely suggest that America

¹¹¹ Ruth Marcus, "U.S. Reluctantly Orders PLO to Close U.N. Mission as New Law Requires," *Washington Post*, March 12, 1988.

¹¹² David B. Ottaway, "Lawmakers Criticize Shultz For Meeting With PLO Wing; U.S. Credibility to Israel at Stake, They Say," *Washington Post*, April 2, 1988.

backed King Hussein's West Bank gambit *because* of Congressional pressure or freelancing without administration approval.

And, although the episode represents a weakening of the pretense imperative, it does not indicate an abnegation of its effects. Political actors in Jordan, the United States, and Israel still faced moderate pressure to engage in this sort of rhetorical acrobatics to ensure the success of their political initiative.

Jordan's massive patronage plan was justified by technocrats as a humanitarian program "completely detached from parochial political considerations," but the reality was quite the opposite.¹¹³ The king himself claimed that he did not seek to substitute for the PLO, despite acting in ways that contradicted this claim.¹¹⁴ Jordan's prime minister insisted that "we are not competing with any party, we are only helping the West Bank people. The plan has no political objectives".¹¹⁵ Yet the prime minister himself was one of the individuals nurturing high political hopes for the kingdom's anti-PLO efforts.¹¹⁶

Then again, the Israelis faced different incentives, since they viewed the PLO as truly beyond the pale at this time, and thus Rabin even acknowledged in September of 1986 in a newspaper interview that "the policy of Israel is to strengthen the position of Jordan in Judea and Samaria and to strike at the PLO".¹¹⁷ Yet he issued these statements as part of a political rivalry, both with the Likud leadership in Israel taking over the premiership and his boss, outgoing prime

¹¹³ For the technocratic argument, see Walker, "Jordan Offers West Bank Aid: Analysis of Five-year Economic Development Plan for Palestinians in Israeli-occupied Territory."

¹¹⁴ Al Madfai, *Jordan, the United States and the Middle East Peace Process, 1974-1991*, 181.

¹¹⁵ "Response Lukewarm to Nonexistent Jordan Urges Aid Plan for West Bank," *The Globe and Mail (Canada)*, August 2, 1986.

¹¹⁶ Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan*, 439-440.

¹¹⁷ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 441.

minister from the Labor Party Shimon Peres. As a matter of piloting executive policy, Peres was much more circumspect in his approach to the endeavor and often described the intervention according to circuitous euphemisms such as “devolution”.¹¹⁸

Meanwhile, despite Washington’s strong anti-PLO preferences at the time, when the first tranche of American money for Jordan’s development plan was announced Shultz’s spokesperson justified aid to the development program on humanitarian grounds and did not trumpet their anti-PLO intentions.¹¹⁹ The *New York Times* read the America’s \$4.5 pledge as “seeking to provide King Hussein of Jordan with American support in his dispute with the Palestine Liberation Organization” but pointed out that the aide on Bush’s trip who co-announced the plan “denied that in provide the money the United States was trying to... increase the chance for a negotiated Middle East settlement. He said the aim was a desire by Secretary of State George P. Shultz and others in the Administration to improve the lot of Palestinians”.¹²⁰

Thus, the PLO office episode in 1987 and 1988 is a fascinating side note in America’s behavior toward Palestinian politics during the Reagan administration and a noteworthy instance of Congressional attempts at freelancing LSI policy. But it does not contradict the bulk of what was posited about the dynamics of LSI in the Israel chapters of this dissertation. Instead, at best it refines our understanding thus far, making clear that some of the patterns described above are subject to scope

¹¹⁸ Miller, “Peres Says He’ll Foster Palestinian Self-Rule.”

¹¹⁹ Schweid, “U.S. Channeling Aid To Palestinians Through Jordan For First Time.”

¹²⁰ Boyd, “Jordan to Funnel U.S. Aid to West Bank.”

conditions and apply in weaker or heterogeneous forms across episodes and dyads.

6. Consistency of Message:

LSI effectiveness seems to be a product of two main factors: consistency and suitability of the message that the sender state projects toward observers in the target polity. Consistency seems to help explain why American LSI toward Palestinian politics was more effective in 1991 than in 1986, and a big part of the reason seems to be personal. American inconsistency in this regard does not seem to have been a matter of bureaucratic pressure or even opposition from pro-Israel members of Congress, as expected by theories two and three. And Theory #1 expects that consistent messaging should be unproblematic, so that also finds little support in the data here. Therefore, Theory #4 seems to fit best with the data in this regard.

At first, Shultz's backing for Jordanization of the West Bank succeeded in conveying the impression that American backing would help the king dole out considerable advantages for pro-Hashemite Palestinians. Immediately as Jordan's West Bank Development Plan was announced, Shultz had already freed up and announced \$4.5 million in American assistance to underwrite the effort. While some Palestinian farmers lined up looking to cash in on their share of the American-Jordanian aid,¹²¹ the PLO attacked the development initiative as "the bribe the U.S. White House is offering in implementation of Uncle Sam's well-known formula... to prevent... the Palestinian march of national liberation... any development plan in the

¹²¹ Mary Curtius, "Palestinians See West Bank Development Plan as a Plot," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 18, 1986.

occupied homeland with is formulated with good intentions must take place in coordination with the PLO, the Palestinian people's sole and legitimate representative".¹²²

However, Shultz's follow-through was dismal. The \$4.5 million he freed up for the plan in its first days was not a harbinger of a massive American bribe but rather the first of three annual meager line items demonstrating symbolic U.S. support instead of genuine American bankrolling. In the next six months of the plan, the U.S. allocated no more money to the effort, and the amount appropriately came to be described by observers as a "token" level; Jordan was forced to scale back its objectives by about \$300 million and had enormous difficulty raising money from other sources.¹²³ In the next two years, America granted only \$20 million more to the project. In the end, the Palestinians got the message. According to the draft 1987 NSSD/NSDD on the peace process, "while Palestinians in the occupied territories have shown some interest in Jordan's announced development program, they are still waiting to see results on the ground".¹²⁴

Nor did Shultz act in ways to suggest that America's diplomatic might would soon be deployed in service of Jordanian influence in the West Bank. Close American allies Saudi Arabia and Kuwait gave to Palestinian causes but opted to circumvent the Jordanian development plan: Riyadh gave \$9.5 million to a preexisting joint Jordanian-PLO fund for the West Bank instead, and Kuwait gave \$5

¹²² "Response Lukewarm to Nonexistent Jordan Urges Aid Plan for West Bank"; "Palestinian Criticism of Jordanian West Bank Development Plan," *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Translated from August 11th Voice of Palestine PLO Central Radio Broadcast, August 13, 1986).

¹²³ Wallace, "Jordan Seeks Funds for West Bank Plan."

¹²⁴ "Draft NSSD," 5.

million directly to Palestinian universities.¹²⁵ U.S. officials privately evinced concern that the Saudi contribution “has provided Arafat an important boost”.¹²⁶

Finally, when Shultz was presented with an opportunity to double down on the Jordanian option after Hussein and Peres signed the London Accords in April of 1987, the secretary refused to endorse it. In all, the message that his behavior conveyed was that Palestinian moderation and allegiance to the king would be appreciated but that they were not matters for the concerted might of the United States government.

Baker on the other hand, was extremely consistent with his effort to engineer outcomes in Palestinian politics. Whereas Shultz held two high-profile meetings with Palestinian leaders in all of 1988 while the intifada was raging, Baker held eleven. He repeatedly enlisted Arab leaders to hammer home the message that the PLO would not be included in peace talks and that its only choices were to authorize local negotiators or to run the risk that the Palestinians would be left out entirely. The message, consistently articulated by Washington, came through, even to leaders of the PLO. As historian Yezid Sayigh writes, even the PLO hardliner Farouq Qaddoumi decided to permit a delegation of local elites to go to Madrid because he had concluded “the PLO had either to join the peace process [as it was at the time] or to exit history”.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ John Kifner, “For Arafat, Nothing Succeeds Like Failure,” *New York Times*, February 22, 1987; Bob Packwood and Alan Cranston, “Op-Ed: No More Arms for the Saudis Until They Show Friendship,” *New York Times*, August 23, 1987.

¹²⁶ “Draft NSSD,” 6.

¹²⁷ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 643.

7. Suitability of Message:

Baker's relative success compared to Shultz was also a matter of volume and content. Not only was the message conveyed by American LSI in the lead-up to Madrid more consistent, but its intended message was also more suitable for influencing the extant dynamics of internal Palestinian politics. Again, the matter seems to come down to personal inclinations of the two secretaries of state, a matter for Theory #4.

One can question whether any effort that aimed to substitute the Hashemite monarchy for the PLO had a chance of succeeding in the 1980s. That is, Shultz's plan was unsound because he pursued it based on an unrealistic understanding of Palestinian politics. Polling at the time demonstrated that roughly 93% of Palestinians in the West Bank still saw the PLO as their sole legitimate representative, while allegiance to Hussein was tepid.¹²⁸ A majority of Palestinians preferred reconciliation between Jordan and the PLO over Hashemite marginalization of the organization.¹²⁹ As Mary Curtius noted in the *Christian Science Monitor*, "Hussein's efforts to find an alternative negotiating partner to the PLO have failed. On the West Bank, the PLO still claims the loyalty of virtually all activist Palestinians, despite Hussein's inauguration of a five-year development plan and a crackdown on pro-PLO Palestinians."¹³⁰ The effort soon came to an abrupt end when Hussein severed ties with the West Bank in July of 1988.

In both periods, American policy held that the PLO was a harmful actor that

¹²⁸ Al-Fajr poll cited in Lukacs, *Israel, Jordan, and the Peace Process*, 164; Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan*, 440.

¹²⁹ Al Madfai, *Jordan, the United States and the Middle East Peace Process, 1974-1991*, 182.

¹³⁰ Mary Curtius, "Hussein and His Kingdom Riding High," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 3, 1987.

had yet to abandon its long-held extremist tendencies. However, during the Bush years America's strategy toward the PLO was to seek out the group's tacit approval for its own marginalization, in favor of local elites from within the territories. And, although obtaining the group's reluctant assent was no easy task, it was certainly more feasible than expecting the group to sit back quietly while the administration in Washington sought to effect the PLO's total removal as a political force.

National interests theory predicts that suitable messaging should not be problematic for actors in the sender state, since their government should be expected to formulate a foreign policy based upon objective circumstances at the time, not actors' institutional or personal biases. Yet one administration's approach evinced a much sounder understanding of the PLO's staying force as a relevant political stakeholder. Nor can this divergence in strategy be persuasively attributed to pressure from domestic structural forces such as Congress or the bureaucracy. Rather, it seems to be a matter of staffing at the top. This is yet another dimension in which the data provides a much better fit for the predictions of leadership theory than its structural competitors.

Conclusion

American efforts to marginalize the PLO were probably doomed from the start. Barring perhaps a more active promotion of the Jordanian option in 1982 under the Reagan Plan or in 1987 under the London Accords, the Palestine Liberation Organization had long been the *de facto* representative of the Palestinian people according to all relevant stakeholders other than Israel and the United States.

Thus, American pursuit of leadership selection intervention against the group skated on rather thin ice from the start.

Washington's efforts were therefore most successful when they were premised upon a realistic assessment of this challenge. To the extent that George Shultz and Ronald Reagan aimed to replace the PLO with a pro-Jordanian group of local Palestinian elites who could participate in a diplomatic process against the wishes of the Tunis-based leadership of the PLO, they were pursuing a mirage. The fact that they devoted only minimal resources to this far-fetched objective only adds insult to injury. In contrast, George H. W. Bush and James Baker aimed to build up a group of nationalist Palestinian elites so they could participate in a diplomatic process with the tacit, if reluctant, approval of the PLO. This effort at LSI demonstrated a much clearer understanding of Palestinian politics and therefore was better poised for success. Baker's willingness to devote substantial political capital toward achieving this difficult yet feasible objective implied a rather keen sense of diplomatic statecraft, even if the often expletive-prone Texan is not widely credited for his diplomatic demeanor.

Chapter IX.

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Palestinian Politics in the Oslo Era **(1993-2001)**

In many ways, Palestinian politics were utterly transformed during the course of Bill Clinton's presidency. He inherited a post-Madrid process in which the main Palestinian interlocutors were local elites from the territories, but he then followed Israel's lead and engaged the PLO with the conclusion of the landmark Oslo Accords in 1993. One intifada had drawn to a close at the start of his term, but an even more violent uprising broke out in the course of his final year in office. The PLO went from outsiders in Tunis to insiders in Jericho, Gaza, Ramallah, and other parts of the territories. In many ways Israel's occupation continued, but the PLO was given administrative and security authority in many Palestinian cities and towns, and western aid suddenly began to flow in support of this new governing apparatus. And, in the eyes of some critics, Yasser Arafat ensconced himself as an autocrat, immune against accountability or political pluralism from below.

Palestine, Case #2:

The Opening after Oslo, 1993-2001

Coding the Dependent Variables

(Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

Yes and no. For most of his presidency, President Clinton clung to his faith in

Yasser Arafat as a crucial partner for peace. This belief colored his approach to Palestinian politics throughout his two terms in office. At key moments, especially in 1993 and 1998, President Clinton took considerable efforts to bolster the standing of Yasser Arafat and the PLO leadership. Also, in later years, his aides tried to meddle in Palestinian politics in other ways, hoping to ease progress on the peace process by empowering perceived moderates within the Palestinian Authority elite. For these reasons, Aaron David Miller suggests that American LSI in Palestinian politics “is new” and “really didn’t exist” before this period: “it really started with Clinton,” at least in its modern incarnation.¹

However, one of the biggest ways in which the United States strengthened Arafat and the PLO was a by-product rather than a goal of American policy and therefore does not qualify as LSI per se. American actions during most of the Oslo period helped to consolidate a Fatah-led autocracy in Palestine, de-developing democracy in hopes of a shortcut to a permanent peace agreement. In this regard, Washington’s meddling in Palestinian politics was *de facto*, not deliberate.

<Sub-Case 1: Welcoming Arafat on the White House Lawn>

The Israelis and Palestinians who concluded the Oslo Accords expected for the agreement to be endorsed at the White House only at the ministerial level and that Arafat’s personal role could be finessed for some time to come. Although Clinton’s aides opposed inviting Arafat to Washington, the president overruled them without warning, announcing to the press that Arafat was welcome to attend, supposedly in part to bolster Arafat in the role of being an advocate for the newly

¹ Aaron David Miller, “Interview with the Author”, November 4, 2011.

invigorated peace process.

Yossi Beilin, a key participant in the Oslo process in its early days, describes Clinton's role in the process: "At first, it looked as if there would be a ceremony in Washington, at which the agreement would be signed with Faisal Husseini as the leader of the Palestinian group in the joint delegation with Jordan... [but] during a flight to Cleveland on September 10, Clinton phoned Rabin and proposed that he come to Washington to sign the agreement himself. Clinton suggested that the opposite party should be Arafat. Rabin was very hesitant, but Arafat was not".²

Martin Indyk, who covered Mideast issues on the NSC at the time, writes that he and National Security Advisor Tony Lake both felt that the American public was not ready to see Yasser Arafat received at the White House. In fact, he recalls Lake saying "Yasser Arafat will come to the White House over my dead body!".³ They anticipated the PLO to send Abu Mazen as the group's main representation, since he was the PLO's number two and thus the equivalent of Shimon Peres, who had overseen most of the last-minute negotiations on the Israeli side leading up to Oslo.

Indyk says Clinton ignored his aides' advice and pushed Rabin in a phone conversation to attend, even though Rabin was torn and it would mean Yasser Arafat would insist on coming as well. Soon after, the U.S. received word of the PLO's exchange of letters of mutual recognition with Israel, in which the group foreswore violence; thus, the State Department moved to take the PLO off its list of terrorist organizations. At this point, Clinton was about to meet a press conference

² Yossi Beilin, *The Path to Geneva: The Quest for a Permanent Agreement, 1996-2004* (Akashic Books, 2004), 37-38.

³ Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East* (Simon and Schuster, 2009), 63.

to discuss the new developments.

Indyk says that, in preparing for the news conference, with Lake and Ross's endorsement he urged Clinton "that he should preempt the question [of whether Arafat would attend] by saying that we had sent invitations to the government of Israel and the PLO and that they had informed us Shimon Peres and Abu Mazen would be representing them. The president listened but did not respond".⁴ However, when Clinton was asked whether Arafat might attend, he answered that "the people who will be here... are the people that the PLO and Israel decide will come. That is entirely up to them... whoever they decide will be here is fine with us, and we will welcome them".⁵ In short order, Arafat sent word he would attend.

<Sub-Case 2: De Facto Dictatorship>

Through most of this period, the Clinton administration remained firmly behind Arafat and the Fatah leadership of the Palestinian Authority. It opposed the rise of Hamas and did little to help an alternative, third way leadership to emerge. However, this support was generally not a matter of conscious effort so much as the consequence of the White House prioritizing other elements of the process. The U.S. enabled Arafat to impose near-dictatorial control over Palestinian politics almost as an afterthought, enabling him to cement his power as a byproduct of its diplomacy toward the Mideast peace process. By the time of Arafat's death in 2004, the Palestinian Authority was rated by Freedom House as 6 out of 7 in civil liberties and

⁴ Ibid., 65.

⁵ Ibid., 65–66.

5 out of 7 in political rights, which overall the group proclaims as “not free”.⁶

Daniel Polisar argues that the early days of the Oslo process were structured in such a manner that the Palestinian people missed a major opportunity to establish a democracy in the West Bank and Gaza. He argues that the main reasons for this failure boiled down to a few main factors: Arafat’s decision to rig electoral rules in his favor, allowing him to rob the new Palestinian legislature of any viable tools for oversight or policy initiation, Israel’s decision to hand over territory directly to the PLO, and outside support for the PA’s finances and security forces.⁷

Also, the PLO established an enormous new bureaucracy with outside support, which Chairman Arafat used as a patrimonial asset with which to buy the continued loyalty of new returnees or possible sources of local dissent. One observer estimated that at least 50,000 PLO cadres returned from exile during the 1990s, “form[ing] the bedrock of the PA’s political and military administration, and hav[ing] been deployed to penetrate and take over Palestinian political and civil society in the West Bank and Gaza”.⁸ The Palestinian public sector grew by 1998 to employ more people in the territories than either agriculture or manufacturing, with a total of 90,000 people being employed in either the civilian public sector or the police; nearly 60 percent of the PA budget was earmarked for salaries.⁹

⁶ Since Freedom House scores are retroactive for the preceding year, these figures are from the group’s 2005 report. However, the numbers were the same in 2004. See sections on “Methodology” and on “Palestinian Authority-Administered Territories” in “Freedom in the World 2005” (Freedom House, 2005), <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2005>.

⁷ Daniel Aaron Roy Polisar, “Electing Dictatorship: Why Palestinian Democratization Failed” (Harvard University Department of Government, Doctoral Dissertation, March 2001).

⁸ “The Palestinian Authority and the CIA: Who Will Protect the Guards?,” *Strategic Comments (International Institute for Strategic Studies)* 4, no. 10 (December 1998).

⁹ Sara Roy, “De-Development Revisited; Palestinian Economy and Society Since Oslo,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 28, no. 3 (Spring 1999): 70–71.

Ziad Abu Amr, a former member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and chairman of its Political Committee, lays out the endemic weaknesses of the new Palestinian parliament. He explains that the group failed at its two fundamental functions: enacting substantive legislation and exercising oversight over the PA's executive branch.¹⁰ Additionally, he noted that the executive authority's failure to sign the PLC's Basic Law deprived the legislature of clear-cut formal powers, and in practice the PLC "has not been permitted to monitor or influence government spending... thus, the widespread practice of bribery and extortion continue, and large sums of public money do not find their way to the PA's budget".¹¹

Glenn Robinson points out that the political economy of Palestinian politics in the post-Oslo era "inherently promotes authoritarianism" since, like the oil and gas-rich states of the Persian Gulf, the Palestinian Authority is a rentier state whose revenue comes almost entirely from external rents, not the taxation of citizens. The only difference is that "in this case, Palestinian government revenues come disproportionately from taxes on Palestinians collected by Israel and given directly to the Palestinian treasury and from foreign donor aid. Comparatively little revenue is collected directly by the Palestinian state from its people. This one-way flow of money has many consequences, but all of them tend to support personalized authoritarian politics, not institutional democracy".¹²

Finally, observers point out that the PA has generally been permitted to behave in a manner that reflects these authoritarian tendencies. Elections are

¹⁰ Ziad Abu-Amr, "The Palestinian Legislative Council: A Critical Assessment," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 26, no. 4 (Summer 1997): 90–97.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹² Glenn E. Robinson, "Palestine After Arafat," *Washington Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (Autumn 2000): 88–89.

postponed, often with tacit international support, when it suits the needs of the incumbents. The judiciary has been weakened through the application of special security courts without extensive scrutiny and for highly political purposes. Arafat's government routinely used these and other tools to harass its opponents, including journalists and other critics who operated within the bounds of the formal law.¹³

Americans have often been criticized for being complicit in this perversion of the newly established Palestinian democracy. Indeed, the U.S. never prioritized the building of accountable institutions in its policy toward the Palestinian Authority and at times helped boost Arafat's tendencies toward monopolization of power. However, this support for Palestinian authoritarianism was a byproduct, not an objective, of American foreign policy.

Michele Dunne explains that from 1993 to 2000, the United States "mostly ignored how Arafat's behavior harmed nascent Palestinian institutions". Its approach was to give him a free hand internally "as long as he cooperated with the United States and Israel on preventing terrorism and continuing negotiations... 'we traded stability in the peace process for concerns about governance and corruption,' a former U.S. negotiator [Aaron David Miller] acknowledged".¹⁴

Dunne notes that the creation of security courts was something the United States actually pressed Arafat to undertake in 1995 as a means of demonstrating that he was moving swiftly to address Israel's security concerns by moving against possible terrorist threats. Vice President Gore even praised Arafat's pledge to create

¹³ See also Yezid Sayigh and Khalil Shikaki, "Strengthening Palestinian Public Institutions" (Council on Foreign Relations, 1999); As'ad Ghanem, *The Palestinian Regime* (Sussex Academic Press, 2002).

¹⁴ Michele Dunne, "A Two-State Solution Requires Palestinian Politics," *Carnegie Papers: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* 113 (June 2010): 3.

the courts as part of “an important step forward in helping to build confidence in the peace process... and stop terrorism”.¹⁵ She also points out that for five years the U.S. never seriously urged Arafat to sign the draft Basic Law sent to him by the PLC in 1997, even though Washington paid for some of the experts who helped with the law’s drafting.¹⁶

Thus, the United States never sought to make Arafat into a dictator and the PA into an autocracy, but it also did not use any of levers at its disposal to resist these developments. Thus, this sub-episode should be coded as a non-instance of American LSI toward Palestinian politics. Of course, the Clinton administration probably would have tried taken steps to help Arafat and his Fatah Party win the Palestinian Authority’s first general elections in 1996 if the result seemed in doubt, but the outcome of those elections was widely seen as a foregone conclusion.¹⁷

<Sub-Case 3: Going to Gaza>

One exception to this unthinking support was President Clinton’s visit to Gaza, which was a much more conscious gesture of support for Arafat in the face of repeated stonewalling by Netanyahu. Clinton’s speech was agreed upon as part of the Wye River Memorandum in order to satisfy an Israeli requirement that the Palestinian National Council endorse Arafat’s earlier decision to change the PLO charter to recognize Israel. However, at Wye it was conceived of by the Americans as something that Arafat would welcome as “a colossal act of recognition,” and

¹⁵ Mary Curtius, “Gore Meets Arafat, Announces Plan to Use U.S. Aid to Create Gaza Job,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 25, 1995.

¹⁶ Dunne, “A Two-State Solution Requires Palestinian Politics,” 5–6.

¹⁷ Jay Bushinsky, “Election Challenge to Arafat Is Largely Symbolic,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, December 29, 1995.

indeed the gesture put Arafat in “a buoyant mood [since] the President’s visit was everything he had hoped for”.¹⁸

When asked if he could think of any notable instances of American LSI toward the PA, Aaron David Miller volunteered: “I’ll never forget the address to the PNC in Gaza... I mean Clinton was a master at this”.¹⁹

Indeed, Clinton’s speech was full of soaring praise for the bold leadership of the PLO for fulfilling its obligations towards peace. He declared that

“I am profoundly grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Chairman Arafat for the cause of peace, to come here as a friend of peace and a friend of your future, and to witness you raising your hands, standing up tall, standing up not only against what you believe is wrong, but for what you believe is right in the future... this moment would have been inconceivable a decade ago. No Palestinian Authority; no elections in Gaza and the West Bank; no relations between the United States and the Palestinians... next year I will ask the Congress for another several hundred million dollars to support the development of the Palestinian people... Mister Chairman, you said some profound words today in embracing the idea that Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace as neighbors. Again, I say, you have led the way, and we would not be here without you”.²⁰

Clinton also paired the trip with a visit to Bethlehem, in the first state visit by an American president to a West Bank city under Palestinian control. He toured the city alongside Arafat and was greeted by thousands of residents waving Palestinian and American flags. He and the PA leader joined together in a ceremony to light a Christmas tree in Manger Square.²¹ Again, the visit was carefully managed to showcase American cooperation with the Palestinian leadership.

<Sub-Case 4: Flirting with Favorites>

¹⁸ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 442, 484.

¹⁹ Miller, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁰ “Clinton’s Words in Gaza: Citing ‘the Waste of War’,” *New York Times*, December 15, 1998.

²¹ “Arafat, Clinton Tour Bethlehem,” *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Translated from December 15th edition of Voice of Palestine radio, December 15, 1998).

The other exception to the pattern listed above was when presidential advisors probed the possibility of working with perceived PA moderates on a final status agreement at the expense of Arafat and his highest lieutenants. At Camp David in 2000, Secretary Albright asked Abu Mazen if he would consider breaking with Arafat by endorsing a final status deal with U.S. backing; the following year, Bush administration officials also allegedly made similar advances toward both Farouq Qaddoumi and Abu Mazen. American officials stuck their hand into sensitive Palestinian politics by trying engineer Arafat's approval through Mohammed Dahlan and Mohammed Rashid when they decided Abu Alaa and Abu Mazen were too resistant to a final status agreement.

Before the summit, one of Barak's negotiators reflects that Dahlan was getting preferential treatment and that "the U.S. administration groomed him to become the next contender" and noted "the preferential treatment he got whenever he came to Washington".²² He even had access to a car service that was not available to comparably senior Palestinian negotiators at the time, something which set off complaints among his colleagues.²³

Israeli negotiator Gilead Sher recalls the Palestinian rivalries really coming to the surface at Camp David. He says that "the first time Abu Mazen had abandoned the passive and indifferent demeanor he had adopted since the beginning of the summit" was to yell so furiously at Mohammed Dahlan for being too forthcoming

²² Oded Eran, "Interview with the Author," June 6, 2011.

²³ Ibid.

over the Temple Mount that “the loud exchange nearly developed into a fist fight”.²⁴

He feels that Abu Mazen and Abu Alaa’s attitudes “contrasted by the constructiveness” of Rashid, Asfour, and Dahlan and that “the two senior veterans were trapped in an approach that constituted a sharp withdrawal from positions that each of them had previously presented”.²⁵ He says that “within the divided Palestinian leadership Abu Ala was the strongest opponent of the summit” because “he had been delegitimized by his political rivals and subsequently marginalized”.²⁶ At times this visibly undermined the process itself, such as when Sher concludes that these rivalries had led Abu Alaa not to report to Arafat the full extent of the progress made in Sweden for fear of being undercut at home.²⁷

Dennis Ross acknowledges that by the end of the Camp David summit, “the Palestinians were tied complete in knots and at war with each other.” Whereas Rashid and Dahlan were relatively forthcoming and constructive, instead of being their usual constructive selves Abu Alaa and Abu Mazen were passive, “lookin[ing] for where Arafat was coming from” while “the Chairman remained mute”.²⁸

Also Swisher quotes an anonymous senior American official confirming that Ross was acting to “divide and conquer” among the Palestinian delegation because “Abu Ala and Abu Mazen were not helpful, and Dahlan and Mohammed Rashid were”. Since the latter two seemed “more forthcoming,” the idea was “to do

²⁴ Gilead Sher, *The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Negotiations, 1999-2001: Within Reach* (Routledge, 2006), 82.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

²⁸ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 688.

negotiations at a lower level, to see if some of the underbrush could be cut out”.²⁹

And, although part of this effort was probably subconscious, some of it was evidently intentional. Clinton’s chief of staff John Podesta agrees that “there’s also then the courting of Dahlan and the younger members as being bolder in decision... and I think it was thought to be useful in giving a support structure to Arafat. But it was definitely a strong dynamic in the meetings”.³⁰ He notes that “I think it was partly conscious and partly subconscious. It was conscious in the sense that the younger guys had more capacity to deal. The subconscious part was that the younger guys were more simpatico, if you will”.³¹

Further, it was exacerbated by the fact that American support for the Palestinian security services, provided via the Central Intelligence Agency and formalized with the Wye River Memorandum, seemed to be building up Mohammed Dahlan’s organizational capability and political reach. The CIA was directly involved in events on the ground, monitoring compliance but also helping to train and support the Palestinian security services in what one former participant called a “massive cover-action program that included training, technical assistance, and infrastructure development”.³² CIA support primarily went to the Preventive Security Service (PSS). The West Bank head of the PSS, Jibril Rajoub, held little favor in Washington, but its head in Gaza, Mohammed Dahlan was widely seen as an

²⁹ Clayton E. Swisher, *The Truth About Camp David* (Nation Books, 2004), 278.

³⁰ Podesta, quoted in Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 215 and n. 25 on p. 268.

³¹ Podesta, quoted in Swisher, *The Truth About Camp David*, 278. Emphases removed.

³² Melissa Boyle Mahle, “A Political-Security Analysis of the Failed Oslo Process,” *Middle East Policy* 12, no. 1 (2005). See also Ilene Prusher, “Palestinians Find Fair Play Champion in the CIA,” *The Guardian (UK)*, August 3, 1999; “The Palestinian Authority and the CIA: Who Will Protect the Guards?”.

American favorite.³³

However, a report by the International Institute for Strategic Studies singled out Dahlan's popularity and warned that "CIA involvement brings considerable opportunities, but also great dangers for Arafat, the PA and the US... the CIA's new role risks involving it in Palestinian internal politics just when they threaten to become increasingly bitter and divisive, and the struggle to succeed Arafat may be getting under way... The US and Israel want successors to Arafat who are not only amenable to their agenda but also wedded to them through political and economic ties. These links are being formed in the increasingly close security relations between Israel, the CIA, and the heads of the PA security services".³⁴ In September 2000, a prominent Lebanese journalist wrote that "it became evident during Camp David that Muhammad Dahlan... is the figure preparing to succeed Arafat. Those who have met him in Washington are praising him as a politician and saying from experience that the difference between him and Jibril al-Rujub is very noticeable".³⁵

Finally, there is the possibility that American officials even tried to instigate rivalries or bolster contenders against Arafat if they would be more open to accepting a deal with the Israelis. A prominent French journalist who has covered the peace process and Camp David, Charles Enderlin, writes that the U.S. reportedly tried a number of times to put out feelers to Palestinian leaders as to their

³³ For instance, one observer suggested that Rajoub was seen as the "Saddam Hussein of the West Bank," while Dahlan strove to be seen as the "Jacques Chirac of Gaza or Palestine": Isabel Kershner, "The Rise & Rise of Colonel Dahlan," *Jerusalem Report*, February 1, 1999. This was also corroborated in conversations by the author with Palestinian experts who observed these dynamics firsthand.

³⁴ "The Palestinian Authority and the CIA: Who Will Protect the Guards?"

³⁵ Huda Al-Husayni, "Muhammad Dahlan and the Guarantee of the Future," *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* (Writer on Prospects of Palestinian Security Head Dahlan as Arafat's Successor, September 8, 2000), World New Connection and FBIS edition.

willingness to break with Chairman Arafat and to oppose his leadership on issues having to do with violence on the ground or regarding the peace process.

He writes that on July 17th, 2002, Madeleine Albright approached Abu Mazen and, possibly of her own accord, asked if he would break with Arafat publicly on the peace process, for instance in support of a partial accord – something his boss firmly rejected.³⁶ Enderlin adds that this was “not the first time that the Americans will try to do an end run around Arafat” and that “less than a year later, the Bush administration will contact Abu Mazen and Farouk Kaddoumi and awkwardly mention similar possibilities to them”.³⁷

Abu Alaa echoes this claim. In his post-thinking analysis, he claims that at Camp David “Albright separately asked the question of both Abu Mazen and myself, ‘Are you ready to go on supporting Arafat?’ Had the Americans concluded that there were discrepancies between the positions of the members of the Palestinian team regarding the intended agreement? Or had hints been made to the Americans by some members of the Palestinian team that there were internal disputes that could affect Arafat’s decisions?”³⁸

Also, Clayton Swisher notes that “in the Americans’ eagerness to conclude a deal [at Camp David], the focus on presumed internal differences among the Palestinians was based on the hope that at some point they would pressure Arafat into accepting their envisioned compromise; alternatively, it might lead to an end

³⁶ Charles Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams: The Failure of the Peace Process in the Middle East, 1995-2002* (Other Press, LLC, 2003), 224.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ahmed Qurie, *Beyond Oslo, the Struggle for Palestine: Inside the Middle East Peace Process from Rabin’s Death to Camp David* (I.B. Tauris, 2008), 259.

run around Arafat, perhaps even provoking a mini-coup within the Palestinian hierarchy that would result in agreement”.³⁹

Did the Policy Succeed?

Yes and no. American efforts to build up Arafat at the very start of the Oslo period were a relative success. However, the low priority given to ensuring that the Palestinian Authority developed into a democracy instead of a one-man show with Arafat as the star was, in retrospect, an enormous missed opportunity. President Clinton’s state visit to Bethlehem and Gaza in 1998 was a modest gesture that was moderately successful at bolstering the leadership of the Palestinian Authority and sustaining the peace process. Finally, attempts to interfere in Palestinian politics in the attempt to reach a final status framework agreement were by and large a failure.

<Sub-Case 1: Welcoming Arafat on the White House Lawn>

Observers in on three different sides (Palestinian, American, and Israeli) all agreed that Clinton’s invitation for Arafat to attend the Oslo signing ceremony at the White House gave Yasser Arafat and the PLO a major political boost. Thus, in the narrow sense, it is quite clear cut that American LSI during this period was effective. However, questions of broader efficacy – that is, whether endorsing Arafat helped boost or undermine the peace process and American interests – tend to get wrapped up in deeper questions about Arafat’s legacy in light of the second intifada.

One of Arafat’s main lieutenants, Abu Alaa, writes that the second signing ceremony and the invitation to Arafat had a major impact on his standing within

³⁹ Swisher, *The Truth About Camp David*, 279.

Palestinian politics. He notes that Arafat was craving an invitation because he

“seems to have calculated that, if he did not sign, this could turn the spotlight on Mahmoud Abbas, making him appear to be the man of the hour, and even signaling him as the new Palestinian leader... I fully understood Arafat’s position. The honours with which he would be met at the White House would mark the end of the international isolation imposed upon him. We understood that many closed doors, especially in Arab capitals, would be opened to Yasser Arafat as soon as he had been to the White House”.⁴⁰

He goes on to explain the following about the agreement:

“it meant that direct relations between the PLO and the USA would be restored, after the *Achielle Lauro* incident had led to their complete severance two years earlier. At this stage, we were very badly in need of American support in the face of a stream of opposition to the agreement from radical Palestinian groups and rejectionist Arab states, even before it was officially signed. Opposition voices would be notably muted after the agreement was seen to have the support and blessing of the Americans. That was why we were pleased to have it signed under the brightest spotlight the Americans could bring to bear... thousands of young men and women in the West Bank and Gaza took to the streets afterwards, carrying Palestinian flags and shouting, ‘Long live Palestine, long live Arafat’.”⁴¹

Although on his return to the city of Oslo three months after the signing ceremony, he says “I felt that the Oslo atmosphere had evaporated,” by then the PLO Central Council had strongly endorsed the agreement.⁴² It had enabled Arafat to claim at the PCC meeting that, in Qurie’s paraphrasing, “the PLO had been ostracized during the Madrid process, but that now it had become a political reality and a force to reckon with... [and that] the Palestinian state was coming”.⁴³

This perspective was also echoed by a Palestinian perspective from within the territories at the time. The main Palestinian leader at the post-Madrid

⁴⁰ Ahmed Qurie, *From Oslo to Jerusalem: The Palestinian Story of the Secret Negotiations* (I.B. Tauris, 2006), 275.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 278–279.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 288.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 286.

Washington talks was Faisal al-Husseini, who had ties to the PLO but operated as a local elite from his own power base in Jerusalem. Although Husseini has since passed away, his nephew and former aide de camp, Kamel al-Husseini believes that Arafat's invitation to the White House ceremony did help the PLO market the Oslo agreement on the ground. When asked if he agreed with Abu Alaa's thesis that the Arafat's role in the signing ceremony helped the PLO's standing as it tried to market the deal, Husseini responded as follows:

"I think so. I think Abu Alaa is talking about the power of goodwill, the power of a new beginning and a healing process... I think it sent a message that there is a breakthrough. For the first time we and the Israelis are not occupied-occupiers, we are becoming more equal partners. Although it doesn't mean that the conflict has ended, but it begins a process of healing. And also it put the Palestinians on the world stage that they have never enjoyed. Accepted by the international community, not viewed as a terrorist organization... this is the first time that you had the whole formula: Palestine as a question, the leadership historic and also the local leadership with it, on the White House, signing a peace treaty... it was a moment of euphoria, and that helped us market it for a few months or a year or two".⁴⁴

Yossi Beilin echoes from the Israeli side that Oslo helped boost Arafat and the PLO immensely. He writes that "one the Palestinian street, Hamas is the PLO's greatest rival. The Oslo Agreement had strengthened the PLO against Hamas because it proved their ability to offer the Palestinians a genuine change in their lives, beyond eternal war with Israel".⁴⁵ More importantly, he argues that Clinton's decision changed Arafat's status overnight and imbued the agreement and his position with newfound international acceptance and U.S.-backed legitimacy. He waxes lyrical about the impact of Clinton's decision:

"It was Clinton who turned the signing of the Oslo Declaration Principles into the

⁴⁴ Kamel Husseini, "Interview with the Author", July 2011.

