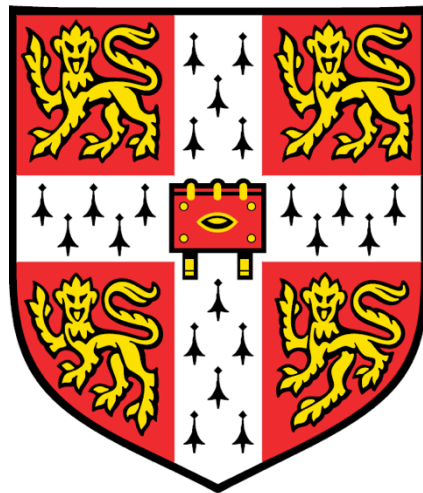


West German foreign policy towards the Arab states, 1967-1979: history of a disappointment



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Table of contents

Table of contents	1
Table of figures	4
Table of pictures	4
Table of abbreviations	5
Acknowledgements and stylistic remarks	7
Introduction: the delicate balancing act of West German Middle Eastern policy	8
1. <i>Introduction: between the stools of Middle Eastern geopolitics</i>	8
2. <i>Literature review: the lack of research on post-war German-Arab political relations</i>	10
3. <i>Research question: the neglected side of West German Middle Eastern policy</i>	17
4. <i>Methodology and data: the interplay of international relations and diplomatic history</i>	20
5. <i>Analytical framework: political psychology and the structures shaping West German post-war foreign policy</i>	23
6. <i>Outline and key findings of the thesis: the importance of the Cold War and the five dimensions of West German ‘Arab policy’ during the 1970s</i>	31
Chapter I: Cold War dynamics and Bonn’s efforts towards a West German Arab policy	36
1. <i>Introduction: the Cold War at the centre of West German Arab policy</i>	36
2. <i>The impact of the June War on West German Middle Eastern policy, 1967</i>	39
3. <i>West Germany’s ‘Mediterranean Moment’ and East Germany’s diplomatic coming-of-age in the Middle East, 1968-1970</i>	43
4. <i>Ost- and Nahostpolitik, 1970-72</i>	47
5. <i>A breakthrough of diplomatic recognition, 1972-1973</i>	53
6. <i>Shattering of illusions: the impact of the October War on West German ‘Arab policy’, 1973-1977</i>	59
7. <i>Camp David and the breaking of the Arab world, 1977-1979</i>	64
8. <i>Conclusion: West German Middle Eastern policy and its link to the geopolitics of Central Europe</i>	67

Chapter II: The Arab-Israeli conflict as a factor in West Germany's 'Arab policy'	70
1. <i>Introduction: a new perspective on the FRG's role in the Arab-Israeli conflict</i>	70
2. <i>One after another: prioritisation and West Germany's restrained attitude to the Arab-Israeli conflict, 1967-1970</i>	72
3. <i>A change of focus towards the Arab-Israeli conflict and Brandt's role in mediation efforts, 1971-1973</i>	77
4. <i>In Kissinger's shadow: the October war and a nascent peace process, 1973-1977</i>	87
5. <i>To the side-lines: Bonn's attitude to the civil war in Lebanon and to Camp David, 1975-1979</i>	93
6. <i>Conclusion: West Germany's decade of engagement in the Arab-Israeli conflict</i>	100
Chapter III: Terrorism and West Germany's stance on the Palestinian question	103
1. <i>Introduction: a gradual process of Palestinian recognition by Bonn</i>	103
2. <i>Blissful ignorance and a silver lining: the absence of the Palestinian question from West German Middle Eastern policy, 1967-1969</i>	105
3. <i>The year that terrorism reached West Germany</i>	109
4. <i>Politics as counterterrorism: talking to the Palestinians, 1971-1973</i>	117
5. <i>The October War and the emerging issue of Palestinian statehood</i>	124
6. <i>A third crisis of terror and the recognition of the PLO</i>	128
7. <i>Conclusion: the link between diplomacy and counterterrorism</i>	133
Chapter IV: Schizophrenic foreign policy - the geopolitics of oil and West German relations to the Gulf	135
1. <i>Introduction: West Germany and its discovery of the Gulf in the 1970s</i>	135
2. <i>The mini oil-boycott of 1967 and the formation of a West German oil 'champion'</i>	138
3. <i>Oil weapon and oil crisis, 1971-1973</i>	145
4. <i>Fighting over the future: Bonn between multi- and bilateral responses to the energy crisis, 1974-1979</i>	152
5. <i>1979: year of crisis and disappointment</i>	157
6. <i>Conclusion: from industry to diplomacy</i>	163
Chapter V: The European dimension of West German Middle Eastern policy	166
1. <i>Introduction: the legacy of European Middle Eastern policy</i>	166
2. <i>Prologue: 1967 and the failure of Western solidarity</i>	169
3. <i>The emergence of a European Middle Eastern policy, 1970-1973</i>	170
4. <i>Copenhagen, the EAD and a reinvigoration of EPC in the Middle East, 1973-75</i>	174
5. <i>Stagnation and take-off of EAD and EPC, 1975-1977</i>	181

6. <i>The breakdown of the European approach, 1977-1980</i>	185
7. <i>Conclusion: Functionalism and early European policy making in the Middle East</i>	188
Conclusion: Disappointment and West German-Arab relations, 1967-1979	191
Bibliography	202
PA/AA List of Inventories (<i>Bestände</i>) consulted:	231
Appendix A	232
Appendix B: Organigrams	239
Appendix C: Timeline	241

Table of figures

<u>Figure 1:</u>	Years in which a West German embassy was opened or re-opened in the Arab states after 1965	18
<u>Figure 2:</u>	West German-Arab Trade, 1967-1979	161

Table of pictures

<u>Picture 1:</u>	Three caricatures of West German foreign minister Scheel and the FRG's policy towards the Middle East from the summer of 1972	8
<u>Picture 2:</u>	Impressions from Scheel's 1972 trip to Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon	56
<u>Picture 3:</u>	Changing of the guard: Helmut Schmidt and Hans-Dietrich Genscher	63
<u>Picture 4:</u>	Brandt's handwritten note on the Arab-Israeli conflict	83
<u>Picture 5:</u>	Brandt meeting Boumedienne in Algiers and Sadat in Cairo	92
<u>Picture 6:</u>	Airplanes exploding on Dawson Field	113
<u>Picture 7:</u>	Cartoon of Scheel and Brandt kowtowing before Sadat and Palestinian terrorism	120
<u>Picture 8:</u>	Hans-Georg Steltzer, West German ambassador to Egypt (1972-1978)	121
<u>Picture 9:</u>	Cartoon in a West German newspaper about Scheel's 1973 journey to Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon	148
<u>Picture 10:</u>	Genscher meeting Tunisian foreign minister Fitouri during the UN General Assembly in New York in 1979	180
<u>Picture 11:</u>	European and Arab leaders meet in February 2019 for a summit of EU and Arab League	190

Table of maps

<u>Map 1:</u>	The successful Egyptian crossing of the Suez Canal in October 1973	60
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Table of abbreviations

AAPD	Akten der Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
AdL	Archiv des Liberalismus
AdsD	Archiv der sozialen Demokratie
AOLP	Active Organization for the Liberation of Palestine
BDI	Bundesverband der deutschen Industrie
BMWi	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft (West German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs)
BND	Bundesnachrichtendienst
CDU/CSU	Christlich-Demokratische Union/Christlich-Soziale Union
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
DM	Deutsche Mark
EAD	Euro-Arab Dialogue
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDC	European Defence Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EPC	European Political Cooperation
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei
FLN	Front de Libération Nationale
FRG	Federal Republik of Germany
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
GDR	German Democratic Republic
IEA	International Energy Agency
IEP	International Energy Program
LAS	League of Arab States
NATO	North-Atlantic Treaty Organization
OAPEC	Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSCE	Organization for Social and Economic Cooperation
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PA/AA	Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

PFLP-GC	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
RAF	Red Army Faction
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WEU	Western European Union

Acknowledgements and stylistic remarks

Four years ago, whilst working in Tunisia and then Jordan, I began to be curious about Germany's traditional relationship to these countries and, more generally, to the Arab states. Neither academic literature nor conversations with practitioners of diplomacy and development provided me with satisfactory answers. The decision to put this topic at the centre of my PhD project stems not least from this experience in the Middle East and is part of the attempt to find answers to my questions.

As with any such project, nothing here would have been possible without the help of others. From the start, I was privileged to receive funding to enable my PhD studies. For the academic year 2017/18, I held a one-year scholarship by the German Academic Exchange Service, the DAAD. Following this, I was granted a PhD scholarship from the German Academic Scholarship Foundation, or *Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes*. Travel to conferences in the US, Oslo and Lisbon was enabled by the graduate research fund of my college in Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College. A fieldwork fund of my department, POLIS, enabled a final research trip to Germany in the summer of 2020. I am incredibly grateful for the support by all these different bodies, without whom the research presented in this thesis could not have been carried out in its final form.

In the different archives I visited, I was helped by a several people, in particular Simon Heßdörfer in the PA/AA, Sussanne Witschaß-Beyer (BDI) and Susanne Ackermann (AdL).

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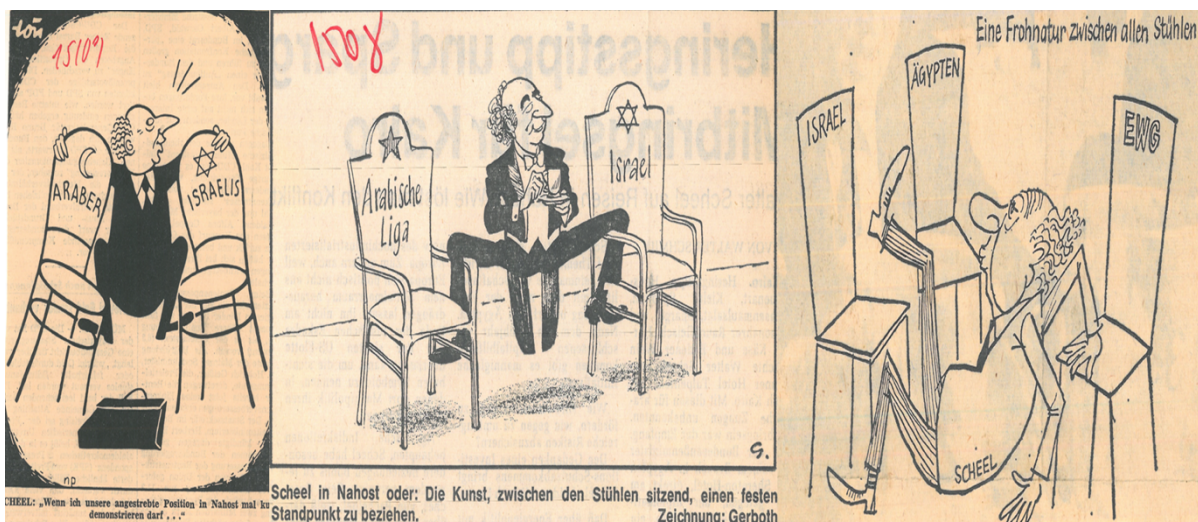
As for style, I used English transliterations for the Arabic names of cities, countries or people. German names are usually left in the original. Translations from German source material into English are mine; German terms are either translated or used italicised in original for prominent cases such as *Ostpolitik* or the *Auswärtiges Amt*, the (West) German foreign office. For events, I mostly relied on terminology used in the archival sources. For example, I refer to the October War, rather than Yom-Kippur War, as the former is the name used by West German diplomats and policymakers at the time.

Introduction: the delicate balancing act of West German Middle Eastern policy

However, the Arab policy has to be seen in conjunction with our Eastern and German policy.
West German foreign minister Walter Scheel, 1970¹

1. Introduction: between the stools of Middle Eastern geopolitics

In their portrayals of West Germany's Middle Eastern policy during the 1970s, cartoonists repeatedly chose to play upon 'sitting between the stools', an idiom which describes a situation of one facing a difficult, if not impossible choice between various alternatives. In those cartoons, one stool would stand for Israel, the other for the Arab states. In the middle, trying more or less successfully to bridge the gap, was West German foreign minister Walter Scheel (see Picture 1).



Picture 1: Three caricatures from the summer of 1972 depicting West German foreign minister Scheel and the FRG's Middle Eastern policy.²

It is telling that West German Middle Eastern policy evoked comparisons with this idiom. After all, during the 1970s the social-liberal coalition under Scheel and chancellor Willy Brandt embarked on a reorientation of Bonn's Middle Eastern policy. In 1969, Brandt publicly declared that the FRG's relations to both Israel and the Arab states would from now on be

¹ AAPD 11.02.1970. Document 48. *Notes by Gehlhoff.*

² The subtitle of the caricature on the left reads: "Scheel: 'Let me briefly demonstrate the position we are striving for in the Near East...'" (*Norddeutsche Volkszeitung, Bremen* (14.07.1972)); the subtitle of the caricature in the middle reads: "Scheel in the Near East, or the art of taking a firm standpoint whilst sitting between the stools." (*Kölnische Rundschau* (24.05.1972)); the caricature on the right is entitled: "A happy soul between all stools." (*Welt der Arbeit* (23.07.1972)).

guided by a “principle of even-handedness”.³ Brandt and Scheel themselves had understood the Middle East as consisting of an Arab and an Israeli stool; now, their government would have to work towards sitting on both simultaneously.

Unsurprisingly in view of the Holocaust’s historical legacy, scholars researching post-war Germany in the Middle East have usually focused on relations to Israel.⁴ Far less attention has been paid to West German foreign policy towards the Arab states. But Brandt’s ‘policy of even-handedness’ was not just the first and to date only time that the FRG has engaged in a specific and publicly stated Middle Eastern policy. It also represented a considerable increase in the attention Bonn paid to the Arab states. This dissertation therefore has two main aims: it studies the emergence of the ‘policy of even-handedness’ in 1969 and its implementation throughout the following years. In addition, it focuses on the ‘Arab world’ and provides a comprehensive study of West German foreign policy towards the Arab states throughout the 1970s. In 1965, all but three of them – Morocco, Tunisia and Libya – had cut diplomatic relations with Bonn in response to the exchange of ambassadors between the FRG and Israel. Between 1967 and 1977, Bonn worked hard to re-establish diplomatic ties to the Arab states. This thesis is the study of these efforts.

Its main argument is that throughout the 1970s Bonn pursued a specific “Arab policy”.⁵ In the aftermath of the 1967 June War, the West German government felt the need to strengthen its ties to the Arab states in order to respond to Cold War developments; Bonn feared that a stronger Soviet role in the Middle East threatened security in Europe and opened the door for an advance of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the Arab states. In the following decade, the FRG’s ‘Arab policy’ evolved around five dimensions, which correspond to the chapter structure of this thesis: the dynamics of the Cold War, the Arab-Israeli conflict, terrorism and the emergence of the Palestinian question, the geopolitics of oil, as well as common European foreign policy making towards the Middle East.

Methodologically, the dissertation lies at the interface between international relations and diplomatic history. I draw upon original documents from both public and private archives. This is complemented by material from published editions and secondary sources such as memoirs and newspaper articles. Loosely following the approach of political psychology, I

³ Buettner, Friedemann. *Germany's Middle East Policy: The Dilemmas of a 'Policy of Even-Handedness' (Politik der Ausgewogenheit)*. In: Goren, Haim (ed.). *Germany and the Middle East: Past, Present and Future*. (Jerusalem, 2003): 115-59.

⁴ See, for example, Fink, Carole. *West Germany and Israel. Foreign Relations, Domestic Politics, and the Cold War, 1965-1974*. (Cambridge, 2019); or Weingardt, Markus. *Deutsche Israel- und Nahostpolitik*. (Frankfurt/New York, 2002).

⁵ AAPD 11.02.1970. Document 48. *Notes by Gehlhoff*.

focus on perspectives and interests as they were perceived by foreign policy elites at the time, rather than on writing history ‘as it was’.⁶

In what follows, I will outline the existing scholarly literature on Germany in the Middle East in order to situate this dissertation within it. I shall then explain the research questions of this thesis in detail, before describing the methodology and data used in order to answer them. Finally, I will present the structure of the thesis, point out its key contributions and will briefly present the main findings about West Germany’s ‘Arab policy’. When the latter was launched, it was a project which policymakers in Bonn and the Arab states had put high hopes in. But as the cartoons presented above illustrate only too well, sitting on two stools is not easy. Indeed, the efforts by the West German government ultimately fell short of its own expectations, making disappointment a recurring theme of this West German ‘Arab policy’.

2. Literature review: the lack of research on post-war German-Arab political relations

Over the past ten years, a growing body of English-language research has engaged with Germany’s role in and policy towards the Middle East throughout the 20th century. This starts with McMeekin’s 2010 study of German-Ottoman relations in World War I.⁷ Nicosia and Motadel built upon this with monographs on German-Arab relations and the role of Islam therein before and during World War II, respectively.⁸ In these works it becomes apparent that, while the Middle East was not a strategic priority for either Wilhelmine or Nazi Germany, Berlin in both World Wars at least attempted to increase its strategic footprint in that region.⁹ In 2018, von Bülow shifted the focus towards the post-war period through her analysis of West German links to the Algerian war of independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s.¹⁰ The following year, Fink published a monograph on West German-Israeli relations around 1970, while in 2020 De Vita added a study of East and West German policy towards Israel during the 1950s and 1960s to the scholarly literature on Germany in the Middle East.¹¹ Less well

⁶ On political psychology and foreign policy analysis, see, for example, Rapport, Aaron. *Cognitive approaches to foreign policy analysis*” In: Thies, Cameron. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Foreign Policy Analysis*. (Oxford, 2018).

⁷ McMeekin, Sean. *The Berlin-Baghdad Express: The Ottoman Empire and Germany’s Bid for World Power*. (London, 2010).

⁸ Nicosia, Francis. *Nazi Germany and the Arab World*. (Cambridge, 2015); Motadel, David. *Islam and Nazi Germany’s war*. (Cambridge/London, 2014). See also Rubin, Barry, and Wolfgang Schwanitz. *Nazis, Islamists and the making of the modern Middle East*. (New Haven, 2014).

⁹ On this analysis, see also Reuth, Ralf Georg, *Entscheidung im Mittelmeer: Die südliche Peripherie Europas in der deutschen Strategie des Zweiten Weltkriegs, 1940-1942*. (Koblenz, 1985).

¹⁰ Von Bülow, Mathilde. *West Germany, Cold War Europe and the Algerian War*. (Cambridge, 2016).

¹¹ De Vita, Lorena. *Israelpolitik. German-Israeli relations, 1949-1969*. (Manchester, 2020); Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019); see also Fink, Carole. *Ostpolitik and West German-Israeli relations*. In: Fink, Carole, and Bernd Schaefer (eds.). *Ostpolitik, 1969-1974. European and global responses*. (Cambridge, 2009).

covered in this plethora of recent studies is the exclusive and comprehensive study of West German-Arab political relations in the second half of the 20th century.

Some less recent research on German-Arab relations in the post-war period already exists. A first strand consists of political science analyses from the 1980s. Foremost amongst them is Hünseler's monograph, which is the only one which specifically addresses the historical outline of West German-Arab relations.¹² He sees a clear link between European geopolitics and Brandt's attempts at an 'even-handed' Middle Eastern policy, as the latter had to be understood in connection with the social-liberal coalition's New Eastern Policy (*Ostpolitik*).¹³ Hünseler provides an excellent overview of West German foreign policy towards the Arab states in the immediate post-war period, but he lacks access to archival material to back up his research. As he writes himself: "Once access to these documents is available, certainly some analyses will have to be rewritten."¹⁴ Moreover, his work focuses heavily on the 1950s and early 1960s, only marginally addressing the post-1969 West German approach to the Arab world. Nor does it cover important issues such as oil politics or Bonn's developing stance to the Palestinian question. Kaiser and Steinbach's handbook offers more of an overview of the 'Arab world' and its relations to the FRG, rather than providing a thorough analysis of West German-Arab relations. Apart from one chapter on political questions, it largely deals with cultural or economic relations.¹⁵ Steinbach's 1992 chapter on "Germany and the Arabs" is a stimulating, yet brief ten-page essay on the topic.¹⁶ These sources help us to understand German perspectives on the Arab states during the 1980s and 1990s. However, these works do not provide a comprehensive study of West German-Arab relations and are also quite dated.

Secondly, there is some research on bilateral relations between the FRG and individual Arab states. Engler and Abu Samra deal with Bonn's 1960s' political relations to Jordan and Egypt, respectively.¹⁷ At the core of their analyses are West German efforts to prevent East German recognition by these Arab third countries. While they are well-researched and helpful

¹² Hünseler, Peter. *Die außenpolitischen Beziehungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zu den arabischen Staaten von 1949-1990*. (Frankfurt, 1990).

¹³ See, for example, Gilbert, Mark. *Cold War Europe*. (London, 2015); Trachtenberg, Marc. *The structure of great power politics, 1963-1975*. In: Leffler, Melvyn P., and Odd Arne Westad (eds.). *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Vol. 2*. (Cambridge, 2010): 482-502.

¹⁴ Hünseler, *Außenpolitische Beziehungen der BRD zu arabischen Staaten* (1990): 11.

¹⁵ Kaiser, Karl, and Udo Steinbach. *Deutsch-arabische Beziehungen. Bestimmungsfaktoren und Probleme einer Neuorientierung*. (Munich/Vienna, 1982).

¹⁶ Steinbach, Udo. *Freundschaft und Frustration – die deutsch-arabischen Beziehungen*. In: Steinbach, Udo (ed.). *Arabien: Mehr als Erdöl und Konflikte*. (Berlin, 1992): 221-32.

¹⁷ Engler, Katja. *Die Deutsche Frage im Nahen Osten*. (Berlin, 2007); Abu Samra, Dalia. *Deutschlands Außenpolitik gegenüber Ägypten*. (Berlin (PhD thesis), 2002). See also Atiq, Wagih, and Abd As-Sadiq. *Probleme der deutsch-ägyptischen Beziehungen*. (Essen, 1987).

contributions, the authors do not attempt to provide a more comprehensive narrative of West German-Arab relations during the Cold War. An excellent example of the value of analysing West German-Arab relations specifically, and of not neglecting the Maghreb therein, is von Bülow's recent monograph on West Germany's role in the Algerian war of independence.¹⁸ As she argues convincingly, the FRG represented an important sanctuary for the Algerian *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN), which posed a challenge to the Adenauer government in Bonn's attempts to forge a close relationship with France. As a result, von Bülow shows how the Algerian war of independence – an event not usually associated with the FRG – had a direct and significant impact on West German policy making. However, the period of study for her book ends before 1969. Moreover, even though her work makes many important contributions to the study of Germany in the Greater Middle East, it once again rather looks at relations to one individual Arab country, rather than at the Arab states as a whole.

The final element in previous studies of West German-Arab relations consists of research on the Palestinian question. Slobodian and Prestel deal with the links between the Palestinian movement and the West German left.¹⁹ Their studies connect the social movements of the Middle East with those of the FRG, but largely leave out their impact on foreign policy making in Bonn. Terrorism is another dimension of the Palestinian question, as from 1970 onwards Palestinian *Fedayeen* were active in West Germany. Several papers cover individual attacks. For instance, a book by Dahlke analyses the 1972 attack on the Munich Olympics.²⁰ Riegler engages with the activities of 'Black September' in Austria and West Germany throughout 1973,²¹ while Geiger researches events around the 1977 hijacking of the Lufthansa airplane *Landshut* during the FRG's 'German Autumn'.²² Two works engage with the diplomatic dimensions of counterterrorism: Dahlke, this time in an article, illustrates secret negotiations between the West German government and the PLO to curb further terrorism in the aftermath of the *Landshut* hijacking,²³ while Blumenau's monograph illustrates West

¹⁸ Von Bülow, *West Germany, Cold War Europe and the Algerian War of Independence* (2016); see also Cahn, Jean Paul, and Klaus-Jürgen Müller. *Le rôle de l'Allemagne dans la guerre d'Algérie*. (Paris, 2003).

¹⁹ Prestel, Joseph Ben. *Palästina-Solidarität. Bruchstelle einer globalen Linken*. *Merkur* 73:839 (2019): 61-7; Slobodian, Quinn. *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany*. (Durham (NC), 2012).

²⁰ Dahlke, Matthias. *Der Anschlag auf Olympia '72: die politischen Reaktionen auf den internationalen Terrorismus in Deutschland*. (Munich, 2006).

²¹ Riegler, Thomas. *Das 'Spinnennetz' des internationalen Terrorismus: Der 'Schwarze September' und die gescheiterte Geiselnahme von Schönau 1973*. *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 60:4 (2012): 579–601.

²² Geiger, Tim. *Die 'Landshut' in Mogadischu: Das außenpolitische Krisenmanagement der Bundesregierung angesichts der terroristischen Herausforderung 1977*. *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 57:3 (2009): 413-45.

²³ Dahlke, Matthias. *Das Wischnewski Protokoll: Zur Zusammenarbeit zwischen westeuropäischen Regierungen und transnationalen Terroristen 1977*. *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 57:2 (2009): 201-15; see also Hürter, Johannes. *Anti-Terrorismus-Politik*. *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 57:3 (2009): 330-48.

German efforts to find a multilateral response to terrorism at the UN throughout the 1970s.²⁴ None of these papers, however, provides a coherent analysis of West Germany's political stance to the Palestinian question throughout the 1970s. Moreover, there is to date no study connecting the issue of Palestinian terrorism with Bonn's foreign policy towards the question of Palestine.²⁵

The FRG's relationship with the Arab world is also covered through research on West German policy towards the Middle East as a whole. A very general introduction is provided by Steininger, who mostly focuses on particular episodes such as the FRG's reaction to the 1967 June War.²⁶ A 1993 handbook by Chubin analyses the elements of Bonn's Middle Eastern policy in isolation.²⁷ His own chapter stresses the importance of international factors, such as the Cold War.²⁸ Similarly, Hubel mentions the connection between West German-Israeli relations and Bonn's participation in the Western alliance (*Westbindung*).²⁹ Risse-Kappen sees the domestic arena as crucial for West German foreign policy attitudes towards the Middle East. The key variable for him is the moral obligation that the Holocaust places on Germans.³⁰ Only Joffe attempts to provide a more general model to explain German Middle Eastern policy.³¹ For him, Bonn was caught in a triangle of moral obligation to Israel and real-political interests towards the Arab states, moderated by the dynamics of the Cold War. However, as De Vita shows, the reduction of West German-Israeli relations to the issue of morality is too simplistic and limiting. It was just as much shaped by self-interest, German-German antagonism and the geopolitical context of the Cold War.³² Buettner concludes that the slogan of 'even-handedness' was just a fig-leaf for a non-existent policy towards the Middle East by Bonn.³³ But as I will show in the following, this conclusion seems to confuse lack of success with lack of intention. All these articles highlight various dimensions of West German Middle

²⁴ Blumenau, Bernard. *The United Nations and Terrorism: Germany, Multilateralism, and Antiterrorism Efforts in the 1970s*. (Houndsmill/New York, 2014).

²⁵ An excellent study on this question from a Swiss perspective with a strong focus on intelligence sharing has recently been provided Guttman (Guttman, Aviva. *The origins of counterterrorism. Switzerland at the forefront of crisis negotiations, multilateral diplomacy, and intelligence cooperation (1969-1977)*. (Leiden/Boston, 2017).

²⁶ Steininger, Rolf. *Germany and the Middle East: from Kaiser Wilhelm II to Angela Merkel*. (New York, 2018).

²⁷ Chubin, Shahram (ed.). *Germany and the Middle East. Patterns and Prospects*. (London, 1992).

²⁸ Chubin, Shahram. *Introduction*. In: Chubin, *Germany and the Middle East* (1992): 1-11.

²⁹ Hubel, Helmut. *Germany and the Middle East conflict*. In: Chubin, *Germany and the Middle East* (1992): 41-54.

³⁰ Risse-Kappen, Thomas. *Muddling through mined territory: German foreign policy-making and the Middle East*. In: Chubin, *Germany and the Middle East* (1992): 177-94.

³¹ Joffe, Josef. *Reflections on German policy in the Middle East*. In: Chubin, *Germany and the Middle East* (1992): 195-209.

³² De Vita, *Israelpolitik* (2020).

³³ Buettner, *Dilemmas of a 'Policy of Even-Handedness'* (2003).

Eastern policy extremely well but only deal with the Arab dimensions of West German foreign policy in passing. They also lack empirical application and consideration of primary source material.

Weingardt's monograph is possibly the most exhaustive and detailed work on West German engagement in the region, which also draws upon primary source material for its analysis.³⁴ However, as the author himself states, his book primarily deals with the relationship between West Germany and Israel. Gerlach provides a very detailed study based on archival material about the German attitude towards the Arab-Israeli conflict from 1967 to 1973.³⁵ Again, however, the account mostly circles around Germany (both West and East) and Israel. In both Weingardt's and Gerlach's books, Bonn's policy towards the Arab states is engaged with through the lens of West German-Israeli relations, only analysing the former to the extent that they were related to the latter.

Of course, within German Middle Eastern policy the study of relations to Israel has been a particular focus area. A whole range of publications deals with this foreign political dimension of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* ('coming to terms with the past') in the aftermath of the Holocaust.³⁶ Reconciliation, recompensation and morality are recurring and dominant themes of these works. Most books focus on West Germany, although some research on East Germany in this respect exists as well.³⁷ Unsurprisingly, the Arab states are only touched upon marginally in such works.

Another theme repeatedly addressed in studies of post-war Germany's foreign policy is the global competition between East and West Germany.³⁸ How did "Germany's Cold War" play out in the Middle East?³⁹ The most comprehensive account of this story is provided by De

³⁴ Weingardt, *Deutsche Israel- und Nahostpolitik* (2002).

³⁵ Gerlach, Daniel. *Die doppelte Front*. (Berlin, 2006).

³⁶ Bachleitner, Kathrin. *Diplomacy with Memory: How the Past Is Employed for Future Foreign Policy*. *Foreign Policy Analysis* 15:4 (2019): 492-508; Borchard, Michael. *Eine unmögliche Freundschaft. David Ben-Gurion und Konrad Adenauer*. (Freiburg, 2019); Hestermann, Jenny. *Inszenierte Versöhnung: Reisediplomatie und die deutsch-israelischen Beziehungen von 1957 bis 1984*. (Frankfurt, 2016); Lavy, George. *Germany and Israel: moral debt and national interest*. (Abingdon, 2013); Jelinek, Yeshayahu. *Deutschland und Israel 1945-1965. Ein neurotisches Verhältnis*. (Munich, 2004); Hansen, Niels. *Aus dem Schatten der Katastrophe*. (Düsseldorf, 2002).

³⁷ Herf, Jeffrey. *Undeclared Wars with Israel. East Germany and the West German Far Left, 1967-1989*. (New York, 2016); Tim, Angelika. *Hammer, Zirkel, Davidstern. Das gestörte Verhältnis der DDR zu Zionismus und Staat Israel*. (Bonn, 1997).

³⁸ On an engagement with this question beyond the Middle East, see, for example, Roberts, George. *Politics, decolonisation, and the Cold War in Dar es Salaam 1965-72*. (Warwick (PhD thesis), 2016); Hong, Young-sun. *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime*. (Cambridge, 2015); Das Gupta, Amit. *The non-aligned and the German question*. In: Mišković, Nataša, et al. (eds.). *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War. Delhi – Bandung – Belgrade*. (London, 2014).

³⁹ Gray, William Glenn. *Germany's cold war: the global campaign to isolate East-Germany, 1949-1969*. (Chapel Hill, 2003). On German-German competition viewed from the FRG's and GDR's perspective, see also Killian,

Vita in her recent monograph, which illustrates the interplay of the Cold War and German-German antagonism in Bonn's and East-Berlin's relations to Israel from 1949 to 1969.⁴⁰ Trentin compares relations of both GDR and FRG to two Arab states: Syria and Iraq. His study goes up to 1974 and therefore into the period of *rapprochement* between the two Germanies.⁴¹ Both De Vita and Trentin follow Kleßmann's approach of "entangled history" by engaging with GDR and FRG simultaneously.⁴² Maeke and Sittmann focus more exclusively on East German relations to the Arab world.⁴³ More and more light is shed upon the question of how the Cold War's 'German question' played out in and was perceived by third countries, although much of it still focuses on the early days of this episode, rather than on the period after *Ostpolitik*.

The 1970s were also the decade in which a common European foreign policy started to take shape through the framework of European Political Cooperation (EPC). Finding common positions on the Arab-Israeli conflict amongst the EEC members was one of the EPC's main tasks. This European dimension therefore has to be taken into account when analysing West German Middle Eastern policy from 1970 onwards. Moeckli's excellent monograph covers the formative years of the EPC.⁴⁴ Jacobs provides insights into the process of the Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD), another, yet more temporary tool of early European foreign policy towards the Middle East.⁴⁵ But these contributions focus exclusively on the European dimension, rather than analysing it in conjunction with the European member states' Middle Eastern policies more generally. The only exception is Neustadt's 1983 book on the European element of West German-Israeli relations, which, however, lacks the incorporation of primary source material.⁴⁶

Werner. *Die Hallstein-Doktrin. Der diplomatische Krieg zwischen der BRD und der DDR 1955-1973*. (Berlin, 2001).

⁴⁰ De Vita, *Israelpolitik* (2020). See also De Vita, Lorena. *Overlapping rivalries. The two Germanys, Israel and the Cold War*. *Cold War History* 17:4 (2017): 351-66.

⁴¹ Trentin, Massimiliano. *Tough negotiations. The two Germanys in Syria and Iraq, 1963-74*. *Cold War History* 8:3 (2008): 353-80.

⁴² Kleßmann, Christoph. *Spaltung und Verflechtung – Ein Konzept zur integrierten Nachkriegsgeschichte 1945 bis 1990*. In: Kleßmann, Christoph, and Peter Lautzas (eds.). *Teilung und Integration. Die doppelte deutsche Nachkriegsgeschichte*. (Bonn, 2005): 20-37. See also Bösch, Frank. *Geteilte Geschichte. Plädoyer für eine deutsch-deutsche Perspektive auf die jüngere Zeitgeschichte*. *Studies in Contemporary History* 12:1 (2015): 98-114.

⁴³ Sittmann, Julia. *Illusions of care: Iraqi students between the Ba'hist State and the Stasi in socialist East Germany, 1958-89*. *Cold War History* 18:2 (2018): 187-202; Maeke, Lutz. *DDR und PLO: die Palästinalpolitik des SED-Staates*. (Berlin, 2017).

⁴⁴ Moeckli, Daniel. *European foreign policy during the Cold War: Heath, Brandt, Pompidou and the dream of political unity*. (London, 2009); see also Sattler, Verena. *Die Institutionalisierung europäischer Nahostpolitik. Frankreich in der Europäischen Politischen Zusammenarbeit 1969/70-1980*. (Wiesbaden, 2017).

⁴⁵ Jacobs, Andreas. *Problematische Partner: europäisch-arabische Zusammenarbeit 1970-1998*. (Cologne, 2008). See also Jawad, Haifaa. *Euro-Arab Relations. A study on collective diplomacy*. (Reading, 1992).

⁴⁶ Neustadt, Amnon. *Die deutsch-israelischen Beziehungen im Schatten der EG-Nahostpolitik*. (Frankfurt, 1983).

Oil is another factor shaping the international relations of the Middle East over the past century. This applies to the 1970s in particular, when not only one, but two oil crises occurred. Still, the role of energy security in Bonn's foreign policy has so far largely been ignored. A chapter by Maull engages with the economic relations between FRG and the Arab states.⁴⁷ On the one hand, they had the potential to be lucrative export markets; on the other hand, they were the main provider of West German oil supplies, which caused a significant energy dependence. Other than that, literature on energy security mostly analyses the FRG's domestic politics of oil.⁴⁸

Finally, to look at the topic from a different angle, in the extensive literature on the engagement of outside powers within the Middle East, Germany has traditionally not received a lot of attention.⁴⁹ Instead, this strand of literature focuses on the USA,⁵⁰ the UK,⁵¹ France,⁵² or, more recently, the Soviet Union.⁵³

Overall, a wide range of literature covers Germany's political relationship to the Middle East throughout the 20th century. However, as far as the post-war period is concerned, much of this research circles around Bonn's relationship to Tel Aviv and the foreign policy of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Bonn's political engagement with the 'Arab world' is often studied only in as much as the Arab-Israeli conflict is concerned. Other themes which the literature points to in this regard are the context of the Cold War, German-German antagonism, terrorism and debates about Palestine, the role of energy security and the emergence of European policy making towards the Middle East. But a comprehensive study of West German-

⁴⁷ Maull, Hanns. *Economic relations with the Middle East: weight and dimensions*. In: Chubin, *Germany and the Middle East* (1992): 113-35.

⁴⁸ Karlsch, Rainer, and Raymond Stokes. *Faktor Öl: die Mineralölwirtschaft in Deutschland 1859-1974*. (Munich, 2003); Hohensee, Jens. *Der erste Ölpreisschock 1973-74: die politischen und gesellschaftlichen Auswirkungen der arabischen Erdölpolitik auf die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Westeuropa*. (Stuttgart, 1996).

⁴⁹ On external powers in the Middle East, see, for example, Ehteshami, Anoushiravan. *Globalization and Geopolitics in the Middle East*. (London, 2007); Khalidi, Rashid. *Resurrecting Empire. Western footprints and America's perilous path in the Middle East*. (Boston, 2004).

⁵⁰ Lesch, David (ed.). *The Middle East and the United States*. (London, 2018); Little, Douglas. *American Orientalism*. (Chapel Hill, 2008); Quandt, William. *Peace Process*. (Washington D.C., 2001); Lenczowski, George. *American Presidents and the Middle East*. (Durham/London, 1990).

⁵¹ Onley, James. *Britain and the Gulf Sheikdoms, 1820-1971*. (Georgetown University, 2009); Jones, Clive. *Britain, Covert Action and the Yemen Civil War 1962-1967*. In: Levey, Zach, and Elie Brighton. *Britain in the Middle East*. (Brighton, 2008); Louis, Wm. Roger. *Britain and the Middle East after 1945*. In: Brown, Carl (ed.). *Diplomacy in the Middle East*. (London/ New York, 2001): 21-58.

⁵² Pedaliu, Effie. *Fault Lines in the Post-War Mediterranean and the 'Birth of Southern Europe', 1945-1975*. In: Calandri, Elena, Daniele Caviglia and Antonio Varsori. *Détente in Cold War Europe*. (London/New York, 2016); Leveau, Rémy. *France's Arab policy*. In: Brown, *Diplomacy in the Middle East* (2001): 3-20.

⁵³ Ginor, Isabelle, and Gideon Remez. *The Soviet-Israeli War, 1967-1973*. (Oxford, 2017); Laqueur, Walter. *The Struggle for the Middle East*. (London, 2016); Rubinstein, Alvin. *The Middle East in Russia's Strategic Prism*. In: Brown, *Diplomacy in the Middle East* (2001): 75-94.

Arab relations bringing together these factors is lacking. West German foreign policy towards the Arab states generally remains under-researched. In the following section, I will explain why this research gap merits our attention, outlining the questions which underlie my dissertation.

3. Research question: the neglected side of West German Middle Eastern policy

In an intentional oversimplification, one can understand West German Middle Eastern policy as a coin, whose obverse represents relations to Israel and whose reverse stands for relations to the Arab states. As the literature review has shown, a significant amount of research over the past few years has shed light on the former side of the coin. Even much of the literature on the Arab states ultimately evolves around Israel. Less attention, however, has been given to the latter side of the coin: the relations of the FRG to the Arab states. But if we view the coin as a whole and want to understand West German Middle Eastern policy more generally, we need to know more about both of its sides. Therefore, this thesis will focus on the side which so far has been studied less by analysing the FRG's foreign policy towards the Arab states.

But can there even be study of Bonn's policy towards the Arabs states comprehensively? Or would that rather just have to be a study of bilateral relations with more than a dozen individual Arab countries? After all, there never has been a united 'Arab state'. However, of course on the Arab side the vision of 'Arabism' and thus a sense of commonality, despite its contested nature, certainly existed in particular in the years and decades following the period of de-colonisation.⁵⁴ Moreover, there are several indicators that in the minds of foreign policy makers in Bonn there truly was the understanding of the Arab states as a somehow coherent political arena. To begin with, on numerous occasions West German diplomats and politicians referred to an "Arab world", using the phrasing of a "tradition of amicable relations between Germany and the Arabs".⁵⁵ Secondly, chancellor Willy Brandt himself gave testimony to a perceived dichotomous separation of the Middle East in Bonn, when in 1969 he publicly announced an 'even-handed' policy to Israel on the one and the Arab states on the other hand. Thirdly, after the collapse of West German-Arab relations in 1965, between 1967 and 1977 the FRG opened or re-opened embassies in thirteen Arab states, mostly in the years 1971-74. This is a clear sign that the re-establishing of diplomatic relations to the

⁵⁴ On Arab nationalism, see, for example, Choueiri, Youssef. *Arab nationalism: a history. Nation and state in the Arab world*. (Oxford, 2000); Ayubi, Nazih. *Over-stating the Arab state: politics and society in the Middle East*. (London, 1995).

⁵⁵ On the former, see, for example, AAPD 09.06.1969. Document 193. *Memorandum by political units I and III; regarding: German-Arab relations*; on the latter, see, for example, AAPD 08.02.1968. Document 50. *Conversation of Duckwitz with the head of the office of the Arab League, Cabani*.

Arabs states was a concerted policy effort throughout this time span. Last but not least, West German foreign minister Walter Scheel himself talked of a West German “Arab policy” (*arabische Politik*) in a 1970 government meeting.⁵⁶ Overall, it becomes clear that amongst the FRG’s foreign policy elites the impression of a coherent Arab political unit existed. The 1970s in particular seem to have been a decade in which the Arab states carried greater importance for West German foreign policy making. Thus, an analysis of West German foreign policy towards the Arab states is possible and can be carried out comprehensively. It is not just the stringing together of eighteen separate chapters covering Bonn’s policy to eighteen individual states.⁵⁷ Throughout the 1970s, studying the whole of West German-Arab relations is more than studying the sum of its bilateral parts.

Country	Relations (re-)established
Morocco	1957
Tunisia	1963
Libya	1964
Jordan	1967
North Yemen	1968
Algeria, Sudan	1971
Lebanon, Egypt	1972
<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	1973
Syria, Iraq, United Arab Emirates	1974
<i>Oman</i>	1975
<i>Kuwait, Qatar</i>	1977
<i>Bahrain</i>	1991
Bold: Diplomatic relations broken up in 1965; embassy re-opened <i>Italics: No diplomatic relations with FRG by 1965; embassy newly opened</i>	

Figure 1: Years in which a West German embassy was opened or re-opened in the Arab states after 1965. The first three countries did not break up diplomatic relations with the FRG in 1965. The period covered in this thesis are shaded in grey.

In order to shed further light on West German-Arab relations during the Cold War, this dissertation will be guided by the following questions:

⁵⁶ AAPD 11.02.1970. Document 48. *Notes by Gehlhoff.*

⁵⁷ I include in this list those countries which the *Auswärtiges Amt* itself understood as belonging to the ‘Arab world’: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, the UAE, Bahrain, Oman, North Yemen, South Yemen.

- Why did Brandt and Scheel engage in a new, ‘even-handed’ Middle Eastern policy from 1969 onwards?
- What was the role of the Arab states in this new policy?
- Was there indeed a comprehensive West German ‘Arab policy’ during the 1970s?
- What were the key dimensions and determinants of West German-Arab relations in this period?
- Which actors drove West German-Arab relations forward in this period?
- What happened to West German-Arab relations by the end of the 1970s, and why do we no longer talk of a German ‘Arab policy’?

Finally, it is worthwhile to reflect on the importance of having diplomatic relations with third countries, as much of this thesis circles around this question. After all, the absence of diplomatic relations with the Arab states certainly did not mean that the West German state was completely absent from those countries in this period. So-called ‘protective powers’ took on the task of directly representing West German interests in the Arab states and they usually hosted West German diplomats as staff. To give just one example, throughout the period of 1965 to 1972 there was a West German delegation working within the Italian embassy in Cairo, as Italy had agreed to serve as West German protective power in Egypt. In many cases, trade, too, remained mostly unaffected by the 1965 break-up of diplomatic relations.⁵⁸ But for two reasons, there is an added benefit to having formal diplomatic relations with third countries. Firstly, on a practical level, full diplomatic representation offers more access and greater freedom to operate abroad. Although transnational politics are just as much conducted above or below the level of official diplomatic channels, states will have it easier to find a solution for any concrete problem if they can resort to a fully staffed embassy abroad. As Berridge states: “Resident embassies are the normal means of conducting diplomacy between any two states.”⁵⁹ Secondly, on a superficial level, diplomatic relations, or rather the absence thereof, carry an important symbolic weight. The unwillingness to exchange ambassadors signals a lack of recognition and political distance. It is for that very reason that East Germany fought so hard to have embassies abroad in the post-war period, as otherwise the GDR’s sovereignty and independence was in question. The absence of diplomatic relations between two countries is in and of itself a statement about the quality of their relationship.

⁵⁸ Abu Samra, *Deutschlands Außenpolitik gegenüber Ägypten* (2002): 179.

⁵⁹ Berridge, Geoff. *Diplomacy: theory and practice*. (Basingstoke, 2015): 115.

I will now turn to outlining the methodology, data and analytical framework underlying the research pursued in order to answer the above questions.

4. Methodology and data: the interplay of international relations and diplomatic history

This dissertation is a study of the FRG's foreign policy towards the Arab states through a West German perspective. Methodologically, it lies at the interface of the study of international relations and of contemporary, diplomatic history.⁶⁰ Ultimately, it is closer to the latter approach, because it represents a study of foreign policy in the post-war period based on archival sources. The closest the description of a political science method comes to this is process tracing, whereby a broad array of sources is used in order to redraw the chronology of a particular event and establish a certain causal narrative.⁶¹ Since this thesis is an explorative research project, it does not rely on a dense and formal theoretical framework. Many of its aspects – such as the engagement with West German policy towards the Maghreb, Bonn's stances to the Palestinian question and the Lebanese civil war or the FRG's emerging oil policy – are, to my knowledge, entirely novel contributions to scholarship. Therefore, the less rigid recourse to 'thin' theoretical inspirations and a broad analytical framework, which will be laid out in the next subchapter, represent the more appropriate choice for the research design of this thesis.

As this project retraces the emergence and implementation of a past foreign policy, it was clear from the start that the data used for this thesis would mainly consist of primary, archival sources. The starting point for finding this material consisted in the redacted editions called *Akten der Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (AAPD), which are accessible in print and online. They contain key documents from the German foreign office archive, which are selected to be published annually by a group of German historians. In a first stage, I went through all documents between 1967 and 1980 containing any reference to the Middle East or North Africa, which already provided a good outline of the main themes and issues that seemed to matter for West German Middle Eastern policy in this period. For example, the link between West Germany's Arab policy and the Mediterranean already emerged at this stage.

⁶⁰ On current trends in diplomatic history, see Mori, Jennifer. *The State of the Art. The Way of the Future*. *Diplomatica* 1:1 (2019): 5-12; Zeiler, Thomas. *The Diplomatic History Bandwagon: A State of the Field*. *Journal of American History* 95:4 (2009): 1053-73.

⁶¹ George, Alexander, and Andrew Bennet. *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. (Cambridge (MA)/London, 2005): 206.

This initial mapping also helped to plan further archival visits. The archive which provided most of the new, previously unused material of this thesis was the Political Archive of the German Federal Foreign Office (*Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes* – PA/AA), where the focus lay on materials from the Middle Eastern and North African desks as well as those units in the *Auswärtiges Amt* dealing with EPC, trade and energy security. In view of my initial findings in the AAPD-documents, I also expanded my research to materials from the Mediterranean desk. Most of the material used – coming from boxes starting with B130 – was still classified; in all approximately 70 cases, requests for the declassification of and access to this material was granted by the PA/AA. The archival research conducted in the PA/AA was the most extensive and fruitful of all the archival visits carried out for this project.

In addition, I visited three further archives for very specific research. In order to access to personal papers of key politicians of the period covered in this thesis such as Willy Brandt or Hans-Dietrich Genscher, I visited the Archive of Social Democracy (*Archiv der sozialen Demokratie* – AdsD) in Bonn – and the Free Liberal Party – the Archive of Liberalism (*Archiv des Liberalismus* – ADL) in Gummersbach. In both, I also studied notes from party committees on foreign policy. However, no documents of note relating to the Middle East or the Arab states could be found there.

Some documents in the fourth chapter on the economic dimension of West German-Arab relations come from the Historical Archive (*Historisches Archiv*) of the Federation of German Industry (*Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie* – BDI) in Berlin. I also examined the minutes of the select committee for foreign affairs in German parliament (*Auswärtiger Ausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages*), which are accessible in published editions up to 1983.⁶² In addition, memoirs, autobiographies and newspaper articles have been used where they filled a particular gap or helped to shed light on the thinking and memories of actors involved at the time.

Of course, these materials come with several limitations. Autobiographies and personal papers carry the most obvious problem of subjectivity with themselves. However, to an extent government documents, official minutes or newspaper articles are just as much “ego-documents” which are written through a certain lens by a particular group to a specific audience.⁶³ To remedy this, I focused on contextualising and interpreting these documents in

⁶² A planned visit to the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz did not materialise due to the COVID-crisis of 2020. However, the wealth of material collected from other sources and archives at this stage meant that I considered materials from the Bundesarchiv merely optional and not essential for the completion of this thesis.

⁶³ Fulbrook, Mary, and Ulinka Rublack. *In Relation: The ‘Social Self’ and Ego-Documents*. *German History* 28:3 (2010): 263-72.

view of the debates and events they relate to. Moreover, as I will show in the following section, this thesis acknowledges such subjectivities by focusing on the political psychology of diplomacy, engaging with the perceptions of threats and interests by key policymakers. As a result, the subjectivity incorporated into ego-documents represents less of a methodological obstacle, as it becomes itself subject of the research. A final caveat is that the material selected mostly follows a top-down perspective. However, where possible material from diplomats acting ‘on the ground’ was incorporated. In addition, government foreign policy making ultimately is a top-down process, of which the use of sources here therefore is a reflection.

The above list of archives also shows both what this thesis does and what it does not deal with. It focuses on the FRG’s perspective on the Arab states. While a study taking into account Arab viewpoints is highly desirable, the engagement with both German and Arabic sources would have gone beyond the limits of this PhD project. The dissertation is also not a social or cultural history of German-Arab relations, which is why the archives listed above mostly deal with political topics. In addition, East Germany is only engaged with through West German sources. De Vita has shown the value of simultaneously taking material from both Germanies into account in her recent book on Bonn’s and East Berlin’s foreign policy towards Israel.⁶⁴ However, she has done so after the foreign policies of both Germanies towards Tel Aviv had been studied separately in detail. As much as I hope to read a similar German-German history of relations to the Arab states at some point, I argue that first it was necessary to focus on either one of the two Germanies in their policy towards the Arab ‘world’. Finally, and as already explained above, it is worthwhile to reiterate that this is first and foremost an empirical rather than a theoretical contribution to the study of Germany in the Middle East.

The period covered in this thesis stretches from 1967 to 1979. This relates to the above-mentioned fact that it was in this period that the (re-)opening of West German embassies in the Arab states took place. If we ever want to understand the FRG’s relations towards the Arab states more comprehensively, those years of Bonn’s ‘Arab policy’ are suited best. Moreover, the period of research lies between two pivotal years for the Middle East: in Segev’s words, 1967 with the Six-Day War was “the year that transformed the Middle East”,⁶⁵ while for Lesch 1979 with the invasion of Afghanistan, the Iranian revolution, the second oil crisis, the Siege of Mecca and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty was “the year that shaped the Modern Middle East”.⁶⁶ In between fall several key events in the recent history of the region, such as the 1969

⁶⁴ De Vita, *Israelpolitik* (2020).

⁶⁵ Segev, Tom. *1967: Israel, the war, and the year that transformed the Middle East*. (New York, 2007).

⁶⁶ Lesch, David. *1979: the year that shaped the modern Middle East*. (New York, 2001).

Libyan coup, the 1973 October War, the oil shock, the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon in 1975 or Anwar al-Sadat's journey to Jerusalem in 1977. These all represent situations in which West German decision-makers had to consider their position in the Arab world, allowing for an analysis of the written records of their debates, conversations and deliberation processes.

5. Analytical framework: political psychology and the structures shaping West German post-war foreign policy

As Elman and Elman put it, diplomatic history and international relations could be understood as separated between a “narrative-theory divide”.⁶⁷ The former focuses on rich, nuanced detail and the latter on rigid, generalised explanations. But as the authors themselves go on to argue, this is probably a too simplistic distinction.⁶⁸ As Levy or Schroeder put it, the difference is rather that the historical approach is less explicit in its use of formal theory, whilst still relying on theoretical assumptions.⁶⁹ Combining the perspectives of political science and history is therefore maybe less difficult than one would intuitively expect. After all, as Wohlforth argues, international relations is already a historical science.⁷⁰

In the context of this thesis, two aspects need to be taken into consideration. On one hand, this research is based on the analysis with original government and policy documents. Thus, any research design has to permit the reader of these primary sources to study them with a certain openness to interpretation. On the other, one has to acknowledge the context in which decision-makers were operating at the time in order to navigate and understand the relevant primary source material.

The following analytical framework is therefore supposed to provide broad guidance on the context in which West German foreign policy towards the Arab states developed, without being too restrictive. It starts with the interplay of agency and structure and the assumption that decision-makers move within certain structures that shape, direct and constrain their actions. In turn, these actors also affect and influence these structures themselves. Consequently, the analytical framework attempts to outline the “political, economic, and ideational structures through the prism of the perception of the agents, assuming that what is essential for

⁶⁷ Elman, Colin, and Miriam Elman. *Diplomatic History and International Relations Theory: Respecting Difference and Crossing Boundaries*. *International Security* 22:1 (1997): 5-21.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*: 7.

⁶⁹ Levy, Jack. *Too Important to Leave to the Other: History and Political Science in the Study of International Relations*. *International Security* 22:1 (1997): 22-33; Schroeder, Paul. *History and International Relations Theory: Not Use or Abuse, but Fit or Misfit*. *International Security* 22:1 (1997): 64-74.

⁷⁰ Wohlforth, William. *A certain idea of science*. In: Westad, Odd Arne (ed.). *Reviewing the Cold War*. (London, 2000): 138.

understanding an individual's behaviour is how he or she interprets these forces and constraints" – what Moeckli terms the political psychology of foreign policy making.⁷¹ It relates closely to Leffler's argument about the need to understand threats and opportunities as decision-makers perceived them through the lens of perspective, ideology and context.⁷²

I will now briefly outline key elements of the structures which generally shaped West German foreign policy in the post-war period. Then, I will turn to agency and introduce key foreign policy makers of the 1960s and 1970s. This will not be an exhaustive list but will give helpful context for the main research of this thesis. It also provides space to introduce and define central concepts, which come up repeatedly throughout this dissertation.

Structures:

The Cold War

The second half of the 20th century is marked more than anything by the Cold War: the ideological and geopolitical struggle between East and West, between capitalism and communism, and, at least within Europe, democracy and autocracy.⁷³ Its key battleground state was Germany. "Throughout the forty-five-year history of the Cold War, [it] remained the principal prize of the conflict."⁷⁴ The FRG was therefore fundamentally affected by this contest and was both subject and object in the struggle of superpowers. The Cold War was also a main reference point in understanding Bonn's relations to its most important international ally after World War II: the United States.⁷⁵ The Cold War therefore is the key framework around which all of West German foreign policy, including that towards the Middle East, evolved throughout the second half of the 20th century.

Rather than rigid bipolarity, however, recent scholarship has stressed what Smith has termed the "pericentric" nature of the Cold War.⁷⁶ He highlights the agency available to "junior members in the international system [...] in expanding, intensifying, and prolonging the

⁷¹ Moeckli, *European foreign policy during the Cold War* (2009): 7f. See also Rapport, *Cognitive approaches to foreign policy analysis* (2018); or Levy, Jack. *Psychology and Foreign Policy Decision Making*. In: Huddy, Leon, et al. (eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. (Oxford, 2013).