⁴⁵ Beilin, *The Path to Geneva*, 66.

most prominent media event of the 1990s. The signatures of Peres and Abu Mazen on a five-year interim agreement with many question marks would definitely have been interesting and unusual, but it would not have amazed the world... Ultimately, the world will remember for many years the picture of the tall young man joining two leaders a generation older and much less tall. America had refused to make the Oslo Accords into an American proposal (as Peres had suggested to Christopher), but it was no longer important after that photograph. The Oslo Accords, signed at the White House on September 13, 1993, became Clinton's agreement within a few hours.

Clinton's decision to bring Arafat and Rabin to Washington had broad implications. Arafat's status was not mentioned in the Oslo Accords, nor in the lengthy talks that had led to the agreement. We naively believed that the issue of Arafat's role would arise only when we reached the permanent agreement, not as part of the interim agreement and the elections to the independent Palestinian government. At the end of August, I was interviewed on *Nightline* by Ted Koppel, who asked if Arafat would come to Jericho to sign the agreement transferring Gaza and Jericho to the Palestinians. I said that this was not on the agenda; it sounded like a diplomatic answer, but it was the whole truth.

Clinton brought forward the meeting between the Israeli and Palestinian leaders, and bypassed a great many hesitations and dilemmas. All at once, Arafat became legitimate, a natural candidate to lead the Palestinian Authority during the interim phases who would come on the scene not only for the permanent settlement, but in a few months' time, for the signature of the Gaza-Jericho agreement".⁴⁶

This assessment was also shared by Martin Indyk with the Americans. He writes that "Arafat craved international recognition. He had sustained the Palestinian cause all these years in part by keeping it in the international spotlight. To be hosted at the White House with the leaders of Israel and other world statesmen, after being treated as a pariah by the United States for so many decades, would be a crowning achievement for him personally and for the Palestinian cause... the president had clearly decided to open the door to Arafat, knowing he would march right through it." And though his main concern might have been trying to get Israel's public to buy into the event by seeing its prime minister endorse the accords, "if that meant hosting Arafat, too, so be it".⁴⁷

Similarly, Nigel Parsons writes in his book on Palestinian politics that this

⁴⁶ Ibid., 37, 38–39.

⁴⁷ Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 66.

period witnessed a marked consolidation of power within the PLO under Arafat. He notes that “the authoritative leadership of the PLO in exile was both clarified and enhanced by the DoP. Within the PLO, Arafat and Fatah consolidated their grip on the institution... marginalizing the leftists from decision making and co-opting the remainder (most prominently FIDA) to Fatah’s fait accompli. [And] in the occupied territories, Israel’s recognition of Arafat’s authority granted the leadership a renewed legitimacy”.⁴⁸ It is quite feasible that Arafat’s participation in the White House signing ceremony played some role in these developments.

In short, observers on all three sides seem to agree that in the narrow sense, this agreement helped bolster Arafat and the PLO at the end of 1993. Some of these testimonials also seem to support the notion that backing Arafat and the PLO also helped achieve a success at the time in terms of broader efficacy by facilitating the acceptance of the Oslo Accords among a broader Palestinian audience, both within the Palestinian nationalist movement and with the general Palestinian public. Whether elevating Arafat as the international community’s main partner for the Oslo process was a wise choice in the long term may also need to be weighed in terms of his willingness to permit violence and incitement as a bargaining chip against the Israelis as well as his reluctance to sign onto a final, conflict-ending agreement later in the decade. Thus, in the broader sense, the effectiveness of the American effort probably has to be viewed as a mixed record.

<Sub-Case 2: De Facto Dictatorship>

Given that American policy under President Clinton tended to facilitate the

⁴⁸ Nigel Craig Parsons, *The Politics of the Palestinian Authority: From Oslo to Al-Aqsa* (Psychology Press, 2005), 43.

degradation of Palestinian democracy, was it a failure? Would a more proactive policy to preclude Arafat's rule without accountability – that is, pursuing a certain brand of LSI at his mild expense, seeking to influence his power by also shaping Palestinian institutions – been better? Sure, no doubt. However, this is one area in which it is far easier to proclaim judgment than to actually expect better conduct.

Michelle Dunne argues that Clinton administration policy shortchanged democratic institution-building in the name of immediate gains on the peace process. She argues that this was, in retrospect, a major mistake.⁴⁹ I am in wholehearted agreement with her. But given that the administration really felt that a peace deal was within its grasp, it is unsurprising that it devoted political capital and diplomatic efforts to anything else in its relations with the Palestinians.

American had enormous influence over the Palestinians during this period. For instance, the PA became the single largest recipient of American aid per capita behind Israel.⁵⁰ However, influence does not always equal leverage, and I doubt the administration could have been persuaded to endanger its relations with Arafat in favor of institutional outputs that likely would have aided the peace process but only in the longer term. Still, targeted efforts to soften the edges of his newfound superpresidential power – such as opposing security courts and pushing for his signature on the PLC's draft of the Basic Law – would have been positive, realistic steps that should have been taken.

Interestingly enough, one additional caveat is in order. Despite the

⁴⁹ Dunne, "A Two-State Solution Requires Palestinian Politics."

⁵⁰ Barry Rubin, *The Transformation of Palestinian Politics: From Revolution to State-Building* (Harvard University Press, 2001), 184.

desirability of putting institutional limits on Arafat's power during the 1990s, it still would have made sense to boost his showing and Fatah's numbers in the 1996 Palestinian elections if their victory had appeared in doubt. The election was a major boost in the PLO's authority at home and its ability to continue on the peace process. Enthusiasm ran high in the immediate aftermath of the 1996 Palestinian elections, although the effect was not particularly lasting. In a statement of some hyperbole, Mahmoud Abbas proclaimed that the election council which he had headed "has brought us five minutes away from independence".⁵¹ That enthusiasm and administrative strength was something positive for the U.S. to nurture if it seemed at risk, provided the government's power did not exceed the bounds of domestic accountability and democratic institution-building.

<Sub-Case 3: Going to Gaza>

Overall, President Clinton's trip to Bethlehem and Gaza did moderately contribute to its intended objectives of boosting the PA and sustaining the peace process. Of course, there were limits on the extent to which a mere visit and speech could bolster support for Arafat in light of a continued stalemate on the ground, but observers seem to agree that it was a strong gesture of American enthusiasm for Arafat and the Palestinian Authority. He suggests that it "underscored the notion that for the first time.. we were creating a bilateral relationship".⁵²

Kamel Hussein agrees that the visit probably was a notable gesture but that its lasting impact was probably minimal: "I know sometimes in international relations, in media communications, you go for a big event or a big milestone that

⁵¹ Ibid., 27.

⁵² Miller, "Interview with the Author."

creates some sort of opportunity. Yes, maybe the Gaza visit and the Bethlehem visit were important in showing we are a nation like others, receiving the most important leader on earth, and all of that. But sometimes people are now waking up to the fact that these ceremonies aren't enough and that should not be your only tactic in the game."⁵³

Israeli analyst Barry Rubin writes that "Clinton's visit to Gaza in December 1998 marked a new high in U.S. support for the PA, though not explicit backing for an independent state" and he gave "a very sympathetic speech". He says "officials saw Clinton's visit as a great advance, embodying 'indirect U.S. support for a Palestinian state.' Much of the public, however, was less enthusiastic, continuing to be critical of the United States and its policies".⁵⁴ Israeli journalist Leslie Susser observed at the time that "Clinton's presence in Gaza showed just how far the U.S. has moved toward endorsing Palestinian aspirations for independence" and noted that the U.S. had just come from backstopping a donors' conference in which it had persuaded the international community to pledge \$1.3 billion to the Palestinians.⁵⁵ Yossi Alpher called it "not a terribly positive moment for Israeli-American relations... [but] a very positive sign for U.S.-Palestinian relations," and James Bennet of the *New York Times* suggested the visit was a major "nod to statehood" and Palestinian national aspirations as a virtual (if not technical) state visit.⁵⁶ Deborah Sontag even went so far as to write in the same paper that the visit was a

⁵³ Hussein, "Interview with the Author."

⁵⁴ Rubin, *The Transformation of Palestinian Politics*, 184. The quote he cites is from the semi-official Palestine Report.

⁵⁵ Leslie Susser, "Everybody's Ally," *Jerusalem Report*, January 4, 1999.

⁵⁶ Bennet's argument is in James Bennet, "Clinton Stirs Palestinians With a Nod To Statehood," *New York Times*, December 15, 1998. Alpher is quoted in Deborah Sontag, "Seesaw: Arafat's Up; Clinton and Netanyahu Teeter," *New York Times*, December 10, 1998.

sign that Arafat was “riding high” politically and that “the strong, unbudgable Palestinian leader knows [there is] no serious challenge to his rule”, although it probably was overestimating his standing.⁵⁷

However, Arafat’s reported enthusiasm for the trip may have been reason enough for Clinton to visit. It probably helped keep the PLO onboard with American initiatives as it sought to pressure Netanyahu to implement the Wye Accords and then to boost the chances of Labor candidate Ehud Barak succeeding him in the 1999 Israeli elections. And the visit helped visibly cement overwhelming support from the Palestinian National Council for revising the PLO Charter to remove threats to Israel, another element that helped set the stage for political change in Israel and resumption of the peace process in 1999.

Thus, President Clinton’s Gaza visit should probably be coded as a moderate success, both in the narrow and broader senses. It was a simple gesture that showcased strong American with the PA leadership, and it likely helped provide a small addition infusion of momentum to the peace process as well.

<Sub-Case 4: Flirting with Favorites>

These efforts, on the other hand, were less successful. Although working with perceived moderates within the PA did sometimes help produce positive ideas in the brainstorming phase, they did little to help achieve a final status framework agreement at Camp David or to change the structure of the Palestinian leadership. And they probably contributed to mistrust of the American team and resistance on the part of disfavored politicians who felt that a deal would hurt them politically.

⁵⁷ Sontag, “Seesaw: Arafat’s Up; Clinton and Netanyahu Teeter.”

Aaron Miller argues that American efforts to play Palestinian politics starting around the time Camp David, against the wishes of Arafat, were a hopeless lost cause: “we were in the game against the great manipulator. I mean, this was this man’s life! I mean, we were amateurs – amateurs minus! It represented... a scene out of a Marx Brothers movie. It became comedic!”⁵⁸

Indyk thinks that American favoritism toward Dahlan undermined the president’s strategy for achieving a final status framework agreement at Camp David in 2000. He writes that the U.S. exacerbated a dynamic on the Palestinian side “between what I call the ‘Abus’ and the ‘Muhammads’. The ‘Abus,’ Abu Mazen and Abu Alaa, considered themselves the rightful heirs to the throne, while the ‘Muhammads,’ Muhammad Dahlan and Muhammad Rashid, were maneuvering to take power... our first sin of commission was... inviting Muhammad Dahlan to the White House”.⁵⁹ He elaborates in he memoirs that

“unfortunately, in the lead-up to the summit, we had managed to alienate Abu Mazen... Dennis and Gamal Helal had arranged for his arch-rival, Mohammed Dahlan, to be hosted by Sandy Berger in the White House. This convinced Abu Mazen that the United States was supporting Dahlan for the succession to Arafat and thereby conspiring to rob him of his birthright as the number two official in the PLO. Abu Mazen’s conviction was reinforced in the early days at Camp David when he witnessed how closely we worked with Dahlan, who together with his key political ally, Muhammad Rachid, were the only Palestinians who seemed keen to achievement an agreement... Abu Mazen disengaged from the negotiations, even departing Camp David for several days to attend his son’s wedding”.⁶⁰

Journalist Deborah Sontag made a similar argument in a high-profile review

⁵⁸ Miller, “Interview with the Author.” See also Shlomo Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace: The Israeli-Arab Tragedy* (Oxford University Press US, 2006), 282–283; Deborah Sontag, “And Yet So Far: A Special Report; Quest for Mideast Peace: How and Why It Failed,” *New York Times*, July 26, 2001.

⁵⁹ Martin Indyk, “Sins of Omission, Sins of Commission,” in *The Camp David Summit: What Went Wrong?*, ed. Shimon Shamir and Bruce Maddy-Weitzman (Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 101–102.

⁶⁰ Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 311.

of Camp David and Oslo's collapse that she wrote for the *New York Times* :

"Western diplomats here say the Palestinians believed that they were being manipulated by the Americans. They said American officials had made a crucial mistake in trying to nurture special relationships with two younger-generation Palestinian officials whom they thought were pragmatic: Muhammad Rashid, Mr. Arafat's Kurdish economic adviser, and Muhammad Dahlan, the Gaza preventive security chief. That angered the veteran Palestinian negotiators, they said, who felt that the Americans were seeking to divide and weaken them.

In the middle of Camp David, one of the negotiators, Abu Mazen, flew back to the Middle East for his son's wedding. He was furious about the American tactics, a European diplomats [sic] said, and pledged that Camp David would never succeed if such games continued and that he would use the refugee issue to foil it, if need be".⁶¹

Former national security advisor Sandy Berger agrees that the consequences of mishandling of Abu Mazen and Abu Alaa were "unfortunate," since now "the two principal subordinates to Arafat who had his trust and confidence – to the extent anyone had Arafat's trust and confidence – were somewhat out of the picture".⁶²

Shlomo Ben-Ami, one of Israel's participants in the Sweden back channel talks that were intended to narrow gaps between the parties, claims that Abu Mazen was responsible for revealing the talks to the media and causing the collapse of the back channel because he "felt that he was now being bypassed in the talks".⁶³ In this instance, Abbas and his camp's exclusion from the Stockholm talks had more to do with intra-Palestinian rivalries being exacerbated by Arafat than by the United States, but his position as a possible spoiler at the time was quite clear, even to American observers.⁶⁴ Ben-Ami writes that he perceive "an intra-Palestinian crisis, which stemmed from a battle for the post-Arafat succession... between the Gaza

⁶¹ Sontag, "And Yet So Far: A Special Report; Quest for Mideast Peace: How and Why It Failed."

⁶² Berger, quoted in Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 214 and n. 24 on p. 268.

⁶³ Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, 252, 282.

⁶⁴ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 611, 613, 619.

group of the younger generation (Muhamed Dahlan, Muhamed Rashid, Hassan Assfour) and the old guard represented by Abu-Mazen and Abu-Ala".⁶⁵

Soon after the collapse of the Sweden talks, Ross met with Abbas to try to soothe his ego: "since I was, in effect, working the internal politics on the Israeli side, I thought it useful to do likewise with the Palestinians".⁶⁶ He says he felt "it was essential to see Abu Mazen. Abu Mazen is a very proud man... when insulted by others, he got angry and often got even... I wanted him to know that peace was possible but we were not going to get there without his help".⁶⁷ He was disappointed with Abu Mazen's response, however, calling him "uncharacteristically unyielding on substance" and concluding that "this was not the posture of a negotiator trying tactically to gain advantage. This was the posture of someone who did not want anything to happen soon - no doubt given his continuing anger at Dahlan and his unwillingness to be out in front of Arafat".⁶⁸

The other senior PA advisor who was less than forthcoming at Camp David was Ahmed Qurie (aka Abu Alaa). Abu Alaa's hardball tactics on the territorial issue, refusing to talk specifics before Israel recognized the principles he advocated, eventually led to a major blowup from President Clinton, who berated the Palestinian negotiator. Henceforth Abu Alaa was dejected and in a foul mood for the remainder of the conference, and Ross says he did not try and talk Abu Alaa out of

⁶⁵ Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, 282.

⁶⁶ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 623.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 623-624. Ben-Ami says that the Israelis also tried "to co-opt Abu-Mazen and convince him not to torpedo the process" but that these efforts failed since Abu Mazen was opposed to the summit concept entirely during the summer of 2000: Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, 283.

⁶⁸ Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 624.

considering leaving Camp David altogether.⁶⁹

Enderlin claims that in both instances of alleged American flirtation with possible rivals within the PLO to Yasser Arafat, the intended partner on the Palestinian side rejected Washington's entreaties outright.⁷⁰ This may be subject to selection bias, given that it seems Enderlin is working on the basis of Palestinian sources here who sought to share the information as an indication of their loyalty to Arafat; thus, it is also possible that other recipients of such American overtures might have been more responsive but chosen to remain quiet about their private suggestions. However, it is certainly not encouraging that both alleged U.S. attempts to reach out to possible Arafat rivals were rejected so abruptly.

Clayton Swisher agrees that "in the end, there was little to show for all these maneuvers. In fact, it stoked even more suspicion within the Palestinian team, resulting in more negotiation gridlock and dissension that at one point resulted in an actual fistfight between Abed Rabbo and Asfur".⁷¹ One of Barak's negotiators who was involved in the preliminary talks during early 2000 said that Yasser Abed Rabbo and Saeb Erekat both complained about the preferential treatment that they felt Dahlan was getting from the Americans.⁷²

Thus, the American efforts to play musical chairs among the leadership of the Palestinian Authority were largely a failure. They did not noticeably strengthen the standing of moderates in Arafat's inner circle, and they certainly did not help anoint his eventual successor. They also did not elicit commitments from any of Arafat's

⁶⁹ Ibid., 668–669.

⁷⁰ Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams*, 224.

⁷¹ Swisher, *The Truth About Camp David*, 279.

⁷² Eran, "Interview with the Author".

lieutenants promising to stand against him if he opposed a peace deal with the Israelis. Further, these tactics probably helped make the possibility of a deal at Camp David or in its immediate aftermath more remote by alienating Arafat's two most important deputies, Abu Mazen and Abu Alaa, when their constructive input was needed the most. Thus, this case should be coded a narrow and broader failure.

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

The four theories tested by this dissertation pose divergent predictions about how actors in the sender state should perceive their interests and thus about the incidence of LSI over time. National interests theory (Theory #1) expects perceptions of sender interests to be faithful reflections of objective reality and thus that occurrence of LSI should accurately reflect the interests of the sender state. The lobby-legislative approach (Theory #2) anticipates that LSI should generally not occur on the Palestine dyad because members of Congress and the powerful pro-Israel lobby tend not to see American interests aligned with supporting any faction of relative moderates among the Palestinians. The bureaucratic approach (Theory #3) predicts that LSI should be extremely frequent and reflect the desires of working-level officials to advance U.S. interests through a peace process in which America bolsters perceived Palestinian moderates. Finally, leadership theory (Theory #4) focuses on the agency of top leaders in the sender state and thus argues that it is their subjective perceptions of U.S. interests that tend to drive LSI.

The frequency of American intervention in Palestinian politics throughout

the 1990s seems is incongruent with the expectations of the lobby-legislative approach. And although the high rate of LSI occurrence is more congruous with the bureaucratic approach, which predicts frequent intervention, it fits for the wrong reasons. Rather, the personal angle emerges as salient for most of these episodes throughout the 1990s, something that supports Theory #4 but not the national interests or bureaucratic approaches. Indeed, if the bureaucratic approach were correct, we should expect to see high rates of backing the PA leadership in both the 1990s and the 2000s, but the dynamics of this intervention changed considerably with the changeover in top political leadership in Washington. Whereas Clinton was willing to lend his support to the leadership of the PA for most of his presidency, George W. Bush refused to do so, especially during his first term in office.

Indeed, it is difficult to tell the story of LSI during the Clinton years without looking to Clinton himself. The effect is most obvious when looking at the decision to intervene in both 1993 and 1998. In 1993, Clinton's involvement grew out of a strong desire to build constituencies for peace on both sides of the conflict, and he instigated the intervention against the advice of his advisors at the NSC. And he was quick to jump on the idea when it was floated at Wye River that he would visit the Palestinian Authority to give a major speech in Gaza to the PNC on behalf of peace.

In fact, Clinton's deep commitment to helping midwife a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians may have played a role in his unwillingness to let Arafat's promotion of authoritarianism in the territories get in the way of close bilateral ties. His successor, George W. Bush, would make a much bigger deal about trying to influence the character of a future Palestinian state, something that was in

part a reflection of new developments on the ground but also a function of his divergent understanding of priorities in U.S.-Palestine relations.

Beilin seems to think that President Clinton's personality also made him more attuned to Palestinian needs and desires, something he would tap into when seeking to strengthen the PA leadership. Beilin writes that "Rob Malley, Clinton's advisor on Middle Eastern affairs, and a member of the National Security Council, in a public appearance shortly after leaving the administration, said that President Clinton was the friendliest president to the Palestinians *and* the friendliest to the Israelis. He was right. It was Clinton who opened the gates of the United States to Arafat, and Arafat made more visits to the White House than any other foreign leader – thirteen – during the Clinton presidency.... He was much closer to Israel than to the Palestinians. But he was not blind to Palestinian needs, and he understood, unlike many others, that being a supporter of Israel did not contradict being a supporter of the Palestinians".⁷³ This was clearly the spirit of his more obvious interventions in Palestinian politics, most notably in 1993 and 1998.

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

The theories also offer divergent predictions with regard to whether or not actors in the sender state perceive a close leadership contest in the target polity. Theories 2 and 3 do not offer clear predictions in this regard, but Theories 1 and 4 do. Theory #1 predicts that LSI should occur in close accordance with objective contests abroad, but Theory #4 argues that subjective biases or distractions should

⁷³ Beilin, *The Path to Geneva*, 49.

get in the way of accurately perceiving these actual dynamics.

The fact that America did not get directly involved in promoting Arafat and the Fatah leadership leading up to the 1996 Palestinian Authority elections offers us little in the way of being able to distinguish between these two theories. Fatah's victory was such a clear and foregone conclusion that there was little room for subjective biases to skew officials' personal forecasts.

On the other hand, the fourth sub-case explored above, America's tentative flirtation with alternative leadership at the top of the PA, offers much more powerful grist for analysis. It was undoubtedly clear to most expert observers at the time that Arafat was wreaking havoc among his negotiators by playing upon their political rivalries.⁷⁴ However, in practice it would have been unrealistic to expect that this environment would allow for much more than some creative brainstorming with relative moderates within the PA. Believing that the United States could seriously alter the possibility that a final status deal would be accepted without some degree of harmony at the top echelons would have been highly unrealistic. And America's ability to play on these rivalries to shape eventual succession after Arafat would have been equally remote.

Nor were these misjudgments attributable to institutional biases caused by Congress, lobbyists, or bureaucrats. Instead, it seems as though this strategy came about as a result of wishful thinking at the very top levels in the Clinton administration, by officials who were so eager to push for a deal that they may have

⁷⁴ Omar M. Dajani, "Surviving Opportunities: Palestinian Negotiating Patterns in Peace Talks With Israel," in *How Israelis and Palestinians Negotiate: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Oslo Peace Process*, ed. Tamara Cofman Wittes (US Institute of Peace Press, 2005), 58; Aaron David Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace* (Bantam Books, 2008), 292.

moderately overestimated the influence of their favored interlocutors at the time.

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

The three domestically-oriented theories tested by this dissertation (theories 2, 3, and 4) offer divergent predictions with regard to the patterns of domestic deliberation and implementation leading up to a policy of LSI. For instance, Theory #2 expects that lobbies and members of Congress should be influential in sender state decision-making before LSI is pursued and that these actors are likely to be included during the deliberative process. Theory #3 anticipates that decisions should bubble up from the bureaucracy and that its leaders should be the ones who are well-informed about the sender state's plans before they are pursued. However, if top leaders in the sender state pursue LSI using informal decision-making procedures while leaving domestic stakeholders in the dark, then that would seem to support the notion that the agency of politicians in the sender state is decisive.

In this regard, all three cases of notable U.S. intervention in Palestinian politics under Clinton (1993, 1998, and 2000) fit with the model anticipated by Theory #4. At least the first two cases and probably the third were all decided verbally rather than on paper through the formal interagency process. For instance, in 1993 President Clinton invited Yasser Arafat to the signing ceremony at the White House without giving any warning to his advisors, let alone informing Congress or the wider bureaucracy. He made this decision by fiat, as a president gone "rogue". If his aides had been calling the shots, he probably would not have pursued the idea.

Then, in 1998, the idea for a presidential visit to Gaza to address the PNC

came about as a result of high-level brainstorming among Clinton and his advisors. It was then offered to the Palestinian team, who eagerly accepted, without an extensive period of deliberation over the idea through standard, paper channels. It was included on a one-page write-up of the group's ideas, but the document seems to have been informal and not a standard memo.⁷⁵ The plan was both proposed and adopted in a summit setting, where members of Congress, the pro-Israel lobby, or the broader bureaucracy would have had scant opportunity to weigh in.

Finally, the nature of the U.S. flirtations with perceived PA moderates leading up to Camp David seem to fit with the notion of an impressionistic policy being put in place without any sort of formal evaluative process being applied first. American outreach to members of the PA's young guard seems to have been extremely impressionistic, and efforts by Albright or others to probe the willingness of the old guard (Abu Mazen, Abu Alaa, or Farouq Qaddoumi) to break with Arafat would likely have been too sensitive to put down on paper at all.

In short, this pattern of behavior seems to fit best with leadership theory. Meanwhile, the lobby-legislative approach and bureaucratic approach do not seem to find much support from the data in this regard.

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

If Theory #2 is correct, we should expect sender state behavior to be shaped by the preferences of lobbyists and members of Congress, and that influence should be especially predominant during periods of divided government and when

⁷⁵ For discussion of how the Gaza idea came up at Wye, see Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 442.

elections are looming in the sender state. If Theory #3 is correct, the preferences of bureaucrats should be similarly influential, especially at the start of presidential terms. Theories 1 and 4, on the other hand, expect that these dynamics tied to variations in the sender state's political calendar should be relatively less important.

American LSI toward Palestinian politics in 1993, 1998, and 2000 seem to contradict the expectations of the two domestically-oriented structural theories of behavior. The United States did pursue a notable intervention in Palestinian politics during the first year of Clinton's presidency, but it only occurred later in that year, when his political appointee were well-situated in positions of power over the bureaucracy.

Clinton even embraced the Palestinian Authority in December 1998 when his standing at home was perilously low, less than a week before his impeachment by the House of Representatives. And although Clinton approached the Israel visit in part as an opportunity to demonstrate his ability to continue doing things that looked presidential, the idea of embracing the staunch nationalist constituency of the Palestinian National Council was much more risky domestically. Yet, as James Bennet wrote in the *New York Times*, "in a further sign of how times have changed, a senior Administration official said tonight that he did not know if the audience – a lustily cheering throng of about 700, mostly men in suits – included any suspects wanted by the United States. And he did not seem much interested".⁷⁶

Finally, Clinton pursued a make or break summit in July of 2000 in spite of impending elections in the United States, timing the conference so it would be done

⁷⁶ Bennet, "Clinton Stirs Palestinians With a Nod To Statehood."

before the Democratic and Republican conventions later that summer. However, his interest in a lasting and legacy-boosting peace agreement seem to have exerted more influence of his calculations than his concern that embracing Palestinian moderates to get there might hurt Democrats' chances at the polls that November.

Nor does it seem to matter for LSI that Clinton's government went from united to divided after the 1994 midterm elections until the end of his time in office. It is difficult to envision in hindsight that Clinton would not have invited Arafat and Rabin to the White House signing ceremony for the Oslo Accords in 1993 if the Republicans had then been in control of the Senate and the House. Nor did his intervention in Palestinian politics drop off in 1998 or 2000 when the Republicans were the majority in both chambers of Congress.

Thus, the cycles of domestic power framework seems to offer some notable evidence against the domestic structural models of LSI behavior, especially vis-à-vis the lobby-legislative approach. If Theory #2 was indeed the best model for U.S. intervention in Palestinian politics during the Clinton years, it would have been extremely unlikely for the data to contradict the theory's expectations in this regard.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

Theories 3 and 4 also offer divergent predictions with regard to the matter of bureaucratic freelancing. Theory #3 anticipates that freelancing should be an extremely frequent occurrence and that it should not depend on presidential styles of management or issue oversight. Theory #4 expects that freelancing should be rare and should only occur during periods of extremely lax presidential control.

Overall, it seems as though the Clinton era fits better with the predictions of leadership theory. Given that Clinton was an extremely involved president on the peace process and Palestinian issues, it makes sense that freelancing was relatively infrequent while he was in office. In 1993, he singlehandedly imposed a policy outcome on his advisors, even though they had explicitly advocated a diametrically opposite policy position on Arafat's invitation. It seemed to matter little that Tony Lake had proclaimed Arafat would be attending "over my dead body".⁷⁷

Then, the administration's political leadership allotted Palestinian democracy promotion an extremely low level of priority against the wishes of some bureaucrats. As Dunne points out, "diplomats in the field raised concerns... but officials in Washington were 'tone deaf'" to these concerns.⁷⁸ These officials in the field proved themselves incapable of affecting Palestinian politics without stronger backing from Washington. Nor could the president's advisors at Wye have easily imposed a visit to Gaza upon him if he didn't feel comfortable going there in 1998.

The only episode that verges on bureaucratic freelancing during the Clinton years seems to have been the efforts of his team to reach out to moderates within the Palestinian Authority leadership in the year 2000. It is conceivable that senior officials pursued these efforts without the president's prior backing. For instance, Israeli negotiator Oded Eran identifies most of the preferential treatment of Dahlan as coming from Dennis Ross and George Tenet, not from President Clinton.⁷⁹ Similarly, there is no concrete evidence that Albright's feeler to Abu Mazen was

⁷⁷ Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 63.

⁷⁸ Dunne, "A Two-State Solution Requires Palestinian Politics," 3.

⁷⁹ Eran, "Interview with the Author".

sanctioned by the White House. However, President Clinton did little to rein these efforts in, and, regardless, all three of these individuals are sufficiently senior to put the “bureaucratic” element of “bureaucratic freelancing” into serious question. However, more decisive data for this case is currently unavailable.

6. Consistency of Message:

One of the main drivers of LSI effectiveness seems to be the consistency with which actors in the sender state sought to convey their message of support to observers within the politics of the target. LSI should be more effective when messaging is consistent and clear, and the theories offer divergent predictions as to when and why this is likely to be the case. For instance, national interests theory argues that messaging should almost always be consistent, since challengers from within the politics of the sender state should be unlikely to obstruct repetition. Theories 2 and 3 anticipate that consistent messaging should be undermined when it contradicts with the institutional preferences of Congress, lobbyists, or the permanent bureaucracy. Theory #4 argues that consistency depends upon the ability and inclination of the president to convey a consistent message.

In this regard, theories 1 and 4 seem to garner the best support from the data. For instance, in 1998 Clinton’s inspiring words were contradicted by realities on the ground and resistance from Netanyahu’s government in Israel on the diplomatic track. However, his team did an extremely careful job of reinforcing his message by emphasizing that the PA was largely compliant with its obligations under Wye while the Israelis were not. This effort was also directed at a very high

political level within the U.S. hierarchy by Albright, sometimes through her spokesperson, sometimes not.

However, the bumps that Clinton's embrace of Arafat provided, first in 1993 and again in 1998, were extremely ephemeral, especially once it became clear that the Oslo process was not yielding the sort of benefits that Washington and the Israelis had originally promised. This sobering reality provided a major damper on the extent to which presidential rhetoric extolling a new era of peace and strong U.S.-Palestine ties could realistically inspire the Palestinian public. Thus, this dimension seems to fit best with the predictions of national interests theory and, only secondarily, the approach focusing on the agency of leaders in the sender state.

7. Suitability of Message:

Finally, the theories offer divergent predictions with regard to the suitability of messaging from the sender state, and, in turn, the efficacy of LSI. Again, Theory #1 expects that outcomes should be consistently driven by objective realities and interests, whereas Theories 2 through 4 expect that institutional interests or personal biases should skew messaging in ways that are not suitable for the politics of the target state. In this regard, Theory #4 seems to explain the data best.

American intervention in 1993 played extremely well to the notion that the Palestinian people were entering a new era in which their people and their leaders would be accepted by the international community. Although a ceremony featuring Mahmoud Abbas or Faisal Husseini would also have been exciting, Clinton's idea of embracing Arafat in Washington helped drive home that the Palestinian people

were entering a new era.

Moreover, his sensitivity to Palestinian aspirations helped make for an especially inspiring speech to the PNC in Gaza. Aaron Miller that the president brought the passion when he came to Gaza: “Hanan Ashrawi recalls that no other American leader before him seemed to see her people ‘as human beings’. Clinton confirmed this impression for me during his remarkable December 1998 speech to the Palestinian National Council in Gaza city [sic]. Sitting in that crowded hall among more than four hundred representatives of the Palestinian national movement, listening to the president speak to them about their aspirations as if he were speaking to a Democratic National Convention, his power and passion amazed me”.⁸⁰ The event poses a considerable contrast with George W. Bush’s lackluster remarks upon his first trips to Palestinian cities in 2008 and helps support the notion that the impact of Clinton’s speech a decade before was conditioned on his connection and charisma.

A notable instance in which the message conveyed by U.S. intervention did not suitably accord with the dynamics of Palestinian politics was when the U.S. tried to play favorites with perceived moderates within the PA leadership leading up to Camp David in 2000. In this instance, it was the Clinton team’s misreading of Palestinian politics that was most salient, promoting mistrust among the Palestinian negotiators and between their delegation and the United States. Again, it was the administration’s top leadership that skewed the messaging and in turn the efficacy of the attempt. In this regard, leadership theory seems to provide a better fit for the

⁸⁰ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 310.

data than the theories that emphasize structural determinants of behavior.

Conclusion

President Clinton's record of intervening in Palestinian internal politics was something of a mixed bag. He singlehandedly elevated Yasser Arafat's global profile and internal standing by inviting him to the signing ceremony for the Oslo Accords that his team was staging on the White House lawn in 1993. However, the Clinton team's biggest effect on Palestinian politics was not intentional, *per se*; by ignoring Arafat's growing power and helping to supply him with capabilities that put him above accountability, the United States unintentionally helped Arafat build a nascent PLO dictatorship in Gaza and the West Bank.

When Clinton did turn his attention to the Palestinian perspective, his knack for empathy was superb. This enabled him to occasionally give Palestinian moderates an added boost, not just in 1993 but also in 1998 with his speech before the PNC in Gaza City, which would have been unthinkable just five years before. However, as facts on the ground began to undermine public enthusiasm for the Oslo process, his ability to strengthen the Palestinian peace camp seemed to be shrinking over time.

Finally, as Clinton's presidency came to an end, he found himself back at square one. He had invested heavily in Yasser Arafat over his two terms in office, and he had lost that bet. Arafat's passive demeanor had undermined opportunities for constructive process on a final status agreement at Camp David, and he instead turned to violence as a means of ensuring his continued rule. Clinton's aides tried to

divide and conquer by working with certain preferred advisors to the PA chairman over others, also probing whether any of his senior lieutenants would consider breaking with him in support of a potential deal. Yet in the end Clinton and his team were foiled by the very system of autocratic authority that they had allowed Arafat to assemble around himself during the preceding decade. As Aaron David Miller aptly concludes, “we were in the game against the great manipulator. I mean, this was this man’s life! I mean, we were amateurs – amateurs minus!”⁸¹

⁸¹ Miller, “Interview with the Author.”

Chapter X.
~
Palestinian Politics, Post-Oslo
(2001-2009)

What Clinton was to Israeli politics, Bush was to Palestine. Whereas the Clinton administration was the historical high-water mark for American intervention in Israeli politics, the George W. Bush administration represents the most extensive period of meddling by the United States government in Palestinian political affairs. This chapter provides a chronicle of the Bush team's various forays into this realm, covering three separate meta-cases. These include: (1) efforts to isolate Arafat and strengthen other cabinet ministers in 2002 and 2003, (2) attempts to lay the groundwork for a new era of Palestinian politics starting in 2005 and ending with Hamas's victory in the PLC elections of January 2006, and (3) the Bush team's West Bank First policy aimed at bolstering Fatah and the PLO while sidelining Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

With the peace process in tatters, an intifada raging on the ground, and the popularity of Hamas on the rise, there is no doubt that George W. Bush came to office facing a tougher set of circumstances than Clinton had experienced.¹ However, distinctive features of President Bush's beliefs and style of leadership shaped his response decisively when it came to his approach toward leadership selection intervention in the politics of Palestine. He was convinced that the immediate source of the problem was not the lack of a peace agreement but rather

¹ Regarding Hamas's sudden jump in popularity after the outbreak of the second intifada, see Khalil Shikaki, "Palestinians Divided," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 1 (2002): 92.

the quality of Palestinian leadership. What ensued was a decade of greater meddling in Palestinian affairs, but to the extent that he displayed a lack of enthusiasm for promoting serious peace talks, his efforts at shaping Palestinian politics tended to fall short.

Palestine, Case #3:

Replacing Arafat, 2002-2004

Coding the Dependent Variables

(Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

Yes. The United States intervened extensively in Palestinian leadership selection during this period. First, it declared that American officials would not engage with the PA so long as Arafat was in power. It imposed a finance minister on the PA who was reputed for his commitment to transparency in order to decrease Arafat's control over economic affairs and thus stem the flow of corruption. It temporarily froze the peace process, refusing to release the Road Map until Arafat appointed an empowered prime minister. And, although it failed to keep him in office, it took a number of gestures intended to bolster Abu Mazen after he had been appointed to the position.

<Sub-Case 1: Ousting Arafat?>

Although they spoke a few times over the phone, Bush never met with Yasser Arafat.² In September of 2001, Bush cancelled plan for a possible meeting with

² George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (Random House, 2010), 400.

Arafat in person at the United Nations General Assembly.³ He then had his last communication with the chairman after the Karine A incident in January 2002, when a ship full of illicit weapons was intercepted by the IDF that had been linked to the Palestinian Authority.⁴ Secretary Powell warned Arafat that April in Ramallah that, if he did not urgently move to stop terrorism against Israeli civilians, it might be his last official meeting with him or other American officials.⁵

In what was a clear dig at Arafat, President Bush gave a speech from the White House Rose Garden on June 24th, 2002, in which he announced that “I call on the Palestinian people to elect new leaders... not compromised by terror”. He assured them that “when the Palestinian people have new leaders... the United States of America will support the creation of a Palestinian state... as new Palestinian institutions and new leaders emerge, demonstrating real performance on security and reform, I expect Israel to respond and work toward a final status agreement... reached within three years from now”.⁶ The speech was widely interpreted to mean that Arafat was off-limits for U.S. diplomacy and that Bush sought his ouster.