⁷² Leffler, Melvyn. *Bringing it together*. In: Westad, *Reviewing the Cold War* (2000): 56f.

⁷³ For an introduction into the history of the Cold War, see Westad, Odd Arne. *The Global Cold War. Third World interventions and the making of our times*. (Cambridge, 2005); or Gaddis, John Lewis. *We now know. Rethinking Cold War history*. (Oxford, 1997).

⁷⁴ Costigliola, Frank. *US foreign policy from Kennedy to Johnson*. In: Leffler and Westad (eds.). "The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Vol. 2." (Cambridge, 2010): 119.

⁷⁵ On US-German relations, see Steininger, Rolf. *Deutschland und die USA. Vom Zweiten Weltkrieg bis zur Gegenwart*. (Reinbek, 2014).

⁷⁶ Smith, Tony. New Bottles for New Wine: A Pericentric Framework for the Study of the Cold War. *Diplomatic History* 24:4 (2000): 567-91.

struggle between East and West”⁷⁷. The framework of pericentrism draws our attention to the mid-levels of global political hierarchies at the time.⁷⁸ It also corresponds to a view which detects an interplay between a global, systemic Cold Wars and several regional Cold War that mutually impacted and shaped each other.⁷⁹

West German Middle Eastern policy represents an excellent case study for pericentrism and the interaction of regional Cold Wars. After all, a particular manifestation of this conflict was what Gray has termed “Germany’s Cold War”: the competition between FRG and GDR about the global claim to sole representation (*Alleinvertretungsanspruch*).⁸⁰ From 1955 to 1969, Bonn’s foreign policy was officially guided by the so-called Hallstein Doctrine, named after a West German State Secretary in the West German foreign office, the *Auswärtiges Amt*, Walter Hallstein.⁸¹ It stipulated that the recognition of East Germany by a third country would be interpreted as a hostile act by West Germany. Indeed, it was the Hallstein Doctrine which had contributed significantly to the break-up of diplomatic relations between the Arab states and the FRG in 1965. Egypt’s president Gamal Abdel Nasser had invited East German leader Walter Ulbricht to Egypt for a visit in order to pressure Bonn into ending weapons deliveries to Israel. Nasser’s decision in turn had been motivated by developments of the so-called “Arab Cold War”, at the time characterised by a struggle within the Arab World between revolutionary republics led by Egypt and conservative monarchies headed by Saudi Arabia.⁸² Responding to several setbacks, Nasser had hoped to reinforce his position amongst the Arab states by challenging the FRG over weapons deliveries to Israel. In turn, the West German government openly discussed to cut economic aid to Cairo and established diplomatic relations with Israel. Only then did most of the Arab states call back their ambassadors from Bonn. The Hallstein Doctrine had not in and of itself caused the breakdown of West German-Arab relations in 1965, but it had set the FRG on collision course with the Arab states.⁸³

The Arab and the German Cold War had collided and caused embarrassment for the West German government. A few years later, changes and relaxation of both German and Arab Cold Wars opened the space in which Bonn attempted to formulate its Arab policy. The re-

⁷⁷ Ibid.: 568.

⁷⁸ On hierarchies in international relation, see, for example, Zarakol, Ayşe (ed.). *Hierarchies in world politics*. (Cambridge, 2017); or Lake, David. *Hierarchy in International Relations*. (Ithaca, 2009).

⁷⁹ Lüthi, Lorenz. *The regional cold wars in Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East: crucial periods and turning points*. (Washington D.C., 2015).

⁸⁰ Gray, *Germany’s cold war* (2003).

⁸¹ Booz, Rüdiger. *‘Hallsteinzeit’: deutsche Außenpolitik 1955-1972*. (Bonn, 1995).

⁸² Kerr, Malcolm. *The Arab cold war, 1958-1964; a study of ideology in politics*. (London/New York, 1965).

⁸³ Ibid: 174-95; on this episode see also Hünseler, *Außenpolitische Beziehungen der BRD zu arabischen Staaten* (1990): 142-56.

intensification of the Arab Cold War from 1977 onwards then made an impact on West German Middle Eastern policy, too. Orkaby rightly warns us from an inflationary use of the ‘Cold War’-term to preserve its analytical value and meaning.⁸⁴ Yet, without a doubt the interplay of Arab, German and systemic Cold War represented a crucial backdrop against which West German Middle Eastern policy unfolded throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

European integration

A key component of the FRG’s post-war foreign policy identity is the commitment to the project of a united Europe. Together, Bonn’s membership in the EEC (later EU) and NATO formed the cornerstone of West Germany’s alignment with the West (*Westbindung*). Moreover, its bilateral relations to key West European states such as France, Italy or Britain were increasingly managed through the European arena.

During the 1970s, the European project took on another dimension. The EEC had faced significant crises throughout the 1960s, for example through de Gaulle’s ‘policy of the empty seat’ and his vetoes against British EEC-membership.⁸⁵ But at the 1969 Hague summit, the EEC leaders chose to push European integration forward by a significant margin. One element of this decision was the closer coordination and integration of foreign policy on a European level. For this, in 1970 the new institutional format of EPC – precursor of the EU’s 1993 Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) – was established. Ultimately, Brandt, Heath and Pompidou might have been unable to achieve what Moekli called their “dream of political unity”.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, West German regard for the European project was greater than ever in this period and was one of the main influences on the FRG’s foreign policy making.

The shadow of the past

The Third Reich is the fulcrum of modern German history. Its impact on the FRG’s politics – both domestic and external – has been profound and lasts to this day. Firstly, this relates to the crimes of the Holocaust. Today, the German government openly accepts an obligation which the murder of millions of Jewish people has created for its policy. The process by which German politics arrived at this point has been contested, but certainly debates about

⁸⁴ Orkaby, Asher. *Beyond the Arab Cold war: the international history of the Yemen civil war, 1962-68*. (New York, 2017).

⁸⁵ See Duke, Simon. *The elusive quest for European security: from EDC to CFSP*. (Basingstoke, 2000); or Griffiths, Richard. *Europe’s First Constitution: The European Political Community, 1952-1954*. In: Martin, Stephen (ed.). *The construction of Europe*. (Dordrecht/London, 1994): 19-39.

⁸⁶ Moeckli, *European foreign policy during the Cold War* (2009).

Vergangenheitsbewältigung, about ‘coming to terms with the past’, have been a continuous feature of politics in both Bonn and Berlin since 1945.⁸⁷ As far as foreign policy is concerned, nowhere was and is this more the case than in the Middle East, where with Israel a Jewish state is located whose creation is directly linked to the Holocaust.

Secondly, the cataclysmic failure of Germany’s bid for world power not only once, but twice in the time span of thirty years has left traces in German perceptions of power and the principles of foreign policy. Bonn only gradually reasserted the hold over its own external relations. In this process, the conduct of its foreign policy was shaped by a commitment to multilateralism and a rejection of military power, which Maull or Risse call “civil power”.⁸⁸ While this term might be an over-idealisation of Bonn’s foreign policy, it is certainly true that throughout the Cold War the FRG operated under a number of self-imposed constraints, such as an exclusion of military means from foreign policy making.

Foreign trade

‘Economic miracle’ (*Wirtschaftswunder*) is another term closely related to West Germany’s post-war history. It had a profound impact on the area of foreign policy.⁸⁹ The expansion of trade was one of the nascent tasks of the *Auswärtiges Amt*. From its re-establishment in 1951, one of its seven (now eleven) units was focused exclusively on the promotion of West German exports. But the significance of trade went beyond monetary value, only. Growing economic strength increased Bonn’s political weight. Geo-economics is the term used by Luttwak or Kundnani to describe this phenomenon.⁹⁰ Bonn’s policy makers were well aware of that. As State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt*, Rolf-Otto Lahr, stated in 1968: “On the economy as instrument of foreign policy: We have had significant success in the area of economic policy; [...] In the European Community we have largely paid the bill. It has not been to our disadvantage. It is the foundation of our position there.”⁹¹

⁸⁷ Fulbrook, Mary. *German national identity after the Holocaust*. (Cambridge, 1999).

⁸⁸ Maull, Hans. *Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers*. *Foreign Affairs* 69:5 (1990); Risse, Thomas. *Deutsche Identität und Außenpolitik*. In: Schmidt, Siegmund, Gunther Hellmann and Reinhard Wolf (eds.). *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*. (Wiesbaden, 2007).

⁸⁹ Staack, Michael. *Handelsstaat Deutschland*. (Paderborn/Munich/Vienna/Berlin, 2000).

⁹⁰ Luttwak, Edward. *From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce*. *The National Interest* 20 (1990): 17-23; Kundnani, Hans. *Germany as a Geo-economic Power*. *The Washington Quarterly* 34:4 (2011): 31-45.

⁹¹ AAPD 03.05.1968. Document 147. *Foreign policy workshop in Heimerzheim*.

The domestic arena

Foreign policy making is traditionally considered more bipartisan than domestic politics. But, of course, the former still cannot be analysed in isolation from the latter.⁹² Different parties have different preferences. Between 1966 and 1982, West Germany was governed by coalition governments under participation of the centre-left Social Democratic Party (SPD): from 1966 to 1969, Brandt's party was junior partner to the centre-right Christian democrats (CDU/CSU), while from 1969 to 1982 it was the significantly larger party within the social-liberal coalition between SPD and the Free Liberal Party (FDP). The leading role of the SPD in West German foreign policy making throughout the 1960s certainly affected the FRG's policy towards the Arab states, too. After all, the social democrats had a greater inclination to pay attention to the 'Global South'. However, the great debates between West German parties at the time were about *Ostpolitik* or armaments policy, not about the Middle East. The latter is not mentioned in any SPD party programme throughout the 1970s.⁹³

Public opinion, too, can have significant impact on foreign policy making, expressing itself through polling data or media activity. However, public opinion only sporadically paid attention to West German Middle Eastern policy. In general, polling shows that the Middle East played an important role in the public arena only in times of severe crisis such as in 1967 or 1973.⁹⁴ The domestic elements of foreign policy making will be considered where they made themselves felt. However, I have not included a systematic analysis of newspaper articles or polling data into the research design of this thesis.

Agency:

In the following, I will introduce some of the key actors of West German foreign policy making from 1967 to 1979. The politicians mentioned below were in office throughout the period of analysis of this thesis. All of them served in the FRG's executive. Of course, other people played vital roles in the events discussed in this thesis. Several diplomats such as State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt* Paul Frank (1970-74) or Helmut Redies, who was in charge of the ministry's Middle Eastern unit (1969-74), come up repeatedly. However, their role was more limited to individual episodes or decisions. While it therefore would go too far to introduce every individual mentioned in this thesis in depth, the Appendix includes short

⁹² Hill, Christopher. *The changing politics of foreign policy*. (Basingstoke, 2003).

⁹³ The party manifestos are accessible via the website of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (see Bibliography).

⁹⁴ Weingardt, *Deutsche Israel- und Nahostpolitik* (2002): 234.

biographies of the main characters to provide further orientation on the actors involved in West Germany's 'Arab policy'.

Kurt-Georg Kiesinger (1904-88)

Kiesinger was the last of West Germany's early conservative chancellors. In 1966, he followed Ludwig Erhard, who had stepped down in part due to his hapless handling of the 1965 crisis around East Germany, the Arab states and Israel. Kiesinger took charge of West Germany's first *Grand Coalition* ("Große Koalition"), combining the two by far largest parties in West German parliament: CDU/CSU and SPD.⁹⁵ The *Grand Coalition* held until 1969.

Kiesinger did not have a particular interest in the Middle East, maybe because of his predecessor's difficulties in dealing with the region. In addition, Kiesinger was the first West German chancellor with a significant Nazi past: he had joined the NSDAP in 1933 and worked within the *Auswärtiges Amt* on international propaganda from 1940 onwards. In view of this he could not deal as easily with Israel as his predecessors Erhard and Adenauer – both without direct affiliation to the NSDAP – had been able to. The foreign policy of the *Grand Coalition* focused on a reorientation of the FRG's policy towards the GDR and the Eastern bloc, laying the groundwork for Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. Following electoral defeat in 1969, Kiesinger first tried to shape opposition policy against the social-liberal coalition. But within two years, he stepped away from the front line of West German politics.⁹⁶

Willy Brandt (1913-92)

Unlike his predecessor, Brandt has become one of most iconic political figures of the FRG's history, even though he acted as chancellor for just five years from 1969 to 1974. His was West Germany's first left-wing government, led by the SPD together with the much smaller FDP. Brandt aimed to profoundly reform West Germany economically and socially, responding to the political climate of the 1968-movement.⁹⁷

Unlike Kiesinger, Brandt had actively opposed the NSDAP. He had spent most of the Nazi-years in exile, first in Norway, then in Sweden, remaining politically active against the

⁹⁵ 447 out of 496 and thus more than 90% of members of West German parliament belonged to the coalition parties.

⁹⁶ On Kiesinger, see Krögel, Dirk. *Einen Anfang finden! Kurt-Georg Kiesinger in der Außen- und Deutschlandpolitik der Großen Koalition*. (Munich, 2009); Gassert, Philipp. *Kurt-Georg Kiesinger, 1904-1988: Kanzler zwischen den Zeiten*. (Munich, 2006); Rundel, Otto. *Kurt-Georg Kiesinger: sein Leben und politisches Wirken*. (Stuttgart, 2006).

⁹⁷ On the early years of the social-liberal coalition, see in particular Baring, Arnulf. *Machtwechsel. Die Ära Brandt-Scheel*. (Stuttgart, 1982).

Third Reich throughout this time. Upon his return to West Germany, he soon rose to the top of the SPD in West Berlin, before in 1966 he became Kiesinger's junior partner in the *Grand Coalition* and took charge of the *Auswärtiges Amt*. This experience helped him to take on a dominant role in shaping the social-liberal coalition's foreign policy. Losing office due to a political scandal in 1974, he remained party leader of the SPD until 1987 and headed the Socialist International from 1976 to 1992. He used these posts to remain active politically and to gain international attention, for example through his 1979 meeting with his friend Bruno Kreisky, the chancellor of Austria, and PLO-chairman Yasser Arafat.⁹⁸

Walter Scheel (1919-2016)

Scheel was a leading member of the liberal party in the post-war years. Under Adenauer and then Erhard, he served as minister for international development (1961-66). He was one of the driving forces behind the formation of the social-liberal coalition in 1969, taking over the post of foreign minister. While he initially struggled to find his place in the shadow of Brandt and the latter's close advisor Egon Bahr, he ultimately managed to assert his role in West German foreign policy making. In May 1974 – the same month Brandt was forced to step down as chancellor – he left the *Auswärtiges Amt* to take over the position of Federal President (*Bundespräsident*) – the more ceremonial post of West German head of state.⁹⁹ He remained in this position until 1979 and then mostly stepped back from the political stage.¹⁰⁰ Despite his key role in the Brandt years of the social-liberal coalition, his legacy is somewhat eclipsed by his successor as foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who served in this post for 18 years.

Helmut Schmidt (1918-2015)

Schmidt became chancellor after Brandt's resignation in 1974. He led the social-liberal coalition until 1982. Born in Hamburg, Schmidt served in the *Wehrmacht* during World War II, earning himself a promotion to the rank of Captain (*Hauptmann*) and being awarded an Iron Cross. For a short while, he had been posted to the Eastern front. No other German chancellor

⁹⁸ On Brandt's life, see Miard-Delacroix, Hélène. *Willy Brandt: life of a statesman*. (London/New York, 2016); Noack, Hans-Joachim. *Willy Brandt: ein Leben, ein Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 2013); Lorenz, Einhart. *Willy Brandt: Deutscher, Europäer, Weltbürger*. (Stuttgart, 2012); Rother, Bernd (ed.). *Willy Brandt: Neue Fragen, neue Erkenntnisse*. (Bonn, 2011); Seebacher, Brigitte. *Willy Brandt*. (Munich, 2003); Merseburger, Peter. *Willy Brandt*. (Stuttgart/Munich, 2002); Schöllgen, Gregor. *Willy Brandt. Die Biographie*. (Berlin/Munich, 2001). Marshall, Barbara. *Willy Brandt*. (London, 1990).

⁹⁹ In the FRG's constitution, the chancellor acts as head of government, whereas the president is head of state.

¹⁰⁰ On Scheel, see Scheel, Walter, Jürgen Engert and Arnulf Baring. *Walter Scheel im Gespräch mit Jürgen Engert: Erinnerungen und Einsichten*. (Stuttgart, 2004); Scholz, Günther. *Walter Scheel*. In: Scholz, Günther, and Martin Süskind (eds.). *Die Bundespräsidenten*. (München, 2004): 251-89.

has been involved as directly in the German war effort. However, Schmidt never joined the Nazi party and remained distanced from it. But his *Wehrmacht* past and pictures of him in a German officer's uniform would represent a burden for his later dealings with Israel.¹⁰¹

After the war, he joined the SPD and became the party's political all-purpose weapon. In Bonn, he led the parliamentary party group of the SPD during the *Grand Coalition*. When Brandt became chancellor in 1969, he first made Schmidt minister of defence, then minister of finance. Characteristic for Schmidt were his soberness and sense for pragmatism. His years as chancellor were shaped by Bonn's response to global economic crisis abroad and left-wing terrorism at home. After losing office in 1982, Schmidt soon took on the role of 'elder statesman' and as editor of the German newspaper *Die Zeit* became a leading commentator of both German and international politics.¹⁰²

Hans-Dietrich Genscher (1927-2016)

No other politician shaped West German foreign policy for as long as Hans-Dietrich Genscher. For 18 years, he served as foreign minister and vice-chancellor: first from 1974 to 1982 in the social-liberal coalition together with the SPD's Helmut Schmidt, then from 1982 until 1992 as partner of chancellor Helmut Kohl and the CDU/CSU. His stress on multilateralism in the UN, EEC/EU and CSCE/OSCE has been termed by later German political observers as 'Genscherism' (*Genscherismus*).¹⁰³

Genscher had joined the *Wehrmacht* in 1945, experiencing the fighting of World War II only in its latest stages. After the war, he entered the FDP and in 1965 became a member of parliament in Bonn. His first executive post was that of West German minister of the interior in 1969, making him a key minister throughout the years of the social-liberal coalition.¹⁰⁴

6. Outline and key findings of the thesis: the importance of the Cold War and the five dimensions of West German 'Arab policy' during the 1970s

The main finding of this thesis is that, as Scheel himself stated, a West German 'Arab policy' existed throughout the 1970s. It resulted from Bonn's reaction to the 1967 June War, as in the view of Bonn's foreign policy makers Cold War dynamics brought together the geopolitics of

¹⁰¹ Weingardt, *Deutsche Israel- und Nahostpolitik* (2002): 292ff.

¹⁰² On Schmidt, see Spohr, Kristina. *The Global Chancellor. Helmut Schmidt and the Reshaping of the International Order*. (Oxford, 2016); Hofmann, Gunter. *Helmut Schmidt. Soldat, Kanzler, Ikone*. (Munich, 2015); Soell, Harmut. *Helmut Schmidt*. (Munich, 2008).

¹⁰³ Herzinger, Richard. *Deutschland erlebt die Rückkehr des Genscherismus*. (*Die Welt*, 04.12.2012); Carstens, Peter. *Genscherismus – ausgleichende Vermittlung*. (*FAZ*, 22.12.2013).

¹⁰⁴ On Genscher, see Heumann, Hans-Dieter. *Genscher: Die Biographie*. (Paderborn, 2011).

Central Europe and the Middle East. The protraction of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the emergence of Palestinian terrorism and the oil crisis made relations to the Arab states ever more important for Bonn from 1970 onwards. Ultimately, this West German ‘Arab policy’ was structured along five main dimensions: the role of the Cold War, the Arab-Israeli conflict, terrorism and the Palestinian question, energy security and relations to the Gulf, as well as the early days of a common European Middle Eastern policy.

The Cold War shaped West German perceptions of interest towards the Arab states. As Chapter I shows, Cold War dynamics resulting from the 1967 June War caused a West German shift of focus towards the Arab states. Brandt’s New Eastern Policy and his government’s new Middle Eastern policy were intricately linked. Similarly, in 1979 the intensification of the Cold War in Europe as part of what has been called the “Second Cold War” was in a large part responsible for removing the strategic necessity for Bonn to engage in the Middle East.¹⁰⁵ This chapter also engages with German-German antagonism in the Arab states. As I will show, *détente* between the two Germanies could be observed in third countries. After the 1972 Basic Treaty between GDR and FRG, the competition between the two Germanies in the Arab states turned into a managed co-existence of cooperation with elements of competition. The first chapter also includes the study of the re-establishment of relations between West Germany and most of the Arab states. Moreover, it argues that instead of a ‘policy of dual-evenhandedness’ Bonn was in fact forced – and ultimately failed – to pursue a ‘policy of dual-evenhandedness’, contending with Israel and two split Arab camps. I argue that this framework is suitable more generally for the study of external powers in the Middle East during this period.

The second chapter covers West German-Arab relations through the lens of the Arab-Israeli conflict. As I argue, the latter did not bring about the ‘policy of even-handedness’ but made its implementation a near-impossible task. The chapter illustrates how Brandt increasingly turned his attention to the Middle East conflict once *Ostpolitik* started to succeed. As the chapter will show in a new argument, in 1973 the West German chancellor even considered a more direct engagement in peace efforts within the region, which were thwarted by the 1973 October War. In its aftermath, Bonn put its hopes into Kissinger’s ability to broker a comprehensive peace deal for the Middle East. But not only did the US Secretary of State have to abort his efforts in this direction; Schmidt and Genscher were also deeply sceptical of the Camp David accords, leading Genscher to undertake a grand yet unsuccessful summer tour of seven Arab states in 1979 to promote a comprehensive solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

¹⁰⁵ Halliday, *Making of the Second Cold War* (1983).

The chapter also engages with West German reactions to the civil war in Lebanon, which Bonn hoped would be settled through Syrian intervention. Overall, by 1980 the conviction had grown in Bonn that the FRG should avoid a too direct engagement in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The 1967 June War also had a major impact on the development of the Palestinian question through the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza strip by Israel. Before 1970, the West German government had paid little attention to this topic. As I argue, Bonn even saw a benefit to the presence of Palestinian refugees, as the FRG hoped that aid to them would improve its standing in the Arab states on the whole. However, in 1970, Palestinian terrorism came to West Germany. As the chapter will show, throughout the next ten years the FRG was compelled to formulate a stance on the Palestinian question. This started in 1973 with a vague acknowledgment of legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and ended in 1979 with the recognition of both a two-state solution and the PLO's role as representative of the Palestinians. Simultaneously, I present new evidence showing how the FRG responded to Palestinian terror attacks by establishing an intricate network of communication with both violent and non-violent elements of the Palestinian movement.

Another issue which hardly mattered in Bonn's 1967 political perception of the Arab states was energy security. The FRG acknowledged its dependence on Arab oil, but limited its response to this to the economic arena by promoting the establishment of a West German oil company called DEMINEX. However, from 1971 onwards, the power in the oil market moved from large oil companies to the oil-producing states. Only then did Bonn include the oil topic on the agenda of foreign policy, for instance by starting to intensify efforts for strengthening its diplomatic networks in the Gulf. Nonetheless, West Germany was caught unprepared by the 1973 oil crisis. Now, Saudi Arabia became a hinge of West German 'Arab policy', until the triple crisis of 1979 – Iranian revolution, second oil crisis and Siege of Mecca – led Bonn to question the value of this relationship. Chapter IV therefore represents the first analysis to date of West Germany's foreign policy of oil and its links to relations with the Gulf.

The fifth chapter covers the interrelation between West German and European Middle Eastern policy after the establishment of the EPC in 1970. As I demonstrate, Bonn soon viewed the EPC through a functionalist lens, hoping that success there and later in the EAD would benefit European integration as a whole. In effect, this mostly led to a West German unwillingness to recognise insufficiencies of these European instruments. I argue that, ironically, the less successful EPC and EAD were, the more Bonn pushed for a stronger role of them. As a result, by 1980 the European dimension of West German Middle Eastern policy was

stronger than ever. This chapter is slightly shorter than the others, as the EPC was only established in 1971 and thus cannot be dealt with for the full period of analysis of this thesis.

Finally, in a brief concluding chapter, I summarise the main results of the thesis, extrapolate from them implications for the study of the FRG's Middle Eastern policy as well as German history more generally, and discuss some theoretical implications. I will also point to future research agendas in regard to Germany in the Middle East.

Because of Cold War dynamics the FRG started to pay more attention to the Arab states in 1967. As a result, Bonn got involved more directly in the Arab-Israeli conflict than ever before. It was challenged to position itself towards the question of Palestine and to confront its oil dependence. To add a new instrument to its foreign policy, it supported a European approach to the Middle East. However, Bonn never achieved a routinised relationship to the Arab states as such and by 1979 an 'Arab policy' no longer existed. It certainly had yielded some significant results. By the end of the 1970s, there were West German embassies in all Arab states and the FRG had become much more of a politically engaged actor in the region than it had been in 1965. Relations to states such as Egypt or Saudi Arabia resembled close political partnerships. The FRG had moved closer to the Arab world and had built up stronger bilateral ties to several Arab states.

However, for three reasons the concept of an 'Arab policy' ran out of steam by the end of the 1970s. To begin with, the sense of strategic necessity which had made the FRG focus on the Middle East was subsiding. Increasing tensions between East and West in Europe as part of the Second Cold War no longer made a strong engagement in the Middle East necessary for Bonn. Moreover, in the 1980s, the pertinence of Palestinian politics for the FRG reduced. As for energy security, the FRG now looked to exploration in the North Sea to remedy its dependence on Arab oil.

Secondly, the notion of "German-Arab friendship" remained illusionary.¹⁰⁶ Relations with several Arab states such as Libya, Iraq or Syria remained strained. Schmidt and Genscher also lost appetite for repeatedly burning their fingers on mediation efforts in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Moreover, despite closer relations to Egypt or Saudi Arabia, an underlying distance remained between Bonn and its Arab partners. Therefore, regardless of the above-mentioned successes, the attempts to reach out to the Arab states repeatedly failed to meet West German

¹⁰⁶ AAPD 08.02.1968. Document 50. *Conversation of Duckwitz with the head of the office of the Arab League, Cabani.*

expectations. Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, the source material on several occasions contains references to the notion of “disappointment” in regard to West German-Arab relations.¹⁰⁷

The greatest misunderstanding pertained to a fundamental component of West Germany’s ‘Arab policy’: its addressee. After the break-up of the Arab League in 1977/78, the illusion of a politically coherent ‘Arab world’ could no longer be maintained. Without a doubt, by 1980 the FRG was in a better place to solve problems in its relations to the Arab states on a case-by-case basis. However, throughout the 1970s, the grand design of an ‘Arab policy’ encountered setbacks and difficulties, making it the history of a disappointment which today is largely forgotten in German political discourse.

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, PA/AA (B36 104844, unfoliated) 09.09.1974. *Werner (Tripoli) to Auswärtiges Amt*; PA/AA (B36 438, p. 21) 21.12.1970. *Moltmann (Tunis) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

Chapter I: Cold War dynamics and Bonn's efforts towards a West German Arab policy

It appears unlikely that a policy of *détente* in the centre of Europe can be successful in the long run, as long as in a region immediately neighbouring Europe the confrontation between East and West continues [and] the Cold War with a struggle for influence between the great powers goes on [...].¹
Walter Redies, head of the Middle Eastern unit in the Auswärtiges Amt, 1972

Since Camp David there is a new situation. To paraphrase Bismarck, we now no longer have to juggle two balls (Israel and the Arabs) but three balls (Israel and two split Arab camps).²
Ministerial director Meyer-Landrut in conversation with the Israeli ambassador to the FRG, 1979

1. Introduction: the Cold War at the centre of West German Arab policy

In August 1969, the Parliamentary State Secretary in the *Auswärtige Amt*, Gerald Jahn, prepared a speech on the Middle East. Its first draft started on a reflective note:

Some might wonder whether for German foreign policy there are not more severe issues than the Middle East. Are not problems such as European unification, *détente* in Europe, our relations with the states of Eastern Europe tasks to which we should devote all our energy? [...] [But] she [the Federal Republic] simply cannot afford to stay on the margins and ignore the pressing problems of world politics.³

Reading the draft of Jahn's speech, Joffe's assessment of German Middle Eastern policy after 1945 comes to mind: "Ideally, the Federal Republic would have preferred to have *no* policy in the Middle East."⁴ Yet, starting with June 1967, West Germany had markedly increased its political engagement in the region and shifted its focus on the Arab states in particular. In 1969, chancellor Willy Brandt declared his policy of even-handedness' in 1969, the first and to date only time after 1945 that the FRG formulated a specific Middle Eastern policy. Foreign minister Scheel had begun to talk about a specific "Arab policy" by February 1970.⁵ What explains this apparent contradiction between an expressed desire for inaction and factual action? Why did this shift in approach occur?