From that point forward, Arafat was blacklisted by Washington. Pressure grew on him to appoint a prime minister to handle day-to-day governance of the PA, peace negotiations, and security affairs. In concert with Israel, the Bush administration also pressured the Palestinians starting in the summer of 2002 to call off elections they had scheduled for the following January, since they had no

³ Karen DeYoung, *Soldier: The Life of Colin Powell* (Random House, 2007), 338, 356.

⁴ Bush, *Decision Points*, 400–401.

⁵ DeYoung, *Soldier*, 382–383; Aaron David Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace* (Bantam Books, 2008), 344.

⁶ George W. Bush, “President Bush Calls for New Palestinian Leadership: The Rose Garden”, June 24, 2002.

interest in seeing Arafat's legitimacy bolstered in an official poll.⁷ The U.S. also discouraged proposals for Palestinian elections in 2004 for similar reasons.⁸

Initially, there was no concrete plan for putting the anti-Arafat framework into action. As Dennis Ross recalls, , "there wasn't any immediate follow-up after the speech."⁹ As a result, the Jordanians suggested, and the Americans gradually agreed to put the plan embodied in Bush's speech into a set of steps for both sides that would help mobilize action on the peace process.¹⁰

In the months that followed, isolating Arafat still seemed to be a main priority of American policy toward the Palestinians. Donald Rumsfeld remarked in a note to Rice after an October 9th NSC meeting that "the reworked 'roadmap' should be focused on the point the President made several times in the meeting – namely, that the goal is to weaken and eventually end the authority of Yassir Arafat. Therefore, each item in the 'roadmap' should be checked to see that they focus on weakening Arafat".¹¹ That same month, Rumsfeld complained that "France [still] continuously favors Arafat and inhibits US efforts to weaken him".¹² One of the techniques the United States used to subsequently hem in Arafat was to support the appointment of a PA finance minister who would impose transparency on its overall

⁷ Karen DeYoung, "U.S. Sets Talks with Palestinian Delegation; Decision to Meet Marks Policy Shift," *Washington Post*, July 29, 2002; Harvey Morris, "Palestinian Elections Expected to Be Cancelled: Authority Will Blame Israeli Occupation," *Financial Times*, December 20, 2002; Ian Fisher, "Blaming Israel, Palestinians Postpone Election Indefinitely," *New York Times*, December 23, 2002.

⁸ Khalil Shikaki, "Shikaki: No Political Will for Palestinian National Elections," interview by Bernard Gwertzman, CFR Blog: Pressure Points, August 11, 2004.

⁹ Dennis Ross, "Interview with the Author," March 23, 2012.

¹⁰ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 350-352; Marwan Muasher, *The Arab Center: The Promise of Moderation* (Yale University Press, 2008), 154-176.

¹¹ Donald Rumsfeld, "NSC Meeting October 9-Middle East - Memorandum to Honorable Condoleezza Rice" (Document released for "The Rumsfeld Papers" at www.rumsfeld.com, October 16, 2002).

¹² Donald Rumsfeld, "Illustrative List of Recent Examples of French Opposition to the United States" (Document released for "The Rumsfeld Papers" at www.rumsfeld.com, October 23, 2002).

finances.

<Sub-Case 2: Funding Fayyad>

One of George Bush's main concerns about the Palestinian Authority as a whole and Yasser Arafat in particular was widespread and deep-seated corruption.¹³ The main avenue Washington pursued for fixing this state of affairs was to push for the appointment of a new face to direct the PA's finance ministry and ensure that the Palestinian government would adopt strong transparency measures. Presumably, this would take economic affairs out of Arafat's hands and dry up the financial flows that had enabled the corruption.

Reportedly, the United States not only pushed for the staffing shakeup but even worked to ensure that its favored candidate got the job, encouraging Salam Fayyad to throw his hat in the ring. Israeli journalist Barak Ravid wrote in *Ha'aretz* that Fayyad

“was on his way to a brilliant business career when the person considered to be his greatest patron intervened – then national security adviser today U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. When... Operation Defensive Shield was over, pressure mounted on Yasser Arafat to implement reforms. As a result, the new job of PA finance minister was set up, a post that was intended to take control of economic affairs away from the *rais* (Arafat) and put them in professional hands. Back then Fayyad's name was mentioned as the leading candidate and *because of pressure from Rice and others, he was persuaded to take the job*”.¹⁴

Bush then encouraged Fayyad's appointment in his public remarks. He praised “some talk of a new finance minister being promoted in the Palestinian Authority, a person that has got international standing” and welcomed Fayyad's

¹³ For public discussion of this issue at the time, see “U.S. Says Palestinian Authority Needs to Reform As It Reconstructs: Boucher Calls for Transparency; Elimination of Corruption, Violence,” *State Department Press Releases and Documents*, May 7, 2002.

¹⁴ Barak Ravid, “Salam Fayad: Everyone's Favorite Palestinian,” *Ha'aretz*, May 27, 2007. Emphases added.

prospective appointment, explaining “this is a positive development, because one of the things that worries us in spending any international aid on an authority that might not keep good books, that the money might not actually help the Palestinian people but might end up in somebody’s pocket”.¹⁵ The U.S. also made a major effort behind the scenes, pressuring Arafat to make the appointment..¹⁶

In time, the U.S. helped persuade Israel to resume the flow of tax revenues to the PA now once Fayyad was handling its finances. As Rice explains, they worked hard at this goal because of the feeling that Fayyad “needed our help”.¹⁷ At a series of private meetings in the fall and winter that were brokered by the U.S., Fayyad met with Israel officials to make the case for restarting the flow of tax monies back to the PA, and he started to receive funds in January, beginning with \$60 million that helped save the PA from bankruptcy.¹⁸ An aide to Israel’s minister of defense confirms that having Fayyad across the table helped encourage the Sharon government to eventually restart tax revenues.¹⁹

Rice reports helping to get these transfers moving again by calling Sharon’s advisor Dov Weissglas, at which point “I told him that Fayyad was different and asked him to meet with the finance minister... Dubi called back to say that he was impressed... as Fayyad continued to implement sound financial reforms, the Israelis began to deliver the tax revenues”.²⁰ At Aqaba in June of 2003, Bush reportedly brushed aside protestations from Sharon that he could not transfer the Palestinians’

¹⁵ Janine Zacharia, “Bush Touts New PA Finance Minister,” *Jerusalem Post*, May 31, 2002.

¹⁶ David Makovsky, “The Next to Go: Yasir Arafat,” *New York Times*, April 14, 2003.

¹⁷ Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (Random House, 2011), 220.

¹⁸ James Bennet, “The Radical Bean Counter,” *New York Times*, May 25, 2003.

¹⁹ Michael Herzog, “Interview with the Author”, December 4, 2010.

²⁰ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 220.

withheld tax revenues, instructing Sharon “it is their money, give it to them”.²¹

<Sub-Case 3: Adopting Abu Mazen>

In the year that followed Bush’s Rose Garden speech, Washington employed the draft Road Map as a means to force Arafat into approving the creation of a prime minister post within the PA. Although the U.S. approach frustrated its allies in Europe and the Arab world, its combination of sticks (refusal to deal with Arafat or let the peace process proceed until he created and filled the post) with carrots (the promise of the Road Map) to generate an effective, multilateral diplomatic campaign.

In October of 2002, the U.S. started floating drafts of the Road Map. The drafts embraced, among other items, the proposal of Palestinian reformers calling for an “empowered prime minister” position as a means of sidelining Arafat’s influence over key governmental affairs.²² Yet by early 2003, the U.S. was treating the creation of a prime ministerial slot as a firm prerequisite for release of the Road Map rather than as a requirement for its fulfillment.

This insistence by Washington helped generate major pressure from Arab states and the Quartet members on him to permit the creation of a prime ministerial slot. In February of 2003, Yasser Arafat announced his decision to appoint a prime minister in direct response to international pressure. After six days of meetings with Russia, the EU, and the United Nations, who urged him that peace talks could not proceed without the appointment of a prime minister, he announced that “in

²¹ Akiva Eldar, “People and Politics: Bush Likes Dahlan, Believes Abbas, and Has ‘a Problem with Sharon’,” *Ha’aretz*, June 10, 2003.

²² James Bennet, “U.S. Offers a New Design for Mideast Peace,” *New York Times*, October 24, 2002.

light of contact that we conducted with members of the Quartet, I decided to appoint a prime minister”.²³ Enderlin confirms that Arafat was “under constant pressure exerted by Terje Larsen and Miguel Moratinos... [with] Hosni Mubarak and King Abdullah of Jordan” to advance the cause of Palestinian reform.²⁴ Former Jordanian Foreign Minister Marwan Muasher writes that Jordan felt motivated to pressure Arafat into finally appointing Abbas as prime minister because of a desire to get the Road Map released already.²⁵

But even after the position was created, Bush held firm until Arafat carried through with his pledge, nominating Abu Mazen in early March and finally appointing him at the end of April at the end of a long period of wrangling over who would control which portfolios in practice. In the interim, Bush advocated for Abu Mazen’s position, stating that “the Palestinian Authority has created the new position of prime minister... to be a credible and responsible partner, the new Palestinian prime minister must hold a position of authority... immediately upon his conformation, the road map for peace will be given to the Palestinians and the Israelis”.²⁶

Once Abu Mazen was appointed at the head of a new Palestinian government, the United States focused on building him up in that new role. In early June, Bush convened two summits in the region with Abu Mazen, where he celebrated the launch of the Road Map and urged Israeli and Arab leaders to back the new

²³ Molly Moore and John Ward Anderson, “Arafat Will Name a Prime Minister; Palestinian Yields to Pressure but Gives No Details on Powers of New Office,” *Washington Post*, February 15, 2003.

²⁴ Charles Enderlin, *The Lost Years: Radical Islam, Intifada, and Wars in the Middle East 2001-2006*, trans. Suzanne Verderber (Other Press, LLC, 2007), 181.

²⁵ Marwan Muasher, *The Arab Center*, 184.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 182–183.

Palestinian leader.

Rice says that the purpose of the Arab summit at Sharm el-Sheikh was for the president and Arab heads of state from Jordan, Egypt, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia to “meet with Palestinian Prime Minister Abbas to signal support for him and for a new effort with the Israelis”.²⁷ Bregman explains that, after it became clear the Arabs would not agree to far-reaching gestures toward the Israelis at Sharm, “they decided to drop the matter altogether and, instead, to focus on getting the Arab leaders to support Abu Mazen”.²⁸ According to a participant in the summit, “Bush was bustling about... slapping all these dignified Arabs on the back and putting his arm round Abu Mazen and joshing him along. He said to those leaders, ‘you have to help this man’.”²⁹

Then, at Aqaba, Bush pushed the Israelis to support Abbas’s new government in the PA as well. When the Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz said that the Palestinian security services should demonstrate results on their own and that “I do not think that we can help them,” Bush allegedly responded “I think you can. And I think that you will”.³⁰ According to an American participant in the summit, “the President was direct [with Sharon] about the need for the Israelis to take action to help Abu Mazen”.³¹

In his public remarks at the summit, Bush declared that he was:

“pleased to be here with Prime Minister Abbas. He represents the cause of freedom

²⁷ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 216.

²⁸ Ahron Bregman, *Elusive Peace: How the Holy Land Defeated America* (Penguin, 2005), 256.

²⁹ Anonymous summit participant, quoted in *Ibid.* This perspective is also echoed in Muasher, *The Arab Center*, 190-191.

³⁰ Eldar, “People and Politics: Bush Likes Dahlan, Believes Abbas, and Has ‘a Problem with Sharon’.”

³¹ Anonymous U.S. official, quoted in Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 257.

and statehood for the Palestinian people. I strongly support that cause as well... Prime Minister Abbas now leads the Palestinian Cabinet. By his strong leadership, by building the institutions of Palestinian democracy and by rejecting terror, he is serving the deepest hopes of his people.”³²

Bush also highlighted pledges that Sharon had agreed to include in his speech, whereby the Israelis would seek to improve humanitarian conditions in the territories, remove unauthorized outposts, release some prisoners, and ensure eventual territorial contiguity. However, Sharon also rejected other American suggestions for the speech – both in terms of concrete proposals and in terms of empathizing with the other side’s suffering – and the tone of his speech was a disappointing surprise to both the Palestinians and Jordanians present.³³

Abu Mazen was then welcomed to the White House in July, marking the first time in his presidency that Bush received a Palestinian leader there. As Charles Enderlin writes, “the purpose of the visit was... primarily symbolic. The American administration wanted to send a message... that the Palestinian prime minister was an ally of the United States. Abbas received a check for \$20 million, and Bush announced the creation of an American-Palestinian economic development group”.³⁴

A small, new tranche of \$20 million in direct aid was rushed to the PA as part of a symbolic effort to show support for the prime minister. The administration waived Congressional restrictions in order to provide the first direct aid to the Palestinian government since the PA was created in 1994 and worked with Congress to ensure its support of the plan. In briefings with members of Congress,

³² Quoted in Enderlin, *The Lost Years*, 192.

³³ Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 261. See also Muasher, *The Arab Center*, 191.

³⁴ Enderlin, *The Lost Years*, 199.

the Washington Post quoted administration officials “stress[ing] the urgency of the action, saying they want to get the funds to the Palestinian Authority as quickly as possible to shore up Abbas as he tries to establish his credibility with the Palestinian people. The push for direct aid accelerated after the recent trip to the region by national security adviser Condoleezza Rice, during which Palestinian Finance Minister Salam Fayyad made an impassioned plea to Rice for direct assistance”.³⁵

In a press conference after their private meeting, Bush answered a question planted by Abbas’s team about Israel’s security barrier by saying that “it is very difficult to develop confidence between the Palestinians and Israel with a wall snaking through the West Bank”.³⁶ Bush’s comment thrilled the prime minister’s advisers, since he had been under particular pressure from the Palestinian public for not doing more to stem the advance of the Israeli barrier.³⁷ However, Khalil Shikaki says that Abu Mazen himself had much higher expectations of the U.S. and that his visit to the White House came as a huge disappointment.³⁸ According to a former Abbas aide, the main concessions he had been seeking were for American to help him deliver from the Israelis a formal settlement freeze, an end to incursions in Area A, and the reopening of Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, none of which he even received.³⁹

Bush did voice his enthusiasm for the new PA government in the days to come. This included not just Abbas also the reform government’s security chief,

³⁵ Glenn Kessler, “U.S. Plans to Provide Direct Aid to Palestinians: Policy Shift Aims to Bolster Abbas and Counter Hamas,” *Washington Post*, July 9, 2003; Enderlin, *The Lost Years*, 199.

³⁶ Enderlin, *The Lost Years*, 200.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 197; Bregman, *Evasive Peace*, 269.

³⁸ Khalil Shikaki, “Interview with the Author”, July 2011.

³⁹ Diana Buttu, “Interview with the Author”, November 11, 2010.

Mohammed Dahlan, whom Bush had decided he liked after being briefed by him at Aqaba⁴⁰:

“I’m impressed by Prime Minister Abbas’ vision... I believe him when he says that we must rout out [sic] terror in order for a Palestinian state to exist... I think Mr. Dahlan, his security chief, also recognizes that. And we’ve got to help those two leaders in a couple of ways to realize that vision of a peaceful Palestinian state. One is to provide help and strategy to Mr. Dahlan so he can lead Palestinian security forces to the dismantlement of bomb-making factories, rocket-making factories inside Gaza and the West Bank... We’ve also got to recognize that things can happen on the ground that will strengthen Mr. Abbas’ hand, relative to the competition, moving – for example, movement throughout the country.”⁴¹

In that same news conference, Bush also went on to praise Salam Fayyad and joked that “I was pleased to discover that he – I think he received a degree from the University of Texas, which gave me even more confidence when he spoke”.⁴²

When Sharon visited the White House a few days after Abu Mazen, the president asked him to make major overtures that would bolster Abbas. However, Sharon rejected the president’s main requests, which focused on achieving a settlement freeze or a temporary halt to construction of the security barrier.⁴³ U.S. efforts to get Israel to bolster Abu Mazen further backfired when long-hyped Israeli plans to release Palestinian prisoners were scaled back to such an extent that much fewer prisoners were released than previously suggested; many of these prisoners were already nearing the end of their terms or had been arrested for common crimes such as being in Israel without permits.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Eldar, “People and Politics: Bush Likes Dahlan, Believes Abbas, and Has ‘a Problem with Sharon’.”

⁴¹ “The President’s News Conference,” *White House Press Releases and Documents - Federal Information & News Dispatch*, July 30, 2003.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Glenn Kessler, “President Urges Israelis to Bolster Abbas; Sharon Resists Dramatic Action on Issues Important to Palestinian Prime Minister,” *Washington Post*, July 30, 2003.

⁴⁴ Greg Myre, “Israel Frees 330 Prisoners: Palestinians Dismiss Gesture,” *New York Times*, August 7, 2003; Jeffrey Heller, “Israeli Release of Palestinian Prisoners Backfires,” *Reuters News*, August 5, 2003; Mark

Further, the Israelis did not consider themselves party to the *hudna* Abu Mazen had negotiated with the Islamist groups, instead assassinating a PIJ leader in mid-August who was responsible for an attack against civilians the previous year. Hamas then retaliated a few days later, launching a dramatic suicide bombing in Jerusalem that killed over twenty Israelis and injured about 100 more, throwing the process into disarray.

The Israelis severed relations with the PA and called off plans to remove the IDF from cities it had been occupying since Operation Defensive Shield in the spring, but the U.S. did not get actively engaged in bringing the two parties back together.⁴⁵ The Palestinian Legislative Council was set to meet to review the record of Abu Mazen's government in its first hundred days, and behind the scenes Arafat was pushing for terms that would bring about the collapse of the prime minister's government.⁴⁶ Although John Wolf, the president's low-level envoy, allegedly told the PLC's speaker, Abu Alaa, that the U.S. would not tolerate the collapse of Abu Mazen's government,⁴⁷ it did little else to change the political equation on the ground that produced Abu Mazen's resignation on the 6th of September, 2003.

Did the Policy Succeed?

Lavie, "Israel to Release 69 Palestinian Prisoners: Palestinians Dismiss Move as Inadequate," *Associated Press*, August 11, 2003.

⁴⁵ Omar Karmi, "PA Cuts Ties with Islamist Factions; Israel Cuts Ties with PA," *Palestine Report* 10, no. 8 (August 20, 2003); Chris Otton, "Suicide Blast Deals Crippling Blow to Peace Process," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, August 20, 2003.

⁴⁶ "Arafat-Abbas Scrap Goes Behind Closed-doors as PM Lauds 'Historical Leader'," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, September 4, 2003.

⁴⁷ "Arafat, Abbas Cannot Work Together Any More - Qorei," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, September 1, 2003; Hisham Abdallah, "Arafat Declares Roadmap Dead as Abbas Prepares to Face MPs," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, September 3, 2003; Chris McGreal, "Day of Decision in Abbas Feud with Arafat: America and Britain Fight to Save Palestinian PM Facing Key Debate," *The Guardian (UK)*, September 4, 2003.

In some ways, these American efforts produced major positive changes in Palestinian politics; in other ways, these policies were self-defeating. On the positive side of the ledger, American pressure helped bring about the appointment of moderate reformers into major positions within the Palestinian Authority. The appointment of Salam Fayyad helped transform PA finances in ways that restored connectivity with the donor community and helped the Palestinians move toward a more transparent system of government while decreasing Arafat's discretionary power. The creation of a prime minister post probably would never have happened without outside pressure, and Abbas was strongly identified with the peace process and ending violence.

However, the U.S. administration's attempts to sideline Arafat and build up Abbas ultimately floundered. The United States took a series of steps to strengthen Abbas but never gave him the level of support he really needed to succeed. Then, when the security situation convulsed in August of 2003, the Bush team did very little to help Abu Mazen ride out the crisis. In the end, the U.S. backed itself into a corner, unable to engage with the main power broker in the PA (Arafat) and with little regard for the agenda of its main interlocutor (Abu Alaa).

<Sub-Case 1: Ousting Arafat?>

Bush's speech, and the new policy that it entailed, was a double-edged sword. On one hand, it decreased Washington's ability to advance the peace process through direct negotiations with Arafat. On the other, it build up pressure for PA reform. Similarly, holding back the Road Map entailed certain costs in terms of delaying activity on the peace process in exchange for possible benefits on reform.

Thus, the policy was a mixed bag in terms of efficacy. It helped bring about the eventual creation of a prime minister position, but it did so at the cost of giving up other avenues for American influence. Had Abbas lasted as prime minister, the costs might have been worthwhile, but given that he left office toward the end of 2003, the result was that the U.S. had boxed itself out from Palestinian politics for the remainder of Arafat's time on this earth.

The initial impetus for reform was derailed by Israeli actions, but the administration soon followed up in ways that ensured the policy would yield results. In September of 2002, the normally docile Palestinian Legislative Council forced the resignation of a PA government in protest at the lack of administrative reform.⁴⁸ However, an Israeli siege of Arafat's compound later that month seemed to reinforce his standing. His poll numbers jumped by more than ten percent, and the portion of Palestinians who felt PA reform could be achieved fell accordingly.⁴⁹ Colin Powell says this upset President Bush, since "every time we put Arafat in his place and started to move him to the sidelines [Sharon would do something and] suddenly Arafat is right dead back in the centre of everything... rather than isolating him [Sharon would] just bring him right back into the game".⁵⁰

However, the Bush administration ensured further motion by moving, albeit slowly, to suggestions from allies, led by Jordan, to forge a plan that would turn the vision contained in the president's Rose Garden speech into a series of parallel steps

⁴⁸ Serge Schmemmann, "Council Deals Arafat a Blow by Forcing Cabinet to Quit," *New York Times*, September 12, 2002.

⁴⁹ Yoav Appel, "Poll Shows Support Grows for Arafat Among Palestinians," *Associated Press*, September 29, 2002.

⁵⁰ Quoted with brackets in Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 238.

for both sides to pursue. The administration began floating a draft of the so-called Road Map in October, and the document called for appointment of an empowered prime minister as one of the steps for the PA to carry out in phase one. The administration's subsequent decision to upgrade creation of the premier post into a prerequisite for the document's release made a major difference in the end. Hatem Abdel Qader, a younger generation Fatah activist, said that "four years ago we began discussing this kind of change... we discussed the issue with Chairman Arafat, but he always refused... but after the pressure brought to bear by Europe and the United States, he finally agreed".⁵¹

David Makovsky concurs that the Washington's firm isolation of Arafat and brandishing of the Road Map reaped benefits in terms of enabling PA reform:

"Because Mr. Arafat's legitimacy at home rested in part on his influence abroad, the American move to isolate him aided his domestic critics. Mr. Arafat could no longer deflect domestic complaints about corruption in his regime, authoritarian-style leadership and a general dearth of good governance... Ironically, it was the American position, read by some as a lack of 'engagement,' that emboldened the authority's Legislative Council, until now largely toothless, to push reform. Breaking from past practice, the European Union and United Nations envoys threatened to disengage, securing the promotions of Mr. Fayyad and Mr. Abbas".⁵²

Menachem Klein argues that the reform discourse in Palestinian politics began long before and that Bush's call for new leadership actually backfired by enabling Arafat to paint reformists as traitors to the national cause.⁵³ However, it is difficult to explain the timing of the prime minister position's creation within reference to the enormous outside pressure that boosted the hands of reformists within the PA.

⁵¹ Hatem Abdel Qader, "A Palestinian View: We Need Democracy," *Bitter Lemons* 11 - The new Palestinian prime minister and the conflict (March 17, 2003).

⁵² Makovsky, "The Next to Go: Yasir Arafat."

⁵³ Menachem Klein, "By Conviction, Not by Infliction: The Internal Debate over Reforming the Palestinian Authority," *Middle East Journal* 57, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 207.

Later on, however, once Abu Mazen's government had collapsed, Yasser Arafat again came to the fore. He appointed Abu Alaa, another longtime western interlocutor for the PA, as his new prime minister, but Abu Alaa was less willing to challenge Arafat for control over security affairs or the negotiations portfolio.⁵⁴ Israeli chatter expelling Arafat the day after Abu Mazen submitted his resignation reoriented international and domestic attention on the chairman's standing rather than the issue of an empowered prime ministerial office.⁵⁵ And, along with opposition from Israel, American resistance helped prevent a new round of PA elections from taking place as scheduled in 2004. Prominent observers believed that such elections might help undermine Arafat's authority by sweeping out from the PLC many of his backers in the old guard, but Bush was more concerned that elections would re-legitimate the chairman's standing.⁵⁶

Three prominent experts on the peace process, Daniel Levy, Robert Malley, and Ghaith al-Omari, conclude that "attempts to isolate and bypass Arafat... not only failed to reduce his standing; they also contributed to Fatah's fragmentation and the loss of U.S. credibility and leverage".⁵⁷ In 2004, the policy certainly reduced U.S. points of leverage over Palestinian behavior. Arafat's popularity had again fallen into the 35% range, and a near-majority supported the resignation of Abu Alaa's

⁵⁴ Jonathan Wright, "U.S. Cautious About Korei as Palestinian Premier," *Reuters News*, September 8, 2003; Omar Karmi, "A Week of Mayhem," *Palestine Report* 10, no. 11 (September 10, 2003); Hossam Ezzedin, "Qorei Set to Remain Palestinian PM but Bush Rebukes Lack of Action on 'Terror'," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, October 28, 2003; "Qorei, Second Palestinian PM, Seeks to Avoid Fate of the First," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, November 12, 2003.

⁵⁵ Johorah Baker, "Arafat Center Stage, Again," *Palestine Report* 10, no. 12 (September 17, 2003).

⁵⁶ Shikaki, "Shikaki: No Political Will for Palestinian National Elections."

⁵⁷ Daniel Levy, Robert Malley, and Ghaith Al-Omari, "Ten Commandments for Mideast Peace," *The American Prospect* 18, no. 6 (June 2007): 27.

successor government, but they remained in power until Arafat's November death.⁵⁸

<Sub-Case 2: Funding Fayyad>

Fayyad's standing since 2002 has depended upon the insistence of Washington and the Europeans that the flow of aid depends upon him being in an official position to ensure its expenditure without graft.⁵⁹ Yet he was also aided by an accident of fate: when Arafat was besieged for ten days in September of 2002 by the IDF, Fayyad was stuck inside with the chairman and was able to win his trust – or a least ameliorate his sense of threat.⁶⁰ Thus, he was reappointed when Arafat approved another cabinet a few months later. He was also aided by Rice and Bush's belief that Fayyad "needed our help".⁶¹ Dennis Ross believes that the Bush team's efforts to persuade the Israelis to restart the flow of tax transfers to the PA once Fayyad was in place was crucial to the new finance minister's success.⁶²

In the broader sense, American backing for Fayyad helped clear the way for fiscal reform at the PA and the resumption of statecraft by the international donor community to promote the peace process and moderation in Palestinian politics. It is unlikely the \$20 million in direct aid to bolster Abbas would have been permitted prior to Fayyad's appointment and anti-corruption efforts. A news report on the \$20 million noted that "the money would be given directly to the Palestinian Finance Ministry. Fayyad, a former official at the International Monetary Fund, has

⁵⁸ "Palestinians Want Genuine Political Reform to Create a Better Future: Concerns of Domestic Power Struggle Mount," *Daily Star (Lebanon)*, October 4, 2004; "Palestinian Survey Shows Rising Frustration with Leadership," *Voice of America Press Releases and Documents* (Mideast, n.d.).

⁵⁹ Ravid, "Salam Fayad: Everyone's Favorite Palestinian"; "Quartet Backs Abbas, Fayyad-led Government," *Ma'an News Agency*, May 10, 2011.

⁶⁰ James Bennet, "Palestinian Seeks Reform by Following the Money," *New York Times*, Spring 2003; Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 237–238; Shikaki, "Interview with the Author."

⁶¹ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 220.

⁶² Dennis Ross, "Op-Ed: Power to the Prime Minister," *Washington Post*, March 24, 2003.

impressed officials in Washington and Israel with a series of reforms he has instituted in the past year to provide greater accountability in how the Palestinian Authority disburses its funds. [At his invitation] a team of accountants from Deloitte & Touche works in the finance ministry to keep an eye on Palestinian accounts”.⁶³

He also posted the PA budget online in full as a confidence-building transparency measure and promoted the idea of using direct deposits to pay PA salaries in order to decrease graft and favoritism by managers in the civil service and security sector.⁶⁴ He singlehandedly stopped other ministries from re-spending revenue that they had collected from delivery of services by simply ordering all banks in the territories to stop cashing their checks and sending his fellow ministers a two-line “for your information” memo outlining the changes.⁶⁵ His reforms helped ensure the PA’s financial health and helped the peace process by partially rehabilitating the PA and clearing the way for further international assistance.

<Sub-Case 3: Adopting Abu Mazen>

Abu Mazen’s very appointment seemed a sign of initial American success. For instance, Dennis Ross catalogues the results of U.S. pressure on Arafat by March of 2003 as follows:

“First, Palestinians have been insisting on reform of the Palestinian Authority, and they mean not just an end to corruption but also an end to Arafat’s arbitrary use of power. Second, the international community is demanding that as the price of support -- politically and economically -- the Palestinian prime minister must truly be empowered. Third, Arafat’s standing and support have never been so low among Palestinians. Fourth, Abbas would never have taken the position if it were devoid of power and Arafat were left to pull all the strings”.⁶⁶

⁶³ Kessler, “U.S. Plans to Provide Direct Aid to Palestinians: Policy Shift Aims to Bolster Abbas and Counter Hamas.”

⁶⁴ Bennet, “Palestinian Seeks Reform by Following the Money.”

⁶⁵ Bennet, “The Radical Bean Counter.”

⁶⁶ Ross, “Op-Ed: Power to the Prime Minister.”

As the U.S. brought down Saddam Hussein, it seemed its power was being similarly deployed to generate major changes in Palestinian politics. Even the selection of Abu Mazen came about as a result of international pressure. At first, Arafat wanted to give the job to Munib al-Masri but eventually buckled to foreign advice that the job should go to the more globally recognized Abbas.⁶⁷

However, Abbas ultimately failed, and part of the reason was lack of support from the Americans and Israelis. The difference in success between Abu Mazen and Fayyad was striking. Dennis Ross predicted in March of 2003 that “Abbas must be able to demonstrate that his cabinet will act notwithstanding Arafat’s wishes. To date, Salam Fayyad... has demonstrated that this is possible in an area where the international community requires transparency and accountability. Fayyad may well be the model, but even in his case Israeli release of revenue made it far easier for him to do his job. Obviously, the Israelis can affect the environment in which Abbas and his new cabinet will operate”.⁶⁸

Israel continued targeted killings in the territories, expanded a wall snaking through the West Bank, and never carried out promises to remove roadblocks or illegal outposts. Nor did Sharon agree to hold back on settlement construction. The Americans never did enough to urge the Israelis on this count.

Indeed, the Israelis never had much confidence in Abbas, making them reluctant to grant concessions for the purpose of building him up politically.⁶⁹ The

⁶⁷ Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 248.

⁶⁸ Ross, “Op-Ed: Power to the Prime Minister.”

⁶⁹ Herzog, “Interview with the Author”; Giora Eiland, “Interview with the Author”, June 30, 2011.

IDF chief of staff earned the ire of Sharon's team when he told the press a month after Abbas's resignation that the Sharon government had helped produce that outcome by not making major concessions to reinforce his authority.⁷⁰ Rather than prisoner releases being done in a way that would have worked to Abu Mazen's credit, they provoked outrage among the Palestinian public. Abu Mazen cancelled a meeting with Sharon in protest, and his minister for prisoner affairs attacked the them as something that "means nothing to us" and proof that Israel's intentions were "to destroy the government, to destroy Abu Mazen personally".⁷¹

Abu Mazen also came away from his first visit to Washington extremely disappointed; by then, his public standing had fallen, and he hoped for something more than token financial aid.⁷² Whereas two-thirds of Palestinians had supported his initial appointment and a majority felt at the time that he would produce results on reform, quality of life, and peace negotiations, pollsters found that confidence in his ability to deliver had already dropped off considerably.⁷³ When he went to the PLC to submit his resignation in September, he was shoved by angry protesters, who assailed his failure to stop settlements, get meaningful prisoners released, and fight the route of the Israeli barrier.⁷⁴ Upon submitting his resignation, he blamed America, along with Israel and Arafat, decrying that "the Americans talk day and night of offering us assistance... but nothing comes".⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Enderlin, *The Lost Years*, 217.

⁷¹ Lavie, "Israel to Release 69 Palestinian Prisoners: Palestinians Dismiss Move as Inadequate"; James Bennet, "Abbas Cancels Meeting With Sharon Over Prisoner Issue," *New York Times*, August 6, 2003.

⁷² Shikaki, "Interview with the Author"; Buttu, "Interview with the Author."

⁷³ "Analysis: Palestinian Viewpoint to the Middle East Peace Process," *NPR: Talk of the Nation* (National Public Radio (NPR)), July 30, 2003).

⁷⁴ Abbas, quoted in Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 278.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Enderlin, *The Lost Years*, 205.

In his final speech as prime minister to the PLC, Abu Mazen reviewed his government's successes and failures vis-à-vis the United States:

"As you know, I paid an important visit to Washington and held a series of meetings with President Bush and with the leaders of the U.S. administration, the Congress, and U.S. society. The visit resulted in the following:

First, renewal of the U.S. pledge to work for the establishment of the Palestinian state by 2005 and the termination of the 1967 occupation.

Explicit U.S. rejection of the racial wall and an explicit call for the dismantling of the settlement outposts and freezing of settlement activity.

A call coinciding with direct efforts to remove the roadblocks, lift the siege and release the prisoners.

Arranging for a bilateral economic relationship. This included for the first time direct financial aid to the PNA...

But regrettably, the U.S. administration did not exert much efforts to make Israel stop its provocations during the period of calm, which resulted from the truce agreement, and to implement its commitments as stipulated by the road map in order to advance the peace process".⁷⁶

Nor were his complaints just for public consumption. According to former Abbas aide Diana Buttu, his resignation was indeed shaped by disappointment in his backing from the U.S.: "in part it was [because] he felt that the Americans were not entirely supporting him – this he told me directly".⁷⁷ Later, Abbas reflected that "the Americans were giving me a bear hug, but their words were hollow. The Israelis conceded nothing. My people were turning against me".⁷⁸

Khalil Shikaki had predicted that these Road Map-relevant issues would be especially important for Abbas's standing: "the more Bush presses Sharon, the more that strengthens Abu Mazen... in the end, the Americans will decide which way the

⁷⁶ Mahmoud Abbas, "Text of Palestinian Prime Minister's Speech to Parliament," *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Translated from September 4th edition of Al-Jazeera TV, September 4, 2003). Emphases added.

⁷⁷ Buttu, "Interview with the Author."

⁷⁸ Norma Percy, *Israel and the Arabs: Elusive Peace* (BBC, 2005).

power shifts. Abu Mazen is entirely a product of the road map. If the Americans don't deliver on this, Abu Mazen is gone – finished".⁷⁹ He reflects that the reason the American effort failed was that the U.S. and Israel both never put in the sort of investment on politically difficult issues that would have been required to really empower Abbas. He feels success would have required the U.S. to invest a lot more money and to persuade the Israelis to make major changes on the ground.⁸⁰

Yet the U.S. appointed an envoy for supervising progress on the Road Map, John Wolf, who had little Mideast experience and claims he was selected for that very reason.⁸¹ Miller argues that, in spite of Aqaba and Sharm, "no *serious* American diplomacy followed the president's speech or the road map for the remainder of the president's first term".⁸² Although the claim is a bit overwrought, it highlights the fact that the U.S. was not closely engaged enough to ensure Abu Mazen's survival. Former U.S. peace envoy Anthony Zinni argues that "we missed an opportunity with Abu Mazen... there should have been more done to empower him".⁸³

When asked if the U.S. ever made gestures toward Abu Mazen that were intended to build him up, Abu Alaa reflected that "the gestures were not the sort that would help".⁸⁴ Former Abbas advisor Ghaith al-Omari reflected that "the U.S. hug is negative in the region, but it's not a killer. It all depends on whether it comes with real and visible benefits... there was an American bear hug for Abu Mazen. I

⁷⁹ Quoted in Chris McGreal, "Middle East Summit: Peace Hopes Lie Heavy on New Force," *The Guardian (UK)*, June 3, 2003.

⁸⁰ Shikaki, "Interview with the Author."

⁸¹ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 353.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 352. Emphases added.

⁸³ Quoted in Daniel C. Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle: America's Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace in the Post-Cold War Era [forthcoming]* (US Institute of Peace & Cornell University Presses, 2012), 319.

⁸⁴ Ahmed Qurie (aka Abu Alaa), "Interview with the Author", June 27, 2011.

think it would have worked though if it came with deliverables... we asked them to pay us in Israeli currency”.⁸⁵

Of course, there is more than enough blame to go around in this episode. Abu Mazen also blamed Arafat for blocking his reform attempts at every turn, and terrorist groups deserve due criticism for their role in ongoing attacks against Israeli civilians. And despite U.S. pressure and PA obligations under the Road Map, Abbas never actually initiated major military operations against Hamas or the other terrorist movements conducting attacks against Israeli civilians.

Abbas instead insisted on incorporating these groups through a formal cease fire, by showing progress on the ground, and through eventual political integration rather than waging a civil war against them or going door to door demanding weapons. Yet even after Hamas abandoned the *hudna* and the PA severed relations with these groups, Abbas’s government did not carry out its promises to apprehend those who had perpetrated the Jerusalem bombing.⁸⁶

Ahron Bregman cites an interview in which John Wolf describes working with Abbas’s new security chief, Mohammed Dahlan, after the attack and being extremely disappointed with results on the ground. He says Wolf explained to Dahlan that:

“History is about to stop, in terms of the roadmap, if you don’t act.’ Wolf added, ‘do something, take out a factory, make some arrests. We need to see progress, pragmatic steps, and very fast.’ They worked out a package of measures which Dahlan agreed to take. ‘I’ll do it, I’ll do it,’ Dahlan said. ‘I’ll start tonight’... Wolf recalls how ‘all night on the one hand I was getting calls from Palestinians saying ‘our guys are on the move,’ and I was getting calls from the Israelis saying ‘nothing is

⁸⁵ Ghaith al-Omari, “Interview with the Author”, February 2011.

⁸⁶ Chris Otton, “Palestinians Vow to Catch Bombers as Israel Freezes Contacts,” *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, August 20, 2003.

happening, we are watching and there is nobody moving.’ The light of morning brought American and Israeli intelligence reports saying that very little had been done by Dahlan’s security forces... He did, as Wolf remembers, ‘move against a couple of tunnels... and he poured some concrete down a few holes, and that was it’.⁸⁷

On the other hand, Dennis Ross told the Council on Foreign Relations a few months later that “after the August 19 bus bombing in Israel... [Abu Mazen] put together a plan to go after Hamas and Islamic Jihad” but “Arafat blocked that”.⁸⁸ Either way, the new government under Abbas was unable to meaningfully deliver on security issues during a critical moment in the process. Thus, although Wolf did subsequently tell the PLC speaker that Washington would not let Abbas’s government fall, this episode may help explain why Washington was reluctant to go to bat for Abu Mazen in the final count that September.

Marwan Muasher confirms this perspective, suggesting that Washington “was starting to blame Abbas... feeling he was either unable or unwilling to firmly act on security issues. Burns informed me in August that Abbas was starting to lose the president’s support and added that Palestinian [security] pledges to the Bush administration... had not been kept”.⁸⁹ Afterwards, Bush suggested that Abbas had not been assertive enough against Arafat and at fighting terrorism, and he told King Hussein that “he bet on Abbas and lost the bet”.⁹⁰

On the other hand, Robert Danin, who was working Mideast issues at the NSC at the time, feels that the August attacks simply drove home for the administration

⁸⁷ Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 274–275.

⁸⁸ Dennis B. Ross, “Ross: Prospects for Israeli-Palestinian Peace Bleak, Arafat to Blame for Much of the Problem,” interview by Bernard Gwertzman, Council on Foreign Relations website, October 20, 2003.

⁸⁹ Muasher, *The Arab Center*, 194.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 195–196.

how unsustainable the negotiations process launched at Aqaba was likely to be:

“basically, what happened was that it was a short honeymoon in which we had Sharm, we had Aqaba, we try to get a process going, and you had a massive terrorist attack, I believe on August 19th, that just sort of destroyed all momentum, and we then kind of went into this period in August and September in which it all unraveled... it was not that Abbas was blamed at all. I think he was seen as a partner and a very positive figure, an admirable one, but the structural factors were seen as too great to overcome, and a big part of that being Arafat”.⁹¹

Thus, when the violence returned, the administration decided realities on the ground might preclude the success of the process launched at Aqaba. Others believe that this may have lessened the support that the U.S. was extending to Abu Mazen.⁹²

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

The four theories pose divergent predictions about expected LSI behavior across a range of observable implications. One such category is perceptions of sender interests – along with how those perceived interests shape variation in occurrence. Theory #1 (national interests theory) anticipates that LSI should occur directly in accordance with unitary objective interests of the sender state. Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) expects LSI not to occur on the Palestine dyad because the pro-Israel community tends to believe that Palestinian moderates are not moderate enough. Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) holds that LSI should occur on the Palestine dyad because working-level officials tend to attach great importance to factional differences in Palestinian politics. Theory #4

⁹¹ Robert Danin, “Interview with the Author”, June 26, 2012.

⁹² Shikaki, “Interview with the Author.”

(leadership theory) expects LSI occurrence to vary according to the subjective beliefs about national interests that are held by top officials in the sender state.

The data in this area tend to provide the most support for Theory #4 over its competitors that focus more on structural forces than on the agency of top individuals. One way in which the data seem to support this conclusion has to do with the matter of counterpart assessments. Individuals' beliefs about their Palestinian counterparts seemed to matter a lot for variation in LSI occurrence. Rice recalls that Fayyad "impressed us all with his determination to do things right," whereas, "when the cautious Abbas tried to carry out reforms... he almost always backed off or simply postponed actions".⁹³ Fayyad "needed our help," but Abbas was expected to deliver before serious benefits would be forthcoming.⁹⁴

Administration principals had strong rapport with Fayyad, trusting him to perform, and Bush's longhorns connection with Fayyad seemed to cement that strong belief. Fayyad recalls that during a meeting with Rice at the NSC in May of 2003, she unexpectedly took him into the Oval Office: "the phone rings and Condi says to me, 'you and I need to go somewhere alone.' She takes me by the hand and sits me down on a sofa in another room. Suddenly, I realize I'm in the Oval Office, and there is George W. Bush, pacing around, and he makes the Texas Longhorns sign at me, and I make it back".⁹⁵ Barak Ravid writes that in subsequent years Fayyad's "ties with President George W. Bush... flourished. Whenever they met, the two made sure they would have at least a quarter of an hour to reminisce about... the

⁹³ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 218–219.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 220; Shikaki, "Interview with the Author."

⁹⁵ Quoted in Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 250.

University of Texas and to get up to date about the latest developments in the American football league”.⁹⁶

Thus, Bush pursued divergent methods for bolstering these two favored Palestinian leaders. In both cases, he was pursuing LSI, but his personal rapport with Fayyad and his disinterest in providing the sort of backing Abbas really wanted – motivating the Israelis to transform quality of life in the territories – provided the basis for success in one case but failure in the other.

Similarly, George Bush’s beliefs about Arafat were crucial in changing his approach to the region in 2002. He writes in *Decision Points* that the Karine A episode that January helped shaped his view of Arafat dramatically: “Arafat sent a leader pleading his innocence... but we and the Israelis had evidence that disproved the Palestinian leader’s claim. Arafat had lied to me. I never trusted him again. In fact, I never spoke to him again. By the spring of 2002, I had concluded that peace would not be possible with Arafat in power”.⁹⁷

For example, Rice explains that, in advance of the speech, the question that was “most on [the president’s] mind was why the PA could not find decent leadership. He knew many Palestinians, mostly living in the United States, and they were entrepreneurial people. He just couldn’t understand why, even under occupation, the Palestinians had not ‘found their Nelson Mandela.’”⁹⁸ She says that he “had become deeply convinced that the question wasn’t whether to establish a Palestinian state; it was ‘What *kind* of Palestinian state?’ He wanted to put on the

⁹⁶ Ravid, “Salam Fayad: Everyone’s Favorite Palestinian.”

⁹⁷ Bush, *Decision Points*, 400–401.

⁹⁸ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 142–143.

agenda the right of the Palestinians to live in freedom both from Israel and from their own corrupt leaders”.⁹⁹

Rice strongly supported the president’s instincts, encouraging him to give the speech against the wishes of his main cabinet advisors. Powell, Rumsfeld, and all opposed the speech due to various elements in it that they opposed. Rice says Powell “was concerned that in a speech denouncing Arafat, the United States would be seen as trying to choose Palestinian leaders,” and Bush explains that “Colin was worried that calling for new Palestinian leadership would embarrass Arafat and reduce the chance for a negotiated settlement”.¹⁰⁰ Cheney and (to a lesser extent) Rumsfeld were worried that promising a Palestinian state at the end of the tunnel would come off as rewarding terrorism.

However, in a preview of the Iraq intelligence debacle – and in fitting with Theory #4 – the vice president’s beliefs were themselves based on erroneous and subjectively interpreted evidence. Cheney was convinced that Arafat was personally directing terrorism, even though the dossier on which he based these claims had been deemed inconclusive, even by the Israeli minister responsible for intelligence oversight at the time.¹⁰¹

On the other hand, the three theories that focus on objective structural factors fare rather poorly against the data in terms of perceptions of sender interests. As I explore in more detail below, the reaction to the speech from the diplomatic corps was extremely negative. There was no serious backing for the new

⁹⁹ Ibid., 143. Emphasis in original.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 144; Bush, *Decision Points*, 404. See also Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 349.

¹⁰¹ Enderlin, *The Lost Years*, 164; Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 226.

policy of writing off Arafat from the professional bureaucracy. Thus, Theory #3 is a poor match for the data.

Also, Theory #1 receives poor support from the data in this case. The idea of black-listing Arafat was opposed by both Powell and by allies in the region, suggesting that imposing such a policy was not an objectively self-evident U.S. interest. Whereas the president thought Arafat had to go, Powell felt the chairman was a reality in the region and that they needed to deal with him.¹⁰² Also, Rice recalls being told by the preternaturally calm Bill Burns, director of Near Eastern Affairs at the State Department, that the reaction in the Arab world was “pretty rough,” which she interpreted to mean “all hell was breaking loose”.¹⁰³ Even the president’s parents questioned his judgment regarding the 2002 Rose Garden speech.¹⁰⁴

Although the speech and new policy were motivated by a spike in violence on the ground,¹⁰⁵ the direction the administration decided to take in response to that violence was anything but predetermined. David Frum, one of Bush’s speechwriters, agrees: although “the pressures now gathering on Bush were intense... [as] the government of almost every American ally were clamoring for some kind of pressure on Israel,” he says that “Bush bluntly refused to rescue Arafat from defeat... [since] Arafat was a liar, a thief, a killer, and a protector of killers”.¹⁰⁶

Nor does Bush’s behavior seem to be the result of pressure from the pro-Israel community. Rice insists that the motivation for the speech came from the

¹⁰² Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 226.

¹⁰³ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 145.

¹⁰⁴ Bush, *Decision Points*, 404.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ David Frum, *The Right Man: An Inside Account of the Bush White House* (Random House, 2003), 258.

principals' views of realities in the region, even though she acknowledges that they had a "love fest" with the Jewish community after the new policy was announced.¹⁰⁷

Frum also argues that Bush's perception of Arafat was more consequential than the organized pro-Israel lobby. Although he may want to keep Evangelical conservatives happy, Frum asks "why did Bush take the stance he did? Not – as the European press insinuated – because of the 'Jewish lobby'. That lobby exists, but what did Bush care for it? He would not need Jewish votes in 2004, and he certainly would not need Jewish political donations. As a challenger in 2000, Bush had raised nearly \$200 million; as an incumbent, he needed only to raise a finger and the skies would shower gold wherever he directed".¹⁰⁸ Instead, the reason for Bush's speech was that "the Karine A incident finished off Arafat in Bush's eyes".¹⁰⁹

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

Another area in which the theories diverge pertains to the matter how perceptions of close contests in the target polity affect variation in LSI occurrence. National interests theory (Theory #1) holds that LSI should occur in direct relation to likely opportunities in the target, whereas the agency-based approach (Theory #4) anticipates that LSI occurrence is more likely to vary in accordance to the subjective beliefs that leaders in the sender state hold about contests in the target. In this regard, the data seems to provide mixed evidence. Although there is some support for Theory #1, more evidence seems to support Theory #4, reflecting the

¹⁰⁷ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 145.

¹⁰⁸ Frum, *The Right Man*, 259.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 256.

Bush team's aspirations for the future more than the objective realities they confronted on the ground.

On one hand, the division within the American team seems to fit the leadership-based approach. Powell's belief that Arafat was a reality the U.S. would have to confront contrasts with Bush's belief that the chairman simply would have to go. On the other hand, the administration's calls for Arafat's ouster were not timed in a vacuum. Arafat's popularity had fallen to 35%, compared to as high as 75% in 1996 at the height of the Oslo process.¹¹⁰

Rice explains that in advance of the president's Rose Garden speech, "the Palestinian Authority had launched a hundred-day reform plan for governance, but we had little confidence that it would actually implement it".¹¹¹ Thus, they felt that American pressure was needed to make a difference, but she does not seem to have been impressed by existing efforts toward PA reform.

Bush and Rice believed Salam Fayyad would be a strong choice for PA finance minister, but he had absolutely no political base within the territories. Even years later, the party he would found to run in the 2006 PLC elections would take only two seats. In this regard, the Bush administration leaders were stretching the constraints of structure more than they were obeying them.

Then, when Washington chose to push for the creation of a prime minister slot at the PA, its sense of timing and opportunity on the ground was shaped by factors specific to Theory #4. In particular, U.S. leaders allowed the effort to linger

¹¹⁰ John Kifner, "As Arafat Critics Close In, Deputies Vie in the Wings," *New York Times*, May 21, 2002; Khalil Shikaki, "Op-Ed: How to Reform Palestinian Politics," *New York Times*, July 9, 2002.

¹¹¹ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 142.

while they dealt with other distractions, particularly, high-level preparations to go to war with Iraq and their decision to postpone release of the Road Map until after Sharon had won his impending election in Israel.¹¹²

Then, the Bush team imposed demands of Abbas that may not have been entirely realistic given the extremely difficult security and political environment he was facing. For instance, demanding that he dismantle terrorist groups entirely was beyond both his comfort level and what Chairman Arafat would accept. Nor was pushing for Arafat's total isolation a particularly realistic formula for success. Also, it is possible that the Bush team was taken by surprise by Abu Mazen's sudden resignation, suggesting that the two sides were not communicating very effectively.

Either way, the Bush team took a number of steps that suggested its approach to leadership selection intervention was shaped more by an idealistic understanding of Palestinian politics than a cold-eyed assessment of possibilities on the ground. Its behavior provides some evidence for national interests theory but more support for leadership theory.

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

Another area in which the theories diverge has to do with the patterns of domestic deliberation leading up to the pursuit of LSI in Palestinian politics. If domestic structural forces such as Congress, lobbyists, or bureaucrats are both informed about administration plans for LSI and influential in shaping those plans, then that would provide strong evidence for Theories 2 or 3. However, if those

¹¹² For the Iraq focus at the time, see Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 350; John Ward Anderson, "U.S.-backed Reforms for Palestinians Moved to Back Burner," *Washington Post*, January 19, 2003.

forces are left in the dark and their preferences ignored, that would support the leadership-based approach.

In this regard, the data seems to provide stronger backing for Theory #4 than the theories more oriented toward domestic structural forces. In advance of the Rose Garden speech, there was extensive, almost painstaking consultation throughout the executive branch, but the State Department had little actual influence on the content of the new policy, which was mainly driven by the White House. Aaron Miller, who was working at Foggy Bottom at the time, explains that “the president’s June 24 address was a White House show with a determined but largely unsuccessful effort at State to shape it... [the speech was] driven largely by Condi Rice”.¹¹³ Nor were domestic actors outside of the White House particularly involved in the effort to get Salam Fayyad appointed as the PA finance minister. The State Department – and Powell, for that matter – were overruled when the administration first decided to postpone the Road Map in December of 2002, which it later extended to force Arafat to appoint Abu Mazen.¹¹⁴

The most visible Congressional posture came about as a result of administration efforts to get a prime minister position created and to empower Abbas once he served in that office. Yet the pro-Israel lobby and the Hill were both playing catch-up with administration efforts, not playing a major role in shaping them. When the Road Map was about to be released, with Palestinian observers seeing Abbas’s survival tied up in document’s implementation, AIPAC got hefty supermajorities of Congress to sign a letter urging the president that the PA should

¹¹³ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 347.

¹¹⁴ DeYoung, *Soldier*, 425.

be expected to take the first steps before any concessions be asked of Israel.¹¹⁵

Then, when the administration published the document, the executive director of the Conference of Presidents, probably the second most powerful group in the pro-Israel community, told the press that “we want to see a process begin that has a real chance to succeed. We think the principles enunciated by the president in his June 24 speech would do that, and there are elements in the road map that contradict that”.¹¹⁶ Yet the administration continued to push the Road Map plan. It did so half-heartedly, but the reason probably had more to do with Bush’s own disinterest in the document and lack of commitment to sustaining progress on its requirements.¹¹⁷

Similarly, when it came to building up Abbas in office, Congress was forced to play catch-up with the administration’s preferences, not the other way around. When the Israelis tried to assassinate Hamas leader Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi just days after Aqaba, Bush condemned the strike, saying it would not bolster Israel’s security out of concern that it would undermine Abbas. Unsurprisingly, his administration was condemned by members of Congress, who suggested that his statement might lead his critics “to think of the word hypocrisy”.¹¹⁸

A few days later, Congressional staffers on both sides of the aisle predicted a tough legislative fight if Bush tried to send direct aid to the Palestinian Authority in support of the new reformist government there. One staffer explained the sense on

¹¹⁵ Adam Entous, “U.S. Presses for Quick Deal on Palestinian Cabinet,” *Reuters News*, April 22, 2003.

¹¹⁶ Alan Cooperman, “Jewish Leaders Back ‘Road Map’; Bush Plan Called Opportunity for Israel to Live in Peace,” *Washington Post*, April 30, 2003.

¹¹⁷ Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 245; Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 351–352; Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 319.

¹¹⁸ Steven R. Weisman and James Dao, “Bush Under Fire in Congress for Criticizing Israel,” *New York Times*, June 12, 2003.

the Hill, which was that the Palestinians “just don’t deserve it yet”.¹¹⁹ However, when Abbas came to Washington the following month, he got the aid. In this instance, legislators were not left in the dark – administration officials briefed the Hill in advance of waiving restrictions on the funds – but the administration got its way and was not moved by Congressional reluctance. In the end, administration consultations handily ensured that “there would be little opposition among Israel’s traditional supporters in Congress and among Jewish groups”.¹²⁰ Thus, although domestic structural forces were by no means powerless during this period, they were not decisive actors during the deliberative process leading up to LSI.

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

The political calendar in the sender state also offers an opportunity to distinguish between the causal weight of the various theories. Theory #2 expects that lobbyists and legislators should be extraordinarily preponderant during periods of divided government or in the run-up to elections in the sender state. Theory #3 expects that bureaucrats should be particularly influential over LSI behavior during the first year of presidential terms in office.

Neither theory does especially well relative to the data in these episodes. Although working-level officials at State tend to support LSI in favor of Palestinian moderates, there was no major LSI during Bush’s first year in office. Instead, his Rose Garden speech came the following year. Nor did impending midterm elections

¹¹⁹ “Bush May Face Fight over Palestinian Funding,” *Reuters News*, June 17, 2003.

¹²⁰ Kessler, “U.S. Plans to Provide Direct Aid to Palestinians: Policy Shift Aims to Bolster Abbas and Counter Hamas.”

dissuade Bush from carrying out LSI. In fact, members of Congress were generally more supportive of his Rose Garden speech than the subsequent Road Map because the former laid out an ultimatum against perceived Palestinian hardliners, whereas the latter actually sketched out a role for moderates as well. Yet they were generally not influential leading up to the Rose Garden speech. Nor was Congress engaged in the Fayyad issue at all. And when the U.S. declined to come to Abbas's rescue, in late 2003, it had little to do with the American election calendar.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

Another area where the theories diverge pertains to bureaucratic freelancing. Efforts by working-level officials to conduct LSI against the express wishes of their bosses would provide strong evidence for Theory #3. On the other hand, evidence for Theory #4 would include if such freelancing were rare or at least subject to the president first having a lax styles of management and issue oversight. In this regard, the data seems to provide stronger evidence for Theory #4.

Overall, freelancing was quite rare. The Rose Garden speech was not reflective of bureaucratic preferences. In fact, Rice recalls that the new policy was strongly opposed by these actors: "the Arabists in the State Department were appalled... [and] one diplomat who was serving in the Middle East [even] told a reporter at a cocktail party that he could no longer do his job thanks to 'that speech'.¹²¹ As described above, Miller attributed the policy to the White House, not Foggy Bottom.

¹²¹ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 145.

Rice was actively involved in helping get Salam Fayyad empowered, causing Barak Ravid to call her Fayyad's patron.¹²² Reportedly, she persuaded him to pursue his job at the finance ministry, she encouraged the Israelis to release the PA's tax revenues to him, and she championed his request for what eventually became the \$20 million in direct aid that he and Abbas were awarded in July of 2003. Nowhere was the permanent bureaucracy on these issues.

During this period, the closest thing to a leading bureaucratic role in American LSI was John Wolf's role as the administration's point person for implementation of the Road Map in the summer of 2003. However, he was fully authorized to perform this role. Bush delegated to him, and the principals left a vacuum that he apparently struggled to fill.

6. Consistency of Message:

One of the main determinants of efficacy seems to be whether or not the messaging implicit in LSI is conveyed in a consistent manner toward observers in the target polity. Theory #1 anticipates that this should be the case, but the other theories posit likely culprits for why this might not be the case. The data in this case seems to fit best with the leadership-based approach.

Bush's statements of enthusiasm for Abbas and token financial assistance did little to bolster his ability or inclination to move against terrorist groups on the ground. Nor did it persuade the Palestinian people that he had the ability to improve their quality of life, as they had initially hoped. In time, his popularity fell

¹²² Ravid, "Salam Fayad: Everyone's Favorite Palestinian."

as a reflection of this growing disillusionment with what he would achieve. The Bush team was extremely consistent in its language about Abbas, but its actions were not consistent with its language.

Qadura Fares, a key Fatah legislator at the time, explained on the eve of the prime minister's resignation that "instead of keep calling Abu Mazen a good man, the Americans should get the roadblocks removed. Then they could call him a bad man, and at least he would be popular... They have not put any pressure on the Israelis to change the policy on the ground to improve daily life for the Palestinians. The U.S. hasn't realized how important this is to Abu Mazen".¹²³

Similarly, a reformist minister in Abu Mazen's government, Ghassan Khatib, explained that "Abu Mazen gave the impression that he was giving hope to the public and... bringing the ceasefire and reforms that the other side would be delivering. Unfortunately, that is not happening".¹²⁴

Ali Jarbawi, a plugged in political scientist at Bir Zeit University near Ramallah who later became a PA minister, explained to the press that "we are witnessing now a return of Arafat to the centre... it's clear that the failure of the roadmap and... the fact that we are back to square one shows that the argument that is the one to blame was not correct".¹²⁵

On the other hand, the administration was much more consistent in its efforts at blacklisting Arafat. Despite repeated European attempts to find a

¹²³ McGreal, "Day of Decision in Abbas Feud with Arafat: America and Britain Fight to Save Palestinian PM Facing Key Debate."

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Hisham Abdallah, "Arafat Steps Centre Stage as Showdown with Abbas Approaches," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, August 27, 2003.

workaround or to encourage Bush to retreat from his staunch position on the issue, the American administration refused to engage with the Palestinian president for the remainder of his days. Other a last-ditch appeal from Powell for Arafat to empower Abbas, the administration even avoided appealing to Arafat by name.¹²⁶

In both instances, the best explanation for U.S. messaging had to do with the beliefs of top principals. The isolation of Arafat stuck because Bush remained convinced that Arafat was beyond the pale, despite pressures from international allies. Similarly, Bush continued to feel positively toward Abbas, but his interest in eliciting real changes on the ground was not consistently applied. And Rice was interested to help but caught by surprise when she “learn[ed] valuable lessons about how frustrating it can be to get the Israelis to actually carry through on promises related to the Palestinians,” including on outposts and roadblocks.¹²⁷ Neither one seemed ready to push the Israelis for dramatic concessions beyond that.

7. Suitability of Message:

The last area in which the theories diverge has to do with whether or not the message projected by the sender state fits with the dynamics of domestic politics within the target polity. National interests theory expects that messaging should be suitably targeted, while leadership theory holds that, if messaging is going to be poorly calibrated, it should be due to subjective biases of leaders in the sender state. Theories 2 and 3 hold that domestic structural forces in the sender state might

¹²⁶ Steven R. Weisman, “U.S., in Shift, Asks Arafat for Help Powell Calls on Palestinian Leader to Use Forces on Militants,” *International Herald Tribune*, August 23, 2003.

¹²⁷ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 219.

interfere with the suitability of messaging due to institutional, rather than personal, biases.

There seems little escaping the fact that American LSI during this period was too direct. Calling for Arafat's ouster, even if Bush never technically said those exact words, was not a recipe for immediate success. Instead, the Rose Garden speech initially set up a dynamic by which the Palestinian public and elites were driven to rally around the flag. It is extremely difficult to explain why the American administration would take this unlikely step without recognizing the enormous impact that President Bush had in making this the policy of the United States.

A slightly more nuanced operator, Condoleezza Rice tried to maintain pretense with regard to Palestinian politics, but Bush's Rose Garden speech was not amenable to this sort of rhetorical flourish. Days after the speech, she tried to clarify the president's message in an interview with Wolf Blitzer, and the results are almost comical:

“Blitzer: The president wants a new Palestinian leadership. Who are the candidates, who are the alternatives to Yasser Arafat?”

Rice: The president is not trying to determine the character of the Palestinian leadership, its members. He's only laying out what we consider to be the facts...

Blitzer: Let's go through some other Palestinian leaders and get your feedback on what you think about them. There have been some names floated out there as possible alternatives to Yasser Arafat. And we'll put some of them on the screen.

- Abu Ala...
- Abu Mazen...
- Marwan Barghouti...
- Jibril Rajoub...
- Mohammed Dahlan...
- Sheik Ahmed Yassin....

Are any of those individuals acceptable to the United States?

Rice: We're not going to try to determine what the new leadership should be... we're

not going to try and choose leaders. That's what elections do. But the president was just putting forward a fact, which is that until there is a changed dynamic in the situation in the Middle East... it's not going to be possible to move forward.

Blitzer: Who are the other names that you're thinking of that are out there? Give us a couple of them.

Rice: Well, I – again, Wolf, I am not going to try and to promote particular people within the Palestinian leadership. That would be inappropriate”.¹²⁸

There was no way to spin Bush's statement in a way that did not raise the hackles of the Palestinian public. Jarbawi explained that after Bush's speech "his [Arafat's] opponents stand alongside him because they felt that defending him is defending the national dignity".¹²⁹ Another political observer based on Bethlehem complained that "if the Americans would not have interfered, there would have been a real chance".¹³⁰ In the words of an unemployed laborer quoted by the Associated Press, now "the people only want Arafat – Arafat or nobody".¹³¹ The policy of calling for Arafat's ouster was not a success. It did not remove him, it constrained U.S. negotiating strategy, and it boosted his popularity. Whereas Arafat's popularity was stuck at 35% in May before Bush's speech, the number of Palestinians who said they would vote for him in hypothetical elections was up to 60% by August.¹³²

However, Washington's corollary policy of insisting on a prime minister post being created before it would reengage with the PA was far more effective because it was better suited to the dynamics of Palestinian politics. That was a message that

¹²⁸ "Interview With Condoleezza Rice; Biden, Hagel Discuss U.S. Policy in Middle East; Thornburgh, Black Debate Pledge of Allegiance Ruling," *CNN: Late Edition* (Cable News Network (CNN), June 30, 2002).

¹²⁹ Susan Severeid, "Bush's Call Leads Palestinians, Even Arafat Detractors, to Defend Their Leader," *Associated Press*, July 7, 2002.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² "Sixty Percent of Palestinians Would Vote for Arafat: Poll," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, August 15, 2002.

could actually sell, since it did not force political elites to choose between national dignity and political reform. But expressing a desire for Arafat's removal was probably a sub-par way of getting bringing this about, precisely because of the misunderstanding it betrayed of Palestinian politics. This misreading was a direct consequence of Bush's particular beliefs about Palestinian affairs.

Another reason the American effort to marginalize Arafat failed probably has to do with the fact that the U.S. did not work hard enough to give the chairman a stake in his own disenfranchisement. There are echoes of the experiences of Baker and Shultz in this episode from the Bush era. Whereas Baker sought to get the PLO's buy-in for empowering local elites, partly at its own expense, Shultz devoted little attention to ensuring the PLO felt it had a role to play behind the scenes. Similarly, it seems Arafat's thinking was key in bringing about the initial success and eventual failure of the Abu Mazen premiership.

Arafat eventually accepted the idea of giving Abu Mazen the job because he was persuaded by his advisors that it was his only way to get the international community to reengage with the Palestinian Authority. He also believed that he would still retain an important leadership role. Thus, he even sent instructions the PLC to pass the new Basic Law to create the premier position.¹³³

However, Abu Mazen's initial successes inspired Arafat's jealousy, and he saw little role for himself in the new, emerging hierarchy, if Abu Mazen had his way. After Abu Mazen concluded a *hudna* with Islamist terror groups and was received in an international embrace at Sharm and Aqaba, Ziad Abu Amr and Nabil Sha'ath

¹³³ Buttu, "Interview with the Author"; Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 246, 248.

described the chairman's jealousy as quite palpable.¹³⁴ Arafat proceeded to undermine the new government and bring about its collapse; arguably, he might have been more amenable to cohabitation if he still felt that he had a role to play with Abbas as prime minister.

However, given Bush and Sharon's shared determination to write Arafat off entirely, there was little room for common ground. About a week after the August suicide bombing and a week before Abbas's resignation, Colin Powell broke with administration procedure to mention Arafat by name, "call[ing] on Chairman Arafat to work with Prime Minister Abbas and to make available to Prime Minister Abbas those security elements that are under his control".¹³⁵ Yet this message was too little, too late, and probably not backed more of widely within the administration. In order to explain why the line against Arafat left no room for a creative background role, the best explanation is probably President Bush himself. Thus, in this regard as well, the data seems to fit closest with Theory #4, the leadership-based approach.

Palestine, Case #4:

What Comes Next?, 2005-2006

With Yasser Arafat's death in November of 2004, an era had ended in Palestinian politics. After a brief period of political wrangling, Mahmoud Abbas was selected as the new head of the PLO and Fatah's candidate to succeed Arafat. His

¹³⁴ Quoted in Bregman, *Elusive Peace*, 251, 256.

¹³⁵ Weisman, "U.S., in Shift, Asks Arafat for Help Powell Calls on Palestinian Leader to Use Forces on Militants."

popularity jumped, almost overnight, from 3% to 40%.¹³⁶ Nomination by Fatah effectively made the result of the presidential elections in January 2005 a foregone conclusion.¹³⁷ Abbas was elected with 63% of the popular vote compared to 20% for his closest competitor.

However, despite his sweeping electoral victory, Abbas's personal political authority was still quite weak.¹³⁸ The Fatah organization and PA capacity had both been devastated during the recent intifada, and faction infighting proliferation with the passing of a unifying charismatic figurehead. Since Abbas was generally predisposed to governing by consensus rather than imposing his will or cracking heads, he sought to accumulate authority by soliciting outside political support and eventually reestablishing organizational unity through a new round of PLC elections.

In the first line of his 2005 State of the Union address, President Bush hailed Abbas's election, along with recent voting in Afghanistan, Ukraine, and Iraq, as an exciting sign that global freedom was on the march.¹³⁹ A week later, after Sharon and Abbas held a summit at Sharm el-Sheikh at which they pledged an end to violence on both sides, Rice welcomed the new developments as "the best chance for peace we are likely to see for years to come," promising to do her best to take advantage of that opportunity.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ "Analysis: Palestinian Voting Behavior," *NPR: Morning Edition* (National Public Radio (NPR), December 17, 2004).

¹³⁷ Ali Jarbawi and Wendy Pearlman, "Struggle in a Post-Charisma Transition: Rethinking Palestinian Politics After Arafat," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 36, no. 4 (6-21): 12.

¹³⁸ Graham Usher, "The Democratic Resistance: Hamas, Fatah, and the Palestinian Elections," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 35, no. 3 (20-36): 2006 Spring; Jarbawi and Pearlman, "Post-Charisma Transition"; Dennis Ross, *Statecraft: And How to Restore America's Standing in the World* (Macmillan, 2008), 265.

¹³⁹ The Public Papers of President George W. Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union" (The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara, February 2, 2005).

¹⁴⁰ "U.S. Warmly Welcomes Middle East Truce," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, February 8, 2005.

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

Yes, extensively. After his election as president, the United States devoted extensive efforts during 2005 to building up his authority as head of the PA. Then, when his party faced parliamentary elections in January of 2006, Washington took unprecedented efforts to burnish the image of the ruling party.

<Sub-Case 1: Backing President Abbas>

In the year 2005, Rice visited the region three times, and Bush welcomed Abbas to the White House twice. The United States made new pledges of support to the PA at a donor conference in December of 2004, just after Arafat's death.¹⁴¹ Of this money, \$20 million went directly to the Palestinian Authority but was restricted for the purpose of paying outstanding bills that the PA owed to an Israeli utility firm.¹⁴² In Bush's 2005 State of the Union, he pledged an additional \$350 for Palestinian development and stabilization.¹⁴³ Condoleezza Rice writes that President Bush also started urging Gulf states to "dramatically increase their aid" in response to Abbas's election.¹⁴⁴

The Americans also employed public rhetoric in these early days in support

¹⁴¹ "Donors Voice Support for New Palestinian Leadership," *Associated Press*, December 8, 2004; "U.S. to Give \$23.5 Million for Palestinians," *New York Times*, December 9, 2004.

¹⁴² Glenn Kessler, "Direct Aid to Palestinians Considered: Creation of a New State a Likely Topic as Abbas Visits Bush," *Washington Post*, n.d., sec. 2005 May 26.

¹⁴³ The Public Papers of President George W. Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union."

¹⁴⁴ Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (Random House, 2011), 332.

of Abbas's leadership. In addition to Bush's State of the Union remarks, Rice urged Israel to make "hard choices" for peace in advance of Sharon's February summit with Abbas at Sharm el-Sheikh.¹⁴⁵ At the summit, Sharon promised confidence-building measures such as eventually transferring more security authority to the Palestinians and setting up a committee to discuss prisoner releases.¹⁴⁶ Later that month, Bush called for an eventual Palestinian state to be "viable," and soon afterward the Quartet expressed its support as well for a Palestinian state that would be "truly viable".¹⁴⁷

Abbas was received at the White House in May of that year. News services reported that Palestinian officials "have sought a clear signal of support for Abbas from the president during the visit," including direct aid and a letter like the one Sharon received in 2004, laying out U.S. guarantees about the content of a possible final status agreement between the parties.¹⁴⁸ Bush granted the request for aid but not the letter, announcing a \$50 million financial package that would mark the first time the United States would provide budgetary support to the Palestinian Authority without earmarking the funds for specific projects. However, as a partial sop to the request for a letter on final status issues, the president did comment that Israel should not "prejudice final-status negotiations with regard to Gaza, the West

¹⁴⁵ "Rice Urges Israel to Take Hard Decisions for Peace Ahead of Summit," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, February 6, 2005.

¹⁴⁶ "Full Text of Sharon Declaration: The Full Text of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Declaration of a Ceasefire with the Palestinians at the Sharm al-Sheikh Summit," *BBC News*, February 8, 2005.

¹⁴⁷ "Rice, Quartet Members Call for 'Truly Viable' Palestinian State: Secretary Asks International Community to Help Build Palestinian Institutions," *State Department Press Releases And Documents*, March 1, 2005; Kessler, "Direct Aid to Palestinians Considered: Creation of a New State a Likely Topic as Abbas Visits Bush."

¹⁴⁸ Kessler, "Direct Aid to Palestinians Considered: Creation of a New State a Likely Topic as Abbas Visits Bush"; Glenn Kessler, *The Confidante: Condoleezza Rice and the Creation of the Bush Legacy* (Macmillan, 2007), 130.

Bank, and Jerusalem” and that “changes to the 1949 armistice lines must be mutually agreed to”.¹⁴⁹ Bush also praised Abbas, calling him a “man of courage” and promising that:

“we will stand with you, Mr. President, as you combat corruption, reform the Palestinian security services and your justice system, and revive your economy... Mr. President, you have made a new start on a difficult journey, requiring courage and leadership each day – and we will take that journey together”.¹⁵⁰

In advance of Sharon’s plan for disengagement from Gaza and some areas of the West Bank in August of 2005, the United States did not, however, do much to strengthen Abbas. The administration was so concerned with helping Sharon get his way on disengagement from Gaza that it did little to ensure that the process was negotiated with or even properly coordinated with the Palestinian Authority.

In the end, the Israelis left Gaza three days earlier than the PA was expecting, and the result was a security vacuum that allowed Hamas thugs to vandalize the evacuated settlements and to proclaim that disengagement was their victory rather than the Palestinian Authority’s.¹⁵¹ Miller concludes the Bush administration “missed a chance” for the U.S. to “build on Sharon’s Gaza disengagement strategy and see how it could be used to strengthen Abu Mazen (and not, as it turned out, Hamas). Again, we didn’t try that hard. A senior administration official intimately

¹⁴⁹ Mark Perry, “Judging Abbas,” *Palestine Report* 12, no. 2 (June 29, 2005); Peter Baker and Glenn Kessler, “Bush Offers Palestinians Aid: Visiting Leader Abbas Is Praised as ‘a Man of Courage’,” *Washington Post*, May 27, 2005.

¹⁵⁰ Baker and Kessler, “Bush Offers Palestinians Aid: Visiting Leader Abbas Is Praised as ‘a Man of Courage’.”

¹⁵¹ King Abdullah II, *Our Last Best Chance: The Pursuit of Peace in a Time of Peril* (Penguin Books, 2011), 272; Charles Enderlin, *The Lost Years: Radical Islam, Intifada, and Wars in the Middle East 2001-2006*, trans. Suzanne Verderber (Other Press, LLC, 2007), 264–265.

involved in policy matters concedes it was a 'blown opportunity'.¹⁵² Rice encouraged Sharon to coordinate with Abbas but apparently did not try very hard.¹⁵³

During Abu Mazen's second visit to the White House, white took place in October, his focus was on trying to decrease the sense of siege around Gaza post-disengagement and to diminish fears exacerbated by Israel's barrier and settlement construction that "Gaza first" would become "Gaza last".¹⁵⁴ He implicitly warned that Israeli policies was undermining his camp, even in the lead-up to PA elections. He argued "Israel's lack of regard for the Road Map," especially vis-à-vis movement issues was:

"having a powerfully negative effect on Palestinian society at an extremely critical time in our democratic development. There is a struggle underway for the hearts and minds of the Palestinian people between the moderates and the fundamentalists. I firmly believe that this struggle should be resolve to the advantage of the moderates via the democratic process".¹⁵⁵

Bush responded at their joint news conference that "it's important that we make quick progress on the issues that [Quartet envoy] Jim [Wolfensohn] has identified as most critical for the Palestinian economy, including opening [Gaza's] Rafah crossing, connecting the West Bank and Gaza, improving the ability of Palestinians to travel in the West Bank, and beginning work on the Gaza seaport" and urged Israel to remove unauthorized outposts, stop settlement expansion, and ensure that the security

¹⁵² Aaron David Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace* (Bantam Books, 2008), 354–355.

¹⁵³ Kessler, *The Confidante*, 127–128; Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 333.