* Some of the research of this chapter is also the basis of a separately published journal paper (Hirsch, Philipp. *The Arab world, the Cold War and West Germany's 'Mediterranean moment'*. *Cold War History* 20:2 (2020): 161-78).

¹ PA/AA (B36 493, pp. 213ff.) 11.04.1972. *Speech by Redies to senior staff in the Auswärtiges Amt*.

² AAPD 12.07.1979. Document 208. *Conversation of Meyer-Landrut with Meroz*.

³ PA/AA (B36 376, pp. 467ff.) 18.08.1969. *Draft speech for Parliamentary State Secretary*.

⁴ Joffe *Reflections on German policy in the Middle East* (1992): 205.

⁵ AAPD 11.02.1970. Document 48. *Memorandum by Gehlhoff*.

Above all else, it was the dynamics of the Cold War that caused and shaped West Germany's engagement with the Arab World after the Six-Day War. Brandt was worried that tensions created by the Cold War in the Middle East would spill over to its neighboring regions and would endanger *détente* in Europe. Linked to this were concerns about a stronger East German position in the Arab states, at a time when German-German relations were still marked by antagonism and a struggle for sole recognition (*Alleinvertretung*). The Cold War had strategically connected Central Europe with the Middle East. As this chapter will show, fears and perceptions about this link were the main drivers of West German foreign policy towards the Arab states.⁶ Contrary to later assertions by West German SPD politicians about the "divisibility of *détente*", during the 1970s the social-liberal coalition very much considered *détente* in Europe to be strongly interconnected with developments in the Mediterranean.⁷ This chapter will therefore engage with the Cold War as central framework shaping West German Arab policy from 1967 onwards. It will also cover the key manifestation of Bonn's turn to the Arab world: the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between West Germany and the Arab states during the 1970s.

The chapter places a somewhat different emphasis on explaining the underlying factors motivating West German relations to the Arab states than previous scholarship. Authors such as Buettner or Gerlach have put the Arab-Israeli conflict at the heart of their analysis of West German Middle Eastern policy.⁸ But as this and the following chapter show, conflict in the Middle East only became a concern to the FRG as long as it related back to broader Cold War trends. Another factor cited very often as determining West German relations to the Arab states is oil.⁹ Energy security certainly mattered, but West Germany's 'Arab policy' was formulated before concerns over an Arab oil weapon emerged in the aftermath of the 1971 Tehran conference, as Chapter IV will illustrate.¹⁰

I also challenge previous accounts about German-German antagonism in the Middle East, which have been the subject of much research on the region.¹¹ Certainly, at the high time of the Hallstein Doctrine there can be no doubt that West Germany identified blocking any East

⁶ See also Fink's views the link between Brandt's policy of *détente* and his stance on the Middle East conflict (Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019)).

⁷ Hansen, Jan. *Abschied vom Kalten Krieg? Die Sozialdemokraten und der Nachrüstungsstreit (1977-1987)*. (Berlin/Boston, 2016): 71.

⁸ Gerlach, *Doppelte Front* (2006); Buettner, *Germany's Middle East Policy* (2003).

⁹ Joffe, *Reflections on German policy in the Middle East* (1992); Maull, *Economic relations with the Middle East* (1992).

¹⁰ This issue will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter IV on oil politics.

¹¹ Sittmann, *Illusions of Care* (2018); Gray, *Germany's Cold War* (2003). See also Roberts, *Politics, decolonization and the Cold War* (2016).

German advance in the Arab world as one of its key aims. But the normalisation of German-German relations in 1972 changed much of that. Of course, if one, like Trentin does, only analyses more left-leaning republics such as Iraq or Syria, one will find that the GDR still tried to push for a stronger role there at the cost of the FRG in the late 1970s.¹² But looking at the Arab world as a whole, this chapter presents new evidence which shows that in most states of the region the FRG was not worried by GDR competition. In fact, by the end of the decade Bonn even started a process of coordination with East Berlin which, despite elements of continued competition, culminated in regular exchanges about the Middle East on a working level between the two German foreign ministries by the late 1970s. I argue that relations between FRG and GDR were increasingly marked by a managed co-existence of cooperation with elements of competition.

Finally, this chapter proposes that the FRG struggled in its pursuit of a coherent Arab policy, as a ‘policy of even-handedness’ was not sufficient to engage in the Middle East; in the end, West Germany failed in this endeavor. In fact, splits in the Arab world had made it necessary to practice a ‘policy of dual-even-handedness’. As a senior West German diplomat put it in conversation with the Israeli ambassador to Bonn in the aftermath of Camp David in 1979: “To paraphrase Bismarck, we now no longer have to juggle two balls (Israel and the Arabs) but three balls (Israel and two split Arab camps).”¹³ But such a juggling act proved far too difficult for Bonn. In that way, its ‘Arab policy’ also failed because – contrary to expectations in the 1960s – the ‘Arab world’ did not evolve into a strong political unit in the post-colonial era, a fact which became clear during the 1970s.¹⁴ As for research on the international relations of the Middle East, I argue that this challenge of ‘dual even-handedness’ is one which more generally pertains to external power engagement in the Middle East during the Cold War.¹⁵

Cold War dynamics drove Bonn’s ‘Arab policy’ and linked the various interests which Bonn identified in the Arab states. As such, it is not surprising that it was at the end of the 1970s that the FRG started to reduce efforts towards a coherent Arab policy. By then, considerations about the Cold War no longer made an engagement in the Arab world seem as pressing as before. Moscow had failed to establish a strong foothold in the region, and with the placement

¹² Trentin, *Tough negotiations* (2008); see also Maeke, *DDR und PLO* (2017).

¹³ AAPD 12.07.1979. Document 208. *Conversation of Meyer-Landrut with Meroz*.

¹⁴ Henry, Clement, and Robert Springborg, *Globalisation and the Politics of Development in the Middle East*. (Cambridge, 2010): 314.

¹⁵ On external powers in the Middle East, see, for example, Ehteshami, *Globalization and Geopolitics in the Middle East* (2007); Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire* (2004).

of Soviet SS-20 missiles in Eastern Europe during the so-called euro-missile crisis the Cold War manifested itself strongly once again in Europe. The second draft of Gerald Jahn's 1969 speech outlined in great detail the threat that a Soviet expansion in the Mediterranean represented to the FRG in Europe.¹⁶ Ten years later, Bonn no longer needed to look to the Arab world to worry about threats to *détente*; they had returned to West Germany's doorstep.

2. The impact of the June War on West German Middle Eastern policy, 1967

The Six-Day War of 1967 is a turning point of modern Middle Eastern politics.¹⁷ It demonstrated that the state of Israel would remain a permanent addition to the region's political order, underlined Tel Aviv's military superiority, brought the Palestinian question to the fore and dealt a death blow to the Nasserist brand of Arab nationalism. Crucially for the FRG, it also further embedded the Arab-Israeli conflict into the landscape of the Cold War.¹⁸ Bonn worried that a protracted conflict opened opportunities for the Soviet Union to advance in the Mediterranean as a whole and feared that East Germany would follow in Moscow's wake. In response to the Six-Day War, the *Auswärtiges Amt* initiated a fundamental reconceptualisation of West German Middle Eastern policy, focusing more on the Arab states and those in the Western Mediterranean such as Algeria or Libya. For a short while, Bonn went through a "Mediterranean moment".¹⁹

The FRG followed a restrained Middle Eastern policy before 1967. It focused mostly on 'coming to terms with its past' in foreign policy terms, through its relationship with Israel.²⁰ Its official position on the Arab-Israeli conflict was that the FRG would neither intervene in the Middle East nor send weapons to any conflict party.²¹ There was no specific 'Arab policy'. Bonn's interests in the Arab states were mostly limited to trade and the competition with the GDR over sole recognition. The 1965 severance of diplomatic ties between all but three Arab states and Bonn had not affected either – trade went on at existing levels and the GDR had still not been recognised by any Arab state.²² The FRG took the stance that as it had been the Arab

¹⁶ PA/AA (B36 376, pp. 467ff.) 29.08.1969. *Draft speech for Parliamentary State Secretary.*

¹⁷ Citino, Nathan. *The Middle East and the Cold War.* Cold War History 19:3 (2019): 449; Segev, *Israel, the War, and the Year That Transformed the Middle East* (2008).

¹⁸ On the June War, see also Louis, Wm Roger, and Avi Shlaim (eds). *The 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Origins and Consequence.* (Cambridge, 2012).

¹⁹ Hirsch, *Arab world, Cold War and West Germany's 'Mediterranean moment'* (2020).

²⁰ De Vita, *Israelpolitik* (2020); Lavy, *Germany and Israel* (2013); Hansen, *Aus dem Schatten der Katastrophe* (2002).

²¹ AAPD 27.07.1967. Document 283. *Memorandum by Meyer-Lindenberg.*

²² Abu Samra, *Deutschlands Außenpolitik gegenüber Ägypten* (2002): 176.

states who had cut diplomatic ties, it was also up to them to initiate a return of relations to the *status quo ante*.²³ Overall, in Bonn's view, it was mostly a matter of time until the West German embassies in the Arab world would open again; the issue did not cause major headaches in Bonn. Already in late 1966 Brandt as foreign minister had stated his optimism that the FRG would soon reopen its embassies in the Arab states.²⁴ This view seemed to find justification when the West German representative in Amman cabled Bonn on 20 February 1967, stating that the Jordanian government was ready to "immediately resume relations".²⁵ On 24 February, the two countries exchanged ambassadors.²⁶ Bonn's plans regarding the Arab states, it might have seemed to anyone in spring 1967, were unfolding well, and the 1965 debacle in the Arab world was about to turn into an odd yet brief footnote to the history of West German-Arab relations.

Under the surface, however, cracks were already appearing. In view of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Romania in early 1967, Bonn felt the need to warn its envoys in the Arab states. After all, Bucharest as Warsaw Pact member obviously already had an embassy in East Berlin. Thus, the Arab states could easily make the argument that they, too, should be allowed to have diplomatic relations with both Germanies. Bonn's insistence that this would be a non-negotiable obstacle to a mutual reopening of embassies made the FRG open to criticism for double-standards.²⁷ Moreover, the long-expected visit to Bonn by Abdul Khaled Hassouna, Secretary General of the Arab League (LAS – League of Arab States) in May 1967 disappointingly ended in controversy and argument.²⁸

Then, the June War of 1967 brought the Middle East conflict right into the centre of the Cold War. What had previously been largely considered a regional conflict had now more than ever become part of the global East-West confrontation and thereby created a link which directly affected the FRG.

To begin with, there was now a worry that superpower tensions in the Middle East could spill over into Europe. As such, the FRG as key battleground of the Cold War had to reconsider its role in the Middle East as well.²⁹ West German chancellor Kiesinger himself connected the geopolitics of the Middle East with those of Europe. In a conversation with the US ambassador,

²³ AAPD 23.02.1967. Document 70. *Harder (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

²⁴ Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. *Deutschlands Beziehungen zu den Arabischen Staaten*. (21.12.1966. Cited in: Abu Samra *Deutschlands Außenpolitik gegenüber Ägypten* (2002): 149).

²⁵ AAPD 21.02.1967. Document 63. *Memorandum by Meyer-Lindenberg*.

²⁶ *Ibid*.

²⁷ AAPD 13.01.1967. Document 18. *Circular by Schütz*.

²⁸ AAPD 16.05.1967. Document 169. *Embassy counsellor (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

²⁹ On Germany's role in the Cold War, see for example Costigliola, *US foreign policy from Kennedy to Johnson* (2010): 119.

he expressed his worries about a Soviet reaction to the defeat of its allies Egypt and Syria, musing about potential consequences for Cold War battlefields such as Berlin.³⁰

Moreover, somewhat counterintuitively the outcome of the war was perceived in Bonn to have strengthened the Soviet Union's hold over key Arab states. While today its position in the Middle East following the Six-Day War is seen as overestimated, at the time most Western powers assumed Moscow would carve out a bigger role for itself in places like Egypt, Syria and Algeria.³¹ Moscow's Arab allies may have lost the war, but they were now more than ever in need of, and therefore dependent on, Soviet support.³² Moscow was happy to oblige and did not even limit its military aid to the states that had fought Israel directly. Algeria, too, was on the list of major Soviet weapons recipients, which was cause for worries in NATO circles.³³

In addition, this alleged Soviet advance increased the likelihood – at least in the eyes of the *Auswärtiges Amt* – that the GDR might follow in Moscow's wake at a time of German-German competition over *Alleinvertretung*. In fact, the *Auswärtiges Amt* was convinced that the GDR was behind what it viewed as an anti-West German campaign in the Arab states, accusing the FRG of direct military support for Israel during the war.³⁴ It therefore came as little surprise to the *Auswärtige Amt* that the GDR pushed for a declaration by the LAS at the latter's August 1967 Khartoum conference to welcome the recognition of East Berlin by all Arab states. A hectic but well-coordinated attempt by the West German government followed, which succeeded in staving off this initiative. Through allies that were considered sympathetic, it worked hard to prevent the Arab governments from such a move. For example, Ankara was employed to work on Baghdad, Cairo and Algiers; Iran was asked to sway Saudi Arabia.³⁵ In the case of Somalia, Bonn was even willing to speed up a transfer of financial aid if Mogadishu were to lean on Sudan.³⁶ Similarly, Egypt was incentivised by the offer of a debt restructuring.³⁷ Ultimately, West German efforts were rewarded and the issue of GDR recognition did not make it to the floor of the LAS meeting. Still, the threat remained.

³⁰ AAPD 19.06.1967. Document 225. *Conversation of Kiesinger with US ambassador McGhee.*

³¹ Di Nolfo, Ennio. *The Cold War and the transformation of the Mediterranean, 1960-1975.* In: Leffler and Westad (eds.). *Cambridge History of the Cold War* (2010): 247.

³² PA/AA (B130 2646A, unfoliated) 20.07.1967. *Memorandum by Gehlhoff.*

³³ AAPD 21.06.1967. Document 229. *Grewe (Paris/NATO) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

³⁴ AAPD 30.06.1967. Document 242. *Grewe (Paris/NATO) to Auswärtiges Amt.* As De Vita has only recently shown, the *Auswärtiges Amt* was right in its suspicions of a coordinated East German campaign against the FRG in the Arab states at the time.

³⁵ PA/AA (B130 2575A, unfoliated). 28.07.1967. *Confidential telegram to embassies in Ankara, Tehran, Islamabad, Kabul, Mogadishu.*

³⁶ PA/AA (B130 2575A, unfoliated). 08.08.1967. *Memorandum by Söhnke.*

³⁷ PA/AA (B130 2575A, unfoliated). 15.08.1967. *Extract from short protocol of cabinet meeting.*

The Bonn government now looked at the Middle East in a different way and could no longer afford to maintain its restrained attitude towards the Arab states. The latter had united behind a common stance against Israel at Khartoum summit, mitigating the divisions of the Arab Cold War in the previous decade. Only two weeks after fighting had ended in the Middle East, a *Hausbesprechung* was convened at the *Auswärtiges Amt*. These are rather informal meetings at operational level between different units within a ministry on topics concerning several working areas. But this *Hausbesprechung* was chaired at high level by a State Secretary, the ministry's most senior civil servant, which is a clear sign of the importance attached to the meeting. Out of the subsequent discussion a memorandum was produced which redefined the West German position in the Middle East, named Bonn's resulting interests and outlined a strategy to achieve them. This June Memorandum represents a significant upgrade of the FRG's political focus on the Middle East, which puts the Cold War in the centre of Bonn's Middle Eastern policy.

The memo first outlines key issues such as superpower tensions and the advance of the Soviet Union in the region. Under the header 'our policy' it then states the FRG's interests in the Middle East: "Protection of the south-eastern flank of Europe from increasing Soviet penetration; our own political presence including resumption of diplomatic relations with nine Arab states; prevention of the legal recognition of East Germany; protection of our economic interests."³⁸ After reading the document, foreign minister Willy Brandt moved the last point (economic interests) to the beginning of the paragraph.

Maybe at this time he was less pessimistic than his key diplomats about the destabilising potential the Middle East carried for Europe. But nonetheless, Cold War themes dominate the document. Not just in relation to Israel and the Arab states, but again West German officials established a clear link between the Middle East and European geopolitics. For the *Auswärtiges Amt*, the danger lay in Soviet and East German encroachment in the entire Mediterranean. Interestingly, however, oil is not mentioned once. Considerations clearly circled around political topics.

What were the main conclusions of the memorandum? First, the familiar principle of non-intervention in the MENA region was mentioned. But this is then criticised somewhat, as it was invalidated by disproportionate financial support to Israel in particular. Ultimately, the memorandum contains the following conclusion: "We have to make an effort to make the Arab

³⁸ AAPD 23.06.1967. Document 232. *Memorandum by Meyer-Lindenberg.*

peoples more aware of our even-handed Middle Eastern policy.”³⁹ It is the first mention of the ‘principle of even-handedness’ which Brandt would turn into official West German policy two years later upon becoming chancellor.

From June 1967 onwards, Bonn started to view the Arab states more through a political lens. The nature of the global, systemic Cold War seemed to make the Middle East more relevant to Bonn, while the relaxation of the Arab Cold War made the Arab states appear to be a more coherent political unit. Also, rather than seeing the Middle East in isolation, Bonn defined its interests in the wider space of the Mediterranean in its entirety. It is this view which would recalibrate the practice of West German Middle Eastern policy in the years to come.

3. West Germany’s ‘Mediterranean Moment’ and East Germany’s diplomatic coming-of-age in the Middle East, 1968-1970

Following the 1967 June War, the FRG faced a dilemma in the Middle East. Cold War dynamics necessitated a stronger West German engagement in the Arab states. At the same time, closer alignment to Moscow by many of them, in particular those in the Mashreq such as Egypt or Syria, as well as an anti-West German mood therein meant that these countries were closed off to West German advances. Thus, a combination of strategic necessity and opportunity led Bonn to shift its focus to a region which has not usually been considered a traditional priority for German foreign policy: the Maghreb and the Western Mediterranean.⁴⁰

NATO and its members were deeply worried about Moscow’s advances in North Africa. A significant fear was that Algeria might become a permanent base for the Soviet ‘Eskadra’, the counterpart to the US 6th fleet in the region.⁴¹ France had only just agreed to turn the military port of Mers El Kébir over to the Algerians and soon after Soviet ships had appeared in the harbour.⁴² Interestingly, Bonn – not usually understood as a Mediterranean power - was worried by this development and started to shift its focus towards North Africa. A memo that the *Auswärtige Amt* compiled in late 1967 showed how much Bonn connected its engagement in the Maghreb with the Cold War:

³⁹ Ibid. Brandt had changed “Arab states” into “Arab peoples” [*arabische Völker*], in Gerlach’s (*Doppelte Front*, 2006) view a clear sign for the recognition of the now emerging Palestinian issue.

⁴⁰ See also Hirsch, *Cold War, Arab world and West Germany’s Mediterranean Moment* (2020).

⁴¹ AAPD 21.06.1967. Document 229. *Schiller to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁴² PA/AA (B36 308, pp. 197ff.) 10.10.1968. *Telex from Paris embassy*.

In the past years the Soviet Union has succeeded in establishing itself firmly in the Eastern Mediterranean. It is clearly intending to extend its dominant role into the Western Mediterranean as well, where Algeria offers the best point of entry. It is in the political and strategic interest of the Federal Republic, as well as of the entire West, to close this gap and prevent that North Africa, too, becomes subject to Soviet domination.⁴³

The FRG's fixation on a Soviet advance in the Mediterranean also becomes clear through the reaction of the *Auswärtiges Amt* to the Libyan coup a few years later. In September 1969, a group of officers around colonel Muammar al-Ghaddafi staged a successful coup in Libya. As the Free Officers Movement behind the coup was ideologically centred around socialism and pan-Arabism, one immediate fear for Bonn could therefore have been that the country might move closer to its neighbour Egypt under Nasser's leadership. But the event was rather linked to the advance of the Soviet Union in the Mediterranean. As senior diplomat Paul Frank concluded: "The case of Libya once again shows the extent to which the unsolved Middle Eastern crisis affects the domestic situation in the Arab states, opens new channels of influence to the Soviet Union and endangers the position of the [Western] alliance."⁴⁴

On top of the Soviet threat, the *Auswärtiges Amt* was well aware that the Mashreq was closed off to West German advances. As has been mentioned above, key Arab states there such as Egypt or Syria were aligning themselves closer than ever to Moscow in the years following the June War. If anything, the opening of East German embassies in those states was likely to happen. Moreover, Algeria was considered a leading member of the non-aligned movement at a time when the 'Third World' formed as a political unit.⁴⁵ Thus, on top of the strategic necessity to challenge the Soviets in the Maghreb came the strategic opportunity North Africa offered to the FRG. A detour via the region seemed like the obvious Plan B for the *Auswärtiges Amt*.

For this, Bonn employed a backchannel. In autumn 1967, Brandt sent Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski to meet Algerian foreign minister Abdelaziz Bouteflika in New York. Wischnewski, albeit of senior rank within the SPD, was only a simple parliamentarian. But he was extremely well connected in the Arab world. In the early 1960s, he had shored up public support for the FLN in the Algerian war of independence.⁴⁶ Due to his standing in the MENA region, he became something of a West German secret weapon in dealing with the Arab states

⁴³ AAPD 09.06.1969. Document 193. *Memorandum by political divisions I and III*.

⁴⁴ AAPD 08.09.1969. Document 281. *Memorandum by Gehlhoff*.

⁴⁵ Byrne, Jeffrey James. *Mecca of Revolution*. (New York, 2016); Berger, Mark, and Heloise Weber. *Rethinking the Third World: international development and world politics*. (Basingstoke/New York, 2014).

⁴⁶ Von Bülow, *West Germany and the Algerian War* (2016): 232ff. See also Wischnewski, Hans-Jürgen. *Mit Leidenschaft und Augenmass: in Mogadischu und anderswo – politische Memoiren*. (Munich, 1989).

over the next few years. Wischnewski met Bouteflika in New York in late November 1967. In their conversation, Bouteflika threw up the idea that Algeria could become Bonn's bridgehead in the Arab world for the project of re-establishing diplomatic relations. Clearly, he was hoping for financial aid and economic benefits in return. Wischnewski was responsive to this suggestion. In particular, he tried to push Algeria into quickly engaging in diplomatic relations with Bonn again. "After the taking up of relations", Wischnewski said, "the German government would be ready to give Algeria new capital support, in a dimension which would correspond to the political and economic significance of Algeria."⁴⁷ It was exactly the sort of *quid pro quo* that the *Auswärtiges Amt* had instructed its envoy in Beirut not to engage in only weeks earlier and would continue to do so over the next years, as Bonn did not want to look susceptible to blackmail.⁴⁸ But clearly Algeria was important enough for the West German government to deviate from this principle.

The second prong of Bonn's approach to the Maghreb involved Libya, at the time a pro-Western kingdom. Libya was one of only three countries that had not cut diplomatic ties with Bonn in 1965. But the West German embassy in Tripoli was worried about the monarchy's stability.⁴⁹ Thus, while the FRG was generally always keen to stress its unwillingness to deliver weapons into the Middle East, Brandt was quick to push through a sale of armoured vehicles to Libya in late 1967 as they were considered important for the internal stability of the country.⁵⁰

While focusing on the Maghreb, West Germany suffered a severe setback in the Mashreq. In May 1969, the GDR had finally won diplomatic recognition in the Middle East for the first time and announced the opening of an embassy in Baghdad.⁵¹ It was a major breakthrough for the GDR. As has been shown before, the East Germans had worked towards it for years and had been blocked by the FRG on several occasions. But in April 1969, in the aftermath of the Baathist coup the previous year, it became apparent that there was a strong mood for establishing relations with the GDR in Iraq.⁵² Bonn was unable to turn the tide this time.⁵³ Soon, Cambodia and Sudan followed Iraq's decision.⁵⁴ Despite Bonn's best efforts, East Berlin had celebrated its diplomatic coming-of-age.

⁴⁷ AAPD 29.11.1967. Document 410. *Memorandum by Gehlhoff*.

⁴⁸ AAPD 14.10.1967. Document 353. *Bente (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁴⁹ PA/AA (B36 260, unfoliated) 05.07.1967. *Telex from Tripoli embassy*.

⁵⁰ AAPD 24.07.1967. Document 279. *Brandt to Kiesinger*.

⁵¹ AAPD 23.05.1969. Document 174. *Memorandum by Wischnewski*.

⁵² See also Kienle, Eberhard. *Ba'ath versus Ba'ath. The Conflict Between Syria and Iraq*. (London, 1991).

⁵³ AAPD 07.05.1969. Document 148. *Memorandum by unit I B 4 (Middle East and North Africa)*.

⁵⁴ AAPD 29.05.1969. Document 179. *Memorandum by ministerial director Ruete*.

Today, this case is mostly seen as one of the turning points in the Hallstein doctrine due to the West German reaction against Cambodia. Bonn called back its ambassador permanently, but the embassy remained open in principle and no immediate economic sanctions were imposed. In the German media, this freeze of relations went down in history as *kambodschieren*. But debates on how to react to Iraq's actions show how seriously Bonn still took the *Alleinvertretungsanspruch*. A memo by the Middle Eastern unit in the *Auswärtige Amt* even included the proposition to resume weapons deliveries to Israel as punishment for Baghdad. Even though this idea did not become policy due to Brandt's personal misgivings, it illustrates the lengths that some in the West German administration were willing to go to countering East Germany.⁵⁵

It did, however, also point to something else entirely: Bonn was increasingly losing control over the German question in the Middle Eastern arena. While confident that no "landslide of recognition" would follow Baghdad's and Khartoum's decisions, the opposite really was the case.⁵⁶ Within months, Cairo and Damascus followed suit.⁵⁷ Soon, the West German representative in Damascus observed that "the habits and customs of the diplomatic missions in Damascus are growing increasingly lax in their relationship to the embassy of the 'GDR'",⁵⁸ and he complained that East German diplomats attended embassy parties that even he had not been invited to.⁵⁹ The FRG's success in re-establishing relations with North Yemen soon after did little to improve the mood in Bonn.⁶⁰ By the end of 1969, a scenario West Germany had tried to prevent for years had played out: in four Arab capitals, the only German embassy in town was East-German. Bonn knew that by sanctioning these countries it would only hurt itself and further weaken its own position.⁶¹ Just like in 1965, it became clear that pressure would not suffice to fight the 'other' Germany in the Middle East.

Forced by the outcome of the June War of 1967, Bonn had fundamentally reconceptualised its Middle Eastern policy. Putting Cold War considerations in the center of its strategic interest, it attempted to strengthen links to the Arab states to avert both Soviet and East German advances therein. A particular focus lay on the Maghreb. But East Berlin's ability to establish itself

⁵⁵ AAPD 07.05.1969. Document 148. *Memorandum by unit I B 4*.

⁵⁶ AAPD 29.05.1969. Document 179. *Memorandum by ministerial director Ruete*.

⁵⁷ PA/AA (B36 487, p. 113) 15.06.1969. *Schwartz (Damascus) to Auswärtiges Amt*; AAPD 08.07.1969. Document 226. *Harder (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁵⁸ PA/AA (B36 487, p. 83) 03.08.1970. Mirow (Damascus) to foreign office.