¹⁵⁴ Mahmoud Abbas, "Is the 'Road Map' At a Dead End?," *Wall Street Journal*, October 20, 2005.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

barrier not be located in a way that takes on political undertones.¹⁵⁶ He also expressed effusive praise for Abbas, proclaiming that:

“It’s my honor to welcome the democratically elected leader of the Palestinian Authority to the White House for the second time this year... President Abbas is a man devoted to peace and to his people’s aspirations... The president’s got an assignment and a job and that’s to establish trust with the Palestinian people... [and using security forces to make sure that armed gangs don’t disrupt the democratic process... and our job is to help him do that”.¹⁵⁷

A few weeks later, Secretary Rice stopped into Jerusalem and refused to leave the region until the two sides worked out a compromise agreement on traffic in and out of Gaza.¹⁵⁸ The parties eventually reached a deal and signed an Agreement on Movement and Access that entailed both immediate steps and freedom of movement and objectives for the longer term. Some seem to think her efforts on the AMA may have been implicitly aimed at affecting the upcoming PA elections.¹⁵⁹

<Sub-Case 2: Through the PLC Elections>

Although Mahmoud Abbas was technically not running in the scheduled PLC elections, his party certainly was, and he needed the vote in order to consolidate his political power. He envisioned the vote as an opportunity to contain Hamas by giving it an avenue for political participation in exchange for an ongoing suspension of its military operations. He did not expect them to actually threaten the PLO’s control over the Authority. Also, he used the elections as an effort to reverse the fragmentation within Fatah itself. His strategy was to use the elections to bolster

¹⁵⁶ “Text of Bush-Abbas News Conference,” *Associated Press*, October 20, 2005.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 408–410.

¹⁵⁹ Daniel C. Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle: America’s Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace in the Post-Cold War Era [forthcoming]* (US Institute of Peace & Cornell University Presses, 2012), 365.

the movement through public legitimation while forcing out his political opponents from seats in the PLC and official PLO organs.¹⁶⁰

These elections were originally scheduled to take place the previous July, but Mahmoud Abbas had cancelled them about a week after his first visit to the White House in 2005. Although the cancellation was primarily due to pressure he was receiving from election skeptics and his opponents within Fatah, Palestinian officials reportedly told the press that it was due to pressure from Washington.¹⁶¹ The U.S. administration mostly held its tongue, perhaps out of respect for Abbas.

There was some consideration within the United States of demanding that Hamas be forbidden from running in the elections before it disarmed.¹⁶² However, Abbas tapped into Bush and Rice's desire to support his program and the president's second term undertaking of promoting democratization around the world, persuading them that in order to bolster his standing the elections needed to be seen as genuine; thus, Hamas should not be excluded on these grounds.¹⁶³ Rice got the backing of all other Quartet members for excluding Hamas on this bases but then was persuaded to back off by Mahmoud Abbas to ensure that the election was perceived as legitimate.¹⁶⁴

There is some speculation that the president's fixation on democratization may have driven to him to pressure Abbas into carrying through with the

¹⁶⁰ For more on Abbas's strategy regarding the PLC elections and factional competition, see Usher, "The Democratic Resistance"; Jarbawi and Pearlman, "Post-Charisma Transition."

¹⁶¹ Perry, "Judging Abbas"; Usher, "The Democratic Resistance," 25.

¹⁶² Steven R. Weisman, "U.S. Is Pressing Palestinians To Bar Extremist Candidates," *New York Times*, n.d., sec. 2005 October 19.

¹⁶³ Kessler, *The Confidante*, 135.

¹⁶⁴ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 415.

elections.¹⁶⁵ Martin Indyk argues that:

“Abu Mazen considered a further postponement. Sharon was willing to cooperate in this effort to deny Hamas a victory at the ballot box. They reached an understanding that Sharon would ban Hamas candidates from running in East Jerusalem and Abu Mazen would then declare that the elections could not proceed. Sharon was ready to do his part, provided Bush did not criticize him for disrupting a democratic process. Israeli and Palestinian envoys were dispatched to Washington and returned with a very clear message: the president himself had decided that the elections should go ahead as planned”.¹⁶⁶

Indeed, some Palestinians who thought Fatah might lose had seized on Israeli reluctance to let Hamas on the ballot in East Jerusalem, which the Israelis directly administered, as a basis for possibly calling off the elections.¹⁶⁷ NSC staffer Elliott Abrams has confirmed that the United States received such a request.¹⁶⁸

Rice confirms that the United States actually did consider encouraging Abbas to postpone but that they ultimately decided not to. She explains that “Elliott said what we were all thinking. ‘Fatah isn’t going to be in better shape six months from now’.”¹⁶⁹ Her counselor, Philip Zelikow, insists they considered postponement but concluded that “if you postpone the elections you don’t solve the problem, and you completely delegitimize Fatah”.¹⁷⁰ Thus, in response to some feelers from Palestinian officials who wanted the vote to be cancelled, Abrams explains that Washington turned down the request, explaining that “your job is to win the election, go out and work, and get your people to the polls and win the damn

¹⁶⁵ James Traub, *The Freedom Agenda: Why America Must Spread Democracy (Just Not the Way George Bush Did)* (Macmillan, 2008), 135.

¹⁶⁶ Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East* (Simon and Schuster, 2009), 382–383.

¹⁶⁷ Mohammed Daraghme, “Palestinians Considering Postponing Parliamentary Election, Blaming Israeli Ban on Jerusalem Voting,” *Associated Press*, December 21, 2005.

¹⁶⁸ Herb Keinon, “Fatah Asked Sharon to Prevent Voting in J’lem in 2006,” *Jerusalem Post*, June 27, 2011.

¹⁶⁹ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 415.

¹⁷⁰ Quoted in Traub, *The Freedom Agenda*, 135.

election”.¹⁷¹ He says it helped that Abbas himself “was confident that he would win”.¹⁷² Bush’s spokesperson discouraged rumors based around the East Jerusalem voting dispute by making clear that he wanted the vote to proceed as planned.¹⁷³

The Bush administration then took some unusual steps to help bolster Abbas’s standing in advance of the vote. First, the United States sent a number of high-level media advisors over in order to help the PA frame its role in the aftermath of the disengagement from Gaza.¹⁷⁴ Secretary Rice explains she sent her senior communications advisor Jim Wilkinson to the PA before the vote “to advise Abbas on how to mount a vigorous defense of his leadership – even helping the PA to construct a proper press facility so that the still popular Abbas could communicate with his people”.¹⁷⁵ Her biographer claims that the project also involved creating a series of local PA media centers and cost a total of \$1.2 million in American funds.¹⁷⁶

Even more dramatic, the United States disbursed almost \$2 million, about twice Hamas’s estimated campaign budget, on last-minute USAID development projects that were intended to influence the outcome of the election. The story, revealed in a major exposé by the Washington Post just three days before the election, is absolutely stunning.¹⁷⁷

When the program was disclosed, American officials tried to maintain the

¹⁷¹ Quoted in Keinon, “Fatah Asked Sharon to Prevent Voting in J’lem in 2006.”

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Donald Macintyre, “Bush Pushes for Palestinian Poll Despite Row over Jerusalem Vote Hamas Uncertainty,” *The Independent (London)*, January 4, 2006.

¹⁷⁴ Diana Butt, “Interview with the Author”, November 11, 2010.

¹⁷⁵ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 418.

¹⁷⁶ Kessler, *The Confidante*, 135.

¹⁷⁷ Scott Wilson and Glenn Kessler, “U.S. Funds Enter Fray in Palestinian Elections; Bush Administration Uses USAID as Invisible Conduit,” *Washington Post*, January 22, 2006.

pretense that it was not an act of blatant political meddling. The USAID mission director for Gaza and the West Bank said that “we are not favoring any particular party... but we do not support parties that are on the terrorism list. We are here to support the democratic process,” despite the fact that clearly that meant the US was favoring one main political force against the other.¹⁷⁸ A spokesperson for the East Jerusalem consulate claimed the program was simply designed “to work with the Palestinian Authority to enhance democratic institutions and to support democratic actors, not just Fatah”.¹⁷⁹ The Palestinian Authority official responsible for directing the funds, a chief of staff in Abbas’s own office, claimed that “campaigning may come into this, but only marginally... it is not political campaigning, but campaigning for the Palestinian national cause, as Mahmoud Abbas sees it”.¹⁸⁰

However, the manner in which the program was designed and handled clearly contradicts these specious claims. The money was spent by a department at USAID called the Office of Transition initiatives, which focuses on providing aid in order to stabilize new democracies during political transition periods such as elections. A Congressional Research Service report on OTI from 2009 states on the very first page that:

“unlike its counterparts at USAID, its mission is neither humanitarian nor development-oriented. OTI’s activities are overtly political, based on the idea that in the midst of political crisis and stability abroad there are local agents of changes whose efforts, when supported by timely and creative U.S. assistance, can tip the balance toward peaceful and democratic outcomes that advance U.S. foreign policy

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Steven Erlanger, “U.S. Spent \$1.9 Million to Aid Fatah in Palestinian Elections,” *New York Times*, January 23, 2006.

¹⁸⁰ Wilson and Kessler, “U.S. Funds Enter Fray.”

objectives”¹⁸¹

Breaking with standard USAID procedure, most projects did not bear an American logo in order to ensure that credit accrued to the Palestinian Authority for the projects. The program was first contracted to a Washington firm that frequently partners with USAID, but then that group contracted it out to a company that had no experience with development assistance and had never before worked with USAID. The president of that firm, Amjad Atallah, said that he refused to be involved with the project until his partners agreed that it would be closely coordinated with an official in President Abbas’s office.¹⁸² What the *Washington Post* report did not disclose was that Atallah, a prominent think tank analyst, had also been a former negotiator for the Palestinian Authority and only recently had served as an advisor to Mahmoud Abbas.¹⁸³

A progress report discussing the program’s implementation strategy that was released to the *Washington Post* stated that the plan was to have “events running every day of the coming week, beginning 13 January, such that there is a constant stream of announcements... in the critical week before the elections”.¹⁸⁴ Newspapers in the territories bore up to three ads on the same page highlighting various projects connected with the American OTI program. A consultancy hired to run these ads explained “why so many ads at the same time?... because we are in a

¹⁸¹ Marian Leonardo Lawson, “USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives After 15 Years: Issues for Congress” (Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, Report Number 7-5700, May 27, 2009), 1.

¹⁸² Wilson and Kessler, “U.S. Funds Enter Fray.”

¹⁸³ Author’s personal knowledge.

¹⁸⁴ Wilson and Kessler, “U.S. Funds Enter Fray.”

very sensitive time, in the elections. That's why now".¹⁸⁵ A follow-up analysis by the *New York Times* also found that geographic considerations were also given to how the funds were allocated: "the government had done a detailed political analysis to try to focus on constituencies where Hamas was doing well" in distributing the aid.¹⁸⁶

Did the Policy Succeed?

No. Not only did Abbas's party go down in a crushing defeat to Hamas during the 2006 PLC elections, but it is not clear that American support really gave Abu Mazen much of a boost at all. Although mass support for suicide bombings dropped and the public backed his call for a *tahdiya*, whereby armed groups would suspend their attacks against Israel, a whopping 84% of the Palestinian public concluded that Gaza disengagement was a victory for armed resistance.¹⁸⁷ Fatah's appeal was also diminished by Abu Mazen's inability to deliver progress on the peace process or to root out corruption and provide law and order.¹⁸⁸ In many of the ways that mattered most to Abbas politically, the United States was not able to provide him support. Further, his requests that the U.S. turned down most likely would have been useful capacity- and confidence-building measures for the getting a meaningful peace process moving again. Thus, Washington's efforts failed in both the narrow

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Erlanger, "U.S. Spent \$1.9 Million to Aid Fatah in Palestinian Elections."

¹⁸⁷ "Palestinian Public Opinion Poll - PSR Survey Unit: Public Opinion Poll #17" (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, September 18, 2005).

¹⁸⁸ "On the Election Day for the Second Palestinian Parliament: A Crumpling Peace Process and a Greater Public Complaint of Corruption and Chaos Gave Hamas a Limited Advantage Over Fateh, but Fragmentation Within Fateh Turned That Advantage into an Overwhelming Victory - PSR Survey Research Unit: PSR's Exit Poll Results" (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, February 15, 2006).

and broader senses, failing to bolster Abbas and failing to advance the cause of peace.

<Sub-Case 1: Backing President Abbas>

Abu Mazen's first visit to the White House in 2005 seemed to put him in a positive state of mind. A consultant to the PA said that Abbas's advisors were "not only pleased but surprised at how [well] it went"¹⁸⁹ However, the support he received was actually of somewhat limited value. Daniel Kurtzer and Scott Lasensky explain that:

"the \$20 million promised during Abu Mazen's 2005 visit to Washington, [sic] had little effect on his standing. Other issues, such as prisoner releases, lifting travel restrictions, and settlement expansion, all of which Abu Mazen had identified as being of great importance, did not receive much U.S. attention, even though progress in these areas would have done much more to bolster the post-Arafat leadership".¹⁹⁰

The second visit was less satisfying, however. There were limited results in terms of deliverables, and the president made a gaffe during the visit that seemed to confirm the Palestinians' worst fears that a real political process addressing final status issues might not follow Israel's disengagement from Gaza. When pressed by a reporter about whether he still envisioned a Palestinian state within his presidency, Bush backtracked, stating that "I'd like to see two states. And if it happens before I get out of office, I'll be there to witness the ceremony. And if it doesn't, we will work hard to lay that foundation".¹⁹¹ Abbas was forced to do damage control, insisting

¹⁸⁹ Ed Abington, quoted in Baker and Kessler, "Bush Offers Palestinians Aid: Visiting Leader Abbas Is Praised as 'a Man of Courage'."

¹⁹⁰ Daniel Kurtzer and Scott Lasensky, *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: American Leadership in the Middle East* (US Institute of Peace Press, 2008), 68.

¹⁹¹ "Text of Bush-Abbas News Conference."

that Bush's off-the-cuff statement did not represent his true beliefs and that a Palestinian state could still be achieved in the next three years.¹⁹²

Just prior to Israel's unilateral disengagement, the *Christian Science Monitor* wrote an editorial in which it expressed concern that "Abbas needs backup" and urged the secretary of state to use her upcoming visit to the region to reassure Palestinians that "there's a 'day after' plan for them post-pullout and that final status talks are not far off".¹⁹³ However, the main focus of her trip was on helping Sharon carry out his plan with a minimum of settler violence against the IDF and maintaining the status quo on the Palestinian side.¹⁹⁴ The United States did little to help Abbas convey that he had played a measurable role in producing Gaza for the Palestinians. Kurtzer et. al. conclude that "the effort to coordinate the withdrawal – once Arafat was out and Abbas was in, was never adequate. Without visible, effective steps at coordination, there was no way to empower Abbas; this left Hamas able to argue that its resistance, not Abbas's diplomacy, forced Israel's withdrawal from Gaza".¹⁹⁵

Despite insisting of Abbas that he forcible dismantle terrorist groups and collect their weapons, the United States offer him little in the way of concrete assistance for transforming his security environment. The Ward mission, a general appointed by the U.S. administration to facilitate Palestinian security sector reform, was a joke. He came with no physical assistance for the Palestinians, was not authorized to mediate between Israel and the PA over disengagement, and was given little direction or support from

¹⁹² "Abbas Says Palestinian State Possible Before Bush Leaves Office," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, October 21, 2005.

¹⁹³ "Editorial: Abbas Needs Backup," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 20, 2005.

¹⁹⁴ Saul Hudson, "Rice Flies to Mideast to Shore up Gaza Pullout," *Reuters News*, July 21, 2005; Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 381.

¹⁹⁵ Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 366.

Bush and Rice. According to Glenn Kessler, even Rice's number two at the State Department, Robert Zoellick, said he "didn't think the effort was real – that Rice, having announced the appointment, was just letting it meander inconclusively".¹⁹⁶

Abbas explained on one of his White House visits that he really wanted American help before he felt capable of making gains on the security situation. Kessler says that

"while words and money were nice, Abbas wanted bullets and rifles. The American and Israelis demanded Abbas confront Hamas, but the Israelis blocked the transfer of rifles, fearing the weapons would be turned on them if there was another outbreak of violence. Abbas called [General] Ward and [Assistant Secretary of Near Eastern Affairs] Welch, and pleaded that the Palestinian Authority be given something that would give him the upper hand".¹⁹⁷

But Welch's response to his request was that instead of pursuing a *tahdiya* with Hamas and other Islamist groups, "your job is to shoot them – the more dead the better".¹⁹⁸

Kessler claims that Rice dismissed Abbas's complaints on security sector support because she felt that "Abbas never had the will to act. You don't get something for nothing".¹⁹⁹ However, given Abbas's weakness relative to the armed groups, it may have been unrealistic to expect him to take kinetic action against armed terrorists during a time in which he could not yet control even Fatah's own militia, the Al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigade.²⁰⁰ He made some symbolic troop deployments

¹⁹⁶ Kessler, *The Confidante*, 128.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 130.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ Usher, "The Democratic Resistance," 23; Jarbawi and Pearlman, "Post-Charisma Transition," 14; Abraham Rabinovich, "Attacks Tied to Abbas' Fatah: Incidents Mar Rice's Praise," *Washington Times*, July 25, 2005; Matt Spetalnick, "Israel Freezes Contacts, Launches W. Bank Clampdown," *Reuters News*, October 17, 2005; Mark Lavie, "Palestinian Gunmen Storm Election Headquarters in Disagreement over

and negotiated a cessation of hostilities from Hamas, but he did not attack them.

Nor was Abbas able to demonstrate economic growth in the Gaza Strip. The Quartet's envoy for coordinating economic issues surrounding disengagement, James Wolfensohn, was only appointed two months before the Israeli evacuation despite the fact that the United States had known about Sharon's intentions for roughly a year and a half.²⁰¹ He complained bitterly that U.S. officials were not giving him backup or involving him in their diplomatic efforts when in the region.²⁰²

Although Rice devoted serious diplomatic capital to achieving the Agreement on Movement and Access in late 2005, the results she had achieved fell apart even before the PLC election. The Gaza crossing point at Rafah stayed open to certain kinds of traffic but not others. The Karni crossing was closed until further notice in mid-January by the IDF even though the Israeli government had pledged to keep it open on "an urgent basis" as part of the AMA. No West Bank-Gaza safe passage was opened as had been pledged, and Gaza farmers were infuriated because they could not get their produce to market before it rotted. In shorts, the siege of Gaza continued, and the AMA was shown to be hollow.²⁰³ Glenn Kessler concludes that this outcome was partly attributable to weak follow-up from Rice and that "the stumbling implementation of the Rafah agreement would soon influence the

Candidates," *Associated Press*, December 12, 2005; Macintyre, "Bush Pushes for Palestinian Poll Despite Row over Jerusalem Vote Hamas Uncertainty."

²⁰¹ Ross, *Statecraft: And How to Restore America's Standing in the World*, 267.

²⁰² Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 362–365; Kessler, *The Confidante*, 131–133.

²⁰³ "Palestinian Farmers Vow to Burn Gaza-bound Israeli Goods to Protest Obstruction," *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Translated from January 12th edition of Al-Ayyam Newspaper, Ramallah, January 13, 2006); "Israeli Troops Kill Mother, Armed Son on W. Bank - Villagers," *Dow Jones International News*, January 15, 2006; "Palestinian Premier, Spanish Foreign Minister Discuss Elections, Peace Moves," *BBC Monitoring Service Middle East* (Translated from January 16th edition of Palestinian news agency Wafa website, January 17, 2006); Gred Myre, "Fatah Protesters Demand Resignation of Faction Leaders," *New York Times*, January 29, 2006.

Palestinian elections”.²⁰⁴

<Sub-Case 2: Through the PLC Elections>

In retrospect, it probably would have been advisable for Washington to urge Abbas to either call of the 2006 PLC elections or to require that Hamas disarm before being allow to participate in Palestinian Authority elections. Now that they have been admitted to electoral politics, that opportunity and the leverage it would have offered are no longer available. However, given how firm Mahmoud Abbas was that letting Hamas participate in elections was essential to his political program, it is difficult to fault the Bush administration for deferring to his personal appeal. As in the case of Bill Clinton’s tendency to grant Ehud Barak’s requests for LSI even when U.S. officials doubted his plans would actually succeed, it seems to be difficult to bolster would-be peacemakers when they themselves have faulty political instincts.

One of the main reasons Fatah fell short at the polls had to do with something that was beyond the control of the United States: corruption and internal rivalries. Indeed, Abbas had difficulty carrying out Fatah primaries to advance his elections strategy because frustrated stakeholders lashed out in protest. Politicians formed rival lists and gunmen stormed polling stations demanding broader economic or political patronage, and Abbas was forced to call the primaries off.²⁰⁵ Instead, he ignored glaring problems with Fatah’s appointed party list and did little to dissuade the losers from splitting the party’s district-level votes by running as

²⁰⁴ Kessler, *The Confidante*, 134.

²⁰⁵ Lavie, “Palestinian Gunmen Storm Election Headquarters in Disagreement over Candidates”; Mohammed Daraghme, “Palestinians Postpone Planned Primaries for Ruling Fatah Party,” *Associated Press*, November 18, 2005; Laurie Copans, “Palestinian Uprising Leader Marwan Barghouti Calls for a Reunited Fatah,” *Associated Press*, December 22, 2005; Usher, “The Democratic Resistance,” 25–26.

independents.²⁰⁶ Funding for security sector reform might have mitigated this pressure, along with substantial progress on the peace process to soften recriminations against Abbas, but this was mainly a housecleaning issue beyond Washington's sphere of influence.

On the other hand, America's last-minute, election-oriented development projects, while comparatively massive compared to the parties' electoral budgets, do not seem to have made a major difference in the election outcome. The money spent on development projects was not directly allocated to electoral purposes, in spite of the high rate of spending on advertisements to publicize the projects. Nor did municipal targeting toward areas where Hamas was already trending popular seem to work, as the New York Times concluded that "the projects had little or no impact on municipal voting, where Hamas did very well".²⁰⁷ Nor did Abbas's team make much use of the new American media centers or take Rice's media advisor very seriously, since he seemed to have a weak grasp of the issues they were confronting.²⁰⁸

Overall, the main reason why American support was so marginal, however, was that it never gave him the kind of diplomatic backing that would have offset his internal power struggles by enabling him to claim he had delivered from the United States and Israel on his biggest external agenda items. Ali Jarbawi and Wendy Pearlman explain his predicament as follows:

"Abbas... looked for three badly needed kinds of cooperation from Israel and the United States: conciliatory gestures such as lifting checkpoints and releasing

²⁰⁶ Usher, "The Democratic Resistance," 25–26; Buttu, "Interview with the Author."

²⁰⁷ Erlanger, "U.S. Spent \$1.9 Million to Aid Fatah in Palestinian Elections."

²⁰⁸ Kessler, *The Confidante*, 135.

prisoners, a resumption of genuine negotiations toward a political settlement; and financial assistance to the PA... for carrying out a sweeping reform of the PA security sector, which would hinge on financially enticing senior officials to retire and intifada fighters to lay down their weapons".²⁰⁹

However, they conclude that:

"Abbas's hopes in each area went unfilled [sic]. Israel removed some checkpoints but put others in place and released a fraction of Palestinian prisoners but detained far more new ones. Israel evacuated some 8,000 settlers in its unilateral disengagement from Gaza but moved forward with plans to confiscate Palestinian land and expand other settlements in the West Bank. Meanwhile, international aid to the PA fell short of its needs".²¹⁰

These arguments are by and large valid. Despite providing detailed pledges to the United States in 2004 to contain various types of settlement activity, the Israeli government violated many of these commitments in this period. Indeed, the Israeli government had not evacuated a single major unauthorized outpost, and new settlements and expansions of existing settlements were both being built, even with state services, just without formal authorization.²¹¹ Israel had released about 400 prisoners as part of a goodwill gesture that June, but Abbas had expected more. They left their meeting with Sharon that month "extremely depressed" at the negligible level of cooperation that emerged.²¹² Aaron David Miller argues that the United States "never even tried" in 2005 to reinvigorate negotiating process based on the Road Map and that therefore "we and Sharon saw our expectations of Abu Mazen fulfilled".²¹³

²⁰⁹ Jarbawi and Pearlman, "Post-Charisma Transition," 13.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Enderlin, *The Lost Years*, 256–258; "Letter from Dov Weissglas, Chief of the PM's Bureau, to National Security Adviser, Dr. Condoleezza Rice" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, April 18, 2004); Daniel Kurtzer, "The Settlement Facts," *Washington Post*, June 14, 2009.

²¹² Enderlin, *The Lost Years*, 259–260; Kessler, *The Confidante*, 129; Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 363.

²¹³ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 354.

Dennis Ross agrees that the U.S. failed to meet Abbas's political needs, helping him at "showing that his way – the way of nonviolence – paid off".²¹⁴ He argues that Abu Mazen

"needed the financing to make [his plans] possible. Donor conferences were organized... but the efforts produced pledges that were very slow to be honor. Here again someone needed to spearhead the effort... unfortunately, the administration did very little. It approached the Saudis and others quietly but never pushed with any insistence or specificity".²¹⁵

Ross explains that Abbas had to be seen delivering on economic growth through freedom of movement, getting Israel to turn negotiate with him over withdrawal from Gaza, and the stabilization of Gaza after the Israeli withdrawal. However, he concludes that "on all three measures, our efforts were too little and too late. This is not to excuse Abu Mazen, who did very little to help... but we had the means to do much more than we did".²¹⁶

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

The four theories tested by this dissertation offer divergent predictions with regard to perceptions of sender interests. National interests theory (Theory #1) expects that LSI should occur directly in accordance with objective, unitary interests of the potential sender state. The lobby-legislative approach (Theory #2) expects that LSI should not occur often in the Palestine dyad because beliefs of the pro-Israel

²¹⁴ Ross, *Statecraft: And How to Restore America's Standing in the World*, 265.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 266–267.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 266.

community tend to believe that Palestinian moderates are not in fact moderate enough. The bureaucratic politics approach (Theory #3) expects LSI to be frequent in U.S. policy toward the Palestinians because working-level officials tend to be highly interested in supporting Palestinian moderates. And leadership theory (Theory #4) expects that variation in LSI occurrence should be highly subject to the subjective beliefs that leaders in the sender state hold about their political counterparts abroad.

Overall, the high levels of American LSI during this period seem incongruent with the lobby-legislative approach. Indeed, AIPAC officials welcomed the election of Mahmoud Abbas but immediately laid out a list of immediate steps he had to take in order to be a suitable Palestinian partner.²¹⁷ Similarly, House Majority Whip Roy Blunt cautioned that Abbas “must now be prepared to make serious and difficult decisions following the end of the campaign”.²¹⁸

Although the occurrence of LSI would have been consonant with the bureaucratic approach, the preferences of these officials rarely had much impact on actual policy outcomes during this period. The administration delegated extensively to envoys on the ground, including General William Ward and James Wolfensohn, but neither of these individuals were given much authority to carry out their briefs. USAID projects played an important role in American efforts toward the PA, but these were a result of administration preferences, not a driver of them. Rice’s move to the State Department had increased the agency’s cachet within the

²¹⁷ “Election of Mahmoud Abbas Presents Opportunity Says AIPAC,” *U.S. Newswire*, January 10, 2005.

²¹⁸ “House Majority Whip Roy Blunt Statement on Today’s Palestinian Election,” *U.S. Newswire*, January 9, 2005.

administration, but its influence on the policy process was decidedly at Rice's direction, not from any sort of impulse from farther down in the organization. Otherwise, one might have expected stronger pressure for Israeli concessions, for accepting Abu Mazen's strategy of containing Hamas politically rather than militarily, and for restarting a substantive negotiating process between the parties, since the Near Eastern Affairs bureau tends to hold these sorts of views. However, Rice's choice to head the bureau, C. David Welch, though not a believer in the 2003 Iraq War, was closely identified with the administration's approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and strongly rejected Abbas's desire to cohabitate with the Islamists.²¹⁹

Meanwhile, the political understanding and counterpart assessments of administration principals seem to have played a major role in shaping America's LSI behavior during this period. Rice's skepticism about Abbas likely limited her willingness to really go to bat for him. She comments that "the Palestinians' behavior in response [to disengagement] did not, however, inspire confidence," despite the fact that she never really helped position Abbas to impose law and order in the area.²²⁰ Kessler expands that "from Rice's perspective, nothing seemed to be happening except complaints. She thought Abbas was a nice man but ineffective, and she soon became frustrated because he seemed to make little progress. The United States had invested in him, she thought, and he seemed incapable of delivering".²²¹

²¹⁹ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 311; Kessler, *The Confidante*, 130.

²²⁰ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 382.

²²¹ Kessler, *The Confidante*, 130.

Indyk argues that the decision to force Sharon and Abbas to allow PLC elections in 2006 to proceed as planned came straight from the president. He explains how the decision factored into the president's strategic thinking: "according to two of the senior American officials who discussed the issue with Bush, the president believed that it would be good for Hamas to participate in the elections because it would make them accountable to the people. The rest is history".²²² Further, his lack of attunement to Palestinian politics led him to misunderstand Abbas's political needs and to speak off-message, suggesting that a peace deal within his presidency seemed no longer feasible. When Karen Hughes got a delegation of Abbas advisors into the White House to meet with President Bush just three months before PLC elections, he reportedly asked them what it meant to be member of Fatah.²²³

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

Another area where the theories offer divergent predictions is whether or not actors in the sender state think that a close leadership contest is imminent in the target polity. Theories 2 and 3 do not speak clearly in this regard, but Theories 1 and 4 do. Leadership theory stresses that top officials in the sender state often misperceive this situations based upon their subjective beliefs, biases, and personal distractions. National interests theory holds that these personal factors should not matter.

²²² Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 383.

²²³ Kessler, *The Confidante*, 135–136; Glenn Kessler, "Hughes Spurred Bush-Palestinian Meeting," *Washington Post*, October 12, 2005.

As noted above, President Bush was personally influential in deciding that elections should go forward as scheduled in the territories and that Hamas should be allowed to participate. It is quite likely that his faith in the moderating power of democracy and his receptiveness to Abbas's arguments led him to overlook the serious risks if Hamas were actually to win the PLC elections. When asked why the United States took the approach it did toward the 2006 PLC election, Dennis Ross concludes that "there the Bush administration got caught up in its own belief in democracy promotion without thinking about the context... I suspect but don't know there was such a belief in the self-correcting character of elections that this would vindicate itself one way or another".²²⁴

Indeed, Rice admits that she astounded upon finding out that Hamas had won the election, suggesting soon after that "nobody saw it coming".²²⁵ This was despite the fact that the intelligence had suggested the result was going to be a close call and that she had received warnings from both Palestinian and Israeli interlocutors.²²⁶ Allegedly, Bush had long before encouraged Abbas to go ahead with the caveat of "don't have an election if you think you will lose,"²²⁷ suggesting that he never would have discouraged efforts to delay the vote if he had recognized that the results of Palestinian elections might actually be competitive. Furthermore, his intense preoccupation with Iraq during 2005 may help explain why American involvement in Palestinian politics was relatively weak on follow-through.

²²⁴ Dennis Ross, "Interview with the Author".

²²⁵ Elisabeth Bumiller, *Condoleezza Rice: An American Life* (Random House, 2007), 280–281.

²²⁶ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 416; Kessler, *The Confidante*, 134; Keinon, "Fatah Asked Sharon to Prevent Voting in J'lem in 2006."

²²⁷ Kessler, *The Confidante*, 135.

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

Leadership theory holds that practitioners of LSI face strong incentives to keep other domestic actors (Congress, lobbyists, and working-level executive officials) in the dark about their true intentions and to avoid formal procedure in favor of unusual deliberative back channels. Meanwhile, Theories 2 and 3 argue that these domestic structural forces should be influential and included when U.S. officials set out to undertake leadership selection intervention abroad.

The forms that gestures of LSI took in this episode were highly personalized according to the role of top American officials. Abbas's visits to the White House became key junctures for affecting Palestinian internal politics, and Bush lavished praise upon him as a man of courage and a promoter of peace. America's push for the initial Agreement on Movement and Access was highly identified with the person of Condoleezza Rice. When a key U.S. official went over to advise Abbas on his election message, he was Rice's personal media advisor. When the administration gave funds to Palestinians in advance of the PLC vote, it was subcontracted to a former Abbas advisor and coordinated by him with Abbas's personal chief of staff.

This dynamic fits strongly with the expectations of leadership theory. One notable exception is that members of Congress – and, even, the pro-Israel lobby – were occasionally informed about the administration's intentions to provide packets of aid to the Palestinian Authority in support of Abbas. This exception is likely due to the unique statutory authority that Congress maintains with regard to the power

of the purse. However, the administration typically got its way on PA aid during this period, even if consultations were sometimes exhausting.²²⁸

Thus, Congressional influence on aid issues during this period tended not to be a matter of whether or not aid would get granted but rather a stakeholder for shaping its modalities somewhat, requiring greater measures for transparency and accountability. For instance, a State Department spokesperson remarked that American aid to the PA in late 2004 would likely be approved by Congress in the end, just subject to certain accountability requirements.²²⁹ The administration engaged in extensive negotiations with the Hill before announcing \$50 million in direct, unrestricted aid to the PA in May of 2005, but the main result of those negotiations was that the money would be handled in a special account under the supervision of Salam Fayyad to ensure Congress was satisfied with how it was administered.²³⁰ This fits with the findings of Scott Lasensky, who argued that Congress's impact on American aid to the Palestinian Authority in the 1990s mainly affect the modalities of that aid, not whether or not it would provided.²³¹

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

The sender state's political calendar offers another avenue for distinguishing

²²⁸ Kessler, "Direct Aid to Palestinians Considered: Creation of a New State a Likely Topic as Abbas Visits Bush"; Bumiller, *Condoleezza Rice: An American Life*, 407; "U.S. to Give \$23.5 Million for Palestinians"; Dana Milbank, "AIPAC's Big, Bigger, Biggest Moment," *Washington Post*, May 24, 2005; Kessler, "Direct Aid to Palestinians Considered: Creation of a New State a Likely Topic as Abbas Visits Bush"; Baker and Kessler, "Bush Offers Palestinians Aid: Visiting Leader Abbas Is Praised as 'a Man of Courage'."

²²⁹ "U.S. to Give \$23.5 Million for Palestinians."

²³⁰ Baker and Kessler, "Bush Offers Palestinians Aid: Visiting Leader Abbas Is Praised as 'a Man of Courage'."

²³¹ Scott Lasensky, "Underwriting Peace in the Middle East: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Limits of Economic Inducements," *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA)* 6, no. 1 (March 2002).

between the causal importance of the various competing theories. Theory #2 expects that lobbyists and members of Congress should be especially influential during periods of divided government or in the lead-up to American elections and thus that LSI should be rarer during these periods. Theory #3 predicts that LSI should be extremely frequent during the beginning of a president's first year in office because bureaucrats should be especially influential over national policy then.

Broadly speaking, the general timing of American LSI fits with a variety of different theories in this regard. The U.S. effort to bolster Mahmoud Abbas happened during the first year of Bush's new term in office and decreased somewhat in intensity over time, both of which would fit with the expectations of the bureaucratic politics approach. It cannot explain why Bush did *not* pursue LSI of this sort during the first year of his previous term in office, but that is beyond the scope of this particular case episode. Further, the fact that LSI was taking place during a non-election year in the United States and during a period of united control of the federal government would also be consonant with Theory #2 (i.e. the lobby-legislative approach), as well as theories 1 and 4.

However, one example of fine-grained variation in the power of the pro-Israel lobby over time is particularly telling. American support for Abbas was substantially higher during his first visit to the White House during 2005, in May, than it was during his second visit that October. However, his May visit came less than a week after AIPAC's annual policy conference that year. Despite the fact that administration support for Abbas was notably unpopular at the event, Rice got up in front of the group's full plenary of backers come to lobby their representatives and

proclaimed that the administration believed in Abbas and would extend tangible economic support to help him achieve his objectives. She even reiterated administration concerns that Israel must not “jeopardize the true viability of the Palestinian state”²³² If Theory #2 were correct, we should expect LSI to decrease, not increase during this period, as the administration seeks to assure domestic support through blatant pandering.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

Another area in which the theories diverge pertains to bureaucratic freelancing. If working-level officials can pursue leadership selection intervention without the authorization of top leaders, that would provide strong support for Theory #3, the bureaucratic approach. Theory #4, on the other hand, argues that freelancing should be rare and occur only in instances of weak managerial oversight.

President Bush was extremely detached from oversight during the latter period of this episode. After Rice negotiated the AMA and world leaders thanked him for “what you’ve achieved for Palestine,” he jokingly asked Rice “what did I do for Palestine, and what did you agree to?”²³³ Rice was generally quite active on Israeli-Palestinian issues at this time, but she was notably disengaged from the Ward mission for security sector reform. Jim Wolfensohn was so frustrated with American inability to broker a solution for preserving Gaza’s greenhouses after disengagement that he was forced to give money from his own pocket and to

²³² Milbank, “AIPAC’s Big, Bigger, Biggest Moment.”

²³³ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 410.

fundraise from some of his wealthy Jewish friends.²³⁴

The *Washington Post's* exposé on last-minute campaign assistance to the Palestinian Authority by OTI was the probably the most pronounced instance of freelancing-type behavior during this period. The article never would have been so comprehensive and compelling without participants being willing to do interviews with the authors and share strategic documentation. One major reason that likely underpinned this dynamic was that the project was sub-contracted to such a low level that the participants were extremely removed from direct executive oversight. Thus, although there appears to be some freelancing behavior during this period, the data probably lies closer to Theory #4 than the bureaucratic approach.

6. Consistency of Message:

Leadership selection intervention tends to be more effective when the message it conveys is projected in a clear and consistent manner abroad. One way in which this can be undermined is if domestic actors such as Congress, lobbyists, or bureaucrats have institutional preferences that conflict with this message, driving them to emit contradictory signals. This would be in fitting with Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) or Theory #3 (the bureaucratic approach). Alternatively, Theory #4 (the agency –based approach) predicts that LSI might be weakened due to dissent or opinion changes strictly among top leaders in the sender state. Theory #1 (national interests theory) holds that messaging should not face difficulty being consistent.

²³⁴ Andy Newman, “How Old Friends of Israel Gave \$14 Million to Help the Palestinians,” *New York Times*, August 18, 2005; Kessler, *The Confidante*, 131.

However, American messaging in this case was largely consistent. American support for Abu Mazen persistently provide certain types of advantages (financial backing, public praise) but not others (diplomatic backing on peace process issues). Perhaps U.S. support weakened moderately over 2005, but that was largely on the margins. If so, it was attributable mainly to Rice and Bush's increasing disappointment with Abbas, evidence fitting with Theory #4. Congress occasionally threatened to impede presidential requests for aid to the Palestinians, something that would fit with Theory #2. However, as noted above the Hill rarely actually foiled administration requests, and its influence was mainly felt in terms of stronger requirements for accountability.