⁵⁹ PA/AA (B36 487, p. 23) 06.07.1970. Mirow (Damascus) to foreign office.

⁶⁰ AAPD 09.07.1969. Document 228. *Memorandum by Gehlhoff*.

⁶¹ PA/AA (B36 391, pp. 188ff.) 01.08.1969. *Protocol of discussion by State Secretaries*.

diplomatically in several Arab states in 1969 challenged the viability of Bonn's new approach to the region.

4. *Ost- and Nahostpolitik, 1970-72*

In September 1969, the West Germans went to the polls and for the first time in the young republic's history voted a social-democratic politician into office.⁶² Willy Brandt became chancellor and Walter Scheel, leader of his junior coalition partner, the liberal FDP, followed him in his position at the *Auswärtiges Amt*. In the following years, the two would establish a close link between Eastern and Middle Eastern policy, between *Ost-* and *Nahostpolitik*. However, their prioritisation of *Ostpolitik* ultimately meant that relations to the Arab states would remain severed until late 1971.

The social-liberal coalition's lasting legacy in foreign affairs was the New Eastern Policy (*Ostpolitik*). It heralded the end of the Hallstein Doctrine in favour of a more forthcoming policy towards the communist East under the slogan of 'change through rapprochement' (*Wandel durch Annäherung*). *Ostpolitik* can be understood in two ways. In a narrow sense, it represented a change of course, a novel policy approach to the Warsaw Pact and Bonn's *Deutschlandpolitik*.⁶³ In a broader sense, it stands for a more general widening and deepening of West German foreign policy. The latter's scope widened, as now the FRG engaged more than before on the global sphere, taking account of regions such as Asia, Latin America or Africa beyond their relevance for German-German relations only.⁶⁴ Simultaneously, Bonn's foreign policy deepened, as its reservoir of policy instruments was extended, for example through an expansion of aid or stronger multilateralism such as West German UN membership. It is in this broader sense that one needs to understand the new approach to the Middle East by Willy Brandt's government after 1969: not merely as a new West German Middle Eastern policy, but as fundamentally linked and intertwined with *Ostpolitik*.⁶⁵

⁶² On the new government, see Baring, *Machtwechsel* (1992).

⁶³ On *Ostpolitik* more generally, see Ludlow, Piers (ed.). *European integration and the Cold War: Ostpolitik-Westpolitik, 1965-1973*. (London, 2007); Hofmann, Arne. *The emergence of détente in Europe: Brandt, Kennedy and the formation of Ostpolitik*. (London, 2007); Haftendorn, Helga. *Kurswechsel. Ein Paradigma außenpolitischer Reform*. *Politische Vierteljahrszeitschrift*, 47:4 (2006): 671-85; Bender, Peter. *Die 'Neue Ostpolitik' und ihre Folgen: vom Mauerbau bis zur Vereinigung*. (Munich, 1995).

⁶⁴ Based on the accounts of Gray (*Germany's Cold War* (2003)) and Kilian (*Hallstein-Doktrin* (2001)), FRG foreign policy to the so-called Third World before 1969 was merely pursued through the lens of the FRG's competition with the GDR, unlike Bonn's policy to the Western alliance or Moscow. This approach changed under Brandt.

⁶⁵ On the global dimension of the New Eastern Policy, see Rother, Bernd, and Klaus Larres. *Willy Brandt and international relations: Europe, the USA and Latin America, 1974-1992*. (London, 2019); Fink and Schaefer,

After all, conflict in the Middle East had the potential to spill over into Europe and derail *détente*. This was not only an abstract, hypothetical fear in Bonn, caused by the memory of the 1967 June War. After all, by 1970, Egypt and Israel were fighting a ‘war of attrition’, marked by regular skirmishes around the Sinai border.⁶⁶ In addition, at that time the first attacks by Palestinian terror groups had reached West German soil, which will be covered in detail in Chapter IV of this thesis. Consequently, Bonn felt the need to flank *Ostpolitik* by simultaneous efforts in the Mediterranean, as stated in the draft for a speech by Scheel from early 1970: “The Mediterranean, too, has to become part of the concept of a European peace policy. Progress of this policy will help to reduce tensions there as well.”⁶⁷ Minister of Defence Helmut Schmidt was even more pronounced in linking *détente* to the Arab-Israeli conflict later that year. Discussing the Treaty of Moscow, a key component of *Ostpolitik*, he told the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs (*Auswärtiger Ausschuss*) in the West German parliament: “The Treaty [of Moscow] does not have to fail because the [opposition] wants to stop it. [...] But it could fail because, for example, SALT fails dramatically, it could fail because a new war starts in the Middle East.”⁶⁸

The social-liberal coalition soon outlined a new approach to the latter region. In his first official speech in parliament as chancellor, Brandt stressed West Germany’s desire to have good relations with all states in the Middle East, without mentioning or underlining the special role of Israel for Bonn’s foreign policy.⁶⁹ Simultaneously, in interviews Scheel relativised the special character of West German-Israeli relations by talking about normalising them without being corrected by Brandt.⁷⁰ Soon this was followed up by an interview by Brandt to the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram*, mentioning what his government had by then managed to wrap into a new formula – a ‘policy of even-handedness’.⁷¹

The ‘policy of even-handedness’ was not conceived of as a narrow mathematical game in which Brandt wanted to equate perfectly any political gesture or favour to Israel with one to the Arabs or *vice versa*. Instead, it needs to be understood as a signalling move to the Arab states. The *Auswärtiges Amt* had been confronted with Arab demands for such a gesture for

Ostpolitik (2009); Lorenzini, Sara. *Globalising Ostpolitik. Ostpolitik revisited*. *Cold War History* 9:2 (2009): 223-242.

⁶⁶ Bar-Siman-Tov, Yaacov. *The Israeli-Egyptian war of attrition, 1969-1970: a case study of limited local war*. (New York/Guildford, 1980).

⁶⁷ PA/AA (B26 471, pp. 239ff.) 20.02.1970. *Notes by Hansen*.

⁶⁸ Hölscher, *Auswärtiger Ausschuss des Deutschen Bundestags: Sitzungsprotokolle 1969-1972* (2007): 423.

⁶⁹ Willy Brandt. *Regierungserklärung vom 28.10.1969*. See also Hünseler, *Außenpolitische Beziehungen der BRD zu arabischen Staaten* (1990): 160.

⁷⁰ Weingardt, *Deutsche Israel- und Nahostpolitik* (2002): 201.

⁷¹ Hünseler, *Außenpolitische Beziehungen der BRD zu arabischen Staaten* (1990): 160.

quite some time.⁷² In November 1969, its head of the Middle Eastern unit, Helmut Redies, had noted that “through smaller friendly gestures here and there we could now already achieve an improved [political] climate, which would [...] prepare the ground for a later normalisation of political relations.”⁷³ Thus, the ‘policy of even-handedness’ was a broad political formula. Partially, it had been designed for presentation rather than substance and therefore remained open to constant re-interpretation regarding its case-by-case implementation.

Given the complicated nature of this formula, it should come as no surprise that there has been some debate about the extent of Bonn’s even-handedness. Judging Brandt and Scheel by their actions, Buettner claims that there was not in fact any even-handedness in this new policy, as ultimately Israel remained the focal point of West German foreign policy in the Middle East.⁷⁴ Hünseler is more favourable and at least acknowledges a “more balanced” foreign policy.⁷⁵ Both of them, however, overlook that the FRG’s approach to the Middle East was not a yardstick for micro-level policy subtraction but contained an important symbolic signalling element.

Interestingly, there is another dimension to the ‘policy of even-handedness’ which has gone un-noted by other authors. Bonn not only had to balance relations between Israel and the Arabs. It also had to juggle tensions within the Arab camp, between the ‘moderates’ such as Saudi Arabia or Jordan and the ‘radicals’ like Egypt and Iraq. This becomes apparent in a memorandum from Redies in 1972:

Having re-established diplomatic relations with the leading representatives of the ‘progressive’ Arab camp [...], in the interest of the even-handedness of our policy we should now strive for the normalisation of relations with Saudi Arabia, which is the most important representative of the conservative camp.⁷⁶

In this sense, there was a subliminal dual nature of even-handedness in West German Middle Eastern policy under Brandt, mirroring the internal ruptures and fault lines in the Arab world.

How did the social-liberal coalition intend to implement its new ‘policy of even-handedness’? In a first memo outlining foreign policy issues for the next four years, the head of the political division in the *Auswärtiges Amt* (soon to be promoted to State Secretary) Paul Frank argued that the FRG needed to “regain territory in the Middle East area” by the “activation of our relations to all Arab states”.⁷⁷ His view was echoed by Scheel, who in a

⁷² See, for example, AAPD 26.09.1969. Document 304. *Böcker (New York) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁷³ AAPD 22.10.1969. Document 310. *Memorandum by Frank*.

⁷⁴ Buettner, *Germany’s Middle East Policy* (2003).

⁷⁵ Hünseler, *Außenpolitische Beziehungen der BRD zu arabischen Staaten* (1990): 160.

⁷⁶ PA/AA (B36 555, p. 99) 06.06.1972. *Redies to Scheel*.

⁷⁷ AAPD 22.10.1969. Document 320. *Memorandum by Frank*.

meeting of the new coalition on the Middle East in February 1970 complained that “diplomatic relations to five out of fourteen Arab states were too little. Currently there was a vacuum in the Middle East for us and maybe the West in its entirety, which would only favour the Soviet Union”.⁷⁸ It was in this meeting that Scheel talked about a West German “Arab policy” (*arabische Politik*).⁷⁹ Without a doubt, therefore, Brandt’s new administration was intent on taking “a region as important as the Middle East” more into consideration than previous West German governments.⁸⁰ “However”, as Frank warned in his memorandum, “the path to re-establishing our position in the Arab states will be a very arduous one.”⁸¹

At the time, Frank’s warning might well have been considered too pessimistic. Reactions from a number of Arab states to Brandt’s governmental declaration had been largely positive. In November, Egypt signalled interest in entering talks about a resumption of relations, and in February 1970 the Moroccan Prime Minister Ahmed Laraki told the West German ambassador in Rabat that Algeria might be willing to re-open its embassy in Bonn.⁸² Ultimately, however, the FRG would not open an embassy in any Arab state until late 1971. What is the reason for this contradiction between internal West German talk on activating its relations to the Arab states and a complete lack of immediate results in that very endeavour?

The answer lies in the prioritisation of improved German-German over better West German-Arab relations. To begin with, the focus of the new administration lay, unsurprisingly, close to home and therefore on its policy towards the Warsaw Pact states. The Hallstein doctrine was officially declared “dead” by Scheel in 1969 himself to enable *rapprochement* with the East.⁸³ However, the West German foreign minister felt that East Berlin’s desire for diplomatic representation could still serve as a potent negotiating instrument. Thus, in came the Scheel Doctrine: Bonn was willing to accept the recognition of the GDR by third countries as soon as both Germanies had found a *modus vivendi*. As long as East Berlin, however, was unwilling to enter negotiations with the FRG to reach a deal, West Germany would still look unfavourably on any newly opened GDR embassy abroad.⁸⁴ In essence, Bonn asked states to put an opening

⁷⁸ AAPD 11.02.1970. Document 48. *Memorandum by Gehlhoff*.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ PA/AA (B130 4533A, unfoliated) 13.01.1970. *Memorandum by Frank*.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² On Egypt, see AAPD 07.11.1969. Document 350. *Memorandum by Frank*; on Algeria, see PA/AA (B36 559, p. 210) 19.02.1970. *Voigt (Rabat) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁸³ Wentker, Hermann. *Aussenpolitik in engen Grenzen: die DDR im internationalen System, 1949-1989*. (Munich, 2007): 354.

⁸⁴ AAPD 30.10.1969. Document 337. *Circular by Scheel*. On the Scheel Doctrine, see also Schöllgen, Gregor. *Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. (Munich, 2001): 120.

of relations with East Germany on hold for the moment and therefore still tried to prevent a recognition of the GDR – for the moment.

This was the case in the Middle East in particular, where a number of left-leaning Arab states had hoped that Brandt's New Eastern Policy was an invitation to engage in diplomatic relations with both East and West Germany simultaneously.⁸⁵ But in the February 1970 coalition meeting on the Middle East, Scheel stated that "the [West German] Arab policy would have to be seen in conjunction with our German- and Eastern policy. In the five countries that have recognised the GDR we can therefore, for the moment, only improve the general climate. The resumption of diplomatic relations should, if possible, first be attempted with the other Arab states."⁸⁶ As a result, a general resumption of diplomatic relations with all Arab states was off the table by Bonn's choosing. Ironically, while *Ostpolitik* increased the priority of the Arab states for West German foreign policy, it simultaneously also made the resumption of diplomatic relations with most of them harder. As to where diplomatic relations were still an option, the route for a West German Arab policy was limited and self-explanatory. Four Arab states that had no relations with either West or East Germany remained.

One of those states was Algeria, which fitted well with the existing West German focus on the Mediterranean. After all, already in the two previous years Bonn had increasingly started to worry about the Soviet push into the Western Mediterranean. Just as much as Bonn had identified Algeria as the main Soviet target in this area, the North African country became more and more a West German point of focus. "Algeria holds a key position for the establishment of the closest possible bond between Europe and the North African region that we are envisaging together with the other European countries in order to counter Soviet influence", Frank noted.⁸⁷ This Soviet dimension was the strategic aspect of West Germany's focus on the Western Mediterranean. Then, there was also the previously mentioned practical dimension, that Algeria, unlike Egypt, Syria or Iraq, had not recognised the GDR. As Brandt stated: "in any case, our relationship to the Arabs can probably be strengthened in the Maghreb first".⁸⁸ West Germany's 'Mediterranean moment', having started already in late 1967, intensified.

While the FRG had communicated to Algiers through Wischniewski as a backchannel during the years of the *Grand Coalition*, now a more direct style was employed. In January 1970, Brandt himself, on holiday in Tunis, met Algerian foreign minister Bouteflika for a short,

⁸⁵ AAPD 07.11.1969. Document 350. *Memorandum by Frank.*

⁸⁶ AAPD 11.02.1970. Document 48. *Memorandum by Gehlhoff.*

⁸⁷ PA/AA (B130 4533A, unfoliated) 06.04.1970. *Notes by Frank.*

⁸⁸ AAPD 11.02.1970. Document 48. *Notes by Gehlhoff.*

40-minute conversation.⁸⁹ It was mostly an exchange of pleasantries, but it set the stage for a flurry of meetings between Bonn and Algiers. In February, Scheel personally met with Bouteflika in Brussels. A meeting between senior West German and Algerian diplomats in Rome shortly thereafter lasted almost seven hours!⁹⁰ But negotiations soon reached a dead end. Both sides were clearly interested in re-establishing diplomatic relations, but at what cost? First, there would be the obvious price tag, which the West Germans accepted in principle. They were considering a sum of 400 million Deutsche Mark (DM) over five years, a significant commitment in West German eyes.⁹¹ The Algerians demanded the same amount, but on a yearly basis.⁹² The *Auswärtiges Amt* complained about “in part entirely unrealistic [Algerian] demands” and an increasingly unsympathetic negotiating atmosphere.⁹³ The second stumbling block turned out to be the issue of GDR recognition. Algeria had not yet recognised East Germany, but certainly wanted to do so. Ultimately it became clear that the Algerians would only agree to diplomatic relations with West Germany if simultaneously an East German embassy could open in Algiers as well.⁹⁴ But this went against the social-liberal coalition’s stance on East Germany. In line with the Scheel Doctrine, Brandt and Scheel decided to put negotiations with Algeria on hold in April 1970.⁹⁵ Only one month later Algiers recognised the GDR and exchanged ambassadors with East Berlin. As a report by the *Auswärtiges Amt* judged:

This decision [by Algiers] will have been motivated by disappointed hopes for massive West German economic aid despite broken-off relations, considerations of Arab-progressive solidarity and undisturbed economic relations to the Eastern bloc [...], but also the ambition to engage actively in European *détente*.⁹⁶

Similarly, relations with Libya proved to be increasingly difficult after Ghaddafi’s rise to power. On the one hand, he had neither led Libya into the Soviet camp nor recognised the GDR.⁹⁷ On the other hand, his anti-imperialist rhetoric was certainly anti-Western, too, leading the West German ambassador in Tripoli to inform Bonn about his “sense of pessimism”.⁹⁸ In

⁸⁹ AAPD 08.01.1970. Document 4. *Conversation of Brandt with Bouteflika*.

⁹⁰ AAPD 11.02.1970. Document 47. *Conversation of Scheel with Bouteflika*; AAPD 26.02.1970. Document 78. *Notes by Gehlhoff*.

⁹¹ PA/AA (B130 10084A, unfoliated) 18.06.1969. *Memorandum by Gehlhoff and Hauthal*; In 1970, West German aid to Arab states amounted to DM 165 million (PA/AA (B130 10084A, unfoliated) 19.01.1971. *Gehlhoff to Scheel*). Thus, in effect Bonn was willing to expand its ODA to the Arab states by 50% for one country only (Algeria).

⁹² AAPD 26.02.1970. Document 78. *Notes by Gehlhoff*.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ AAPD 17.04.1970. Document 164. *Notes by Gehlhoff*.

⁹⁶ PA/AA (ALGI 17936, unfoliated) 17.08.1970. *Country briefing Algeria*.

⁹⁷ PA/AA (B130 2791A, unfoliated) 07.09.1969. *Turnwald (Tripoli) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁹⁸ PA/AA (B36 413, p. 92) 30.04.1970. *Turnwald (Tripoli) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

substance, little changed in the relations between the two countries, but the atmosphere increasingly turned frosty.⁹⁹

Ultimately, Bonn had miscalculated. It had stopped itself from discussing the opening of embassies in states such as Syria or Iraq due to the Scheel Doctrine. The alternative approach, its Mediterranean strategy, led nowhere. The *Auswärtige Amt* had confused Algerian interest in West German capital aid with hopes for a strong political bond. On top of that, it was increasingly unable to manage its relations to Libya in the Ghaddafi era. When Bonn ultimately succeeded in opening an embassy in Algiers in late 1971, it did so more or less at the same time as in Sudan and Lebanon.¹⁰⁰ Even then, relations with Algiers would remain cool under the surface: Algeria did not send an ambassador to Bonn until 1974 and delayed political consultations for several years.¹⁰¹ In addition, by 1972 Egypt, closed off to West German advances in 1967 and considered by the *Auswärtiges Amt* to be the “key” to the Arab world, now seemed to open up to the West.¹⁰² Bonn’s ‘Mediterranean moment’ was coming to an end.

5. A breakthrough of diplomatic recognition, 1972-1973

After the disappointing turn of events in mid 1970, when Algeria had chosen East over West Germany, the *Auswärtiges Amt* decided to put its ‘Arab policy’ on hold for the moment in order to focus on *Ostpolitik*.¹⁰³ The German-German transit agreement of 1971 meant that the path was cleared to abandon the Scheel doctrine and open embassies in Arab states which also disposed of diplomatic relations to the GDR. West German relations were re-established with Sudan and Algeria in December 1971, Lebanon in March and, most importantly in view of the *Auswärtiges Amt*, with Egypt in June 1972. German-German *détente* spilled over to the engagement of both Germanies ‘on the ground’ in the Middle East, leading their bilateral relations within third countries to relax significantly.

A key factor in efforts towards re-establishing relations to the Arab states was the LAS. In 1965, it had recommended its members to cut diplomatic relations with the West Germans.

⁹⁹ See also AAPD 08.03.1971. Document 83. *Conversation of Moersch with Libyan ministers Jalloud and el-Mabruk in Tripoli.*

¹⁰⁰ PA/AA (B36 378, p. 79) 23.12.1971. *Notes by Redies*; PA/AA (B36 104824, unfoliated) 08.10.1973. *Lankes (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

¹⁰¹ PA/AA (B36 104702, unfoliated) 05.03.1974. *Interministerial meeting in preparation of Brandt’s visit to Algeria.*

¹⁰² AAPD 01.12.1969. Document 384. *Notes by Duckwitz.*

¹⁰³ PA/AA (B130 10084A, unfoliated) 05.01.1971. *Notes by Frank and Scheel.*

Now, Egypt, for example, was only willing to consider sending an ambassador to Bonn if the LAS collectively agreed to take back that decision.¹⁰⁴ Some states like Tunisia and Lebanon supported such a move, but more radical ones like Iraq opposed it.¹⁰⁵ While the LAS was blocked, negotiations with two countries about immediately re-establishing relations picked up speed. Algeria, wishing to demonstrate its independence from Cairo, intended to re-establish relations with West Germany either before an LAS decision or half a year after it.¹⁰⁶ Sudan, too, was keen to establish ties again. The latter case illustrates particularly well how political relations and economic gifts went hand in hand. The *Auswärtiges Amt* was able to attach a veritable list of “Sudanese wishes” should diplomatic relations be re-established, including points as specific as the extension of the television network in Sudan with West German help.¹⁰⁷ In November, the LAS was unable to even discuss the West German question due to “intra-Arab jealousies”.¹⁰⁸ But neither Algiers nor Khartoum were willing to wait anymore. In December, Sudanese president Jaafar Nimeiry mentioned in a public speech his desire to establish diplomatic relations with the West Germans.¹⁰⁹ Similar signals were sent out by Algiers.¹¹⁰

Then, on 17 December 1971, West and East Germans signed a transit agreement, Brandt’s first substantial accomplishment in German-German relations. The path was cleared to discard the Hallstein doctrine internationally for good. Bonn accepted the sending of ambassadors to two capitals in which there already was an East-German ambassador. On 21 December, the West Germans announced the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Algiers, on 23 December with Khartoum.¹¹¹ It was the first big success in Brandt’s and Scheel’s Arab policy.

Now, the LAS was itself put under pressure. Its inability to decide on an official stance towards West Germany had cost it its unity. Further inaction threatened to highlight its irrelevance even more.¹¹² On 12 March 1972, the LAS officially decided that every member state was individually responsible for its relations to the FRG.¹¹³ The 1965 resolution had

¹⁰⁴ AAPD 04.02.1971. Document 45. *Notes by Redies.*

¹⁰⁵ PA/AA (B36 377, p. 466) 15.09.1971. *Weiss (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

¹⁰⁶ PA/AA (B130 9862B, unfoliated) 09.11.1971. *Notes by Müller.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ PA/AA (B130 5769A, unfoliated) 23.11.1971. *Speaking notes for cabinet meeting.*

¹⁰⁹ PA/AA (B36 426, unfoliated) 18.12.1971. *Aurisch (Khartoum) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

¹¹⁰ PA/AA (B36 559, pp. 272ff) 02.12.1971. *Wischnewski to Scheel.*

¹¹¹ PA/AA (B36 378, p. 79) 23.12.1971. *Notes by Redies.*

¹¹² See also a report by Jesser entitled “Power and impotence of the Arab League” (PA/AA (B36 520, p. 5) 09.02.1972. *Jesser (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

¹¹³ PA/AA (B36 493, p. 148) 12.03.1972. *Jesser (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

effectively been overturned. Shortly afterwards, Bonn was able to announce the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Lebanon.¹¹⁴

The LAS decision cleared the way for the Egyptians as well. There was a final push for negotiations, in which Cairo tried to gain the most from re-establishing relations with the West Germans. “From experience, the Egyptian appetite grows particularly strong whilst eating”, diplomat Walter Jesser in Cairo complained to his superiors in Bonn.¹¹⁵ But, as in previous years, the FRG was quite willing to pay a price to make a return to the Nile. While, officially, the West Germans kept up the appearance that relations with Egypt were re-established “without preconditions”, internally Jesser was allowed to give assurances to Cairo that a satisfactory solution would be found.¹¹⁶ “New negotiations about debt should only be planned for the time after re-establishing relations. But we should already now inform the Egyptians that we would be ready to then start talks at any moment. The *Auswärtiges Amt* will advocate a generous debt regulation to the other ministries.”¹¹⁷ After minor debates about protocol and a backchannel meeting in Paris in late May, the next month finally saw the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between West Germany and Egypt. Jesser cabled to Bonn:

Exchange of verbal notes on agreement about the re-establishment of German-Egyptian diplomatic relations has taken place today (7 June) 12.00 o'clock between acting Egyptian foreign minister Hassan Al-Zajjat and ambassador Plaia of the Italian protective power in my presence. [...] Communiqué can therefore be published as agreed tomorrow (8 June) 15.00 GMT; simultaneously, at our office building the Italian flag will be brought down and the German flag hoisted.¹¹⁸

Bonn was jubilant. As stated in a directive from the *Auswärtiges Amt* to Jesser: “The re-establishment [of relations] with Cairo without a doubt represents the decisive step in the whole process of normalising the German-Arab relationship. The missing states (Saudi-Arabia, Syria, Kuwait, Iraq, Aden) will surely follow predominantly in the course of next year.”¹¹⁹

Shortly after the opening of the West German embassy in Cairo, Egyptian president Sadat announced that 5.000 Soviet military advisors would have to leave Egypt.¹²⁰ Unsurprisingly, this news was received positively in Bonn and the *Auswärtiges Amt* urged to pull Egypt into the orbit of Western influence by economic aid.¹²¹ It seemed as if Bonn had

¹¹⁴ PA/AA (B36 104824, unfoliated) 08.10.1973. *Lankes (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

¹¹⁵ PA/AA (B130 9861A, unfoliated) 13.04.1972. *Jesser (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

¹¹⁶ PA/AA (B36 494, pp. 6ff.) 05.01.1972. *Country briefing Egypt.*

¹¹⁷ PA/AA (B130 9861A, unfoliated) 17.04.1972. *Müller to Scheel.*

¹¹⁸ PA/AA (B130 9861A, unfoliated) 07.06.1972. *Jesser (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

¹¹⁹ PA/AA (B130 9861A, unfoliated) 20.05.1972. *Müller to Jesser (Cairo).*

¹²⁰ Daigle, Craig. *The Russians are going: Sadat, Nixon and the Soviet presence in Egypt.* Middle East Review of International Affairs 8:1 (2004): 1-15.

¹²¹ PA/AA (B26 472, pp. 70ff.) 31.07.1972. *Memorandum by I B 4.*

returned to the Arab states at just the right moment. In November 1972, electoral victory by the social-liberal coalition consolidated previous progress in the area of *Ostpolitik*. By February 1973, the FRG followed up Jenser's promise to Cairo about a "generous debt regulation" and an economic agreement with Egypt for almost 300 million DM was concluded.¹²² It rounded up the political rapprochement of the previous year and "created the foundation for a full normalisation of relations and long-term cooperation with Egypt".¹²³



Picture 2: Impressions from Scheel's 1972 trip to Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon: In conversation with Jordan's King Hussein (top left) and Egypt's president Sadat (bottom left); passing a guard of honour at Amman airport (top right) and taking a tour through downtown Beirut (bottom right). It was the first ever official visit of a West German foreign minister to an Arab state.¹²⁴

Moreover, by the summer of 1973 relations were also resumed with Saudi-Arabia, which in view of the growing importance of the oil question was considered almost as important as "the re-establishment of the German-Egyptian relations in the past year".¹²⁵ This "rounding off" of the "lengthy normalisation process of the West German-Arab relationship", as State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt* Hans-Georg Sachs put it, had been publicly demonstrated by two long-

¹²² PA/AA (B130 9861A, unfoliated) 17.04.1972. *Müller to Scheel*.

¹²³ AAPD 12.02.1973. Document 49. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹²⁴ Courtesy of the ADL.

¹²⁵ AAPD 21.09.1973. Document 291. *Sachs (currently Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt*. See also Chapter IV.

anticipated trips.¹²⁶ In June 1973, Brandt had been the first West German chancellor to visit Israel, while shortly beforehand Scheel became the first West German foreign minister to travel to Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan.¹²⁷

This parallelism was supposed to signal the even-handedness of West German foreign policy towards both Israel and the Arabs.¹²⁸ Six years after the June War, following which Bonn had for the first time considered the need to politically engage with the Arab states, this process seemed to have come to its completion, and the FRG appeared to have arrived in the Middle East as political actor for good.