7. Suitability of Message:

The efficacy of leadership selection intervention also seems to depend upon whether or not the message that it conveys is suitable to the political exigencies of the favored faction overseas. Theory #1 expects that suitable messaging should be relatively unproblematic. Theories 2 and 3 anticipate that suitability should depend upon whether the institutional biases of domestic stakeholders favor the projection of an appropriate message. Theory #4 holds that suitability is mainly subject to the subjective biases of leaders in the sender state.

In this regard, the data provides the strongest support for the agency-based approach. President Bush and Secretary Rice were both interested in supporting Abbas. But their belief that he should be expected to deliver immediately on security issues decreased their willingness to directly boost his hand on the ground

against rival power centers. And their unwillingness to expend political capital on extracting Israeli concessions or pushing for a resumption of substantive negotiations (either on disengagement or on final status issues) meant that the types of help that the United States offered did little for strengthening his standing.

Former Abbas advisor Diana Buttu explains that in 2005 “most of the diplomatic work that the Americans did was tailored to trying to prop up Abu Mazen as the leader... (basically from) as soon as he was elected... They were giving him a lot of oral support – ‘we like you’ – and there’s some financial support, but, again, not the political support”.²³⁵ Hanan Ashrawi elaborates that Abu Mazen’s political fate was impacted by his inability to deliver on the issues that really mattered to Palestinians: “I mean, okay, Abu Mazen has an agenda for peace, of nonviolence, of reform, of moderation. How did they respond to this in Israel? Did they stop their policies? Did they stop their settlement activities? Did they stop the wall? Did they stop assassinations? No, they didn’t”.²³⁶ As Ross argues, the American support that was provided did not do a very good job of helping Abu Mazen to demonstrate that the way of nonviolence pays off for Palestinian national aspirations.

Palestine, Case #5:

Benign Neglect through
West Bank First, 2006-2009

The January 2006 elections gave Hamas a majority in the Palestinian Legislative Council and the political power to nominate one of its own as prime

²³⁵ Buttu, “Interview with the Author.”

²³⁶ Ashrawi, quoted in Robert Zelnick, *Israel’s Unilateralism: Beyond Gaza* (Hoover Press, 2006), 68.

minister. The creation of the premier post in 2003 meant that Hamas's victory in the legislative arena translated into an opportunity to challenge President Abbas, Fatah, and the PLO for control of executive power in the Palestinian Authority. Both America and the European Union had long designated Hamas a terrorist organization, and it remained to be seen how the world community, let alone Israel, would grapple with the emergence of Hamas as a political force within the PA. In March of 2006, Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas was appointed prime minister, putting the ball in the court of other actors to react.

Coding the Dependent Variables (Occurrence and Efficacy)

Did LSI Occur?

Yes, but in stages. First, from early 2006 through the middle of 2007, the United States tried to topple Hamas in the context of political intrigues within the PA. Then, once the rivalry between Hamas and Fatah split the PA into separate governing authorities in Gaza and the West Bank, the United States sought to build up the Fatah-PLO government based out of Ramallah as part of a West Bank First strategy that culminated in the Annapolis peace conference that November. Although U.S. efforts qualify as LSI during both periods, in many ways they escalated after the June 2007 Hamas coup in Gaza. During the first period, the Bush team pursued LSI via a dramatic disengagement from the effort to achieve a Palestinian state through the Middle East peace process. In the second period, it pursued LSI through its most concerted effort to invigorate the peace process to date.

<Sub-Case One: LSI through Disengagement>

During the period from late January 2006 through June 2007, the Bush administration definitely sought to influence internal Palestinian politics. As former Consul General in East Jerusalem, Jacob Walles, explains: “we were trying to strengthen people, strengthen Abu Mazen working through people that he had designated to strengthen his position”.²³⁷ The first salvo in this effort was the Quartet conditions of January 30th, just days after the PLC vote. Quartet officials announced that “future assistance to any new government would be reviewed by donors against that government’s commitment to the principles of nonviolence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap”.²³⁸ Rice, who played a major role in crafting the declaration, describes it as “a direct shot at Hamas”.²³⁹

Few within the Bush administration expected Hamas would actually fulfill these requirements, and thus American officials exerted very little effort in actually trying to bring the group along. Instead, the *de facto* policy became one of confrontation. Rumors began to surface that the United States was exploring “ways to destabilize the Palestinian government so that newly elected Hamas officials will fail and elections will be called again... to starve the Palestinian Authority of money and international connections to the point where, some months from now, its

²³⁷ Walles interview quoted in Daniel C. Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle: America’s Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace in the Post-Cold War Era [forthcoming]* (US Institute of Peace & Cornell University Presses, 2012), 394.

²³⁸ “Statement by Middle East Quartet” (UN Secretary General, Department of Public Information, News and Media Division - SG/2104, PAL/2042, January 30, 2006).

²³⁹ Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (Random House, 2011), 419.

president, Mahmoud Abbas, is compelled to call a new election”.²⁴⁰

This strategy required a broader diplomatic effort to persuade U.S. allies to keep Hamas isolated. Washington sought to persuade the Europeans to stop direct aid to the PA budget, and instead they established a Temporary International Mechanism that channeled roughly half a billion Euros directly through Abbas’s office, most of which was spent on public services or humanitarian assistance.²⁴¹ Rice explains that this effort involved Arab allies as well, and that Egypt and Saudi Arabia both countries agreed to restructure their Palestinian aid programs to avoid handing money over Haniyeh government.²⁴²

Michael Singh, senior director for the Middle East at the NSC toward the end of the Bush period, elaborates: “as opposed to saying, well, if you’re Saudi Arabia, if you’re Egypt, you’re going to support all the factions, we wanted them to say, no, you’re going to support Abbas. And sort of leave him to decide his Palestinian strategy... that’s something we also tried to do. Trying to keep those states from trying to meddle too much inside Palestinian politics, and that I think was also an important way to ensure support for him”.²⁴³

The U.S. also pressured Abbas to dismiss the PA government led by Haniyeh, either replacing it by fiat with an emergency government of non-Hamas officials or calling new elections entirely. David Rose writes in a controversial and hotly

²⁴⁰ Steven Erlanger, “U.S. and Israelis Are Said to Talk of Hamas Ouster,” *New York Times*, February 14, 2006.

²⁴¹ “Powers Agree Palestinian Aid Plan,” *BBC News*, June 18, 2006; “Factsheet: Temporary International Mechanism, Key Facts” (European Commission, via EU Neighborhood Library, January 18, 2008); “Factsheet, Temporary International Mechanism - Overall Implementation Progress” (European Commission, via EU Neighborhood Library, January 18, 2008).

²⁴² Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 420.

²⁴³ Michael Singh, “Interview with the Author”, July 12, 2012.

contested *Vanity Fair* article that when Secretary Rice visited Abbas in Ramallah on October 4th, 2006, she told him that “isolating Hamas just wasn’t working... and America expected him to dissolve the Haniyeh government as soon as possible and hold fresh elections”.²⁴⁴ Allegedly, he claims that Abbas agreed to do so within a few weeks but then repeatedly stalled in carrying out this pledge.²⁴⁵ However, former Abbas advisor Diana Buttu has since confirmed these portions of Rose’s account.²⁴⁶

She also confirmed his claim that at Rice’s request a few weeks later U.S. Consul General Walles followed up with Abbas, urging him to move ahead with the plan.²⁴⁷ David Rose also posted on the *Vanity Fair* website a copy of Walles’s unofficial notes for the meeting which he claims Walles accidentally left behind. His untitled non-paper read as follows:

“President Bush wants to support you... but our ability to help depends to a great extent on you. We can do much more if there is a PA government in place that fully and clearly accepts the Quartet principles... You told Secretary Rice you would be prepared to move ahead within two to four weeks of your meeting. We believe the time has come for you to move quickly and decisively to resolve the governmental crisis... if you agree to this strategy, we will be there to support you”.²⁴⁸

However, Abbas never moved ahead as intended.

In the meantime, the Americans also tried to build up security forces that were loyal to Fatah, for fear that Hamas’s new control over the interior ministry would enable it to outcompete Fatah and impose its predominance by force. Rose claims that the Americans pushed Mohammed Dahlan and other Palestinian security

²⁴⁴ David Rose, “The Gaza Bombshell,” *Vanity Fair* (April 2008).

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Diana Buttu, “Interview with the Author”, November 11, 2010.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Item 1, n.d., downloadable at: David Rose, “The Proof Is in the Paper Trail” (*Vanity Fair* (online), March 5, 2008), http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2008/04/gaza_documents200804.

chiefs to launch a coup against Hamas and that the June 2007 Islamist coup in Gaza was merely a reaction to an American plan for Haniyeh's forcible overthrow. This certainly fits perceptions on the ground. For instance, Israeli journalist Danny Rubenstein says that there were prominent rumors at the time among the Palestinians that Dahlan was literally going to invade Gaza with an American-backed army.²⁴⁹

However, Rose's argument seems to reflect an exaggerated impression of U.S. support. It is clear that the United States sought to bolster Dahlan's Fatah forces as a means of deterring Hamas,²⁵⁰ and Washington's posture certainly encouraged these forces to expand their control in ways that often escalated the confrontation through sporadic clashes on the ground.²⁵¹ Furthermore, Rose is one firm ground in claiming that the Bush administration turned in late 2006 to its Arab allies – including Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates – as a means of circumventing Congressional restrictions against using American security assistance to provide Dahlan with lethal armaments.²⁵² This program no doubt contributed to Palestinian arms racing and exacerbated existing fears by Hamas, but there is no compelling evidence that the effort aimed to go beyond deterrence to actually instigate an overthrow of Haniyeh and Hamas's security cadres. Administration thinking was that “we do need to support the development of security forces that are loyal to those who accept the Quartet principles because I'm quite sure that those who do not accept it will continue to build their security

²⁴⁹ Danny Rubenstein, “Interview with the Author”, June 27, 2011.

²⁵⁰ Buttu, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁵¹ Haim Malka, “The U.S. Should Support Palestinian Unity,” *Washington Post*, February 13, 2007.

²⁵² Rose, “The Gaza Bombshell.”

forces”.²⁵³

One consequence of the ongoing street battles between Fatah and Hamas was that they shocked King Abdallah of Saudi Arabia into pushing hard for a unity agreement among the Palestinians. The result was the Mecca Accords, in which leaders of both factions pledged to support a Fatah-Hamas unity government and Riyadh pledged \$1 billion in aid to the Palestinian Authority.²⁵⁴ Rice was described as “apoplectic,” and her aide Gamal Helal blurted out in her presence that the Saudi maneuver was “a piece of sh-t!”²⁵⁵ She says she saw the deal as a “devastating blow”.²⁵⁶

Again, after Gaza, the U.S. continued efforts with its allies to “enable Abu Mazen and his supporters to reach a defined endgame... [which] should produce a PA government through democratic means that accepts Quartet principles... undermine political strength of Hamas through continued international pressure and steps that accrue domestic political credit to Abbas, particularly in areas where Hamas cannot deliver” and explored such possible solutions as “early elections? Collapse unity government by withdrawing ministers? Technocrat government? Referendum?”²⁵⁷

However, while Rice had been trying to sustain a trilateral series of meetings between herself, Olmert, and Abbas, the Mecca Agreement threw a wrench in this plan. Although Rice succeeded in keeping the talks going, she herself acknowledges

²⁵³ Rice on March 21, 2007, quoted in Michele Dunne, “A Two-State Solution Requires Palestinian Politics,” *Carnegie Papers: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* 113 (June 2010): 11.

²⁵⁴ Helene Cooper, “After the Mecca Accord, Clouded Horizons,” *New York Times*, February 21, 2007.

²⁵⁵ The first quote is from Rose. The second quote is from Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 551–552.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 551.

²⁵⁷ English language (presumably U.S.) non-paper entitled “An Arab Quartet Plan for the Palestinian Presidency in 2007 – Plan B”, n.d., included Rose, “The Proof Is in the Paper Trail.”

that Fatah's reinvigorated cohabitation with Hamas made it nearly impossible for Olmert to engage in a discussion of anything more ambitious than short-term confidence building measures.²⁵⁸

However, despite these talks the general direction of American policy during this period was to pursue LSI through disengagement from the peace process. As Glenn Kessler observes, "the Hamas [electoral] victory brought the campaign to establish a Palestinian state to a dead stop. The Bush administration once again disengaged".²⁵⁹

<Sub-Case Two: LSI through Reengagement>

The Hamas-led coup in Gaza in 2007 paved the way for much greater American support for the Palestinian Authority leadership of Abbas and Fayyad. For the U.S. administration, this development clarified the distinction between perceived moderates and hardliners in Palestinian politics and served as a call to action lest Hamas parlay its military gains into full-fledged overthrow of the PA. As will be discussed in more detail below, U.S. efforts at LSI were surprisingly blatant and self-admitted during this particular sub-case, due to a perception caused by the Gaza coup that Palestinian politics were in a state of war and were not in a state of quasi-competitive politics as usual.

Although Rice's former advisor on the peace process, Robert Danin, says that the administration officials did not use the term, he agrees that their policy during this period could accurately be characterized as a "West Bank First" strategy, aiming

²⁵⁸ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 550–554.

²⁵⁹ Glenn Kessler, *The Confidante: Condoleezza Rice and the Creation of the Bush Legacy* (Macmillan, 2007), 138.

to weaken Hamas and strengthen Fatah by making the West Bank a paragon of development, peace, and national progress.²⁶⁰ Top Mideast advisor to the president, Elliott Abrams, explained that “West Bank First is inevitable once you are where you are with Gaza after the coup”.²⁶¹ President Bush explains his own view as follows:

“We redirected our economic aid and security assistance to Abbas’s government in the West Bank and supported an Israeli naval blockade of Gaza... the people of Gaza would see a vivid contrast between their living conditions and those under the democratic leader Abbas. *Over time, I was confident they would demand change*”.²⁶²

The first elements of this strategy involved embracing the new Palestinian government in the West Bank that was announced by President Abbas and led by Salam Fayyad as prime minister. Within days after the fall of Gaza and the appointment of this emergency government, Rice announced that

“this morning President Bush spoke with Palestinian Authority President Abbas. He told him that the United States supports his legitimate decision to form an emergency government of responsible Palestinians, and he welcomed the appointment of Salam Fayyad as Prime Minister. The President pledged the full support of the United States for the new Palestinian Government... we are going to support President Abbas and what he wants to do. We’re going to support Prime Minister Fayyad”.²⁶³

She also noted that the United States would restart direct assistance to the main PA budget as well as aid for Palestinian political institutions, security forces, and humanitarian needs.

²⁶⁰ Robert Danin, “Interview with the Author”, June 26, 2012. See also Elisabeth Bumiller, *Condoleezza Rice: An American Life* (Random House, 2007), 308; Mohammed Samhour, “The ‘West Bank First’ Strategy: A Political-Economy Critical Assessment,” *Brandeis University - Crown Center for Middle East Studies Working Paper 2* (October 2007); Robert Malley and Aaron David Miller, “Op-Ed: ‘West Bank First’: It Won’t Work,” *Washington Post*, June 19, 2007.

²⁶¹ Abrams interview quoted in Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 402. Emphases removed.

²⁶² George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (Random House, 2010), 408. Emphases added.

²⁶³ Condoleezza Rice, “Special Briefing by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice” (State Department website archives, June 18, 2007).

The United States also coordinated its strategy with the Olmert government in Israel to embrace the new emergency government under Fayyad. On Olmert's visit to the White House, he announced Israeli plans to unfreeze some PA tax revenues and to consider lifting roadblocks and releasing Palestinian prisoners.²⁶⁴ He also proclaimed alongside Bush that "like you, I want to strengthen the moderates" among the Palestinians.²⁶⁵ Bush echoed during the event that "our hope is that President Abbas and the prime minister – Fayyad, who's a good fella – will be strengthened to the point where they can lead the Palestinians in a different direction".²⁶⁶ Roughly a week later, Olmert met with Abbas in Egypt, where the two of them announce plans to proceed with substantive negotiations on the peace process; Olmert also followed through on recent pledges, offering to release 250 Palestinian prisoners and unfreezing some PA tax revenues.²⁶⁷

This effort eventually escalated into a full-fledged peace summit that November at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Rice, the main architect of the meeting, writes in her memoirs that her intention was "*sustain the good guys* by giving international momentum to the process".²⁶⁸ A former official who worked at the State Department acknowledges that "for sure, yes, we were trying to bolster both" sides with Annapolis.²⁶⁹ The official elaborates that

²⁶⁴ Jennifer Loven, "Bush and Olmert Seek to Bolster Abbas After Palestinian Split," *Associated Press*, June 19, 2007.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ Steven Erlanger, "Backing Fatah and Abbas, Egypt Organizes Summit Meeting for Palestinian Leader," *New York Times*, June 22, 2007; Ellen Knickmeyer and Scott Wilson, "Israelis, Arabs Meeting to Shore Up Abbas; Portion of Tax Revenue Unfrozen to Aid Fatah," *Washington Post*, June 25, 2007; Ellen Knickmeyer, "Olmert Makes 'Gesture of Goodwill'; At Summit in Egypt, Israeli Leader Pledges to Seek Release of 250 Palestinian Prisoners," *Washington Post*, June 26, 2007.

²⁶⁸ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 601. Emphasis added.

²⁶⁹ Former US Official, "Interview with the Author", March 7, 2011.

“on the Palestinian side... when it came to bolstering that side... yeah [we did] anything and everything we could do... we were dragging the whole world into this process, into bolstering these extremely weak guys to go forward... if we were serious about the peace process moving forward, we had to have this sort of impact. If they’re going to succeed, they need to be strong”.²⁷⁰

Michael Singh confirms that, from the point of view of the NSC:

“The view was, and the view still is today, that you have to give the Palestinian people hope that if you’re asking them to eschew violence that they have another path forward to achieve their aspirations, and that’s the diplomatic route. And to the extent guys like Abbas and Fayyad were the champions of that diplomatic path, yes, there was a desire to strengthen them and support them and to support their efforts to walk that diplomatic path”.²⁷¹

Bush also praised Abu Mazen in his remarks in the following six months. During a trip to the Israel and the West Bank in January of 2008, he wrapped up his remarks by saying “Mr. President... we want to help you. I appreciate your vision, and I appreciate your courage, and I appreciate your hospitality”.²⁷² When Abbas visited the White House in April, Bush called him a “man of peace” and a “man of vision,” telling Abbas that “I consider you a friend... [and] a courageous person”.²⁷³ Then, when he met with Abbas in Sharm El-Sheikh that May, he was photographed holding hands with the Palestinian president and also remarked in a joint press availability:

“Mr. President, thank you for your time, and thank you for your courage... The President and his team are committed to peace. They stand squarely against those who use violence to stop the peace process. And for that I admire you and your team, Mr. President, and I commit to you once again that our government will help

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Singh, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁷² George W. Bush, “President Bush and Palestinian Authority President Abbas Participate in Joint Press Availability - Muqata, Ramallah” (White House website archives, January 10, 2008).

²⁷³ George W. Bush, “President Bush Meets with President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority - Oval Office” (White House website archives, April 24, 2008).

achieve... two states living side by side in peace".²⁷⁴

Furthermore, this language was backed with cash. The U.S. restarted direct aid after the June of 2007 collapse of the Palestinian unity government. It organized a December 2007 donor conference in Paris, where the Palestinians under Abbas raised \$7 billion in pledges of aid from foreign governments and international organizations, an event Hamas leaders criticized as an act of war.²⁷⁵ The Bush administration also launched a U.S.-Palestinian Partnership, leveraging pledges from private businesses and foundations to provide \$1.4 billion in proposed investment to the PA.²⁷⁶ It supported the appointment of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair as Quartet envoy to the Palestinians, who organized major Palestinian investment conferences in Bethlehem and Nablus during 2008.²⁷⁷ Michael Singh explains the administration's thinking at the time as follows:

"We felt, and I think the Palestinians and I think the Palestinians and Israelis both felt that it was very important that the Palestinians sees improvements on the ground. Improvements in their lives as a result of this diplomatic process. And so that meant making sure that we were giving the Palestinians assistance with economic institution-building, with law and order and the kind of financial aid that they need on a monthly basis. And we did do those things. Obviously, we put a lot of U.S. assistance into that effort, but I think even more importantly we led the diplomatic effort to get other states to contribute to that, to get the Europeans to do it, to get even more importantly the Arab states to do it, and that was a tough slog every time".²⁷⁸

Did the Policy Succeed?

²⁷⁴ George W. Bush, "President Bush Meets with President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority - Hyatt Regency, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt" (White House website archives, May 17, 2008).

²⁷⁵ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 556.

²⁷⁶ "Palestinians 'Win \$7bn Aid Vow'," *BBC News*, December 17, 2007; "Implementing the Palestinian Reform and Development Agenda: Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee" (The World Bank, May 2, 2008), 10.

²⁷⁷ Jim Zanotti, "U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians" (Congressional Research Service (CRS), Library of Congress, Report RS22967, July 16, 2009), 23.

²⁷⁸ Singh, "Interview with the Author."

Only briefly, around the time of Annapolis. Initial U.S. efforts to isolate the official PA cabinet under Hamas in 2006 and 2007 failed to achieve their objective because they did not undermine the group and did not goad Abbas into dismissing Haniyeh from office. Further, disengagement from the peace process was an ineffective strategy. Subsequent American efforts to undermine the contested Hamas government in Gaza by focusing on the West Bank helped consolidate Fatah control at first but failed to serve as a model for Palestinian reunification under Abbas. Still, reengagement in the peace process did give Abbas, Fayyad, and their allies a temporary boost while the Annapolis process still looking like a promising avenue for achieving Palestinian aspirations.

<Sub-Case One: LSI through Disengagement>

The aid cut-off created the opposite intended effect. Although it ensured that the Hamas-led government under Haniyeh was unable to pay salaries and was mired in financial hardship, it also gave Hamas a convenient pretense for why it failed at governance. Not only was it never given a true test of office, but it was enabled to play the role of national champion against the external oppressor. The authors of a recent study on American peace process diplomacy conclude that “although the United States intended to strengthen Abbas and those loyal to him, in many respects the aid cutoff made matters worse. In Gaza, for example, the inability to pay salaries and to maintain adequate operational support for the Fatah-affiliated PA security service [actually] weakened Abbas’s control and created opportunities for Hamas to step into the void”.²⁷⁹ Haim Malka concludes that the policy was “helping them

²⁷⁹ Kurtzer et al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 393.

consolidate their rule instead of weakening it” because the aid embargo put the group in the domestically popular position by which it is seen “defend[ing] Palestinians and is steadfast in the face of the West’s boycott. They posture and speechify”.²⁸⁰

American pressure on Abbas to consistently exclude Hamas also limited his room for political maneuver. Although some officials within Fatah actually supported the Quartet conditions as a means of boosting their hand against Hamas, others opposed the idea.²⁸¹ Kessler elaborates that over time “Abbas and his aides... were convinced that isolating Hamas would not work. They pleaded with U.S. officials for leeway in dealing with Hamas, but the answer was always the same – no, Hamas is a terrorist group”.²⁸²

The aid cutoff also had institutional consequences that were not constructive for Palestinian democracy. Fayyad argues that the temporary mechanisms created by foreign governments to avoid sending money to Hamas were destroying the institutions he had built up for ensuring accountable PA budgets at the Finance Ministry and that the money being sent instead to Abbas’s office was not subject to safeguards against corruption.²⁸³ Further, U.S. efforts to empower the president, making it the “center of gravity” in Palestinian politics in 2006 undermined the very reforms Bush had tried to promote in his first term by giving the PA a functional legislature and empowered prime minister.²⁸⁴

Finally, U.S. efforts to empower Fatah to deter Hamas actually achieved just the opposite, creating a spiral of violence that resulted in the crushing defeat of U.S.-

²⁸⁰ Malka, “The U.S. Should Support Palestinian Unity.”

²⁸¹ Hussein Agha, “Interview with the Author”, March 3, 2012.

²⁸² Kessler, *The Confidante*, 138.

²⁸³ Salam Fayyad, “Palestinian Hope Held Hostage,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 31, 2007.

²⁸⁴ Quote is from Item 3, “Action Plan for the Palestinian Presidency,” n.d., downloadable at Rose, “The Proof Is in the Paper Trail.” For the broader point, other relevant sources include: Buttu, “Interview with the Author”; Dunne, “A Two-State Solution Requires Palestinian Politics.”

sponsored forces in Gaza. This violence had been encouraged, not dampened, by U.S. diplomacy, with a keen observer pointing out just months before the collapse that the American mantra of supporting moderates actually translated into “seeking a decisive confrontation” between Hamas and Fatah and that America was “exacerbating this internal Palestinian power struggle by enticing Fatah with delusions of regaining power, along with shipments of equipment and cash... [in] a dangerous game that can only lead to more bloodshed”.²⁸⁵

<Sub-Case Two: LSI through Reengagement>

American efforts in the year that followed the Gaza coup were considerably more successful than before, arguably because the United States was finally demonstrating that Abbas could provide something that Hamas could not: a seemingly promising peace process involving Israel and the United States. Whereas disengagement failed abjectly, reengagement in the process with leaders based in the West Bank seemed to generate some initial success. However, when it became clear that this process would not produce lasting, tangible gains the edifice ground to a halt.

Promises of aid and public praise were inconsistent and did not track with developments on the ground. Foreign aid to the PA increased substantially, but Arab states were often hesitant to follow through on their pledges.²⁸⁶ American rhetorical support also began to waver. For instance, Bush’s speech to the Knesset that focused on Israeli threat perception without much consideration of the peace

²⁸⁵ Malka, “The U.S. Should Support Palestinian Unity.”

²⁸⁶ Glenn Kessler, “Arab Aid to Palestinians Often Doesn’t Fulfill Pledges,” *Washington Post*, July 27, 2008; Singh, “Interview with the Author.”

process or Palestinian aspirations in May of 2008 reportedly angered Abbas.²⁸⁷ CRS analysis during this period observed that “international pledges of support... have proven insufficient to cover the PA’s monthly budgetary expenses, occasionally requiring last-minute efforts by Fayyad and Blair to obtain outside assistance”.²⁸⁸

The vast increase in PA budgets after Paris certainly improved the fiscal and economic outlook in the West Bank, turning growth from negative to positive after the first half of 2007. However, the World Bank warned that GDP growth in the West Bank was still not be large enough to keep pace with population growth, resulting in falling income per capita. It concluded that “the contributing effects of the closures and movement restrictions cannot be overestimated”.²⁸⁹ Indeed, Diana Buttu argues facts on the ground were not really improved during Annapolis; “there was no way you could really say that there were massive amounts of checkpoints that were removed or that conditions for Palestinians were improving”.²⁹⁰ Of course, had Annapolis achieved results on the diplomatic track, this might have been overlooked. However, as Michael Singh acknowledges, “the Annapolis process... was an effort to create that kind of political path, to create that political horizon that Secretary Rice talked about. And to give the Palestinian people hope that negotiations and diplomacy could achieve their aspirations in a peaceful way and set up the possibility of peaceful coexistence with Israel. Now it didn’t work, you know

²⁸⁷ Charles Levinson, “Bush Wraps up Mideast Trip with a Thud, Analysts Say,” *USA Today*, May 19, 2008.

²⁸⁸ Zanotti, “U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians,” 20.

²⁸⁹ “Implementing the Palestinian Reform and Development Agenda: Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee,” 2.

²⁹⁰

obviously it didn't work".²⁹¹ Once the talks ground to a halt, it became increasingly evidence that problems on the ground were not going anywhere. Later, the prospects for economic development in the West Bank would further improve, but economic and political effects of restrictions on movement and access would continue to be felt.

Finally, supporting an embargo on the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip did not accrue political benefits to Washington. In many ways, the sanctions actually boosted Hamas's ability to consolidate its authority against potential challengers within the Gaza Strip by blocking other sources of commerce and revenue. Hamas not only took a leading role in the smuggling business near Rafah, but it was basically able to craft its institutional authority in Gaza *de novo* without serious competition from outside.²⁹² Nor did the external pressure produce a popular backlash that unseated Hamas. Hussein Agha reflects that, in this regard, "I've never heard a more daft misreading of Palestinian politics, and the blame accrues to Washington, not Hamas".²⁹³ Again, the isolation of Hamas succeeded in the limited sense to decreasing its contact with the outside world but failed in the sense of putting the movement in the populist position of advocating for national rights along with the basic humanitarian needs of their people.

In their initial shock at the fall of Gaza and their sense that Hamas was not prepared to play by the ordinary rules of competitive democratic politics, during this period U.S. officials stepped considerably past traditional pretenses, making

²⁹¹ Singh, "Interview with the Author."

²⁹² Yezid Sayigh, *Hamas Rule in Gaza: Three Years On* (Brandies University Crown Center for Middle East Studies, 2010).

²⁹³ Agha, "Interview with the Author."

clear their desire to not just oust Hamas but also strengthen President Abbas. This was apparently driven by the events in Gaza, which fostered in the impression that Palestinian politics were in a state of war and were not undergoing a period of competitive politics as usual. As the dust settled and it became increasingly evident that the Annapolis process would not substantially change Palestinian political affairs or living conditions, this practice by the Bush team likely added to the sense that Abbas was a foreign quisling, decreasing his standing on the ground.

Indeed, images of Mahmoud Abbas kissing American and Israeli officials continue to propagate on the Internet as a sign of public protest among many Palestinians at his closeness with disliked foreign officials when his people still have not yet achieved their aspirations. Further, Michele Dunne concludes that since Palestinian politics were frozen in 2007 “without a presidential election, legitimacy [has been] draining away from President Mahmoud Abbas; without a functioning Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and its ability to make laws, institution building is severely limited... while concerns about Hamas and terrorism are real and need to be taken seriously, it is time to consider that the organization cannot be pressured or starved out of existence or political relevance”.²⁹⁴

One area which support for Fayyad and Abbas strengthened their standing in a more lasting manner involves concrete support to PA security forces, which vastly increased after the Gaza coup. As a result the Dayton mission finally being given firm political backing from Washington to pursue a comprehensive program of building up Palestinian security forces loyal to Fatah. Whereas his efforts received

²⁹⁴ Dunne, “A Two-State Solution Requires Palestinian Politics,” 1–2.

no operational funds before June of 2007, afterwards his mission finally received funding for its programs and was able to cooperate not just with the Presidential Guard but all PA security forces in the West Bank.²⁹⁵ He also engaged in a highly successful effort to coordinate a transfer for day-to-day security responsibilities in Palestinian population centers from the IDF to forces under the Palestinian Authority. This support has restored PA security forces in the West Bank to a level comparable to before the second intifada, when they were demolished by the IDF, a development which had contributed to their poor performance during 2007 in Gaza.

Coding the Observable Implications

1. Perceptions of Sender Interests:

One area in which the theories tested by this dissertation offer divergent predictions involves the effect that perceptions of sender interests are predicted to have on variation in LSI occurrence. Theory #1 (national interests theory) expects that the incidence of LSI occurrence should be driven by objective strategic realities. Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) predicts that LSI should usually not occur on the Palestinian dyad because members of Congress and the pro-Israel lobby tend to believe that relative Palestinian moderates are actually not moderate enough. Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach) argues that meddling should be frequent due to the fact that members of the U.S. permanent bureaucracy that deal with Palestinian politics tend to prefer frequent, active engagement on

²⁹⁵ Steven White and P. J. Dermer, "How Obama Missed An Opportunity for Middle East Peace: Why Did the President Ignore the Only Part of the 'Peace Process' That Was Working?," *Foreign Policy (online)*, May 18, 2012.

behalf of relative moderates. Theory #4 (leadership theory) anticipates that variation in the occurrence of meddling should depend primarily upon the preferences of top American officials. In this regard, the data provides much stronger evidence for leadership theory than its structural alternatives.

Lobby-legislative theory receives comparatively little in the way of support from the case material. LSI took place during both sub-cases, a result which is in stark contrast to the expectations of the theory. Further, Michael Singh argues that Congress was actually supportive of American efforts to bolster Fatah, especially after the Gaza coup. When asked how the Hill reacted to administration efforts to build up Abbas, Singh reflects that “Congress I think bought into it. I think they were supportive. There were always concerns about who are we giving the money to, exactly where is it going, exactly what is it going for, I think that’s appropriate, that’s Congress’s role to exercise that oversight... [but] you still see basic support for this idea that we can’t walk away from responsible Palestinian leaders because the alternative is the extremist Palestinians”.²⁹⁶ Members of Congress did press the administration to somewhat delay and modify its package of security assistance to PA forces under Dahlan during late 2006 and early 2007, but as a firsthand participant in this episode I am confident that the revised package would almost certainly have been approved. Even AIPAC seemed to warm rather uncharacteristically to the possibility just after the Gaza coup that Abbas and Fayyad should be supported, provided they carried through meticulously on their pledges

²⁹⁶ Singh, “Interview with the Author.”

to help Israel and move against Hamas.²⁹⁷

Further, the way in which the Bush administration pursued LSI during the first sub-case strongly contradicts the expectations of the bureaucratic politics approach. Although working-level officials were in favor of using American resources to bolster Abbas, their preferences did not line up with the administration's policy of disengaging from the Mideast peace process at the time.

Finally, objective circumstances also do not necessarily point in direction of the policy that the Bush administration pursued, especially in sub-case number two. One can envision the events of June 2007 being perceived in one of two different ways. In some ways, the coup justified the administration's belief that the risk posed by Hamas was now higher and the opportunity to help Palestinian moderates was increased once PA cohabitation fell apart. However, the flipside was that any potential strategy for resolving the conflict would now have to be a three-state solution. Also, Israeli hardliners could now say that they could not make a deal because Hamas would veto it or demand later renegotiation. The event was seen by the Bush team as a reason for reengaging, but one also could have seen it go a different way, especially if the Secretary of State had not been Condoleezza Rice, who was pivotal in convincing Bush. Indeed, it took repeated efforts by her over a series of months to actually persuade him that going to Annapolis was a good idea.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁷ See for instance "New Palestinian Government Taking Important Steps Needed for Peace" (AIPAC Memo, July 5, 2007); "Annapolis: Potential for Progress If Arabs Demonstrate Seriousness by Matching Israel's Commitment" (AIPAC Memo, December 4, 2007). On the other hand, see "AIPAC Expresses Concern over Abbas' Conduct" (Press Release, March 4, 2008).

²⁹⁸ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 600–601.

2. Perceptions of Close Contests

Another area in which the theories diverge has to do with the actors' perceptions of close political contests abroad. Although national interests theory anticipates that LSI should occur in lockstep with objective evidence of developments as they occur abroad, leadership theory argues that the subjective perceptions and personal distractions of top leaders in the sender state impose a mediating constraint on this relationship.

In this regard, the balance of evidence seems to support the agency-based approach. Hamas and Fatah were locked in effectively a zero-sum battle from the moment the PLC election results showed that Hamas had been victorious. However, it was only after the fall of Gaza that Washington decided to use all of the tools at its disposal to adjudicate this dispute, not just retiring from the conflict in hopes that the results would somehow shake out in Washington's favor. Furthermore, Bush's intense preoccupation with Iraq into 2006 may also help explain American reluctance to seriously engage in Palestinian politics at the time.

3. Patterns of Domestic Debate:

Another area in which the theories diverge involves the patterns of domestic deliberation in advance of LSI. If domestic structural forces such as Congress, lobbyists, and bureaucrats are in the loop about administration plans, that would provide evidence for Theories 2 and/or 3. However, if they are generally in the dark about administration initiatives until after the fact, that would provide greater

support for the agency-based approach.

In this regard, the case provides strong evidence for the leadership theory. Although Jacob Walles seems to have been in on the strategy as a conduit between Rice and Abbas, the circle of knowledge seems to end around there. Most notably, a working-level official at the State Department reflected “No, I can’t say someone said that or I saw it in a cable”.²⁹⁹ The top official for USAID in the West Bank after the Gaza coup agrees that he never once saw anything in writing demonstrating that the administration was pursuing a West Bank First strategy to bolster Abbas and Fayyad, even though this was obviously an administration goal.³⁰⁰

4. Cycles of Domestic Power:

While Theory #2 (the lobby-legislative approach) expects that lobbyists and legislators should be especially powerful during periods of divided government or in the lead-up to elections, there seems to be little support for this perspective in the data. Although LSI did seem to weaken toward the end of 2008, at a time when American elections were approaching, the theory fares especially poorly with regard to the divided government prediction. These last two years of Bush’s presidency were the only period in his presidency in which the Democrats held clear-cut majorities in either, let alone both, chambers of Congress. However, partisan intervention by the United States continued in Palestinian politics full bore.

5. Bureaucratic Freelancing:

²⁹⁹ Former US Official, “Interview with the Author.”

³⁰⁰ Howard Sumka, “Interview with the Author”, November 3, 2011.

Another area in which the theories diverge pertains to bureaucratic freelancing. Under Theory #3 (the bureaucratic politics approach), pursuit of LSI by working-level officials without senior authorization should be relatively frequent. On the other hand, Theory #4 (leadership theory) predicts that this should be relatively rare and conditioned upon a lack of oversight from top U.S. officials. However, the evidence in this case is relatively opaque. Generally speaking, both instances of America LSI (first from 2006 to 2007 and then from 2007 through 2009) appear to have been approved by either Rice or Bush. Walles's message to Abbas in late 2006 was a re-articulation of Rice's recent message, not an innovation of policy *de novo*. However, Bush does not seem to have been particularly involved in either the first effort or the second one after the Annapolis talks began to slow down. Yet his disengagement does not seem to have produced notable freelancing.

6. Consistency of Message:

One of the main determinants of efficacy for LSI seems to be whether or not the message conveyed by the sender state's policies is expressed in a consistent manner or not. Theory #1 anticipates that this should be the case, but the other theories emphasize institutional or personal biases that might undermine this consistency.

However, the Bush administration's message was notably split. On one hand, Bush promised and re-promised that his administration would ensure a two-state solution by the end of his term. On the other hand, when it became clear that the Annapolis process was not yielding comprehensive agreement between the parties

on their own he made clear that he was not going to exert American leverage to help bridge gaps between the parties, let alone get engaged in the specifics of the talks. His hesitancy to publicly exert American political capital for the purpose of bringing home a deal, even an interim one codifying areas of agreement and progress between the parties, ultimately served to sap the effort to bolster Abbas of much of its vigor.