The normalisation of German-German relations had not only paved the way for the reopening of West German embassies in the Arab states. From 1972, a marked reduction of antagonism between Bonn and East Berlin could be observed in third countries, too. Unfortunately, while a lot of research focuses on German-German competition before this moment, little attention has been paid to the international consequences of its relaxation.¹²⁹ In 1972 it was anything but certain that *détente* between the two Germanies would spill over into the international arena. As the head of the Middle Eastern unit in the *Auswärtiges Amt*, Helmut Redies, put it: “It remains to be seen whether, after a potential entry of both Germanies into the UN, confrontation [in the Middle East] will continue or not.”¹³⁰ But Redies’s worries were mostly unfounded, as an episode from Egypt illustrates well.

In January 1973, two Germans met in Cairo for a chat, exchanging views over sweets and cigars. What sounds innocent and unspectacular was anything but, as Hans-Georg Steltzer and Martin Bierbach were not just two citizens of the same nationality, who paid each other a “courtesy call”.¹³¹ The former was the West German, the latter the East German ambassador to Egypt. Bierbach had invited Steltzer to his embassy for a conversation in a “friendly atmosphere” and received him over “a few plates of sweets and tobacco products”.¹³² A few years earlier, such a meeting would have been unthinkable.

Clearly, the worst days of FRG-GDR antagonism abroad were over. While in 1969 the *Auswärtiges Amt* dedicated entire workshops to the challenge of the GDR in the Middle East, in a 1973 ambassadors’ colloquium (*Botschafterkonferenz*) “the presentation called ‘GDR and

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019): 219ff.

¹²⁸ PA/AA (B130 9861A, unfoliated) 24.05.1972. *Müller to Scheel*.

¹²⁹ Sittmann, *Illusions of Care* (2018); Gray, *Germany’s cold war* (2003); Kilian, *Hallstein-Doktrin* (2001).

¹³⁰ PA/AA (B36 493, pp. 213ff.) 11.04.1972. *Speech by Redies to senior staff in the Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹³¹ PA/AA (B36 104662, unfoliated) 25.01.1973. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹³² Ibid.

FRG in the Arab world' is only conceived off as short introduction".¹³³ A year later, a senior West German diplomat – while warning against a “false sense of security” - noted an “obvious easing in the rivalry in respective host countries”.¹³⁴ Relations between the two Germanies abroad largely depended on the attitude of the individual ambassadors, as some GDR representatives – as the West German ambassador to Sudan noted – were still trying to decouple themselves from their FRG colleagues.¹³⁵ Also, the GDR seemed more confident in its approach to the FRG in countries it considered ideologically closer to itself, such as Libya or, again, Sudan.¹³⁶ But, in reverse, this meant that in those Arab countries less sympathetic to socialism, East Berlin had a much harder time, not least since of all the Warsaw Pact states it was often considered closest in its alignment to Moscow's foreign policy.¹³⁷ In the Arab states, too, a relaxation of German tensions in their region was noted, which a newspaper in Beirut welcomed with the comment that “for the Lebanese, they are both Germans and belong to each other like a jacket to trousers (bonnet blanc, blanc bonnet)”.¹³⁸

It remained a complex and problematic relationship of both Germanies in third countries. But, at least in the Middle East, the Basic Treaty of 1972 certainly heralded a reduction of conflict and tensions between the diplomats of both countries. As Steltzer noted in the report about his meeting with Bierbach, the East German ambassador had constantly used the word “juxtaposition” (*Nebeneinander*) and at times even “togetherness” (*Miteinander*) to describe their relationship in Egypt.¹³⁹ Therefore, as Steltzer pointed out, the East German diplomat might have avoided the word “cooperation”; but his choice of alternatives certainly represented a change from the previous omnipresence of ‘confrontation’.¹⁴⁰

By 1973, Brandt and Scheel could look upon their Middle Eastern policy with some satisfaction. Once *Ostpolitik* had been secured, relations to key Arab states were resumed and West Germany's diplomatic return to the Arab world was finalised. Brandt's and Scheel's journey to the Middle East underlined Bonn's return to the region. Moreover, *Ostpolitik* once again emanated to the Middle East, though now through a significant improvement of German-

¹³³ PA/AA (B2 216, pp. 197ff.) 31.08.1973. *Redies to minister's office*.

¹³⁴ PA/AA (B38 111567, unfoliated) 07.11.1974. *Notes by 210*.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ PA/AA (B36 104649, unfoliated) 01.01.1973. *Country briefing Egypt*.

¹³⁸ PA/AA (B36 104824, unfoliated) 03.01.1973. *Nowak (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹³⁹ PA/AA (B36 104662, unfoliated) 25.01.1973. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

German relations on a working level. Bonn might well have felt that its 'Arab policy' was about to take off for good.

6. Shattering of illusions: the impact of the October War on West German 'Arab policy', 1973-1977

By 1973, the Brandt administration could look upon its Arab policy as having come to full fruition. Bonn was about to be diplomatically represented in all Arab states. The perceived advance of the Soviet Union seemed to halt by the early 1970s and relations with the GDR had normalised. But the October War of 1973 shattered both the illusion that the Middle East as risk factor for European *détente* was contained and that re-established relations would remove Bonn's difficulties in dealing with the Arab states. While Bonn's detailed reaction to the war shall be addressed in the next chapter, here those aspects concerning Cold War dynamics shall be discussed.

The Egyptian and Syrian attack on Israel on 6 October 1973, the Jewish Yom-Kippur holiday, came as a total surprise for the FRG.¹⁴¹ Only two months earlier, the *Auswärtiges Amt* had been convinced that "no one in Cairo was thinking about war as a possible alternative anymore".¹⁴² From the beginning, a Cold War lens was visible in West German reactions, although Brandt and Scheel did not formulate their interests through it exclusively. A day after the outbreak of hostilities, Brandt was at a meeting with British prime minister Heath; both "agreed that the escalating events implied dangers for East-West relations and Western energy policy".¹⁴³ Scheel, too, feared that the new war carried the "risk of explosion beyond the region".¹⁴⁴ But overall, the West German government realised that in this situation the superpowers were the key actors, and hoped that neutrality would negate the political consequences West German involvement might otherwise bring.¹⁴⁵

Despite outward neutrality, in the first weeks of the war both support for Israel and the Western alliance in a Cold War setting dominated the West German reaction to the October War. Brandt's administration recognised the possibility of an Arab victory over Israel, which would end up being interpreted as a success for the Soviet Union. As a result, when ten days

¹⁴¹ On the question of surprise, see for example Bar-Joseph, Uri. *The 'Special Means of Collection': The Missing Link in the Surprise of the Yom Kippur War*. *The Middle East Journal* 67:4 (2013): 531-46.

¹⁴² PA/AA (B36 104649, unfoliated) 14.08.1973. *Memorandum by 310*.

¹⁴³ AAPD 07.10.1973. Document 312. *Von Hase (London) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁴⁴ AAPD 08.10.1973. Document 313. *Conversation of Scheel with Arab ambassadors*.

¹⁴⁵ PA/AA (B36 104823, unfoliated) 10.10.1973. *Notes by 310*.

after the war's outbreak US ambassador Hillenbrandt informed Scheel that the US would airlift weapons to Israel via the FRG, the West German foreign minister indirectly gave his agreement to the mission.¹⁴⁶ And while after the war FRG officials were quick to criticise US threats to stop elements of *détente* in Europe in a bid to sanction Soviet aggression in the Middle East, in mid-October the West German ambassador to NATO supported his US colleague Donald Rumsfeld on that very point in the NATO council.¹⁴⁷ He “underlined that for the federal government, too, *détente* was an inseparable entity, so that the Soviet actions in the Middle East conflict could not remain without effect on *détente* in other areas”.¹⁴⁸



Map 1: The successful Egyptian crossing of the Suez Canal in October 1973, before the later Israeli counteroffensive.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ AAPD 16.10.1973. Document 322. *Conversation of Scheel with Hillenbrandt.*

¹⁴⁷ PA/AA (B130 9982A, unfoliated) 09.11.1973. *Notes by Jesser.*

¹⁴⁸ AAPD 17.10.1973. Document 324. *Krapf (Brussels/NATO) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

¹⁴⁹ Source: History Net

Only towards the end of the war did this initial support for US actions wane. When it became public that US weapons deliveries to Israel were sent via the FRG on 24 October, Bonn publicly and privately demanded that Washington end its operation. The details of this controversy will be dealt with in Chapter II of this thesis. Here, it will be sufficient to point out that even though Bonn was worried about an Arab oil boycott, it turned a blind eye to the weapons deliveries until by late October there was a clear trend towards victory by Israel. Looking at the issue through the lens of Middle Eastern politics, the *Auswärtiges Amt* felt it had good grounds for its change of position on US weapons deliveries to Tel Aviv. But Washington, viewing the matter from the angle of East-West confrontation, was livid. It considered the delayed West German objections to weapons deliveries as a betrayal as well as an unnecessary break in Western unity against their Soviet antagonists.¹⁵⁰ As Kissinger told Bernd von Staden, Bonn's ambassador to DC, the "alliance had displayed a 'blatant show of disunity'."¹⁵¹

On its end, Bonn was unsettled when by the end of the war Washington put its nuclear weapons on standby in response to Soviet threats of direct military intervention in Egypt.¹⁵² It was less an argument about substance than about style between the US and its European partners, but it certainly was a bitter one. As a "disenchanted" Kissinger told von Staden in late October, he was "so bored" by the developments in NATO, as "a confrontation of documents was staged. One argued about terms like 'partnership' or 'consultation'. He [Kissinger] did not see how in these circumstances the Western alliance could survive 50 or even another five years."¹⁵³

Despite these tensions, however, Bonn never questioned the Western alliance in principle. There was unhappiness about a perceived lack of coordination with and information from Washington, but the principal support for the US becomes clear when looking at Brandt's reactions to messages from Moscow. Throughout the October War, Bonn had been in contact with the Soviets, mostly to impress upon them the need for de-escalation in the Middle East.¹⁵⁴ However, as minutes from the archive of the *Auswärtiges Amt* show, by the end of the war Brezhnev also sent Brandt a personal message via his ambassador to Bonn, Valentin Falin,

¹⁵⁰ AAPD 25.10.1973. Document 337. *Conversation of Frank with Hillenbrand*.

¹⁵¹ AAPD 26.10.1973. Document 341. *Von Staden (Washington) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁵² PA/AA (B130 9982A, unfoliated) 09.11.1973. *Notes by Jesser*.

¹⁵³ AAPD 26.10.1973. Document 341. *Von Staden (Washington) to Auswärtiges Amt*. See also Schulz, Matthias, and Alan Schwartz. *Strained alliance. US-European relations from Nixon to Carter*. (Cambridge/New York, 2010); Pietrantonio, Silvia. *The year that never was: 1973 and the crisis between the United States and the European Community*. *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 8:2 (2010): 158-77; Hynes, Catherine. *The Year That Never Was: Heath, the Nixon Administration and the Year of Europe*. (Dublin, 2009).

¹⁵⁴ PA/AA (B130 9981A, unfoliated) 11.10.1973. *Jesser to Moscow embassy*.

indicating how “cooperation in this area [of the Middle East] could also have an indirect, positive impact on our bilateral relations”.¹⁵⁵ It is very conceivable that the Soviet leader hoped to capitalise on splits in the Western alliance by breaking out individual members for separate talks on the Middle East, but Brandt remained impassive to Falin’s message.¹⁵⁶ Also, previous conversations with other Communist leaders such as Romania’s Ceausescu on the Arab-Israeli conflict ceased during and after the crisis.¹⁵⁷ On the issue of the October War and energy crisis, there might have been a partial lack of specific support for US actions by the FRG. But that never led to a questioning of its general support for the Western alliance and *Westbindung*.

In fact, as far as US engagement in the Middle East was concerned, Bonn had little to complain about. After all, the US now took the more active role in brokering peace agreements between Israel and the Arab states that the FRG had been missing in previous years.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, Kissinger’s *shuttle diplomacy* had succeeded in excluding the Soviet Union from Middle Eastern politics, another one of Bonn’s key policy interests. The FRG was therefore willing to step into second rank in the Middle East and “follow in the wake of a balanced American Middle Eastern policy”, as West German ambassador to Cairo, Steltzer, put it in mid-1974.¹⁵⁹

In summer 1974, the FRG underwent an internal changing of the guard. Scheel moved to the more symbolic position of Federal President, followed in the *Auswärtiges Amt* by another liberal politician, Hans-Dietrich Genscher. Shortly thereafter, Brandt had to step down from his post due to a political scandal at home and was replaced by Minister of Finance Helmut Schmidt.¹⁶⁰

Under its new leadership, Bonn was still intent on keeping its focus on the Middle East. If anything, the October War with its potential to escalate into global superpower conflict and the ensuing energy crisis had illustrated that the MENA region as a whole still mattered. As a 1975 memorandum in the *Auswärtiges Amt* put it: “It is obvious that our interests in the Near and Middle East region are particularly strong for political and economic reasons.”¹⁶¹ In 1975, Genscher travelled to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, a journey which he considered “the most important of this year”.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁵ PA/AA (B130 9982A, unfoliated) 25.10.1973. *Notes by Bahr*.

¹⁵⁶ See also Wolffsohn, Michael. *Friedenskanzler? Willy Brandt zwischen Krieg und Terror*. (Munich, 2018).

¹⁵⁷ AAPD 29.06.1973. Document 209. *Conversation of Brandt with Ceausescu*; this will also be dealt with further in the next chapter.

¹⁵⁸ See Chapter II on West German attitudes to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

¹⁵⁹ PA/AA (B36 104868, unfoliated) 06.09.1974. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁶⁰ Heumann, *Genscher* (2012); Spohr, *Global Chancellor* (2016).

¹⁶¹ PA/AA (B36 109107, unfoliated) 21.03.1975. *Memorandum by Böker*.

¹⁶² PA/AA (B36 104666, unfoliated). *Memorandum of the Auswärtiges Amt*.



Picture 3: Changing of the guard: from the summer of 1974 onwards, West German foreign policy would be dominated by Hans-Dietrich Genscher in the *Auswärtiges Amt* and new chancellor Helmut Schmidt (background).¹⁶³

But the October War had changed the West German outlook on the Arab states. The optimism of the early 1970s was gone, and with it the assumption that upon completion of its ‘Arab policy’ some sort of immediate or automatic political dividend would reward the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the Arab states. Maybe what had in fact happened was that between 1965 and 1975 any political problem between Bonn and the Arab states could be explained away by the absence of diplomatic relations, thus pointing to a symptom of problems instead of their cause. While in December 1974 Genscher noted his “satisfaction [about] the normalisation of relations to all 20 Arab states, which has been completed in this year”, Bonn still struggled with the ruptures of the Arab world.¹⁶⁴ In particular in regard to Syria, Iraq and Libya, Bonn’s diplomats complained about difficult relations.¹⁶⁵ The FRG still proved unable to overcome the challenge of ‘dual-even-handedness’. Moreover, in view of the oil weapon the Arab states were now more assertive in dealing with Western counterparts. On

¹⁶³ Courtesy of the ADL.

¹⁶⁴ PA/AA (B36 106634, unfoliated) 05.12.1974. *Notes by Niemöller*. Underlined as in original.

¹⁶⁵ See, for example, PA/AA (B38 111567, unfoliated) 07.11.1974. *Notes by 210*.

top of that, Schmidt was a more careful politician than Brandt in many ways and certainly lacked his predecessor's tendency to formulate grand political visions.¹⁶⁶

All of these factors led to a temporarily more restrained West German attitude to the Arab states. Instead of a grand, comprehensive 'Arab policy', after 1973 Bonn focused on few key states. Egypt remained the most important for the moment, not least because it was in a "key position" in the Middle East and "still a leading power in the Arab world".¹⁶⁷ Significant economic aid for Cairo is testimony that Egypt was now a "focal point" in West Germany's Arab policy.¹⁶⁸ In the aftermath of the oil crisis, strengthening relations to the Gulf and Saudi Arabia in particular became a new focus of West German Middle Eastern policy, which will be described in detail in Chapter IV of this thesis.

All in all, the immediate years after the October War are characterised by a more passive, wait-and-see attitude in the West German government's stance toward the Arab states. The political enthusiasm of the early 1970s was gone, and Bonn stepped into the shadow of the US, hoping that Washington would ease political tensions in the region. The weakening of the Soviet Union's position in the Middle East reduced the strategic necessity for the FRG to engage directly in the region. Despite difficult relations with some Arab countries, it hoped that economic aid and good bilateral relations to key countries such as Egypt or Saudi Arabia would, in the long-term, strengthen its leverage on the Arab states. By late 1976, Bonn even noted a more sympathetic tendency in Syria and Libya towards political consultations, which it interpreted as a first sign that it could escape the need of the ultra-complex 'policy of dual-even-handedness'.¹⁶⁹ However, by the end of the decade this illusion would be shattered, too.

7. Camp David and the breaking of the Arab world, 1977-1979

In November 1977, Egyptian president Anwar al-Sadat undertook his momentous journey to Jerusalem. This event and the subsequent initiation of direct peace talks with Israel, resulting in the Camp David Accords a year later, shook Bonn out of its passive attitude towards the Middle East. Sadat's journey made manifest a previously latent split in the Arab world, as Egypt was now suspended from the LAS. Two immediate challenges now arose for Bonn's Middle Eastern policy. Firstly, the FRG feared that the fault lines within the Arab camp created an

¹⁶⁶ Spohr, *Global chancellor* (2016); Hofmann, *Helmut Schmidt* (2015); Soell, *Helmut Schmidt* (2008).

¹⁶⁷ PA/AA (B36 109107, unfoliated) 21.03.1975. *Memorandum by Böker*.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ AAPD 29.12.1976. Document 377. *Bartels (Damascus) to Auswärtiges Amt*; PA/AA (B36 119931, unfoliated) 20.12.1977. *Jesser to State Secretary*.

opening for the Soviet Union to return to Middle Eastern politics. Secondly, Egypt's ostracism within the Arab camp greatly diminished the value of the much-improved West German-Egyptian relations, in which Bonn had invested so much energy based on the assumption that the path to the Arab states led through Egypt.¹⁷⁰ Related to this, a coherent 'Arab policy' was no longer possible for Bonn, as the political compound of an 'Arab world' no longer existed.

The Soviet dimension was mostly used by Schmidt and Genscher to impress the need for a comprehensive "global" solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, rather than a separate Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, on their international partners.¹⁷¹ As Genscher told his Japanese colleague Sonoda in April 1978: "Sadat's initiative [is] of the highest importance. [There is a] danger that after a failure the Soviet Union would go on the offensive in the region."¹⁷² Unsurprisingly, the Soviet component in the Middle East also related to *détente* in Europe, as Schmidt pointed out to Polish leader Edward Gierek in August 1979.¹⁷³ Genscher himself expressed his worries to Chinese foreign minister Huang Hua two months later: "Peace in the Middle East increases security in Europe, insecurity on the other hand [increases] opportunities for interventions by the Soviet Union."¹⁷⁴ An invasion of South into North Yemen, behind which NATO suspected Soviet encouragement, rumours about a stronger Soviet engagement in the Lebanese Civil War as well as the turmoil in Iran by 1978 further fuelled West German anxieties about a possible return of the Soviet Union into the Middle East.¹⁷⁵ Cold War dynamics therefore played a key role for Bonn's largely sceptical outlook on the Camp David process. However, ultimately these were mostly diffuse fears and by late 1979 Schmidt and Genscher realised that the Soviet Union was not advancing into the strategic gap opened up by Camp David. In any case, their arguments had not managed to bring about a comprehensive peace deal in the Middle East, as the March 1979 peace treaty coming out of the Camp David Accords was limited to Israel and Egypt. If anything, the threat of the Soviet Union was now no longer visible in the Middle East, but in Europe itself, where by 1979 the Euro-Missile Crisis triggered the 'Second Cold War'.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁰ PA/AA (B36 109107, unfoliated) 21.03.1975. *Memorandum by Böker*.

¹⁷¹ AAPD 30.11.1977. Document 342. *Notes by Lahn*.

¹⁷² AAPD 19.04.1978. Document 116. *Conversation of Genscher with Sonoda*.

¹⁷³ AAPD 17.08.1979. Document 236. *Conversation of Schmidt with Gierek*.

¹⁷⁴ AAPD 23.10.1979. Document 304. *Conversation of Genscher with Huang Hua*.

¹⁷⁵ AAPD 21.06.1979. Document 185. *Pauls (Brussels) to Auswärtiges Amt*; AAPD 11.07.1978. Document 217. *Peckert (Damascus) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁷⁶ Gilbert, *Cold War Europe* (2015); Njølstad, Olav. *The collapse of superpower détente, 1975–1980*. In: Leffler, Melvyn P., and Odd Arne Westad (eds.). *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Vol. 3*. (Cambridge, 2010): 112-33.

Interestingly, however, the sceptical outlook on the potential re-emergence of the Soviet Union as key player in Middle Eastern politics had little negative impact on German-German relations in the region. Bonn was without a doubt acknowledging and addressing “GDR activities directed against us in Africa”.¹⁷⁷ The *Auswärtige Amt* also noted an increase in GDR engagement in the ‘radical’ Arab states such as Syria or Libya in the aftermath of Sadat’s Jerusalem trip.¹⁷⁸ But these did not yield much success for East Berlin. Bonn’s diplomats on the ground enjoyed depicting fruitless East German travel activity in the region, such as Honecker’s “welcome by Ghaddafi, [which] looked embarrassingly uptight on television”.¹⁷⁹ If anything, the *Auswärtiges Amt* now increased its coordination with East Berlin. As of March 1978, it initiated consultations on a working level with GDR diplomats about the Middle East, in which the latter quite openly laid out their activities in the region.¹⁸⁰ At least on the issue of the GDR in the Middle East, Bonn felt on top of things. After 1972, German-German relations in the Arab states remained characterised by a managed co-existence of cooperation mixed with elements of competition.

Apart from the Soviet threat, Bonn’s major issue with Camp David was that an ‘Arab policy’ was no longer possible, as the latter’s addressee had vanished; Sadat’s action had cemented the division of the Arab world. Bonn now also silently dropped the concept of ‘even-handedness’; after all, as a senior West German diplomat told the Israeli ambassador in Bonn in July 1979, the FRG now had to balance its relations to Israel and two Arab camps.¹⁸¹ This was too great a challenge for Bonn to accomplish. Bonn’s ‘Arab policy’ was running out of steam, which is also exemplified by a conversation between Genscher and the ambassadors of Qatar, Syria, Tunisia and Jordan by the end of the year. The four openly rejected Genscher’s restrained attitude and urged him to a stronger engagement and commitment on certain issues. As the Jordanian ambassador stated: “One now expects after the re-activation of our [the West German] Middle Eastern policy in the past summer a clear follow-up.”¹⁸² But Genscher merely pointed to a possible later conversation on the topic, turning instead to events in Iran. Both sides were talking at cross purposes.

¹⁷⁷ AAPD 19.12.1979. Document 387. *Memorandum by Lücking.*

¹⁷⁸ PA/AA (B38 116409, unfoliated) 20.03.1978. *Notes by II 2*; PA/AA (B38 116409, unfoliated) 26.07.1978. *Bertele (East Berlin) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

¹⁷⁹ AAPD 17.02.1979. Document 43. *Neupert (Tripoli) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

¹⁸⁰ PA/AA (B36 135613, unfoliated) 21.03.1978. *Memorandum by 310*; PA/AA (B38 116409, unfoliated) 20.11.1978. *Gaus (East Berlin) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

¹⁸¹ AAPD 12.07.1979. Document 208. *Conversation of Meyer-Landrut with Meroz.*

¹⁸² AAPD 27.11.1979. Document 349. *Conversation of Genscher with four Arab ambassadors.*

Despite more than ten years of attempts for a more active engagement, West Germany had time and again failed to move from a bystander to an influential player in Arab politics. Its inability to influence the processes surrounding Camp David illustrates how by late 1979 it once again found itself bereft of the leverage to become a significant political player in the Middle East. Moreover, any Arab policy by now faced the ever more obvious challenge that after 1977 a politically united Arab world did not exist.¹⁸³ The slogan of ‘even-handedness’ slowly disappeared from West German discourses on the Middle East. In addition, by the end of the 1970s the context for West Germany’s Middle Eastern policy was undergoing a profound transformation, as the underlying factors which had after the Six-Day War convinced Bonn that it needed to engage politically with the Arab world were changing. The focus of the Cold War was now shifting to Central Asia, where the Soviet Union had only just invaded Afghanistan and had thereby triggered fears in the West of a Soviet advance into Central Asia in its entirety.¹⁸⁴ Afghanistan’s neighbour Iran was in turmoil, too, and Bonn had not yet completely excluded the possibility of Soviet meddling there either.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, the crucial link between peace in Europe and conflict in the Middle East was now disappearing. The social-liberal coalition no longer had to look to the Middle East to worry about threats to *détente*: the stationing of Soviet SS-20 missiles in Eastern Europe and the NATO double-track decision of December 1979 in response to that meant that *détente* was being threatened right in the centre of Europe.

8. Conclusion: West German Middle Eastern policy and its link to the geopolitics of Central Europe

In the aftermath of the 1967 June War, the FRG had felt obliged to focus more on the Arab world, fearing that a Soviet advance there and superpower competition in the Middle East would threaten *détente* in Europe. Linked to this, but a contentious issue on its own, was the German-German antagonism between GDR and FRG. But by the end of the 1970s, both the threat of the Soviet Union and the GDR were deemed less pressing by Bonn when it came to the Middle East. Its Arab policy, fraught with the inability to respond to splits in the Arab world, increasingly subsided. Brandt’s ‘policy of even-handedness’ had turned into a ‘policy of dual-even-handedness’, which proved too complex to handle in a coherent way.

¹⁸³ See also literature on the history of Arab nationalism, such as Choueiri, *Arab Nationalism* (2000).

¹⁸⁴ AAPD 31.12.1979. Document 394. *Berninger (Kabul) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁸⁵ AAPD 20.03.1979. Document 86. *Conversation of Schmidt with Warren Christopher*.

By 1979, Europe witnessed an intensification of the Cold War through debates about Soviet and American intermediate range missiles.¹⁸⁶ Moreover, if there was one region where the West now worried about global Soviet encroachment, it was Central Asia. There, the West was on the back foot due to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian revolution, whose outcome was still uncertain but sure to be unfavourable to the West. North Africa had long vanished as a priority for Bonn, and despite all disappointment about Camp David the Arab-Israeli conflict seemed contained for the moment; all in all, the Arab world no longer carried a sense of urgency for Bonn. A conversation between Genscher and the Moroccan ambassador from 7 December 1979 is telling in this regard. The ambassador illustrated Soviet support for the Sahrawi rebel movement of *Polisario*, repeatedly warned of a Soviet bridgehead in North Africa, demanded stronger Western support and complained about a recent SPD party conference decision to recognise *Polisario*. Genscher replied:

He [Genscher] was not yet familiar with the decision of the SPD party conference, which the ambassador mentioned. This should not be interpreted as lack of interest; it could simply be explained by the fact that all of our attention was currently focused on questions of priority within the alliance and developments about nuclear energy.¹⁸⁷

Only ten years earlier, Genscher's own ministry had defined as a key West German "political and strategic interest [...] [to] prevent that North Africa, too, becomes subject to Soviet domination."¹⁸⁸ Now, he was not even embarrassed by openly admitting that he simply did not pay enough attention to affairs in North Africa to be kept up to date about events there.

This chapter has put the Cold War in the centre of interpreting West German policy towards the Arab states during the 1970s. It thereby expands on similar work by Joffe, while challenging the fixation on the Arab-Israeli conflict, which, for example, can be found with Gerlach or Buettner.¹⁸⁹ As a result, the chapter uncovers new nuances such as the temporary importance of the Maghreb during West Germany's 'Mediterranean moment'.

For the social-liberal coalition, a clear link between *Ost-* and *Nahostpolitik* existed, both before and after the German-German rapprochement of the 1970s, underlining the ability of both Germanies to soothe tensions and even engage in a rudimentary form of cooperation more than previous work would let on.¹⁹⁰ As I argue, German-German relations in the Middle East

¹⁸⁶ On renewed inter-bloc tensions of the 1980s, see, for example, Halliday, *Making of the Second Cold War* (1983).

¹⁸⁷ AAPD 07.12.1979. Document 365. *Conversation of Genscher with ambassador Iraqi*.

¹⁸⁸ AAPD 09.06.1969. Document 193. *Memorandum by political divisions I and III*.

¹⁸⁹ Gerlach, *Doppelte Front* (2006); Buettner, *Germany's Middle East Policy* (2003); Joffe, *Reflections on German policy in the Middle East* (1992).

¹⁹⁰ Sittmann, *Illusions of Care* (2018); Gray, *Germany's cold war* (2003).

from 1972 onwards can be described best as managed co-existence of cooperation mixed with elements of competition.

This chapter also sheds new lights on the assessment of intra-alliance relations around the oil crisis.¹⁹¹ I argue that the differences and arguments between Washington and Bonn were about US communication style as well as the appropriate response to the oil crisis, whereas on the Middle East the FRG willingly stepped back in anticipation of a US lead in that region. In addition, I contend that the depiction of a challenge of ‘dual-even-handedness’, which West Germany faced, describes a situation which external powers more generally were confronted with in the Middle East for most parts of the post-war era.

What does this analysis of West Germany’s ‘Arab policy’ tell us about Bonn Middle Eastern policy more generally? In line with its ‘policy of even-handedness’, Bonn on individual topics indeed attempted to give more consideration to the interests and demands of the Arab states. However, when challenged, the social-liberal coalition would not waver in its support for Israel, for example during the October War or during debates about financial aid to Tel Aviv. Ultimately, the dynamic of West German Middle Eastern policy, which emerges from 1967 onwards, resembles Easton’s distinction between *diffuse* and *specific legitimacy*. As Easton writes, legitimacy is not a dichotomous concept. Instead, it is multi-layered, relating either to a specific issue or a more general, diffuse sense of support. Therefore, a government can face opposition on a specific topic and thereby lack *specific legitimacy*, whilst not losing the overall, *diffuse legitimacy* to govern its people.¹⁹² Translating this concept to the area of foreign policy, I argue that it represents an adequate explanatory framework for West German Middle Eastern policy from 1967 to 1979. While on individual topics the FRG was ready to prioritise relations to the Arab states, the Bonn government never wavered in its underlying support of Israel. *Specific support* was given to the Arab states on occasion, whilst despite regular arguments with Tel Aviv *diffuse support* was reserved for Israel.

After June 1967, Cold War dynamics had prompted Bonn to shift its glance to the Arab world. A decade later, the very same factors caused the inverse process to take place. Ultimately, this illustrates how an analysis of German Middle Eastern policy needs to be carried out through the lens of Central European politics, which during the 1960s and 1970s were dominated by the logic and processes of the Cold War.

¹⁹¹ Schulz and Schwartz, *Strained alliance* (2010); Pietrantonio, *Crisis between United States and European community* (2010); Hynes, *Year that never was* (2009).

¹⁹² Easton, David. *A re-assessment of the concept of political support*. *British Journal of Political Science* 5:4 (1975): 435-57.

Chapter II: The Arab-Israeli conflict as a factor in West Germany's 'Arab policy'

The federal government remains committed to its stated policy of non-interference in regional conflicts¹
Talking notes for State Secretary Klaus Schütz with Eugene Rostow on the Arab-Israeli conflict, 1967

Sadat stated [...] that the minister [Genscher] had shown real courage to promote the peace process at this point in time.²
Conversation of Sadat with Genscher, 1979

1. Introduction: a new perspective on the FRG's role in the Arab-Israeli conflict

The West German stance towards the Arab-Israeli conflict has mostly been analysed from a perspective of German-Israeli relations, as the FRG had to balance its position on Middle Eastern peace in the present with its historical obligation to Israel due to the past.³ But the Arab-Israeli conflict, the issue which has shaped Middle Eastern politics more than anything since the end of World War II, also had a significant impact on Bonn's attempts to re-define its relationship with the Arab states during the 1970s.⁴ First, the June War of 1967 had embedded the Arab-Israeli conflict within the Cold War more than ever and thereby caused West Germany's subsequent turn to the Middle East. Then, during the 1970s, the Arab-Israeli conflict would make Brandt's concept of an 'even-handed' Middle Eastern policy a circle which the FRG simply could not square, blocking Bonn's attempts to achieve a clear equilibrium in West Germany's relations to Israel and the Arab states.

Previous works on the social-liberal coalition's Middle Eastern policy have struggled with an apparent mismatch of the administration's words and deeds. On one hand, the Brandt administration stressed the relevance of the Arab-Israeli conflict as of 1970, both due to the conflict's threats to *détente* in abstract terms and more directly in the form of terrorist violence spilling over to Europe. On the other, statements by Brandt and Scheel on West Germany's need to show restraint on the issue from the same period seem to contradict such sentiments.

¹ PA/AA (B130 2578A, unfoliated) 14.09.1967. *Notes by I B 4*.

² AAPD 02.09.1979. Document 250. *Behrends (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

³ Weingardt, *Deutsche Israel- und Nahostpolitik* (2002); Schmidt, Wolfgang. *Aus historischer Verantwortung, moralischer Verpflichtung und politischer Überzeugung*. (Berlin, 2014); Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019).

⁴ Gerlach, *Doppelte Front* (2006); Hünsele, *Außenpolitische Beziehungen der BRD zu arabischen Staaten* (1990).

That leads Schmidt to argue that Brandt neither wanted nor could mediate in the conflict, Wolffsohn to claim that he could have mediated but did not want to, and Fink and Schöllgen to state that he wanted but could not mediate.⁵ By embedding West German Middle Eastern policy in the foreign policy of the social-liberal coalition in general, I show how prioritisation explains this apparent contradiction: Brandt focused on *Ostpolitik* first, but as soon as its successes became clear his focus shifted to the Arab-Israeli conflict. In that vein, this chapter also makes an entirely new argument, showing that Brandt considered a more active engagement in the search for peace in the Middle East during the summer of 1973. As to the October War, I show that Bonn knew in detail about American weapon's deliveries to Israel. Contrary to what Wolffsohn claims, the FRG timed its stance on the issue so as to ensure Israel's survival, allowing weapons deliveries to take place until Tel Aviv had gained an upper hand in the war.⁶

West German attitudes to the Arab-Israeli conflict after 1973 are generally less well covered in the literature.⁷ The FRG's stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict from 1975 to 1980 will therefore be analysed in the second part of this chapter. As the previous chapter has already outlined, Bonn stepped into second rank in the immediate aftermath of the October War and hoped for a resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict by the US. However, as I can show here, when the Camp David process did not result in a comprehensive Middle Eastern peace deal, West German foreign minister Genscher made a final push for a "global solution" of the Arab-Israeli conflict with a trip through the Arab states in the summer of 1979.⁸ However, he was neither willing nor able to go to the lengths needed to achieve his aim.

This chapter makes three key contributions. Firstly, it analyses West Germany's stance towards the Arab-Israeli conflict during the 1970s through the lens of West German-Arab relations. Furthermore, this chapter clarifies existing debates in the literature on Brandt's role in possible peace initiatives and adds new perspectives to them. Finally, it fills a research gap by studying Bonn's policy on the Arab-Israeli conflict after the October War. In this context, it is worth mentioning that this chapter also contains the first analysis of West Germany's reaction to the early stages of the civil war in Lebanon, another episode of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

⁵ Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019); Wolffsohn, *Friedenskanzler* (2018); Schmidt, *Aus historischer Verantwortung* (2014); Schöllgen, *Willy Brandt* (2003).

⁶ Wolffsohn, Michael. *Yom-Kippur Krieg. Für Erdöl setzte Bonn 1973 das Bündnis aufs Spiel*. (21.10.2013).

⁷ An exception is Neustadt (*Deutsch-Israelische Beziehungen* (1983)); however, his focus lies on the European elements of West German Middle Eastern policy during this period.

⁸ PA/AA (B36 108834, unfoliated) 18.07.1975. *Notes by 310*.

Twice in the 1970s West Germany in one way or another attempted to actively promote a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, first pushed on by Brandt and then by Genscher. Both times the FRG failed, due to a mix of bad fortune, political realities or the burden of the past. ‘You fool me once, shame on you; you fool me twice, shame on me’, a famous saying goes, and, in a way, it reflects well the attitude of West German policy makers on this matter. There would be no third time for the FRG to take on peace in the Middle East single-handedly. As of 1980 and the EEC’s Venice Declaration of that year, Bonn would engage on the Arab-Israeli conflict through the European level only.

2. One after another: prioritisation and West Germany’s restrained attitude to the Arab-Israeli conflict, 1967-1970

The Six-Day War in June 1967 shook the political kaleidoscope of the Middle East, ending in a resounding victory of Israel over Egypt, Jordan and Syria. But as the previous chapter has shown, Bonn’s reaction to this new situation only marginally focused on the Arab-Israeli conflict itself. The FRG lacked links to the Arab states, while the historical baggage of its relations to Israel complicated any direct engagement in the Middle East conflict. Keeping its initial focus on the Maghreb instead, the West German government chose to stay on the sidelines of conflict in the Middle East well into Willy Brandt’s tenure as chancellor.

Israel’s victory in 1967 did little to remove the issue of the conflict itself from the political agenda of the Middle East. Tel Aviv might have proven its military superiority; but the hope that it might turn some of its territorial gains into a bargain for peace with the Arabs were soon squashed. At their Khartoum meeting in September that year, the same at which the GDR had lobbied for political recognition, the Arab League members agreed on three ‘No’s’ as their policy towards Israel: no peace, no recognition and no negotiations. Israel had won the war, but not a peace.⁹

As Chapter I of this thesis has shown, the June War had a significant impact on Bonn’s Middle Eastern policy, but mostly because it was seen through the prism of the Cold War. The *Auswärtiges Amt* worried about a stronger position of both Moscow and East Berlin in the Arab states.¹⁰ The June Memorandum, analysed in detail in Chapter I, mentions the June War’s potential damage for German-Arab relations or NATO’s south-eastern flank. It does not,

⁹ For a recent take on the legacy of the Six-Day War, see, Laron, Guy. *The six-day war: the breaking of the Middle East*. (New Haven, 2017).

¹⁰ See Chapter I on the impact of Cold War dynamics on West German ‘Arab policy’.

however, contain a reference to a potentially more direct engagement by the FRG in the resolution of the conflict itself. West Germany's policy on the Arab-Israeli conflict remained one of non-intervention and of an unwillingness to deliver weapons into conflict areas, expanded by support for security council resolution 242, which had been passed at the UN in the aftermath of the Six-Day War.¹¹ Ultimately, the FRG continued to stay on the side-lines of the Arab-Israeli conflict, as it was short of leverage on the issue due to being side-lined as a political actor in most of the Arab peninsula. Instead, it decided to focus on the Maghreb for the moment

Chapter I has demonstrated in detail how, in 1969, the Middle East increased in importance for the FRG due to the perceived link between the region and *Ostpolitik*. This included a stronger West German focus on the Arab-Israeli conflict, as it was around this time, in March 1970, that the *Auswärtiges Amt* for the first time engaged in political consultations with the Americans on that topic.¹²

But as with West Germany's Arab policy more generally, the prioritisation of progress in *Ostpolitik* also meant that Brandt and his government, at least initially, shied away from engaging more actively in conflict resolution efforts. In a January 1970 meeting with Bouteflika Brandt had stated that "from the German side one has few possibilities to exert influence in this question [of the Arab-Israeli conflict]".¹³ Moreover, Brandt put his hopes into greater European foreign policy coordination in regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict in form of the EPC, which was about to launch in late 1970.¹⁴ Both these points come out very clearly in a conversation between Brandt and Jordan's king Hussein in December 1970: "The normalisation of East-West-relations and the concrete political consultations amongst the Western European states will enable [us] to take a clearer stance towards Near East questions."¹⁵

There was another dimension to this restrained attitude, only half-related to the question of peace in the Middle East itself. When, in June 1971, Brandt was once more pushed to clarify his position by Moroccan Prime Minister Ahmed Laraki, he again pointed to West Germany's limited influence, but then added that this was the case "not least as we do not have diplomatic

¹¹ AAPD. 27.07.1967. Document 283. *Memorandum by ministerial director Meyer-Lindenberg*. See also Lavy, *Germany and Israel* (2013).

¹² PA/AA (B36 281, p. 229f) 18.03.1970. *Gehlhoff (Washington) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹³ AAPD 08.01.1970. Document 4. *Conversation of Brandt with Bouteflika*. See also AAPD 06.04.1971. Document 124. *German-British government talks*.

¹⁴ PA/AA (B36 397, pp. 49ff.) 15.02.1970. *IB 4 to Scheel*. See also Moeckli, *European foreign policy during the Cold War* (2009): 72. The EPC and the Middle East are also dealt with in more detail in Chapter V of this thesis.

¹⁵ AAPD 16.12.1970. Document 604. *Conversation of Brandt with Hussein*.

relations with a number of Arab states”.¹⁶ By implication, Brandt was saying that anyone who wanted the West Germans to engage more directly in the Arab-Israeli conflict would have to help Bonn in its effort to re-open its embassies in most of the Arab states. And such Arab requests for a stronger West German engagement were made, for example by Tunisian foreign minister Mahmoud Mestiri in late 1970.¹⁷ It is hard to judge whether this was a shrewd political manoeuvre by Brandt or an honest assessment of the situation, as how could Bonn be considered a serious mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict while being excluded politically from most of the Arab states? Whichever it was, Brandt had a point: the lack of political links into the Arab camp weakened Bonn’s political stature and fostered its momentary role as bystander in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Of course, another factor influencing the FRG’s stance towards the Arab-Israeli conflict was the special nature of its relationship with Israel. West German attempts to come to terms with the past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) were, after all, not limited to domestic politics, but included the FRG’s policy towards Tel Aviv as well.¹⁸ In view of this, could Brandt and Scheel even have considered themselves as potential actors in a Middle Eastern peace process?

When the social-liberal coalition took up office, this question was actively addressed. Brandt and Scheel both felt that they would be able to square the past with the future. “Our Middle Eastern policy shall be balanced, which by no means, however, implies indifference towards the fate of Israel”, stated Brandt at the February 1970 Middle East workshop of his new government.¹⁹ At the same time, the West German chancellor demanded a “policy without complexes” towards Tel Aviv.²⁰ Brandt, having himself been persecuted by the Nazis, might well have felt less bound personally by guilt or shame than his predecessors.²¹

But in practice such balance was hard to find. A case in point was West German capital aid to Israel, at the time DM 140 million per year. That was almost as much as all of the Arab states in their entirety received, a West German diplomat in the *Auswärtiges Amt*, Walter Gehlhoff, noted critically in 1970.²² In his view, the FRG was risking “a loss of credibility for

¹⁶ AAPD 21.06.1971. Document 217. *Conversation of Brandt with Laraki*.

¹⁷ PA/AA (B36 438, p. 21) 21.12.1970. *Moltmann (Tunis) to Auswärtiges Amt*. See also a similar request by the Egyptians from 1973 (PA/AA (B130 9981A, unfoliated) 18.04.1973. *Notes by Niemöller*).

¹⁸ On ‘coming to terms with the past’, see, for example, De Vita, *Israelpolitik* (2020); Frei, Norbert. *Vergangenheitspolitik: die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit*. (Munich, 2007); Reichel, Peter. *Vergangenheitsbewältigung in Deutschland: die Auseinandersetzung mit der NS-Diktatur von 1945 bis heute*. (Munich, 2001); Fulbrook, *German national identity after the Holocaust*. (Cambridge, 1999).

¹⁹ AAPD 11.02.1970. Document 48. *Notes by Gehlhoff*.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ See Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019); or Schmidt, *Aus historischer Verantwortung* (2014).

²² AAPD 03.07.1970. *Notes by Gehlhoff*; PA/AA 19.01.1971 (B130 10084A, unfoliated). *Notes by Gehlhoff*.

the even-handedness of our Middle Eastern policy, which we have claimed repeatedly”.²³ He proposed to reduce monetary support to Israel by DM 20 million annually. However, soon the West German cabinet decided to keep capital aid to Israel at DM 140 million a year, although DM 20 million of it would be project-related. Understandably, Tel Aviv was not overjoyed about the decision, but clearly could live with it. No significant counter-efforts were made by Israel’s ambassador in Bonn, Ben Horin.²⁴

A second example of the difficulty of balancing past and present in West German Middle Eastern policy is of rhetorical nature. Scheel publicly tested the formula of “normalised relations” between Israel and the FRG.²⁵ As Chapter I has shown, this happened in part to placate the more radical Arab states when the Arab League was about to end its ban on the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between its members and Bonn. But on this issue, Tel Aviv was unwilling to accept a change and pushed back on such phrasing, which ultimately largely disappeared from West German foreign policy discourse.²⁶

Previous works on West German foreign policy have usually portrayed the *Auswärtiges Amt* as more pro-Arab and Brandt as more pro-Israeli.²⁷ The debate about financial aid for Israel broadly confirms that picture. However, it speaks less for a general pro- or anti-Arab attitude of West German diplomats but for the re-emerging West German confidence in the FRG’s ability to conduct international affairs. Paul Frank, State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt*, wrote a longer memorandum on the topic. Israel, he noted, viewed its relations to West Germany mostly through the lens of the Holocaust and German obligation resulting from this. But “the Federal Republic cannot make the past the only foundation of its relations to Israel”.²⁸ The limits of past obligation, Frank concluded, was the Arab-Israeli conflict, which ultimately threatened world peace and opened the Soviet Union a path into Middle Eastern politics. In his view, West Germany was justified to pursue a policy against Israeli wishes as long as it served the higher aim of peace in the Middle East, which ultimately benefited Israel as well. Maybe this represented a presumptuous attitude, but hardly the anti-Semitism Jelinek considers prevalent in the *Auswärtiges Amt* during the 1960s.²⁹

²³ AAPD 03.07.1970. Document 298. *Notes by Gehlhoff*.

²⁴ AAPD 04.08.1970. Document 361. *Notes by Herbst*.

²⁵ Weingardt, *Deutsche Israel- und Nahostpolitik* (2002): 198.

²⁶ *Der Spiegel Israel-Politik: Nicht normal* (02.03.1970).

²⁷ See Gerlach, *Doppelte Front* (2006), or Weingardt, *Deutsche Israel- und Nahostpolitik* (2002).

²⁸ AAPD 18.02.1970. Document 65. *Notes by Frank*.

²⁹ Jelinek, *Deutschland und Israel* (2004). See also Maulucci, Thomas. *Adenauer's foreign office: West German diplomacy in the shadow of the Third Reich*. (Chichester, 2012); or Wiegeshoff, Andrea. ‘Wir müssen alle etwas umlernen’. *Zur Internationalisierung des Auswärtigen Dienstes der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. (Göttingen, 2013).

Also, one should note that demands for a decrease in West German aid to Israel were pushed forward by diplomats responsible for relations to the Arab states, such as Gehlhoff, Walter Jesser in Cairo or his colleague Friedrich Landau in Iraq.³⁰ Their arguments all followed a similar line: large sums of aid to Israel stood in Bonn's way of improving its relations to the Arabs. Rather than anti-Semitism this would point to a case of 'agency capture', in which West German diplomats dealing with the Arab world started to take on arguments from their Arab counterparts and increasingly represented them in the *Auswärtiges Amt*. This is not an unusual phenomenon in large, centralised, yet geographically dispersed organisations such as a foreign office.³¹ Ultimately, these debates might just confirm the occupational hazards of diplomacy.

In the immediate aftermath of the 1967 June War, Bonn had chosen to mostly stay away from the Arab-Israeli conflict itself. It lacked political representation in the Arab states, while history was the sword of Damocles hanging over West German-Israeli relations. Upon taking up office, Brandt and Scheel initially prioritised *Ostpolitik* over a stronger engagement in the Middle East. At the same time, under the social-liberal coalition there was a more active consideration about the link between the burden of the past and current policy. Brandt's new government felt that it was less bound by crimes of Germany's Nazi past than its predecessors had been. It nevertheless struggled in its attempts to practice this self-perceived freedom from the past when the issue crystallised around practical questions such as capital aid to Israel. But this feeling of being freer from the past, coupled with the resumption of diplomatic relations to key Arab states from 1971 onwards, paved the way to a gradual shift of focus towards the Arab-Israeli conflict by Brandt and Scheel.

3. A change of focus towards the Arab-Israeli conflict and Brandt's role in mediation efforts, 1971-1973

Shortly after taking up office, Brandt had stressed the need for the FRG to stay out of any efforts for a Middle East peace process. His administration faced the burden of the past in relations to Israel, lacked diplomatic links to almost all Arab states and, crucially, decided to devote its attention almost exclusively to *Ostpolitik*. But by the end of Brandt's first term in office, the last two of these variables had started to change: *Ostpolitik* was unfolding

³⁰ PA/AA (B36 382, p. 88) 20.12.1970. *Country briefing Egypt*; PA/AA (B36 283, p. 286) August 1971 (exact day unknown). *Country briefing Iraq*.

³¹ Rotation is supposed to decrease the risk that diplomats develop too strong emotional ties with their host countries. The standard work in 'agency capture' and organisational strategies to deal with it is Kaufmann's *The Forest Ranger. A study in administrative behavior* (Baltimore, 1960).

successfully and diplomatic relations to most Arab states were re-established. As a result, his administration started to shift focus to the core topic of Middle Eastern politics: the Arab-Israeli conflict. In principle, Brandt saw the key to a solution of the conflict in Washington and Moscow. For years, he had placed his hopes in the willingness of the superpowers to take on that responsibility. However, these hopes were disappointed time and again. Thus, by early 1973, he and his government started to consider how they could get more involved in promoting a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. As so far largely neglected material shows, Brandt did not see himself as a peace broker, but rather considered the role of mediator between the key actors of the conflict; not leading a peace process but catalysing it.

The reasons why the social-liberal coalition turned its attention to the Arab-Israeli conflict by 1973 were manifold. To begin with, as the previous chapter has shown, by June 1972 the FRG had re-opened embassies in Algeria, Sudan, Egypt and Lebanon. It was now only a matter of time until the other Arab states would follow suit. Bonn's diplomatic exclusion from the Middle East started to come to an end.

Moreover, Brandt and Scheel had made significant strides in their efforts towards *détente* with the East. In September 1971, the former allies from World War II concluded the Four-Power Agreement on Berlin. In December that year, East and West Germany signed a transit agreement and a year later the Basic Treaty. All of these were crucial steps towards a normalisation of relations between the FRG and both the GDR specifically and the Communist East more generally.³² When Brandt won the general election of 1972, *Ostpolitik* had proven to be a success.³³ That gave him new room for manoeuvre regarding other foreign policy topics. It was even further enlarged when the West German chancellor was awarded the 1971 Nobel Peace Prize. His prestige increased globally, the Middle East included, as Bonn's diplomats were increasingly able to observe. In April 1973, the embassy in Beirut reported that "the great number of articles dealing with the personality and the tasks of the German chancellor [were] noteworthy".³⁴

At the same time, there was a growing dissatisfaction within Bonn in regard to US policy in the Middle East. Just like the West German government, Nixon and Kissinger mostly viewed the region through the lens of the Cold War. However, they drew an entirely different

³² On the New Eastern Policy, see, for example, Schoenborn, Benedikt. *Reconciliation road: Willy Brandt, Ostpolitik and the quest for European peace*. (New York, 2020); Kreuzberger, Stefan. *Westintegration und Neue Ostpolitik. Die Außenpolitik der Bonner Republik*. (Berlin, 2009); or Fink and Schaefer, *Ostpolitik* (2009).

³³ Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019).

³⁴ PA/AA (B130 104824, unfoliated) 25.04.1973. *Notes by Lankes*.

conclusion from this. While Brandt and Scheel saw the need for de-escalation and broad peace efforts in the region, Washington was more interested in unilaterally supporting Israel than in brokering a deal between Tel Aviv and Soviet-supported Arab states such as Egypt and Syria.³⁵ “The Arabs had to realise that they might get weapons from the Soviet Union, but that only the United States were capable of effectively promoting a solution to territorial questions”, as Kissinger put it himself in 1973.³⁶ Comments from West German diplomats on the ground show frustration with this American strategy.³⁷ Washington was much further away from the Middle East than Western Europe, where the Arab-Israeli conflict made itself felt increasingly through Palestinian terrorism, most devastatingly in the form of the 1972 Munich Massacre. More than ever, the West Germans felt the impact of unsolved conflict in the Middle East, while erstwhile restrictions on Bonn’s stance towards the Arab-Israeli conflict were reducing.

By 1973, Brandt and Scheel clearly turned their attention to the Arab-Israeli conflict for good. One indicator for this is travel activity, as in the summer 1973 Brandt was the first West German chancellor to visit Israel. Simultaneously, Scheel travelled to Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon. Furthermore, internal government documents now more actively discussed potential West German contributions to a peace deal. In February 1973, Sadat’s security advisor Hafiz Ismael visited the FRG for talks with Brandt, Scheel and Frank. The latter reminded Ismael of the FRG’s need to follow “constructive neutrality” in the Middle East, but then went on:³⁸

It is correct that European governments can play a role in conflict resolution, but this has limits. Europe cannot take on its own a mediating position. However, it certainly can become active diplomatically and talk to those who have decisive influence such as the conflict parties and superpowers. Although the precondition is that we know their positions better than we do now.³⁹

Bonn attempted to find and test out a middle way between engagement and restraint. In April that year, Scheel mused about a European initiative to catalyse potential US talks over a Suez agreement.⁴⁰ Not yet, recommended the Middle East expert in the *Auswärtige Amt*, Helmuth Redies. But he also did not challenge Scheel’s idea in principle.⁴¹

³⁵ Savaranskaya, Svetlana, and William Taubmann. *Soviet foreign policy, 1962-1975*. In: Loeffler and Westad, *Cambridge History of the Cold War, Vol. 2*. (Cambridge, 2010): 153f.; see also Quandt, *Peace Process* (2001); Lenczowski, *American Presidents and the Middle East* (1990).

³⁶ AAPD 02.11.1973. Document 365. *Von Staden (Washington) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

³⁷ One example is West German disappointment over the replacement of US envoy to Cairo Bergus by a different diplomat, as Bergus had been seen as working strongly towards some sort of negotiated solution to the conflict. For the *Auswärtiges Amt*, this once again indicated a lack of US interest in a solution to the Middle East conflict (PA/AA (B36 528, unfoliated) 12.01.1972. *Jesser (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.)

³⁸ PA/AA (B130 9981A, unfoliated) 08.03.1973. *Notes by Redies*.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ PA/AA (B130 9981A, unfoliated) 19.04.1973. *Redies to Frank*.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Another indicator for a West German shift of focus towards the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1973 are government talks. Having made the Arab-Israeli conflict a topic of consultations with the Americans and British in 1970 already, in December 1972 for the first time the West German embassy in Moscow exchanged views on the region with a diplomat in the Soviet foreign office.⁴² Over a span of two years, the FRG had set up lines of communication on the Arab-Israeli conflict to all four ‘great powers’. Moreover, in the first half of 1973 Brandt and Scheel raised the issue with the Americans, British, Soviets, Romanians, Yugoslavians, Jordanians, Egyptians and Israelis.⁴³ In May 1973, the Arab-Israeli conflict took up significant space in conversations of Brandt and Scheel with Nixon and US Secretary of State Rogers in Washington, with Brezhnev in Moscow as well as with Heath in London.⁴⁴ In these conversations, Brandt and Scheel mostly listened to the various standpoints of their interlocutors, gauging possible elements of a peace deal and comprehending key positions of the different sides. For example, in their conversations with Brezhnev both Brandt and Scheel asked about how negotiations between Arabs and Israelis could be started, how peace guarantees could look like and how the Suez Canal could be re-opened.⁴⁵ Whether inadvertently or not, even before their journey to the region Brandt and Scheel had become intermediaries between the Great Powers in the search for a solution to the Middle East conflict. In fact, this may have even been promoted by the Americans. During a long conversation with Nixon and Rogers, Brandt and Scheel were told by the US envoy to the Middle East Joseph Sisco that “[the] Europeans, however, could be of help, if they made it clear to the Arabs that the Americans would happily play a role in the resolution of the conflict, although they could only do it, either through proposals or in another way, after negotiations had started”.⁴⁶ And in a later conversation “the American side” stated: “Every peacemaker is welcome”.⁴⁷ Sisco’s comments sound like an invitation, maybe even an encouragement for Brandt to engage more actively as mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

⁴² PA/AA (B36 494, p. 79f.) 05.12.1972. *Sahm (Moscow) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁴³ AAPD 02.05.1973. Document 128. *Van Well (currently Washington) to Auswärtiges Amt*; AAPD 19.05.1973. Document 147. *Conversation of Brandt with Brezhnev*; AAPD 02.03.1973. Document 69. *German-British government talks*; AAPD 29.06.1973. Document 209. *Conversation of Brandt with Ceausescu*; AAPD 01.06.1973. Document 173. *Schlegl (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*; AAPD 05.06.1973. Document 176. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*; AAPD 07./08.06.1973. Document 184. *German-Israeli government talks*.