7. Suitability of Message:

Finally, the last area in which the theories diverge involves whether the message expressed by officials in the sender state is suitable to the political dynamics in the target state, including whether that message meets the requirements of the sender's favored protégé. Theory #1 expects that this should always be likely, but theories 2 through 4 expect that this appropriateness may often be skewed either by institutional or personal biases.

The fact that the Bush team pursued a highly problematic strategy for strengthening Abbas during the earlier sub-case, stretching from 2006 to 2007, points in the direction of institutional or personal biases. Washington's insistence on disengaging from the peace process entirely – in a manner that evidently worried even Abbas – contradicts the expectation of national interests theory that suitable messaging should be unproblematic. Further, the administration's willingness to temporarily employ a more effective strategy in late 2007 seems to point in the direction of leadership theory and away from the lobby-legislative approach. In all, the evidence on all seven observable implications in this case seems to point in the

direction of Theory #4.

Conclusion

Upon review, the Bush administration's repeated attempts to influence Palestinian politics were colored by the president's reluctance to push for a full-fledged, active peace process with America as a concerned participant. His willingness to countenance a Road Map for peace boosted Washington's ability to get the moderate Mahmoud Abbas appointed prime minister of the Palestinian Authority in 2003, but U.S. behavior also contributed to his resignation by withholding the sort of concrete political benefits that he was seeking to mitigate the occupation and then partially abandoning him that August.

The Bush administration again weakened Abu Mazen's standing in 2005 by refusing to push for final status talks before the PLC debacle and by devoting comparatively little political capital even to asking Sharon to "coordinate" disengagement with Abbas. Finally, although the Bush administration encountered greater success through reengaging with the peace process in starting in 2007 than disengaging from it in 2006, American hesitancy to push for peace beyond what the parties will themselves offer and its unwillingness to float bridging proposals helped ensure that that process would yield little in the way of lasting political change.

Since the fall of Gaza to Hamas, direct aid flows to the PA have resumed, and Secretary Rice launched a final status political process at Annapolis in 2007 that she admits was designed to sustain moderates. However, the stagnation of final status talks – which has been further locked in since the election of Netanyahu in Israel –

has undermined this strategy to bolster Abu Mazen and Fayyad by removing one of its key conceptual pillars. Without meaningful peace talks or a functional Palestinian political sphere, Washington's West Bank First strategy – which continues to this day – seems a dead letter, in place only because there is nothing ambitious with which it has been replaced.

Chapter XI.

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The Iran Shadow Case *(World War II to Present)*

The following chapter describes U.S. efforts to influence Iranian internal politics from World War II to present. As such, it offers an important shadow case for exploring how the patterns derived in Chapters III through X apply beyond the Arab-Israeli conflict and Mideast peace process. For, although Iran is yet another nation in the Middle East, it offers some useful comparative leverage on several different study variables.

Iran is comprised of a different predominant ethnic group than either Israel or Palestine, and it is located in a part of the Mideast that is largely removed from the Arab-Israeli conflict (despite recent efforts by Iran to shape that struggle through proxies in recent years). Its government has a different sort of relationship with Washington than either Israel or the Palestinian Authority does – as an avowed enemy rather than an ally or a disfavored client – but it also displays variation on this dimension over time, since the Iranian regime used to be extremely close to Washington before 1979.

Thus, looking at Iran before the revolution provides an instance of American intervention in the politics of a dictatorial Cold War ally; looking at Iran after the revolution offers an example of U.S. meddling in the politics of an opponent deemed beyond the pale, in which there are clear domestic incentives to being

hawkish on issues regime change and government change. In both instances, Washington has shown little regard for the sanctity of Iran's institutions of democracy (in much the same way its leaders have acted, for that matter). In both periods, the U.S. has often tried to tip the balance in Iran's domestic political contests toward perceived moderates, and in both periods it has also adhered to the fiction that it does not meddle in Iran's internal affairs.¹

The Case Studies

Roosevelt & Truman:

During World War II, the Soviet Union and Great Britain occupied Iran and split it into two zones starting in 1941, with the north going to the Soviets and the south going to the British. The United States acceded to Iran being carved up by its allies as an element of wartime necessity, but it nurtured hopes that Iran would be opened to American influence after the war. For instance, a 1943 State Department memo reflects that "although Russian policy has been fundamentally aggressive and British policy fundamentally defensive in character, the result in both cases has been interference with the internal affairs of Iran, amounting at times to a virtually complete negation of Iranian sovereignty and independence". The document went on

¹ This chapter employs somewhat looser standards of evidence, since its purpose is only to consider generalizability to a single context beyond the Arab-Israeli peace process, not to write another full record of diplomatic history. I have only used openly published materials for coding episodes on the U.S.-Iran dyad. These include scholarly publications, policy monographs, newspapers and memoirs by former officials. Rather than conducting a rigorous theory test at the end of each case history, the explicit comparison of theories according to seven dimensions of observable implication is omitted.

to explore the idea that “so far, we have rested our response to this appeal primarily upon our interest in winning the war. I wonder if we should not also begin, privately, to base our response upon our interest in winning the peace? The United States, alone, is in a position to build up Iran to the point at which it will stand in need of neither British nor Russian assistance to maintain order in its own house”.²

When the Soviet Union failed to remove its troops from Iran at the end of the war, Iranian officials elicited Truman’s diplomatic backing in 1946 to help produce Moscow’s eventual withdrawal.³ In 1947, the Shah tried to solicit American support for him to remove an activist prime minister, Ahmad Qavam. At first, the Americans rebuffed his request but later reconsidered.⁴ Although in 1947 the Truman administration unveiled the president’s new doctrine for defending countries at risk of Soviet-inspired insurrection but continued to give Iran only symbolic support, in part for fear of provoking Moscow.⁵ However, mutual cooperation increased considerably after 1950, as the U.S. began to consider broadening containment to a geographic area broader than strongpoint defense in only Europe and Japan.

Eisenhower:

In their last months in office, Secretary of State Dean Acheson and, presumably, President Truman, adhered to the hope that tensions between the UK and Iran’s government under Mosaddeq could be resolved peaceably and therefore

² Memorandum is quoted in James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (Yale University Press, 1989), 19.

³ *Ibid.*, 36–38.

⁴ Abbas Milani, *The Shah* (Macmillan, 2012), 128–129.

⁵ Mark J. Gasiorowski, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah: Building a Client State in Iran* (Cornell University Press, 1991), 52.

prevent an outbreak of chaos that would allow a possible takeover by the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party.⁶ However, a change in staffing on the U.S. side increased its openness to promoting a coup. As Mark Gasiorowski writes in a volume produced for a recent conference by the National Security Archive on the 1953 coup in Iran, perhaps the most comprehensive survey of U.S. decision-making during the crisis:

“top officials in the incoming Eisenhower administration favored a more aggressive approach toward the Soviet Union and its allies, both globally and in Iran. During the 1952 election campaign... John Foster Dulles and other Republicans called for a ‘rollback of the Iran Curtain’ and accused Truman of letting Iran become ‘a second China’. Although their enthusiasm for ‘rollback’ later waned, Dulles, his brother Allen, and other officials slated for top positions in the new administration were eager to take a more aggressive posture toward the Soviets... [and] were more eager than their predecessors to use the CIA’s covert political action capabilities. The Dulles brothers discussed the British proposal for a coup frequently in the weeks before Eisenhower was inaugurated”.⁷

Thus, Eisenhower was much more open to using covert against in Iran, which he approved in March after Mosaddeq called off negotiations with the British.⁸ Of course, the 1953 coup falls outside of this study’s scope conditions, since it primarily involves the use of force rather than the tools of diplomacy, but the decision-making dynamics seem surprisingly analogous to instances of LSI. For the remainder of his term, he focused on strengthening the Iranian regime with economic and military aid, providing over \$1 billion by 1960.⁹ In a sign of growing ties, Iran received state visits by Vice President Nixon, Secretary of State Dulles, and eventually even President Eisenhower.¹⁰

⁶ Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1987), 683–685; Mark J. Gasiorowski, “Coup d’Etat Against Mosaddeq,” in *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran*, ed. Mark J. Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne (Syracuse University Press, 2004), 231.

⁷ Gasiorowski, “Coup d’Etat Against Mosaddeq,” 231–232.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁹ Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 113–114.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 118–120.

Kennedy & Johnson:

The new American administration came to office believing that the Iranian government, which was facing an economic crisis and major public protests, was at serious risk of collapse. The president was particularly disturbed by an April 1961 interview with Walter Lippman in which he heard Nikita Khrushchev single out Iran as an example of a country headed for a leftist revolution.¹¹ The Iran desk over at State even produced a no-holds-barred report weighing the risks of abandoning the Shah in favor of popularly-based nationalist politicians instead, although the report rejected this option as too risky.¹²

The new president organized a special task force to determine how he should respond to the turmoil in Tehran, to which he gave an extremely broad mandate, making clear that all options were on the table (which implicitly included abandoning the Shah).¹³ The task force concluded that a “slide toward chaos in Iran could result in as grave a set-back as in South Vietnam” unless the U.S. were to push the Shah into a “controlled revolution” of reform from above, in alliance with the country’s disaffected middle class.¹⁴

Based on the task force’s recommendations, Kennedy ordered a new policy toward Tehran in an NSC meeting on May 24, 1961, which called for the U.S. to “make a major effort to back” Ali Amini, Iran’s new reformist prime minister, as the “best instrument in sight for promoting orderly political and economic, and social

¹¹ Ibid., 132.

¹² Ibid., 133.

¹³ Milani, *The Shah*, 251.

¹⁴ Ibid., 252.

revolution” in Iran. It said the U.S. “should be prepared to tolerate certain seemingly anti-American actions by Amini which do not really damage any major American interest” and to “encourage the formation and growth of broadly based political parties in Iran” while “more actively encouraging the Shah to move toward a more constitutional role”.¹⁵ The U.S. deterred the military overthrowing Amini, and the Shah later complained that Kennedy forced Amini upon him.¹⁶ The Shah eventually outmaneuvered Amini and succeeded in dismissing him in July of 1962, shortly after a trip to Washington in which Abbas Milani suspects – but is unable to prove – that President Kennedy agreed in a private meeting to abandon the premier in favor of Iran’s monarch.¹⁷

After Kennedy’s assassination in 1963, the U.S. devoted considerably less attention to Iranian domestic affairs. As Mark Gasiorowski explains, President Johnson’s team was

“increasingly preoccupied with the Vietnam War and later the Arab-Israeli conflict... distracting its attention from Iran and further reducing the salience of perimeter defence... together with U.S. policy makers’ growing confidence in the shah’s ability to contain domestic unrest... Sharply declining U.S. military and economic aid reduced the ability of U.S. policy makers to pressure the shah for further reforms. The State Department and the CIA also drastically reduced their intelligence gathering capabilities in Iran in the mid- and later 1960s. The size of the Tehran embassy’s political section fell from twenty-one in 1963 to ten in 1969 and only six in 1972. The CIA dropped many of its Iranian agents”.¹⁸

Additionally, the Shah, who was “still smarting from American pressures applied during the Kennedy administration... determined that he would use all means at his disposal to win the Johnson administration to his personal cause,” working hard to

¹⁵ Quotes are from *Ibid.*, 265.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 267, 320.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 286–287.

¹⁸ Gasiorowski, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 99.

build a close relationship with Kennedy's replacement.¹⁹ Burgeoning oil revenues also bolstered the monarch's bargaining leverage.²⁰

Nixon & Ford:

In the years that followed, the Shah's leverage over Washington increased. With the Vietnam debacle reaching a crescendo, the United States looked to local allies to take up the slack in ensuring regional stability under the Nixon Doctrine. The Shah also had maintained a strong relationship with President Nixon going back to his days as vice president under Eisenhower, and he allegedly even tried to help Nixon get elected in 1960 and 1968 – for example, one of the Shah's close confidants accuses him of giving illicit funds to Nixon's campaigns.²¹

The new administration also shared a common worldview with the Shah. As Henry Kissinger explains that

“Under the shah's leadership, the land bridge between Asia and Europe, so often the hinge of world history, was pro-American and pro-West beyond any challenge. Alone among the countries of the region – Israel aside – Iran made friendship with the United States the starting point of its policy. That it was based on a cold-eyed assessment that a threat to Iran would most likely come from the Soviet Union, in combination with radical Arab states, is only another way of saying that the shah's view of the realities of world politics paralleled our own”.²²

In response to a request from the Shah to “protect me,” Nixon made clear to his

¹⁹ Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 170.

²⁰ Gasiorowski, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 113.

²¹ For this specific claim, see Milani, *The Shah*, 248. See also Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 137.

²² Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Simon and Schuster, 2011), 1262.

aides that Iranian arms requests “should not be second-guessed”.²³ His administration proceeded to sell weapons to the Shah far in excess of what bureaucrats at the Defense and State Departments thought was advisable; over the next four years, Iranian orders made up more than half of all orders for U.S. arms sales abroad.²⁴ With Kissinger still holding the top office at Foggy Bottom, Ford administration largely maintained these patterns of relations. His government continued unfettered weapons sales to Iran, approved a major economic accord with Iran, and uttered little complaint when the Shah sold out America’s Kurdish allies it had previously been using to undermine Saddam Hussein.²⁵

Carter:

Despite disagreements on arms sales and human rights issues, the Carter administration saw strong value in reinforcing the Shah. James Bill explains that “early in the Carter administration the shah had effectively convinced the new president that the Pahlavi regime was exceptionally important to the United States... the issue of human rights did not figure heavily in the political equation; it was far down on Carter’s list of issues concerning the United States and Iran”.²⁶ Indeed, the president had decided that “expression of concern would not change the policies of the shah” and should not get in the way of crucial ties.²⁷ He proclaimed near the end

²³ Gregory F. Treverton, “Iran, 1978-1979: Coping with the Unthinkable,” in *Dealing with Dictators: Dilemmas of U.S. Diplomacy and Intelligence Analysis, 1945-1990*, ed. Ernest R. May and Philip Zelikow (MIT Press, 2006), 112; Kissinger, *White House Years*, 1264.

²⁴ Treverton, “Iran, 1978-1979: Coping with the Unthinkable,” 112; Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 201.

²⁵ Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 204–207.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 232.

²⁷ Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (University of Arkansas Press, 1995), 437.

of 1977 that “Iran under the great leadership of the Shah is an island of stability in one of the most troubled areas of the world”.²⁸ As Secretary of State Vance explains, “we decided early on that it was in our national interest to support the Shah”.²⁹

Thus, when the revolution hit, the U.S. administration did its utmost before the Islamic Revolution to reinforce the shah against burgeoning unrest. For most of the crisis, Carter relied on his national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who “simply wanted to see the shah’s regime remain, wanted to see us support him and wasn’t going to hear anything that contradicted that position”; his attitude was “tell me how to make it work”.³⁰ Some officials at the State Department came to believe that “only a political solution capitalizing on the ‘moderates of the center’ could succeed,” but “without the support of the secretary of state they were unable to argue their views at the highest level”.³¹

In early November, Brzezinski received Carter’s backing to have the ambassador in Tehran tell the Shah that America still supported him “without reservation” and that the time had come for “decisive action,” while liberalization could wait until calm was restored.³² Even in his more uncertain moments that December, Carter admitted “we personally prefer that the shah maintain a major role in the government”.³³

A week after the Shah left Iran in January, the Americans tried to support the

²⁸ Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 233.

²⁹ Cyrus R. Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America’s Foreign Policy* (Simon and Schuster, 1983), 317.

³⁰ Assessment of the State Department’s Iran desk officer, Henry Precht. Treverton, “Iran, 1978-1979: Coping with the Unthinkable,” 117.

³¹ Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: America’s Fateful Encounter in Iran* (I.B. Tauris, 1985), 71–72. See also Vance, *Hard Choices*, 327–330.

³² Sick, *All Fall Down*, 68.

³³ Treverton, “Iran, 1978-1979: Coping with the Unthinkable,” 126.

interim Bakhtiar government by sending a message to Ayatollah Khomeini via an aide. Using diplomatic language, the missive discouraged the ayatollah from returning to Iran lest the American-backed armed forces arrest the political process with a coup.³⁴ Even after Khomeini flew to Tehran in February, Carter, Brzezinski and others within the administration continued to hold out hope in the possibility of a supporting coup until it became evident that the military itself was no longer up to the task.³⁵

The case seems to fit the expectations of the dissertation's theory quite strongly. This includes the matters of pretenses, secretive deliberation and aversion to widely distributed paper, as well as the importance of personal distractions.

For instance, the U.S. letter through his aide, Yazdi, in which Washington implicitly threatened a coup if Khomeini came back, was cloaked in classic pretense language. In it, the U.S. emphasized the two sides' mutual interests in avoiding a coup, vowed that the U.S. opposed outside interference in Iran's politics, and implied that Khomeini's return to Iran would be "premature" at the present time because it would risk triggering an "extra-constitutional confrontation," that is, the U.S. would be inclined to give its allies in the Iranian military a green light to launch a coup.³⁶

The case also seems to demonstrate patterns of leaders operating in a manner designed to shield their true intentions from leaks. This includes preemptively taking steps during the deliberative process to avoid formal decision-making channels, instead operating on a strict need-to-know basis and issuing

³⁴ Sick, *All Fall Down*, 146.

³⁵ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977-1981* (Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1983), 391–393; Sick, *All Fall Down*, 152–156.

³⁶ Sick, *All Fall Down*, 146.

verbal orders instead of written directives whenever possible.

For example, during the 1978 turmoil in Iran, American officials discussing LSI often communicated via telephone instead of in classified cables for fear that their words would “appear, almost verbatim, in the *New York Times*”.³⁷ When the desk officer for Iran wrote a memo to his bosses insisting that the Shah’s days were limited and that they should begin promoting a council of notables instead, his cover letter candidly vented that “I have probably confided more than I should to a piece of paper, but I doubt I have much of a future anyway”.³⁸

Ironically, Sick points out the author “was unaware that George Ball’s Council of Notables idea had already been floated to Sullivan and that he had rejected it. This is a measure of the degree to which the circle of information had contracted. Critical policy messages were no longer being distributed below the level of the assistant secretary” and points out that “despite [the author’s] verbal criticism of continued support for the shah, which was quite well known throughout the policy community... [he] had waited until December 19 to put his thoughts on paper”.³⁹

Officials used unusual back channels to coordinate meddling with their counterparts abroad. For instance, the administration’s November 2nd private message of support to the Shah was technically described as a personal message from the national security advisor to the American ambassador in Tehran, and Brzezinski also was holding repeated backchannel conversations with the Iranian

³⁷ Treverton, “Iran, 1978-1979: Coping with the Unthinkable,” 131.

³⁸ Sick, *All Fall Down*, 121.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

ambassador to Washington without the State Department's knowledge.⁴⁰ Vance reflects that he was only informed about Brzezinski's back channel conversations through his own sources on the ground and that he confronted the national security advisor in front of President Carter about having been left out of the loop.⁴¹

Finally, personal distractions seemed to matter a lot, which should not be the case if meddling were only driven by objective international circumstances. Carter's efforts to shore up the Shah came too little, too late, in part because he was initially caught up with Arab-Israeli issues. When protests against the Shah escalated into a rebellion in the fall of 1978, he and his advisers were initially so fixated on Israeli-Egyptian talks at Camp David that they failed to recognize the severity of the emerging rebellion against the regime.⁴² He did take time out from the summit to place a phone call to the Shah to reiterate his personal support after the Black Friday massacre, but the action betrayed a grave underestimation of the regime's problems and convinced the opposition that Washington would not support even measured liberalization.⁴³

Reagan:

In 1985 and 1986, the Reagan administration undertook the secret arms sales to Iran through Israel that ultimately became part of the Iran-Contra scandal when some of the proceeds were redirected to support the Contras in Nicaragua against the intent of Congress. What many observers tend to forget is that the effort

⁴⁰ Ibid., 68; Treverton, "Iran, 1978-1979: Coping with the Unthinkable," 128.

⁴¹ Vance, *Hard Choices*, 328.

⁴² Treverton, "Iran, 1978-1979: Coping with the Unthinkable," 118-119.

⁴³ Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 257-258.

first emerged as part of an ambitious American and Israeli effort to try and influence the internal power dynamics within the Iranian regime.

Indeed, one of the very few documents bearing Reagan's imprimatur from the debacle, a covert action finding that was withheld from Congress, explains that this was literally the administration's number one objective for the arms sales: "I hereby find that the following operation... is important to the national security of the United States... for the purpose of: (1) establishing a more moderate government in Iran, (2) obtaining from them significant intelligence... and (3) furthering the release of the American hostages held in Beirut".⁴⁴

At the time, American analysts were abuzz about rumors that Ayatollah Khomeini was ill and that the Iran-Iraq War was creating new openings for possible encroachments by pro-Soviet factions within the Iranian government. For instance, the Near East officer on the National Intelligence Council wrote at the time that "the Khomeini regime is faltering and... we will soon see a struggle for succession. The U.S. has almost no cards to play; the USSR has many... our urgent need is to develop... some leverage in the race for influence in Tehran".⁴⁵

President Reagan suggests in his follow-up memoir, *An American Life*, that these rumors did influence his receptivity to selling arms that might bolster Iranian moderates: "at that time, there were reports worldwide that the ayatollah was

⁴⁴ "Memorandum from John M. Poindexter to President Ronald Reagan 'Covert Action Finding Regarding Iran,' with Attached Presidential Finding", January 17, 1986, Document 16 - <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB210/index.htm>, Digital National Security Archive.

⁴⁵ Graham E. Fuller, "Toward a Policy on Iran - Memorandum for the Director of Central Intelligence and Deputy Director of Central Intelligence", May 17, 1985, www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC_0001341948/DOC_0001341948.pdf, CIA Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Electronic Reading Room. The document was also distributed to top Mideast officials at the NSC and Department of State.

extremely ill... and intelligence reports indicated that several factions had formed to jockey for control of Iran after the ayatollah's death. From our point of view, reestablishing a friendly relationship with this strategically located country – while preventing the Soviets from doing the same thing – was very attractive... we wanted to ensure that the next government in Teheran was moderate and friendly".⁴⁶

The LSI element of the Iran arms deal was essential. Reagan explains that Bud McFarlane had described the plan's Iranian beneficiaries as "moderate, politically influential Iranians" who "wanted to establish a quiet relationship with U.S. leaders as a prelude to reestablishing formal relations between our countries following the death of the Ayatollah Khomeini".⁴⁷ Henceforth, Reagan repeatedly refers to these Iranians, in *American Life* as "the Iranian moderates".

Further, he makes clear that "here was a bona fide opportunity to shape the future in the Middle East, take the initiative, and preempt the Soviets in an important corner of the world. As I've said, we wanted moderates running the Iranian government. I would not have entertained the plan for a second if the Israelis had said they wanted to sell American weapons to the ayatollah or to his militia, which was operated separately from the Iranian army; it did not seem unreasonable that Iranian moderates who opposed the ayatollah's authoritarian regime would ask for weapons in order to strengthen their position and enhance their credibility with Iran's military leaders. Iran's military forces were to some extent independent of the ayatollah. We knew of many cases where factions fighting for control of a country – often trying to introduce democracy to it – had found it

⁴⁶ Ronald Reagan, *An American Life* (Simon and Schuster, 2011), 504.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

necessary to get the country's military on their side".⁴⁸

In his address to the nation apologizing for the scandal, President Reagan reflected that "It was a mistake. I undertook the original Iran initiative in order to develop relations with those who might assume leadership in a post-Khomeini government. It's clear from the [Tower Commission] Board's report, however, that I let my personal concern for the hostages spill over into the geopolitical strategy of reaching out to Iran".⁴⁹ He writes that "looking back now... some of those 'moderates' may have had links to the Ayatollah Khomeini's government... or behaved at times like bait-and-switch con men".⁵⁰ And even though "I still believe that the policy that led us to attempt to open up a channel to moderate Iranians wasn't wrong... I may not have asked enough questions about how the Iranian initiative was being conducted".⁵¹

As I argue elsewhere in this project, the president's style of management seems to be a critical determinant of whether or not bureaucratic freelancing is possible against his wishes. In his apology to the nation, Reagan noted that "much has been said about my management style... when it came to managing the NSC staff, let's face it, my style didn't match its previous track record. I've already begun correcting this... there'll be no more freelancing by individuals when it comes to our national security".⁵²

Because of the secretive nature of American behavior in selling arms to

⁴⁸ Ibid., 506.

⁴⁹ Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Nation on Iran-Contra" (The Miller Center at Virginia University - Presidential Studies, March 4, 1987).

⁵⁰ Reagan, *An American Life*, 542.

⁵¹ Ibid., 540-541.

⁵² Reagan, "Address to the Nation on Iran-Contra."

Tehran, the Tower Commission's report, specifically its chapter on "What Was Wrong" (Part IV), puts into focus many of the biggest challenges with LSI policy writ large, even though the scandal was a rather unique application of LSI. The report argues that "the arms transfers to Iran and the activities of the NSC staff in support of the Contras are case studies in the perils of policy pursued outside the constraints of orderly process... this pattern persisted in the implementation of the Iran initiative... the initiative fell within the traditional jurisdictions of the Departments of State, Defense, and CIA. Yet these agencies were largely ignored. Great reliance was placed on a network of private operators and intermediaries. How this initiative was to be carried out never received adequate attention from the NSC principals or a tough working-level review... the result was an unprofessional and, in substantial part, unsatisfactory operation. In all this process, Congress was never notified".⁵³ Although LSI typically does not involve the sort of statutory violations that Reagan's arms sales eventually incurred, the episode serves as a cautionary tale. Presidential diplomacy in the pursuit of leadership selection intervention can be astute and swift, but it can also run the risk of being unprofessional and counterproductive if the president is not guiding policy in the right direction.

As in the broader arena of LSI, the Tower Commission report also emphasizes that "the whole decision process was too informal... no formal minutes seem to have been kept. Decisions subsequently taken by the President were not formally recorded. An exception was the January 17 Finding, but even this was apparently not circulated or shown to key U.S. officials. The effect of this informality

⁵³ John Goodwin Tower, Edmund S. Muskie, and Brent Scowcroft, *The Tower Commission Report: The Full Text of the President's Special Review Board* (Bantam Books, 1987), 62.

was that the initiative lacked a formal institutional record... It made it difficult to determine where the initiative stood, and to learn lessons from the record that could guide future action... the Board can attest first hand to the problem of conducting a review in the absence of such records".⁵⁴

This author can also attest firsthand that conducting research on LSI behavior is extraordinarily difficult, even when it is not in the wake of an enormous legal and political scandal breaking out into the public realm. However, just because assembling a record of this behavior is difficult does not mean that it should not be done. In fact, often the most difficult topics of inquiry can be the most in need of serious study. Governments' natural inclinations in this issue area – neither keeping written records nor acknowledging such involvement retrospectively – makes it especially prone to non-evaluative biases.⁵⁵ This heightens the risk of pathological foreign policy behavior in case after case and adds to the importance of serious outside analyses such as this study being conducted instead.

Bush 41:

The George H. W. Bush administration explored the possibility of again working with moderate elements in Iran under President Hashemi Rafsanjani to

⁵⁴ Ibid., 70–71.

⁵⁵ On a discussion of non-evaluation in international relations, see Stephen William Van Evera, "Causes of War" (Ph.D. Dissertation - University of California, Berkeley, 1984), chap. IX: Non-Evaluation, pp. 453–499; Stephen Van Evera, "Why States Believe Foolish Ideas: Non-Self Evaluation by States and Societies," in *Perspectives in Structural Realism*, ed. Andrew K. Hanami (Palgrave, 2003), 163–198. For application to a non-IR context, see also Aaron Wildavsky, "The Self-Evaluating Organization," *Public Administration Review* 32, no. 5 (October 1972): 509–520.

secure the release of American hostages held by Shi'ite groups in Lebanon.⁵⁶ Ken Pollack believes that Rafsanjani's inability to produce quick results and recent memory persuaded the president and his advisors "that the United States could not start a rapprochement with a faction inside the Iranian government; until Iran as a whole was ready, it would be a waste of America's time – and a potentially embarrassing one, as their own experiences with Iran-contra reminded them".⁵⁷ However, it is also possible that this was an episode of American LSI; the data currently available is somewhat weak for either perspective.

American outreach through the UN regarding the hostages was likely influenced by leadership changes in Tehran, since it started in early August of 1989, just weeks after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini and the election of perceived moderate Rafsanjani as president.⁵⁸ UN officials agreed to frame a message from President Bush as UN Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar's description of Bush's thinking. The idea was to shield Rafsanjani from Iranian radicals if he were forced to admit receiving the message because "we felt that we needed to protect Rafsanjani as the new man in Teheran".⁵⁹

One of the main intermediaries for the hostage quid pro quo was Giandomenico Picco, an aide to Cuéllar. As he explains, even this abortive non-case seems to fit the dynamics of paper aversion described in the other episodes and

⁵⁶ In addition to the UN source cited below, for more on this period see Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: Iran, the U.S., and the Twisted Path to Confrontation* (Macmillan, 2009), 178–181; Ali M. Ansari, *Confronting Iran: The Failure of American Foreign Policy and the Next Great Crisis in the Middle East* (Basic Books, 2006), 131–132.

⁵⁷ Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America* (Random House, Inc., 2005), 247.

⁵⁸ Giandomenico Picco, *Man Without a Gun: One Diplomat's Secret Struggle to Free the Hostages, Fight Terrorism, and End a War* (Times Books, 1999), 111–112.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 111–2.

dyads, perhaps amplified in this instance because the lives of hostages hung in the balance. He writes in his memoirs that “I never mentioned the subject of the hostages in New York outside the most tightly restricted circles; success, if we were to have it, required complete secrecy within the United Nations itself – virtually an oxymoron. Even within the secretary-general’s office we never discussed the case in ways that might reveal my involvement. Everything I did on the hostage issue was marked for the files, “No Distribution. Original 1 – Sec. Gen., G.P. Copy.” It went into the “pink folder,” inviolable to everyone except my assistant... the entire affair became the exclusive province of Pérez de Cuéllar and myself... to this day, I regret that, during those years, it was necessary to deceive the secretary general’s *chef de cabinet*, Virenda Dayal, who had no knowledge of the details of my operations – or even my whereabouts... my suspicion was that Dayal, an Indian national, tended to share information with diplomats of various countries in order to strengthen his bureaucratic position as somebody ‘in the know’.”⁶⁰

At one point, Baker conveyed that messages regarding Iran’s efforts over the hostage “should be conveyed personally to Bush, to Baker himself, or to Ambassador Pickering” at the UN, thus limiting the flow of information toward the American side as well.⁶¹ And although Picco felt that the main reason the U.S. declined in April of 1992 to follow through on its plan whereby “goodwill beget goodwill” was probably the impending American election,⁶² interpersonal dynamics seemed to drive behavior as well. He recalls that in July of 1991, one of the reasons the Iranians

⁶⁰ Ibid., 107, 108, 109.

⁶¹ Ibid., 124.

⁶² Ibid., 4, 104–105.

were so eager to move ahead swiftly on the hostage issue was that they hoped to close the hostage file before the end of Cuéllar's term in office.⁶³ The American government granted both Picco and Cuéllar medals for personal appreciation of their role in the episode.⁶⁴

However, Picco feels that the abortive nature of the American effort caused damage to Rafsanjani's position that was palpable. The Iranian president told him "you understand, Mr. Picco, that you are putting me in a very difficult position... [and] I understood him loud and clear. Rafsanjani was Iran's most pragmatic political leader, and he must have played a valuable chip convincing those in Teheran who opposed him that helping in Beirut would pay off in an American goodwill gesture". Javad Zarif, an Iranian diplomat involved in the exchange, said after their meeting that "he was very worried about the domestic consequences for Iran's president. My troubles might be over, but Rafsanjani's and those other Iranian officials who had spent political capital to help free the Beirut hostages were just beginning".⁶⁵

Clinton:

Two periods are particularly notable during the Clinton administration with regard to American behavior with regard to LSI towards Iran. The first pertains to presidential efforts to keep Republican grandstanding in Congress from affecting Iranian internal political dynamics in a harmful manner. In late 1995, House

⁶³ Ibid., 150.

⁶⁴ Marlene Cimon and Dara McLeod, "Former Hostages Honored at White House; Celebration: Five 'True Heroes' Join Bush in Lighting the National Christmas Tree," *Los Angeles Times*, December 13, 1991.

⁶⁵ Picco, *Man Without a Gun*, 7.

Speaker Newt Gingrich held the entire intelligence budget hostage in hopes of forcing the administration to accept a provision allocating \$18 million to promoting change in Iran.⁶⁶ Yet even though Iran-U.S. relations are such that President Clinton faced clear domestic incentives to endorse this promotion of changing Iran's institutions, leadership, and policies altogether, his administration refused to consent until Gingrich agreed to change the language from regime change to behavior change, for fear that endorsing this inflammatory, if entirely symbolic, language would elicit a backlash within Iran against the administration's goals.⁶⁷

This episode seems to provide especially striking evidence in favor of maintaining pretenses in the course of LSI. The fact that the Clinton White House would even exert political capital to remove Gingrich's "regime change" language from the administration's Iran policy suggests that these pretenses matter even when presidents face strong incentives in the U.S. domestic arena to act otherwise.

The second period of note involves the election of the conciliatory moderate Mohammad Khatami as president of Iran in 1997. From that point forward, Clinton's government repeatedly sought opportunities to create an opening for rapprochement in bilateral relations and to bolster Khatami at the expense of conservatives and the supreme leader in Iran. For instance, the administration sought to signal its enthusiasm for the election of a reformist parliament in 2000 by loosening sanctions to allow for bilateral trade in carpets, pistachios, and medical

⁶⁶ David Rogers, "Gingrich Wants Funds Set Aside for Iran Action," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 27, 1995.

⁶⁷ R. Jeffrey Smith and Thomas W. Lippman, "White House Agrees to Bill Allowing Covert Action Against Iran," *Washington Post*, December 22, 1995; Tim Weiner, "U.S. Plan to Change Iran Leaders Is an Open Secret Before It Begins," *New York Times*, January 26, 1996.

products. As one official anonymously explained at the time “people here are aware that the Iranian moderates need something to work with”.⁶⁸

Bush 43:

The George W. Bush administration approached Iranian internal affairs in an entirely different manner, persuaded that the best way to empower reformists in Iran was to isolate rather than embrace its hard-line government. Thus, it dismissed overtures from Iran’s moderates to talk and minimized the importance of unprecedented Iranian cooperation behind the scenes for overthrowing the Taliban in Afghanistan.⁶⁹ Instead, Bush excoriated Iran for being part of an axis of evil in his 2002 State of the Union speech, and called later that year for supporting reformists to achieve “a future defined by greater freedom, greater tolerance” in Iran.⁷⁰

Reformists in Iran report that Bush’s statements harmed them domestically by delegitimizing their effort to foster rapprochement and that “the authorities here – even some of the reformists – interpreted that as interference in Iran’s internal

⁶⁸ Quote is from Barbara Slavin, “U.S. Discusses Way to Reward Iran,” *USA Today*, February 22, 2000. See also Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East* (Simon and Schuster, 2009), 227–228.

⁶⁹ Barbara Slavin, “U.S., Iran Could Benefit from Temporary Alliance,” *USA Today*, September 28, 2001; Steven Mufson and Marc Kaufman, “Longtime Foes U.S., Iran Explore Improved Relations,” *Washington Post*, October 29, 2001; Amy Waldman, “In Louder Voices, Iranians Talk of Dialogue with U.S.,” *New York Times*, December 10, 2001; Amb. James Dobbins et al., “Negotiating with the Iranians: Missed Opportunities and Paths Forward” (House Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, November 7, 2007).

⁷⁰ Karl Vick, “Bush’s Support for Reformers Backfires in Iran: Speech Brings Conservative Crackdown,” *Washington Post*, August 3, 2002. See also Richard W. Stevenson, “Bush Appeals to Iran’s Public in Radio Talk,” *New York Times*, December 21, 2002; Colum Lynch, “Bush Lauds Protesters in Iran, Warns on Weapons,” *Washington Post*, June 19, 2003; Robin Wright and Michael A. Fletcher, “Bush Denounces Iran’s Election: President Vows to Stand by Citizenry in Struggle for Freedom,” *Washington Post*, June 17, 2005.

affairs and condemned it".⁷¹ Millions of Iranians rallied in the streets against Bush's axis of evil statement.⁷² Also, in his second term he announced \$75 million for democracy promotion in Iran, a measure widely condemned there, including by reformists because it gave the security forces a pretense to interrogate moderate organizations it claimed might be taking funds.⁷³

Conclusion

The rudimentary state of the research agenda on leadership selection intervention necessitates putting greater emphasis on internal validity, in part at the expense of external validity. Thus, this study focuses on exploring and documenting the dynamics of LSI in a very limited number of dyads in order to ensure internal validity. However, as a work of political science it aims to establish not just idiographic knowledge but also nomothetic understanding. Therefore, after really drilling down on the case history (especially in the Israel cases covered in chapters three through seven) it pivots toward considering which patterns are idiosyncratic to particular contexts versus which ones apply more generally to multiple settings.

This dissertation utilizes three different techniques for exploring how the themes that emerged from the U.S.-Israel directed dyad also drive LSI in other contexts. First, it studied parallel instances of outside intervention into Israeli politics by societies other than the United States, including: France, Britain, Jordan,

⁷¹ Quote is from Vick, "Bush's Support for Reformers Backfires in Iran: Speech Brings Conservative Crackdown." For the damage caused by the 'axis of evil statement,' see also "Interview with Former Vice President of Iran Mohammad Ali Abtahi," *PBS Frontline*, June 29, 2007.

⁷² Neil MacFarquhar, "Millions in Iran Rally Against U.S.," *New York Times*, February 12, 2002.

⁷³ "U.S. to Devote \$75 Million to Promoting Democracy in Iran," *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, February 15, 2006; Robin Wright, "Iran on Guard over U.S. Funds," *Washington Post*, April 28, 2007.

Egypt, and the Palestinians. Second, it documented another history, this one of U.S. intervention into the politics of Palestine, both before and after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994. Finally, this chapter briefly considered episodes of American intervention in the politics of Iran by way of a shadow case.

Many of the patterns derived in Chapters III through X seemed to emerge in the Iran cases as well. Officials still seemed to operate under enormous incentives to employ pretense when intervening in another nation's domestic politics. This applied when Iran was a friendly dictatorship as well as when it was a hostile theocracy. In both periods, U.S. officials went to pains to hide their intention to pursue LSI from public disclosure and seemed relatively capable of undertaking such a policy program free from domestic pressure or accountability. American LSI also changed across administrations according to top leaders' personal understanding of how Iranian politics work. In short, the theory of LSI derived from Israeli and Palestinian domestic politics seems to apply to Iranian affairs and perhaps beyond as well.

Chapter XII.

Conclusion

This dissertation has aimed to establish that leadership selection intervention is a recurring and consequential feature of America's peace process diplomacy. It has also sought to understand and explain the dynamics of this remarkable behavior, building an agency-based model of LSI that is designed to travel beyond the Arab-Israeli conflict to the point where it can serve as a generalized theory of how great powers play favorites in the domestic politics of other nations. And it has sought to explain variation in not just the occurrence of LSI but also to address matters of efficacy, evaluating when and why these policies contribute to national interests and achieve their intended goals.

This chapter offers some final thoughts as to the implications of this study. First, it lays out a summary of its findings, including: the persistence of presidential power, an explanation of why agency matters, and consideration of rival theories. Second, it discusses limitations of the present study and suggests some avenues for future research. Third, it offers ten lessons for policy-makers that can be extrapolated from the case histories.

A. Summary of Findings

PRESIDENTIAL POWER

Over and over again, a constant theme throughout these cases seems to be the importance of top leaders in the sender state – in this study, mostly the U.S. – for

determining the dynamics of LSI behavior. In both cases and non-cases, the reason for the occurrence or non-occurrence of LSI can usually be traced back to the characteristic actions of either the president or one of his most trusted aides. And although efficacy is subject to less degrees of freedom than occurrence because foreign intervention can only change so much of the balance of power among social forces in the target state, efficacy also seems to be shaped most by the ability or inability of U.S. leaders to understand the dynamics of the target's political system.

Some important dimensions of leadership seem to be presidential passions, assessments about their foreign counterparts, personal distractions, styles of management and oversight, and even beliefs about specific political contests overseas. For instance, Carter's passion for launching a multilateral peace process at the start of his term led him to overlook how urgent promotion of such a process would damage Yitzhak Rabin at the polls. Clinton's eagerness to aid Shimon Peres led him to overstep the bounds of what his staff thought was judicious, causing him to elicit a partial backlash of nationalist voters who did not like such overt U.S. meddling.¹ In both instances, strong presidential desires overrode prudence and led to counterproductive results in terms of efficacy in the final count.

Assessments of personal counterparts in the target state's political elite also seem to matter. It is difficult to explain why Bush Senior backed Shamir in 1989 but then tried to oust him in 1990 and again in 1992 without the personal angle. In the end, it matters a great deal that Bush felt the prime minister had lied to him on settlement activity and that in time the president came to describe his Israeli

¹ Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* (Macmillan, 2004), 257.

counterpart in private as “that little shit”.² Also, Rice and Bush’s belief that Fayyad “needed our help” but Abu Mazen needed to perform before getting meaningful U.S. support is in part explained by the fact that they had little faith that Abu Mazen would succeed but had strong rapport with Fayyad and trusted him to perform.³

Styles of management seem to matter as well. The most prominent instances I have found of bureaucratic freelancing, pursuing LSI without clear authorization from the president, seem to occur under administrations where the president had an unusually detached approach to issues of management style and oversight, especially with regard to the particular bilateral relationship in question. Freelancing toward Israel flourished under Reagan and to a lesser extent Bush 43, but was virtually nonexistent under Carter or Clinton, both of whom were so active on these issues as to be almost over-involved on decision-making and oversight.

Personal distractions also seem to matter a lot, which should not be the case if meddling were only driven by objective international circumstances. For instance, Carter’s efforts to shore up the Shah came too little, too late, as he was initially consumed with Arab-Israeli issues. Additionally, observers seem to believe that Clinton was forced to delay efforts to topple Netanyahu because of the Monica Lewinsky scandal until he was acquitted by the Senate in early 1999.⁴

Finally, even leaders’ idiosyncratic beliefs about their counterparts’ political contests can make the difference between successful LSI and either non-LSI or a

² Aaron David Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land: America’s Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace* (Bantam Books, 2008), 210.

³ Glenn Kessler, *The Confidante: Condoleezza Rice and the Creation of the Bush Legacy* (Macmillan, 2007), 130.

⁴ Yossi Beilin, *The Path to Geneva: The Quest for a Permanent Agreement, 1996-2004* (Akashic Books, 2004), 43–44; Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999* (Random House, Inc., 1999), 650.

failed attempt. For instance, before the Hamas victory in 2006, President Bush reportedly told Mahmoud Abbas “don’t have an election if you think you will lose”.⁵ He never would have pushed the elections to go forward if he did not think that it would boost Fatah’s existing standing. Similarly, Carter’s accidental boost to the Israeli right in 1977 never would have happened if not for his national security advisor’s misplaced confidence that Labor would almost certainly be reelected.

WHY AGENCY MATTERS

The sum total of these cases seems to support a view of LSI behavior that revolves considerably around the role of top leaders in the sender state. As best I can tell, the controversial nature of the subject matter – in essence, the existence of a global norm against meddling – conditions the behavior and capabilities of actors in the sender state such that they pursue leadership selection intervention in a manner that is unusually free from structural constraints.

People tend to believe that conscious meddling, at least in their own nation’s sovereign leadership selection, violates the democratic rules of the game. As a result, especially obvious and self-admitted partisan intervention tends to get penalized. Instead, sender state officials go to great lengths to erect alternative pretenses that mask their true intentions. They may express open support or opposition to the policies advocated by a leader in the target state, but they will almost always deny their effort is aimed at rescuing or removing that leader. James Baker still to this day denies that he used the dispute over housing loan guarantees

⁵ Kessler, *The Confidante*, 135.

to help kick Yitzhak Shamir out of office, even though his own personal papers contradict this claim. The fact that the Clinton White House would exert political capital just to protect the administration's Iran policy from Gingrich's regime change language suggests that these pretenses matter even when presidents face strong incentives in the U.S. domestic arena to act otherwise.

Of course, an important scope condition to this effect is that the pressure for pretenses is somewhat weaker in the presence of the one-vote problematique. When officials feel that certain challengers in the target state are so beyond the pale that their victory would bring an end to competitive politics as a whole, those officials may be more inclined to announce that these actors should be excluded from competition altogether. However, even in those instances actors tend to dance around admitting when their actions are aimed at shaping the power balance between that group and other political actors. They may acknowledge their opposition to a radical challenger, such as Hamas, but still must cling to the fiction that the incumbent's strength derives from public mandate, not outside backing. For example, American officials insisted that their decision to fund last-minute development projects by the Palestinian Authority with an eye toward Fatah's popularity had nothing to do with marginalizing Hamas. They insisted that USAID simply chose to support all actors who respect the rules of the game, despite the fact that one of the two major contenders was obviously excluded from this arrangement.

In order to protect these pretenses, leaders operate in a manner designed to shield their true intentions from leaks. This includes preemptively taking steps

during the deliberative process to avoid formal decision-making channels, instead operating on a strict need-to-know basis and issuing verbal orders instead of written directives whenever possible. For instance, during the 1978 turmoil in Iran, American officials discussing LSI often communicated via telephone instead of in cables for fear that their words would “appear, almost verbatim, in the *New York Times*”.⁶ A participant in the 1996 effort to get Peres elected recalls that Secretary Christopher ensured no paper memo ever existed of their plans.⁷

In both instances, officials used unusual back channels to coordinate meddling with their counterparts abroad. Brzezinski was communicating sensitive messages to the shah through an intermediary without actually informing officials at the State Department. Clinton’s team colluded with Peres’s aides through three separate informal channels, including through the prime minister’s campaign staff, and “all of this background coordination was not in cables”; often “it was done on the political side of the [White House] shop, not the policy side”.⁸

It is especially striking that the top State Department bureaucrat for Arab-Israeli issues in 1992 never saw a written memo or other proof that America was pursuing LSI even though he will “believe it forever” that this was Bush and Baker’s intent.⁹ The head USAID official for Palestinian affairs in 2007 has a similar

⁶ Gregory F. Treverton, “Iran, 1978-1979: Coping with the Unthinkable,” in *Dealing with Dictators: Dilemmas of U.S. Diplomacy and Intelligence Analysis, 1945-1990*, ed. Ernest R. May and Philip Zelikow (MIT Press, 2006), 131.

⁷ Retired, Senior State Department Official, “Interview with the Author”, March 8, 2011.

⁸ Amb. Martin S. Indyk, “Interview with the Author”, April 10, 2011. Those channels were Savir to Ross, Furst and Schoen to Emanuel, and Theumim to Indyk. Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 257; Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East* (Simon and Schuster, 2009), 178; Moïshe Theumim, “Interview with the Author”, July 3, 2011.

⁹ Thomas M. DeFrank, “Transcript of Interview with Daniel Kurtzer”, August 4, 1994, Box 193 / Folder 3 / Chpt 29 – Baker Files, 1994, James A. Baker III Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

assessment of the West Bank First strategy; he knew it existed but never saw a memo laying out its principles.¹⁰

Under such restrictive circumstances, the only way officials can approve this sort of policy is if they are senior enough to dispense with formal procedure, limiting the pool to the president and his most senior aides. And because presidents must not only decide on but also implement much of this policy themselves, they thrust themselves into attempts on the basis of unusually high resolve. For instance, when Bush and Baker worked to get Rabin elected, they already knew that linking the loan guarantees to a settlement freeze would stir up a major, “AWACs-plus” domestic controversy.¹¹ However, Bush persuaded Congress to back down in the dispute in September of 1991 and again in March of 1992, threatening members of Congress in public and private with a drawn-out fight.¹² In fact, the administration’s legislative strategy was premised on getting in front of Congressional leadership and pressuring them to avoid such a fight.¹³

These factors combine to diminish the impact of structural factors that might otherwise act to constrain the president’s freedom of action on foreign policy. Subjective perceptions take on added importance for motivating attempts at LSI, although they just as often seem to threaten the possibility that partisan

¹⁰ Howard Sumka, “Interview with the Author”, November 3, 2011.

¹¹ Dennis Ross, “Approach to the \$10 Billion and the Peace Process”, July 1, 1991, Box 193 / Folder 3 / Chpt 29 – Baker Files, 1994, James A. Baker III Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

¹² Thomas L. Friedman, “Bush Rejects Israel Loan Guarantees,” *New York Times*, March 18, 1992; James A. Baker, “Presentation to Leahy on Absorption Aid: Outline for President”, September 3, 1991, Box 193 / Folder 3 / Chpt 29 – Baker Files, 1994, James A. Baker III Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

¹³ Janet Mullin, “Note to the Secretary”, August 27, 1991, Box 193 / Folder 3 / Chpt 29 – Baker Files, 1994, James A. Baker III Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

intervention, when it is pursued, fails for lack of understanding of the target state's policy dynamics. Members of Congress and lobby groups, which may be quite influential on other areas of bilateral relations, simply may not learn the president's true intentions and just as often find themselves outmaneuvered by a determined chief executive. Finally, members of the bureaucracy find themselves unable to initiate or block partisan intervention in contravention of the president's desires because there is no formal arena for aggregating bureaucratic preferences.

RIVAL THEORIES

I initially set out to apply four basic paradigms of foreign policy behavior to this set of cases. What I found was that the agency of top political officials in the sender state seems to be exceptionally influential in the issue area of leadership selection intervention relative to rival theories that emphasize international or domestic structural forces.¹⁴ The three other theories that were considered possible contenders for explaining behavior in this project were: national interests theory, the lobby-legislative approach, and the bureaucratic politics approach. Before quickly concluding, I would like to note some evidence from the cases that militates against these structure-based theories.

National interests theory is a variant of structural realism that jettisons

¹⁴ The leadership approach argues that the main determinants of political outcomes are the contingent choices of top officials. Examples of work in this area include: Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In," *International Security* 25, no. 4 (2001): 107–146; Robert O. Keohane, "Disciplinary Schizophrenia: Implications for Graduate Education in Political Science," *Qualitative Methods: Newsletter of the American Political Science Association, Organized Section on Qualitative Methods* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 9–12; Richard J. Samuels, *Machiavelli's Children: Leaders and Their Legacies in Italy and Japan* (Cornell University Press, 2005); Gautam Mukunda, "The Paths of Glory: Structure, Selection, and Leaders" (MIT Dissertation, 2010); Elizabeth N. Saunders, *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions* (Cornell University Press, 2011).

certain elements of Waltzian neorealism to simply argue that states make unitary, self-regarding decisions on the basis of objective international circumstances.¹⁵ The lobby-legislative politics approach is a variant of pluralist theory that emphasizes the tendency towards state capture by powerful lobbyists and the legislators who curry favor with them.¹⁶ Finally, the bureaucratic politics approach argues that policy outcomes are driven by organizational interests and bargaining efforts of lower-level officials in the sender state, with decisions bubbling up from below rather than being imposed in a top-down manner by political leadership.¹⁷

If national interests theory were true, we should expect different American officials to pursue similar LSI behavior under comparable circumstances. However, comparing Washington's posture towards Israel in 1987 versus 1990 provides a fantastic natural experiment that contradicts this expectation of the theory. In both instances, America was faced with an Israeli national unity government in which Labor backed a peace plan with promising Arab support that Likud resisted. In one

¹⁵ Thucydides, "Melian Dialogues," in *Essential Readings in World Politics*, ed. Karen A. Mingst and Jack L. Snyder, trans. Suresht Bald (Norton, 2010), 2–3; Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (A. A. Knopf, 1948); Morton A. Kaplan, *System and Process in International Politics* (Wiley, 1957); Kenneth Neal Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (McGraw-Hill, 1979); John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2001).

¹⁶ Ross Y. Koen, *The China Lobby in American Politics* (Octagon Books, 1974); Theodore J. Lowi, *The End of Liberalism: The Second Republic of the United States* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1979); Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations* (Yale University Press, 1982); Tony Smith, *Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Harvard University Press, 2000); John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Macmillan, 2007); Ken Silverstein, "Their Men in Washington: Undercover with DC's Lobbyists for Hire," *Harpers* 1886 (2007): 53; John Newhouse, "Diplomacy, Inc.: The Influence of Lobbies on US Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 88 (2009): 73.

¹⁷ Graham T. Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *American Political Science Review* 63, no. 3 (September 1969): 689–718; William A. Niskanen, *Bureaucracy & Representative Government* (Aldine, Atherton, 1971); Ezra N. Suleiman, *Politics, Power, and Bureaucracy in France: The Administrative Elite* (Princeton University Press, 1974); Morton H. Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Brookings Institution Press, 1974); Chalmers A. Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975* (Stanford University Press, 1982); Amy B. Zegart, *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NSC* (Stanford University Press, 1999); Daniel P. Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928* (Princeton University Press, 2001).

instance, Shultz and Reagan rejected requests for the American administration to back the London Accords, for fear of getting drawn into an internecine Israeli fight. In the other, Bush and Baker pushed for the adoption of the so-called Shamir Plan even though Shamir himself had abandoned it and they knew that to do so would risk the end of the NUG, which may or may not be replaced by a Labor government instead.

The lobby-legislative approach should get an especially favorable hearing with many of these cases given that the U.S.-Israel relationship is considered a most likely case for government capture by a powerful ethnic lobby.¹⁸ However much that perspective may or may not explain other aspects of U.S.-Israel relations, it seems to hold little traction for understanding the dynamics of LSI. Not only do presidents frequently pursue LSI without regard for an impending election at home, they have even done so quite intensively when they themselves faced reelection. Notable instances include Bush 41's use of loan guarantees in 1992, Clinton's dramatic backing of Peres in 1996, and also his efforts to help reelect Yeltsin in Russia that year.¹⁹ Meddling is common not only in periods of united government but even in periods of divided government, and, as noted above, presidents tend to pre-select into cases of LSI on the basis of high resolve.

If the bureaucratic politics approach were driving LSI behavior, we should expect to see freelancing occur all of the time, but instead it only seems to occur

¹⁸ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Israeli Lobby," *London Review of Books* (March 10, 2006); Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*.

¹⁹ Strobe Talbott, *The Russia Hand: A Memoir of Presidential Diplomacy* (Random House, 2003), 189–215; Lee Marsden, *Lessons from Russia: Clinton and U.S. Democracy Promotion* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2005), 61–100.

under presidents who have an especially detached system of management and exert weak oversight when handling bilateral relations with the target country. Not only does intervention not consistently reflect bureaucratic preferences, sometimes it flies in the face of what the bureaucracy hopes to foster in the target state.

Even though the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs has evinced a relatively steady preference at the working level for prioritizing the peace process in Israeli affairs, presidents have granted major concessions to strengthen Likud ministers rather than individuals from the Labor Party – for instance, Reagan backing Moshe Arens or Bush 43 backing Olmert and Sharon. Additionally, sometimes presidents use methods to achieve LSI that require overruling executive agencies, supporting the Lavi aircraft program to help Arens or the Nautilus anti-missile laser system to help Peres. In both episodes, the weapons systems had been opposed by the Pentagon for being dysfunctional and not cost-effective, and both programs were suspended years later for exactly those reasons.²⁰

These theories were given a relatively fair hearing. They were considered in every case or non-case of peace process LSI examined by this dissertation. Not only that, but they were parsed according to seven different dimensions of their observable implications, on which they pose mutually exclusive predictions. The effort verged on being a bit mind-numbing at times, but being methodical also helped ensure the validity of the project's findings.

²⁰ Dov S. Zakheim, *Flight of the Lavi: Inside a U.S.-Israeli Crisis* (Brassey's, 1996); Philip Shenon, "Boosting Israel's Defenses, U.S. Will Provide Anti-missile Aid," *New York Times*, April 29, 1996; William J. Broad, "U.S. and Israel Shelved Laser as Defense," *New York Times*, July 30, 2006; Bruce O. Riedel, "Interview with the Author", April 9, 2011.

B. Limitations & Future Directions

Every study involves certain methodological tradeoffs. Although each technique adopted opens certain doors, it inevitably closes others. This section reviews some of the research design choices made in this dissertation in order to be conscientious about ways future studies might address some of its shortcomings.

Because of the rudimentary state of the present research agenda about leadership selection intervention, this study adopted a deep-dive approach to data analysis, examining episodes of LSI from a very limited number of country dyads. Thus, it offers an extremely in-depth explanation of LSI behavior in a limited number of target polities. Additionally, in nearly every case examined by this dissertation, the sender country is the United States (except in the ten or so cases of third-party intervention covered in the Israel chapters).

Therefore, one avenue for future research would be to expand the sample population of episodes to examine the dynamics of leadership selection intervention in other contexts. What are some instances of LSI beyond the Middle East, and how do they compare to the cases examined in this dissertation? Do similar dynamics apply to instances of LSI by other senders, including with different regime institutions? For example, it would be fascinating to see if the dynamics described in this project apply when an authoritarian regime is the one pursuing LSI. It would also be useful to check and confirm that the same patterns observed in the postwar era in this study apply during earlier periods in history, such as in the interwar years or even before.

Another approach would be to employ different analytical techniques in

place of qualitative historical methods. Although I avoided statistical techniques in this dissertation, large-n analysis will be increasingly efficient once researchers have compiled sets of observations about LSI that, like this one, are relatively comprehensive in nature. Daniel Corstange and Nikolay Marinov have even found creative ways to examine the dynamics of LSI in an experimental research setting.²¹

This study focused on two particular research questions – explaining variation in both occurrence and efficacy – at the expense of explicitly considering many other ones. Why do states adopt specific tools in the pursuit of LSI at some times but not others? Do different tools yield different rates of success? Why do states choose LSI over other possible forms of foreign policy intervention, and when do they choose to hybridize them? Which sorts of states are more prone to conducting LSI or finding themselves on the other end of it? How do regime type or electoral institutions shape the environment in which LSI operates? These questions offer a vast terrain for future research that still has yet to be explored.

Finally, there are limitations of this study that are simply impossible to overcome. Studying efficacy is inherently tricky, since practitioners of LSI are trying to influence leadership selection outcomes on the margins of domestic political contests. Thus, it is extremely difficult to sort out possible causal effects in this regard from meaningless background noise.

Second, even taking a deep-dive approach to data collection cannot fully overcome the missing data problem due to the secretive nature of LSI behavior in many cases. I have sought in this study to mitigate the risk of false negative or false

²¹ Daniel Corstange and Nikolay Marinov, “Does Taking Sides Encourage Radicalization?: The US and Iranian Messages in the 2009 Elections in Lebanon”, January 28, 2010.

positive observations, and hopefully there is not systematic bias in my codings, but finding conclusive proof one way or another in a realm of conspiracies and whispers is simply not always possible.

Third, it can sometimes be difficult to falsify an explanation that is premised upon leadership factors. If leadership is only epiphenomenal, serving as a proximate trigger but not a true underlying cause, then it might appear as though agency is important when in fact there are deeper, structural issues that are determining the variation across cases. However, this dissertation has sought to minimize the chances that such problems are occurring by conducting both two-cornered and three-cornered tests, evaluating leadership theory against not just the null hypothesis but also prominent rival theories.²² If leadership theory provides a powerful stylized explanation of the data and it stacks up impressively against the rival theories, we should have some confidence that the leadership-based approach is not epiphenomenal.

Finally, there is a certain unavoidable risk of a voluntarist, pro-agency bias based on the data that is available for explaining the cases. The case histories I have accumulated may feel as though I am telling a stylized narrative that is tailored to advance my pet theory, and some of the available data sources – presidential libraries, interviews with former officials, memoirs – might over-privilege the role of leadership at the expense of other causal factors. I have tried to minimize this in a number of ways: applying all four theories to the various cases, evaluating each

²² For an explanation of two-cornered versus three-cornered theory testing, see Imre Lakatos, “Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes,” in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, ed. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Cornell University Press, 1997), 38, 83.

theory according to seven categories of mutually observable implications in each episode, looking for data from other sources that might confirm rival theories if they were true (such as interviewing members of the bureaucracy and relevant lobbies), and not just telling a stylized story but also seeking to falsify arguments from alternative explanations. However, to a certain extent this is a hazard of the terrain based on data availability and prevailing narratives that cannot be avoided entirely.

However, none of these limitations are reasons to discard the findings produced by the present study. Instead, they are risks, pitfalls, shortcomings, or challenges that should inform our understanding of those findings. Good social science research tackles questions because they are important, not because they are easy.

C. Implications for Policy

One of the reasons that I adopted this research topic was that it directly bears upon current U.S. foreign policy. Addressing real-world problems necessarily entails generating usable knowledge that is expressly policy-relevant. This requires findings to address particular sorts of factors (i.e. ones that are manipulable by policy-makers) and to be framed in certain ways rather than others (in terms of precise causal predictions instead of generalized conditional probabilities).²³ Thus, this project seeks to explain fine-grained variation in the study variables within a given bilateral relationship rather than gross variation across large spans of time

²³ Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (MIT Press, 2005), 279–282.

and space.²⁴ In this regard, I have sought to produce a specified theory of foreign policy, not an abstract theory of international politics.²⁵ Further, the tendency of states not to keep comprehensive records or evaluate their behavior retroactively in the realm of LSI makes it especially important to conduct an outside audit.

The section below offers a list of ten major takeaways from this dissertation that are intended to be policy relevant. However, first, a disclaimer is in order. In this dissertation, I have not touched at all on the normative debate of whether foreign intervention is a good or a bad thing.²⁶ I only address the empirical debate. Therefore, I cannot advise for or against the pursuit of LSI except on a purely empirical basis. If an individual believes that LSI is morally untenable, no amount of material gains should justify its use.

Lesson #1: LSI is an Effective Tool of Statecraft

Meddling is a fact of life. At some points, policy-makers in a relatively

²⁴ For the distinction between fine-grained and gross variation (applied to the context of state power in international relations) see Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Cornell University Press, 1999).

²⁵ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*; Colin Elman, "Horses for Courses: Why Not Neorealist Theories of Foreign Policy?," *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (1996): 7–53; Kenneth N. Waltz, "International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy," *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (1996): 54.

²⁶ Some examples of this literature include Stanley Hoffmann, Robert C. Johansen, and James P. Sterba, *The Ethics and Politics of Humanitarian Intervention* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1996); James A. Barry, *The Sword of Justice: Ethics and Coercion in International Politics* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998); John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Harvard University Press, 2001); J. L. Holzgrefe and Robert Owen Keohane, eds., *Humanitarian Intervention* (Cambridge University Press, 2003); Deen K. Chatterjee and Don E. Scheid, *Ethics and Foreign Intervention* (Cambridge University Press, 2003); Deen K. Chatterjee, *The Ethics of Assistance* (Cambridge University Press, 2004); Gareth J. Evans, *The Responsibility to Protect* (Brookings Institution Press, 2008); Michael J. Smith, "Humanitarian Intervention: An Overview of the Ethical Issues," in *Ethics and International Affairs*, ed. Joel H. Rosenthal and Christian Barry (Georgetown University Press, 2009), 67–84; Terry Nardin, "The Moral Basis of Humanitarian Intervention," in *Ethics and International Affairs*, ed. Joel H. Rosenthal and Christian Barry (Georgetown University Press, 2009), 85–102; Alex J. Bellamy, "Responsibility to Protect or Trojan Horse: The Crisis in Darfur and Humanitarian Intervention After Iraq," in *Ethics and International Affairs*, ed. Joel H. Rosenthal and Christian Barry (Georgetown University Press, 2009), 103–130.

powerful country will undoubtedly conclude that their nation's interests are served by interfering in domestic leadership contests in another political system. Not only that, but LSI is often successful. There are no shortage of cases in which its use produced little effect or was counterproductive, but more often than not it seems to be an appealing means for achieving national interests. And LSI rarely seems to result in score-settling after the fact if disfavored leaders in the target polity ultimately win office.

Lesson #2: Don't Go It Alone

Freedom from domestic accountability can be liberating for presidents when they seek to employ LSI. However, the absence of interagency consultation or checks and balances can also make for bad policy concepts or bad implementation – the Iran Contra debacle being an especially worrisome worst case example. As Yossi Beilin reflects, “people are very careful not to speak about it, even with their own advisors... because they are afraid of leaks, and they are afraid that it will be shown, and they always have to deny it. So it is not done professionally, and what you get is something which is so amateurish at the end of the day”.²⁷

Leadership selection intervention naturally lends itself to secrecy, but policy-makers should resist these incentives at least enough to ensure that they have the necessary support to craft an effective strategy and to carry it through to completion. Going on gut instinct has led leaders to either go off message in harmful ways (Bush's comments on East Jerusalem in 1990 or Carter's comments about

²⁷ Former Minister Yossi Beilin, “Interview with the Author,” June 26, 2011.

borders and the PLO in 1977) or to go overboard when they feel passionate about helping a comrade overseas (Clinton's backing for Peres in 1996). The most effective instances of LSI have often benefitted from having a team of committed officials onboard with the same plan (for example, the Clinton administration's full-spectrum effort to get Ehud Barak elected in 1999).

Lesson #3: Preserve Pretense

Practitioners of LSI employ pretenses for a reason: they work. Instances in which pretenses strained credibility, such as Clinton's all-out push to get Peres elected in 1996, seem to produce more of a backlash. American officials also tend to feel a somewhat weaker pressure to use pretenses when they believe that certain political actors in the target polity are beyond the pale, such as groups that use terrorism or are sponsors of terror. This tendency is also greater for leaders who have a particularly black-and-white view of other political actors overseas. Thus, Reagan and Shultz were more open about their desire to marginalize the PLO than Bush or Baker; George W. Bush was more open about his use of LSI against Yasser Arafat and Hamas in Palestine as well as against the ruling clique in Iran. However, these statements rarely pay off in terms of effective policy.

Lesson #4: Don't Forget Institutions

American intervention in Palestinian politics gradually degraded the quality of democratic institutions, allowing Arafat to set up an autocracy in the 1990s, destroying PA governance during the second intifada, and warping institutions to

disadvantage in the aftermath of its electoral victory in 2006. This fits with a broader class of activities observed by scholars who study American support for dictators during the Cold War.²⁸ Propping up dictators often necessitates allowing them to manipulate representative and administrative institutions to their personal benefit. In the short run, these actions are appealing, but in the long run, the costs are extremely high. The Shah consistently outmaneuvered and outlasted American efforts to force him to cohabit with reformists, but the eventual result was far worse for U.S. interests than holding firm against his demands in the first place. America's longstanding support for the Shah did help instigate revolutionary change by closing off alternative options. And, although anti-Americanism in Iran seemed to emerge more from the 1953 coup than instances of meddling that fell short of force, Washington's long legacy of LSI toward Tehran did not help in the court of public opinion either.

Lesson #5: Missing Opportunities Can Be Costly

Former National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy purportedly once remarked that "Pleikus are like streetcars": if you miss one, another will soon come along; in short, he was suggesting that if the Viet Cong had not attacked the U.S. base near Pleiku, South Vietnam, in February of 1965, the Johnson administration

²⁸ Mark J. Gasiorowski, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah: Building a Client State in Iran* (Cornell University Press, 1991); Noam Chomsky, *Deterring Democracy* (Macmillan, 1992); Ernest R. May et al., *Dealing with Dictators: Dilemmas of U.S. Diplomacy and Intelligence Analysis, 1945-1990* (MIT Press, 2006); Julia Sweig, *Friendly Fire: Losing Friends and Making Enemies in the Anti-American Century* (Public Affairs, 2006); Hilton L. Root, *Alliance Curse: How America Lost the Third World* (Brookings Institution Press, 2008); Jason Brownlee, *Democracy Prevention: The Politics of the U.S.-Egyptian Alliance [Forthcoming]* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). This was also the topic of Nikolay Marinov's recent conference paper on LSI in emerging democracies: <http://www.yale.edu/leitner/democracyEdge.html>

probably would have found some other trigger to escalate its involvement in that conflict.²⁹ However, leadership contests are not like Pleikus; they only come along infrequently, and missing opportunities for LSI can therefore be costly. This appears to be the case even in regimes with flexible-term electoral institutions, fractious coalitions, and frequent leadership contests such as Israel.

One reason actors miss opportunities is that they are personally distracted by other pressing agenda items. Another reason is that they may be dissuaded from LSI because they want to ensure calm bilateral relations and their least favored party holds the incumbency in the target polity. However, this tactic prioritizes short-term gains at the cost of long-term headaches. American presidents who shied away from disagreements with Likud incumbents in Israel (Reagan, Bush 43) ended up with their diplomatic initiatives frustrated by a long era of Likud dominance, whereas those who did not hide their disagreements (Bush 41, Clinton) were eventually rewarded with Labor electoral victories and breakthroughs on the peace process. There is a reason we remember Bush 41's Madrid Conference and Clinton's Oslo process today much better than the Reagan Plan, the Shultz Initiative, and Bush's Road Map.

Lesson #6: Avoid Marriages of Convenience

Even more costly than missing opportunities to foster leadership change

²⁹ For the original quote, see David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (Barrie and Jenkins, 1972), 533. Ironically, recent diplomatic history suggests that even the Viet Cong did not attribute much importance to their attack on Camp Holloway near Pleiku at the time, despite American intelligence assessments to the contrary. See Robert S. McNamara, James Blight, Robert K. Brigham, Thomas J. Biersteker, and Col. Herbert Schandler, *Argument without End: In Search of Answers to the Vietnam Tragedy* (Public Affairs, 1999), 170-174.

abroad are instances in which policy-makers actively throw their lot in with an ideologically incompatible political faction in the target polity. These marriages of convenience are also sometimes activated by the perks of incumbency or by unusual counterpart assessments in which officials are particularly impressed or repulsed with politicians in another country. This is almost always a mistake that leaders come to regret later on. Notable examples include King Hussein of Jordan's implicit endorsement of Binyamin Netanyahu in 1996 or Anwar Sadat's embrace of Begin in 1981. These leaders also were going against the vast majority of public opinion and elite sentiment within their countries in favor of dubious strategic gambles.

Lesson #7: Follow-Through is Essential

James Baker succeeded at empowering local Palestinian leaders at the expense of the PLO, while George Shultz did not. One major reason has to do with practical follow-through. Once Baker set his goal for Palestinian politics in 1991, he doggedly mustered U.S. assets to achieve that goal, meeting a remarkable eleven times with his preferred Palestinian interlocutors (mostly in the region) and mustering a diplomatic campaign to keep Arab states supportive of his efforts. Shultz mainly sought to use cash to backstop anti-PLO forces in the West Bank, but even that he did not persistently deliver. Reagan's White House, not exactly reputed for its managerial prowess, had to remind him solicit money from the Hill to fund his programs for encouraging moderation in Palestinian politics.

Lesson #8: People Can Smell a Fraud, Don't Bother

One of my Palestinian interlocutors, in trying to explain the difference between effective and ineffective American LSI, emphasized the importance of an Arabic concept called *'Abathiyya*.³⁰ As best I understand it, the word entails shades of absurdity, manipulation, tampering, fraud, and a frivolous act.³¹ He argued that empty gestures of American backing for Palestinian leaders – major speeches in the territories, calling somebody as “man of peace,” and brandishing new tranches of aid – rarely register with the Palestinian public and, if so, do not provide more than a temporary bump. People can usually tell if America’s promises to reward the path of peace and moderation are not backed up tangible change on the ground – or at least some concrete steps that really seem to matter. Thus, Yossi Beilin argues that the global anti-terrorism conference at Sharm el-Sheikh had only a limited impact because, after another wave of terrorist attacks, “the gap between the situation on the ground... and the ceremonies” was seen by most Israelis “as something very artificial effort to gain some votes in the last moment”.³² Dennis Ross concurs, explaining that “the key to helping a Palestinian moderate is to be in a position where you put them in a position where they can show that they are delivering something, and they are delivering what matters to the Palestinian public. Anything short of that, and it’s more rhetorical than real”.³³

Lesson #9: No Kiss of Death?

³⁰ Kamel Husseini, “Interview with the Author”, July 2011.

³¹ Hans Wehr, *Arabic-English Dictionary: The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. J. Milton Cowan, 4th ed. (Spoken Language Services, 1993), 685.

³² Beilin, “Interview with the Author”.

³³ Dennis Ross, “Interview with the Author,” March 23, 2012.

The positive flip side of this effect is that the fabled American “kiss of death” may not actually be so deadly, provided that Washington’s support actually yields benefits. Perhaps an implicit underpinning of this folk theory, which holds that anybody America supports in the Muslim world will fail, is that people inherently expect America is not willing to provide the sort of benefits that matter to Arabs or Iranians. However, when favored leaders actually deliver, the kiss of death is not so deadly. For example, Salam Fayyad has sustained a decade-long career in Palestinian politics without a domestic political constituency because he is the goose that lays the golden aid. He is not a Fatah member, and in the last PLC election his party won a piddling two seats, yet somehow he remains the Palestinian Authority prime minister. An exchange in the *Palestine Papers* highlights this discrepancy:

[Israeli general #1]: You have internal factional problems with Fayyad.
[Israeli general #2]: This is between us, don’t write it down.
[Palestinian negotiator]: These notes are confidential.
[Palestinian general]: At first there were some problems, but since he started getting results, opposition to him is down. The bottom line is performance – how he delivers”.³⁴

Similarly, former Abbas advisor Ghaith al-Omari reflected that Abu Mazen might have been able to succeed as prime minister if the American endorsement had come with the sort of support that he had actually been seeking from abroad:

“the U.S. hug is negative in the region, but it’s not a killer. It all depends on whether it comes with real and visible benefits... there was an American bear hug for Abu Mazen. I think it would have worked though if it came with deliverables”.³⁵

³⁴ Clayton E. Swisher and Ghada Karmi, *The Palestine Papers: The End of the Road?* (Hesperus Press, 2011), 154. Descriptors in brackets added to contextualize the individuals. They are Amos Gilad, Yoav “Poly” Mordechai, Rami Dajani, and Hazem Atallah.

³⁵ Ghaith al-Omari, “Interview with the Author”, February 2011.

Lesson #10: Know your World Politics

Although all it takes is willpower to generate LSI occurrence, it requires genuine understanding to achieve success. Leaders do not need deep area studies expertise, but it does not hurt. Mainly, they need to have a knack for understanding the political ethos of the society in which they hope to affect leadership selection.

George W. Bush was able to bolster Israeli leaders at times because he deeply empathized with Israel's security predicament. Yet he never really reaped major gains on the peace process because he could not fully tap into their other main political drive: the desire for peace. His speech to the Knesset in May of 2008, meant in part to bolster Olmert, exemplified this dilemma because he focused more on rejecting appeasement than inspiring Israelis to pursue peace with their neighbors. Nor did he have much success in engineering outcomes in Palestinian politics, even in the narrow sense of affecting immediate leadership struggles, since he failed to grasp the value that the Palestinian people attach to substantive concessions on the ground from Israel and substantive negotiations moving toward final status issues. Thus, although he pursued LSI with remarkable frequency toward Palestinian affairs, these efforts rarely achieved much in terms of lasting American interests.

Bill Clinton, on the other hand, achieved relative success in both Israeli *and* Palestinian politics because people on both sides felt that he better understood their aspirations, fears, and needs. His empathy was also backstopped by an encyclopedic knowledge of the points of negotiation and specific political contests in both Israel and Palestine. He won Israeli hearts and minds with two simple words "*shalom, chaver*" (Hebrew for "goodbye, friend") on Yitzhak Rabin's passing, and he brought

the house down when he flew to Gaza and spoke to the PNC on Yasser Arafat's behalf. In this regard, his reputation as the most pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian president in recent memory is probably well deserved because he really comprehended the politics of these two fractious societies.

Conclusion:

James Baker used to call his advisors on Arab-Israeli affairs "food processors" for their wearisome focus on procedure and for their permanent employability, as though they had chosen to work on an intractable conflict to ensure that they always made a steady paycheck.³⁶ As long as the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians persists, there will be outsiders interested in trying to resolve it, or at least manage it. And a part of that impetus is that world leaders will try to influence these developments by bolstering perceived pro-peace leaders in the politics of Palestine and in the politics of Israel, part of a broader class of foreign policy behavior known as leadership selection intervention. Because typically most everybody has their preferences, but the president actually decides to play favorites.

³⁶ Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*, 26; Aaron David Miller, "Let's Make a Deal: Six Real-world Lessons on How to Be a Successful Peace Negotiator. Or at Least Not a Total Flop.," *Foreign Policy (online)*, May 9, 2012.

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