⁴⁴ AAPD 05.1973. Document 128. *Van Well (currently Washington) to Auswärtiges Amt*; AAPD 07.05.1973. Document 130. *Notes by Bahr*; AAPD 19.05.1973. Document 147. *Conversation of Brandt with Brezhnev*; AAPD 19.05.1973. Document 148. *Conversation of Scheel with Brezhnev*; AAPD 29.05.1973. Document 165. *Conversation of Brandt with Heath*.

⁴⁵ AAPD 19.05.1973. Document 147. *Conversation of Brandt with Brezhnev*.

⁴⁶ AAPD 02.05.1973. Document 128. *Van Well (currently Washington) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁴⁷ AAPD 07.05.1973. Document 130. *Notes by Bahr*.

Overall, it becomes clear that by the beginning of 1973 the West German government started to pay more attention to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Both Brandt and Scheel had various conversations with other world leaders on the topic. What conclusions did they reach? The answer becomes clear when focusing on the summer of that year. On 7 June 1973, Brandt landed in Israel for the highly anticipated first visit of a West German chancellor in the country which had been founded in the aftermath of and – at least in part – in response to the Holocaust.⁴⁸ Relations between Israel and West Germany had been difficult in the previous years, as Tel Aviv was sceptical of Brandt's *Ostpolitik* and the new administration in Bonn openly toyed with a more relaxed interpretation of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. But with the exception of one incident – Brandt's helicopter almost crashed at the historic site of Masada – the visit was considered a success by both sides.⁴⁹ Topics discussed evolved around bilateral relations, but also the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁵⁰

Concerning the latter there is significant divergence of opinion and debate amongst historians. Wolffsohn and Tsoref claimed in a 2013 newspaper article that Willy Brandt missed the opportunity to broker a peace between Israel and Egypt. Based on documents from the German foreign policy editions and Israeli sources, they claim that Meir told Brandt about her willingness to make peace with Egypt. Brandt was supposed to convey Israel's interest in secret negotiations to Sadat. Tsoref and Wolffsohn criticise Brandt harshly, as the West German chancellor, in their opinion, did not take the offer seriously enough and relegated it to a senior diplomat in the *Auswärtiges Amt*, only, to pass it on to Cairo. The two historians almost go as far as suspecting that Brandt was generally ill-disposed towards Israel.⁵¹ Their argument is vehemently rejected by Schmidt. Looking at a wider range of sources, he convincingly refutes the assertion that Brandt disposed of a principally anti-Israeli sentiment. In essence, Schmidt argues, Brandt did what little he could. Meir's request for direct talk with Sadat had been little other than an offer for appearance's sake only. But both Brandt and Meir would have known that such a request was not realistic at the time.⁵² Fink follows a similar line of argument, pointing to Brandt's apparent and self-confessed limitations as peacemaker in the Middle East, as the FRG was at the time at best a middling power and certainly without much traditional clout in the Middle East.⁵³ Yet another view is taken by Schöllgen. In his biography of Brandt,

⁴⁸ For travel dates, see Bundeskanzler-Willy-Brandt-Stiftung. *Reisen 1967-74*.

⁴⁹ Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019): 219ff.

⁵⁰ AAPD 07./08.06.1973. Document 184. *German-Israeli government talks*.

⁵¹ Tsoref, Hagai, and Michael Wolffsohn. *Wie Willy Brandt den Nahost-Frieden verspielte*. (Die Welt, 09.06.2013)

⁵² Schmidt, *Aus historischer Verantwortung* (2014).

⁵³ Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019).

he writes – unfortunately without reference to any archival evidence – about failed efforts by the West German chancellor to mediate peace in the Middle East in the summer of 1973.⁵⁴

What this debate with conflicting arguments on all sides lacks is clarification by primary source material. Luckily this exists, even though it has been largely neglected by previous scholars.⁵⁵ A first piece in this puzzle can be found in Brandt's personal papers. It is a short note in his own handwriting, dated 7 June 1973, with the location being Jerusalem. As Brandt notes in his memoirs, he prepared it himself as a preparation for the meeting with Meir.⁵⁶ Looking like a mind map, at the top the US and Soviet Union are clearly marked as key actors, to whom one needed to "recommend or encourage a political solution".⁵⁷ From the two superpowers, arrows go to their respective allies such as Britain and the Europeans, or Tito and Egypt. This note is important for several reasons. To begin with, it once again illustrates the extent to which Brandt considered the two superpowers as crucial for any sort of peace solution in the Middle East. The focus on the proxy-element of the Arab-Israeli conflict comes out clearly, as the whole document evolves from the juxtaposition of "USA+SU".⁵⁸ Moreover, the note also points to the systematic and significant shift of Brandt's focus to the Arab-Israeli conflict as of the start of 1973. If one looks at the individual points mentioned on it, they all directly relate back to conversations which Brandt had held with world leaders about the Middle East in the run up to his and Scheel's Middle East trip in May and June of that year. For example, next to 'Heath', the third underlined point on the left of the document, he noted 'oil'. This goes back to West German-British government talks in April 1973, in which the British prime minister had stressed the threat to Europe's oil supplies through a renewed escalation of conflict in the Middle East.⁵⁹ For Brezhnev, Brandt notes 'steps, aims, guarantees, troops, UN-framework (4+?)', which are exactly the points which came up in the conversation between the two on the Middle East in May 1973.⁶⁰ And next to Tito, who shared his worries about the Middle East with the West German chancellor in April 1973, Brandt noted 'worried: dangers'.⁶¹

⁵⁴ Schöllgen, *Willy Brandt* (2003).

⁵⁵ See footnote 155 in Schmidt, *Aus historischer Verantwortung* (2014).

⁵⁶ Brandt, Willy. *Begegnungen und Einsichten: die Jahre 1960-1975*. (Hamburg, 1976).

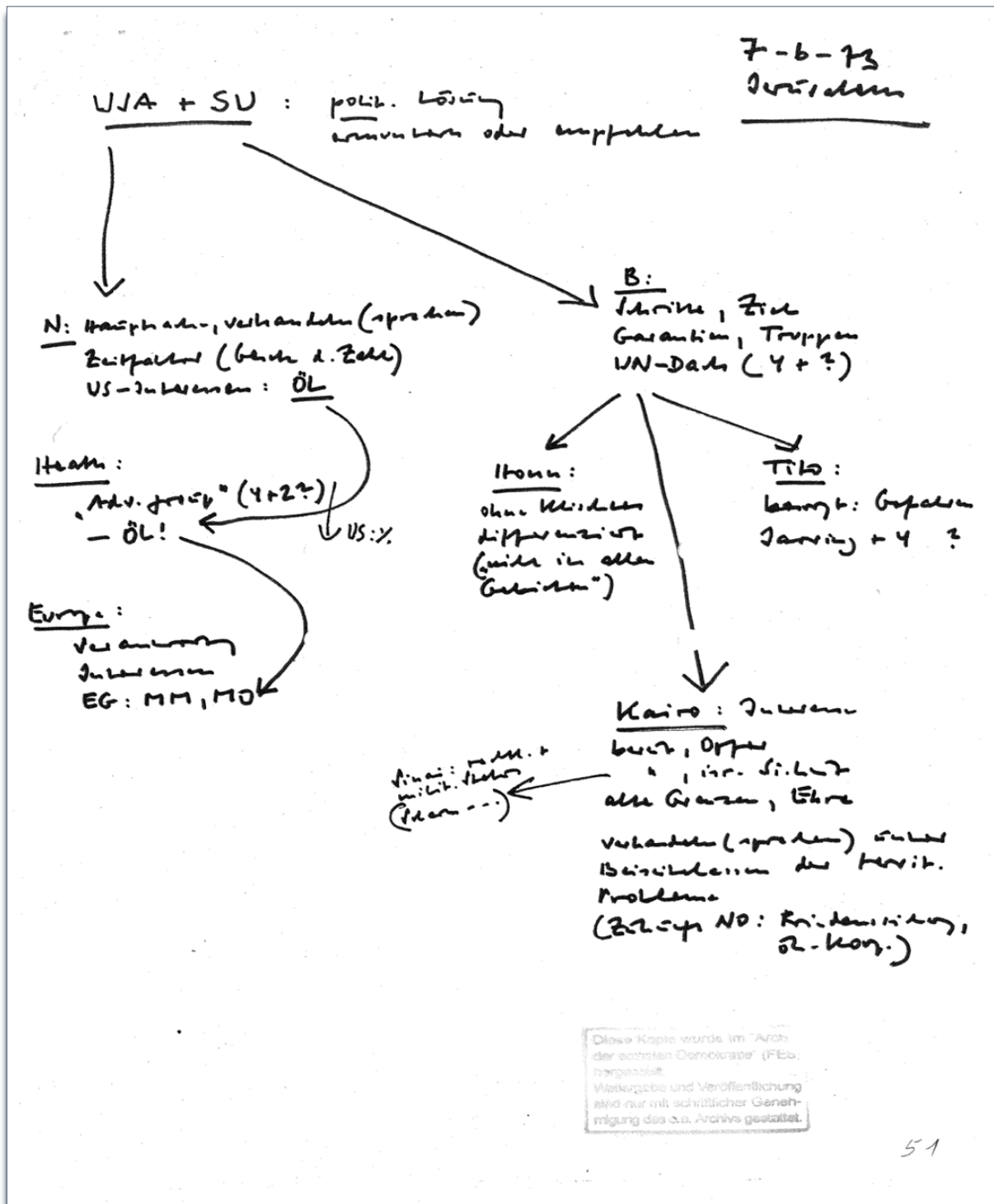
⁵⁷ AdSD/WBA 8, Box 94 (page 51). *Note by Brandt*.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ AAPD 02.03.1973. Document 69. *West German-British government talks*.

⁶⁰ AAPD 19.05.1973. Document 147. *Conversation of Brandt with Brezhnev*.

⁶¹ AAPD 18.04.1973. Document 110. *Conversation of Brandt with Tito*.



Picture 4: Brandt's handwritten note on the Arab-Israeli conflict⁶²

All in all, Brandt's note is more than a mere mind map: it is the compilation of his concerted efforts to gain an understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict and to identify avenues towards its solution. This approach corresponds exactly to what Frank had told his Egyptian guest in

⁶² Ibid.

February 1973: in order to engage more in a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Bonn first needed to know the positions of the latter's key actors better. The note shows that Brandt, in his opinion, had been doing his homework. It also confirms that 1973 is the year in which West Germany turned its focus to the Arab-Israeli conflict more purposefully than ever before in its history.

Finally, the note is also important in order not to misunderstand Brandt's cautious reaction towards Meir's idea of West German mediation between Israel and Egypt, criticised so heavily by Wolffsohn and Tsoref. His own perception of the conflict relied on superpower engagement. Moreover, based on Scheel's conversations in Cairo he already knew very well that the Egyptians would reject Meir's idea in any case. When the West German foreign minister mentioned how useful direct talks had been for the success of *Ostpolitik*, Egyptian foreign minister Zayyat left no room for misinterpretation:

Zayyat rejected negotiations [with Israel] 'without preconditions' vehemently. This formula, often used by the West, was an Israeli invention and meant that one would not use the point of legal ownership of the territories as starting point but instead the current situation of ownership.⁶³

The Egyptians had made clear that they expected some sort of public commitment by Israel about a return of the occupied territories before any sort of negotiation could start. But this was not in line with secret talks as envisioned by Meir. In the end, Tsoref and Wolffsohn do not contextualise their analysis of both Brandt's and Meir's behaviour sufficiently, and quite generally over-estimate the potential of Meir's peace ideas.⁶⁴

In mid-June, a few weeks after Brandt's return from Israel, Brezhnev visited Nixon in San Clemente, California, proposing that he and the US president should negotiate a comprehensive peace settlement for the Middle East. But Nixon declined.⁶⁵ It now became clearer than ever that the superpowers were not ready to reach a Middle Eastern settlement.

Only two weeks after this meeting in California, Romania's leader Nicolae Ceaușescu was on visit in the Federal Republic. Romania was the only Warsaw Pact member with embassies in both Israel and the Arab states. When Ceaușescu repeatedly veered the conversation towards possible European contributions to peace in the Middle East, Brandt stated:

We have defended ourselves strongly against attempts – in part friendly – to take up the role of some sort of broker. This would go beyond our powers. But I think,

⁶³ AAPD 05.06.1973. Document 176. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁶⁴ Tsoref and Wolfsohn, *Wie Willy Brandt den Nahost-Frieden verspielte* (09.06.2013).

⁶⁵ Savaranskaya and Taubmann, *Soviet foreign policy* (2010): 153f.

just amongst us we should know that if there is any link or one of us believes the other could be of help, then we should get in contact with each other directly.⁶⁶

At the same time, Scheel had been told during a visit in Amman by his Jordanian interlocutors that “the Federal Republic should take over a more active role in the solution of the Near East conflict due to its international renown and its special position, in particular in the context of the [EPC]”.⁶⁷ But as already stated, Brandt and Scheel did not view themselves as peace brokers, who would advertise to the region their own “magic formula”, as Scheel had put it in conversation with Jordanian ministers in June 1973.⁶⁸ However, the second part of Brandt’s reply to Ceaușescu implies that the West German chancellor certainly was willing to play some role in facilitating an agreement in the Middle East, promoting efforts between the great powers.

By July 1973, the attempt to follow up Meir’s initiative, which Wolffsohn and Tsoref describe, reached its expected dead. One of the senior diplomats of the *Auswärtiges Amt*, Lothar Lahn, had travelled to Cairo and transmitted Meir’s idea to President Sadat’s national security advisor. The latter refused the idea of direct talks with Israel without preconditions immediately.⁶⁹ Now, instead of becoming an active peace broker with his own peace solution, it seems that Brandt planned to be a sort of ‘mediator between the mediators’ and went about promoting this idea in a letter to UN secretary general Kurt Waldheim.

In late August 1973, Waldheim was about to go on a journey to several Middle Eastern countries to gauge chances for a peace settlement. Brandt took the opportunity to send him a letter which was, as he stressed, of confidential nature. The start is inconspicuous enough: In view of Waldheim’s upcoming journey, Brandt points to his and Scheel’s recent journey to the Middle East. He describes well known Arab and Israeli positions, stating nothing fundamentally novel. However, in the final paragraph, the letter becomes more interesting; Brandt points to the idea of a conference under UN leadership, which Waldheim had floated the year before. This, he states, “still appears to be a suitable way to reduce the very different attitudes of the conflict parties to a common denominator”.⁷⁰ The conference should have a broad and vague theme, to prevent the different sides from getting bogged down immediately in the controversial details of concrete negotiations. “Finally, a Near-East Peace Conference

⁶⁶ AAPD 29.06.1973. Document 209. *Conversation of Brandt with Ceaușescu*.

⁶⁷ AAPD 01.06.1973. Document 173. *Schlegl (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ AAPD 01.07.1973. Document 211. *Lahn (currently Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁷⁰ PA/AA (B130 9981A, unfoliated) 23.08.1973. *Brandt to Waldheim*.

might offer a suitable frame to include not only the superpowers, but maybe also some others, in particular European countries into specific peace efforts.”⁷¹

Was this Brandt’s attempt to float his own idea of a peace initiative to Waldheim? This seems likely, as much of what he was writing about corresponds to the basic principles of both the note he had prepared in Israel and his conversation with Ceaușescu. The idea to “recommend or encourage a political solution”⁷² corresponds to the concept of a broad political dialogue to get the conflict parties talking. And in Israel Brandt had noted in regard to the Americans: “Main thing [is to] negotiate (talk).”⁷³ This was exactly what Brandt was now recommending to Waldheim: just get the conflict parties talking somehow. Then, there is the question of the role of the middling powers and statesmen such as Brandt, Heath or Tito. As discussed with Romania’s leader, they could be the ones getting the two superpowers at the negotiating table. Last but not least, timing also suggests that this letter might have been part of a broader scheme by Brandt. By August, Lahn’s mission to Cairo had ended in failure and it was clear that the direct talks between Israel and Egypt that Meir had envisioned would not be happening. If anything, the episode had confirmed Brandt’s understanding that this approach would not bring peace to the Middle East. It was time to try a different path – his path. The letter to Waldheim represents the West German chancellor’s attempt to float his own notion of what the Middle East would need – a global peace conference with the superpowers at the centre and Europe’s middling powers such as West Germany itself as intermediaries. This was the role that Brandt had identified for himself as peace contribution. It is also worthwhile to point out that Brandt and Scheel both once again drew a parallel between Eastern and Middle Eastern policy. Both repeatedly stressed the merit of talking directly to their previous conflict partners. Scheel more than once pointed to *Ostpolitik* as source for inspiration for solving conflict in the Middle East.⁷⁴ Brandt made a similar comparison in his conversation with Meir, as Fink has already shown.⁷⁵ But both the Arabs and the Israelis rejected this comparison.⁷⁶

Ultimately, the 1973 October War put an end to Brandt’s ideas. As the previous chapter has shown, the war came as a total surprise to the FRG as much as to anyone else. Before, in what

⁷¹ Ibid.: 3

⁷² AdSD/WBA 8 (Box 94, p. 51). *Note by Brandt*.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ See, for example, AAPD 30.05.1973. Document 170. *Notes by Redies*; AAPD 05.06.1973. Document 176. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁷⁵ Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019): 241. See also AAPD 07./08.06.1973. Document 184. *German-Israeli government talks*.

⁷⁶ See, for example, AAPD 01.07.1973. Document 211. *Lahn (currently Cairo) to foreign office*.

Bonn had considered a “neither-war-nor-peace” situation, a peace conference might have been a worthwhile initiative.⁷⁷ Now, the attack by Egypt and Syria had changed the fundamentals of the conflict. However, even during the war there was an echo of Brandt’s peace idea. At its outset, a senior West German diplomat, Günther van Well, attended an EPC meeting which attempted to coordinate the EEC’s response to the war. Reporting to Bonn about the meeting, van Well notes the following: “As the frame for negotiations, which is mentioned in our declaration, I proposed the chancellor’s idea for a peace conference.”⁷⁸ It was the final attempt to salvage an idea which Brandt had thought up over the summer, only a few months before the war. However, despite the failure of Brandt’s approach, it is clear that throughout the first half of 1973 the West German chancellor engaged more coherently and directly than previously known in efforts to bring the Arab-Israeli conflict to an end.

4. In Kissinger’s shadow: the October war and a nascent peace process, 1973-1977

The October War shocked Bonn. All the steps Brandt and Scheel had taken in the years preceding it to avoid the dilemma of 1967 soon seemed without effect. Initially, the *Auswärtiges Amt* hoped to steer through the conflict with restraint neutrality. But when Israel suffered severe losses early on, the US launched an airlift of significant weapons supplies, which in part ran via the FRG.⁷⁹ Bonn was very aware of the exact dimensions of the US airlift and supported it until a ceasefire favourable to Israel had been agreed upon – only then, a significant clash with Washington ensued over the continuation of these weapons deliveries. Still, from 1974 onwards, Bonn stepped back and welcomed a stronger American mediating role in the Arab-Israeli conflict, hoping that Kissinger would deliver a comprehensive peace deal. Only when the latter failed did the new West German leadership around Schmidt and Genscher re-consider a stronger West German engagement for peace in the Middle East.

At the beginning of the 1973 October War, Scheel met both the Israeli and nine Arab ambassadors to appeal for an immediate cessation of the fighting. This sparked outrage with Tel Aviv’s ambassador Ben-Horin, who asked “whether that meant that the fighting should also stop if the Egyptians and Syrians [...] could keep the territories that they occupied [now]”.⁸⁰ Brandt himself mostly held back at this time, leaving the coordination of the crisis

⁷⁷ PA/AA (B36 528, unfoliated) 14.06.1972. *Jesser (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

⁷⁸ PA/AA (B130 9897A, unfoliated) 12.10.1973. *Van Well (Brussels) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

⁷⁹ Greenbaum, Avraham. *The US Airlift to Israel in 1973 and its Origins.* Israel Affairs 13:1 (2007): 131-40.

⁸⁰ AAPD 08.10.1973. Document 314. *Conversation of Scheel with Ben-Horin.*

mostly to Scheel and Frank in the *Auswärtiges Amt* and even abandoning Bonn for a holiday in late October.⁸¹ Maybe the contrast between his vision for peace and the reality of war in the Middle East was too much for him to handle. Whichever it was, his administration seemed to believe that given a possible dilemma between historical guilt and oil dependence the best policy was to duck away and hope that the storm passes. “As for ourselves, in this situation we should not get involved though judgemental statements, if only as to not disturb current diplomatic efforts between the superpowers,” a foreign office memorandum from 10 October 1973 stated.⁸² Only two weeks after the war had broken out, on 19 October, the *Auswärtiges Amt* managed to put together a more concrete memorandum on “our position in the Middle East conflict”, stressing the need for an immediate ceasefire to be followed with a lasting peace along the lines of UN security council resolution 242.⁸³

In Chapter I, the impact of the October War on West German-US relations was discussed. Here, I will cover events surrounding US weapons deliveries to Israel via the FRG in detail. On 13 October, a bit more than a week into the war, the Egyptian foreign office started to ask questions as to whether the West Germans were involved in the US airlift.⁸⁴ The *Auswärtiges Amt* followed up and on 15 October asked the US embassy whether “US war materials are being brought from the FRG to Israel”.⁸⁵ The next day, US ambassador Hillenbrand arrived in the *Auswärtiges Amt* himself to inform Scheel in general terms about the operation, although “he could not give exact details about the extent of the deliveries”.⁸⁶ Scheel was not excited by this prospect and asked Hillenbrand some critical questions: how would the material within the FRG be replaced and “[h]ow should one explain these deliveries to the public and the Arab states”?⁸⁷ The West German government was well aware of the political explosiveness of the US airlift via its own territory. Yet, despite his critical attitude Scheel did not actively speak out against it. Implicitly, he gave the US the nod.

Soon, the West German government was well aware about the details of the US airlift to Israel. Only one day after Scheel’s conversation with Hillenbrand, the US embassy passed on to the *Auswärtiges Amt* very explicit information on the extent of the weapons deliveries, planning to ship “65 M60 tanks, 135mm howitzers and 75.000 rounds of 105mm ammunition”

⁸¹ Wolffsohn, *Friedenskanzler* (2018): 144.

⁸² PA/AA (B36 104823, unfoliated) 10.10.1973. *Notes by 310*.

⁸³ AAPD 19.10.1973. Document 329. *Circular by Dohms*.

⁸⁴ PA/AA (B36 104968, unfoliated) 16.10.1973. *Notes by Pfeffer*.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ AAPD 16.10.1973. Document 322. *Conversation of Scheel with Hillenbrand*.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

to Israel via the port of Bremerhaven.⁸⁸ But even though already by 21 October West German ambassador Steltzer in Cairo warned Bonn of “serious strain on our relations to the Arab states because of US material deliveries” and a West German inclusion in an Arab oil boycott, the *Auswärtiges Amt* held still.⁸⁹

Then, one week into the airlift, the US weapons deliveries turned into a calamitous affair which would put a strain on West German-American relations for years to come. By that time, the war was drawing to a close, as by 18 October Israeli forces had managed to turn the tables by crossing the Suez Canal themselves and thereby encircled the Egyptian army.⁹⁰ On 22 October, a ceasefire was brokered between the superpowers and on 24 October the fighting finally came to an end.

Once again, the issue of timing is crucial to understand West German behaviour in the crisis. After all, when Scheel gave the unofficial nod to US airlifts into Israel – on 16 October – the situation still looked dangerous for Israel. A week later, Tel Aviv’s victory was clear to everyone. It was then, on 23 October, that State Secretary Frank told Hillenbrand the FRG now expected the US to no longer use West Germany for weapons deliveries to Israel.⁹¹ A day later, a West German newspaper learned about three Israeli ships, which were loaded with weapons by the US army in Bremerhaven.⁹² An infuriated Frank called deputy US ambassador Cash into the *Auswärtiges Amt* to reaffirm his earlier request to Hillenbrand, but now the whole affair was too public to be denied anymore.⁹³

Wolffsohn criticises this decision as an immoral betrayal by Brandt: he had put oil interests above West Germany’s historical responsibility to the Jewish state.⁹⁴ However, the conversation between Frank and Hillenbrand on 23 October, when the former asked the latter to end the airlift from West German soil, outlines very clearly the West German motivation in the crisis. Yes, oil of course played a role, as, in Frank’s own words, “an inclusion of the FRG into the oil embargo was to be feared”.⁹⁵ Chapter IV will show that there was a concrete Saudi threat for this. As Frank put it in a clear reference to the 1965 breaking of diplomatic relations

⁸⁸ PA/AA (B130 9982A, unfoliated) 17.10.1973. *Notes by Pfeffer*.

⁸⁹ PA/AA (B130 9982A, unfoliated) 21.10.1973. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁹⁰ On the course of the October War, see Siniver, Asaf. *The October War. Politics, diplomacy, legacy*. (London, 2013).

⁹¹ PA/AA (B130 9982A, unfoliated) 23.10.1973. *Notes by Pfeffer*.

⁹² Hoeres, Peter. *Außenpolitik und Öffentlichkeit: Massenmedien, Meinungsforschung und Arkanpolitik in den deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen von Erhard bis Brandt*. (Berlin/Boston, 2013): 493.

⁹³ AAPD 24.10.1973. Document 335. *Conversation of Frank with Cash*.

⁹⁴ Wolffsohn, *Yom-Kippur Krieg* (Die Welt, 21.10.2013).

⁹⁵ PA/AA (B130 9982A, unfoliated) 19.10.1973. *Notes by Pfeffer*.

by the Arab states, “the worst is to be feared”⁹⁶, meaning a renewed break-up of West German-Arab diplomatic relations. Finally, and crucially, Frank started the conversation by the statement that “the ceasefire makes my task much easier”, as in the view of the *Auswärtiges Amt* US support to Israel was only necessary as long as Tel Aviv faced defeat.⁹⁷ Now that Israel’s victory seemed secure, the FRG needed to focus once again on the broader risks involved with the October War for itself, such as an oil boycott. Wolffsohn is thus not quite fair in his criticism, as Bonn clearly put oil interests on hold while Israel was threatened. As Gerlach writes correctly, West Germany had waited with carrying out neutrality to the fullest until an Israeli victory was secured.⁹⁸

As has been laid out in the previous chapter, the FRG fell out with Washington over the handling of the October War and the energy crisis. But in terms of the Arab-Israeli conflict Bonn stepped into second rank and left the field to the US. As Frank told US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Joseph Sisco in November 1973, “the US had as world power global responsibility, whereas Europe’s focus was mostly regional. We do not consider this view discriminatory. [...] Europe, however, lay nearer to the conflict, which meant that there were differences in ‘approach’ we needed to talk about.”⁹⁹ In March 1974, Scheel applauded Kissinger for his travels to the Middle East and, as Kissinger writes in his memoirs, “spoke of Atlantic tensions as if they were a French disease, against which Germany was immune”.¹⁰⁰ This was potentially too euphemistic by the West German foreign minister, but regarding Kissinger’s efforts towards a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict not entirely wrong. As Frank suggested to NATO Secretary General Luns in the same month, the West should play different roles in the Middle East.¹⁰¹

In line with this, the West Germans focused on stronger bilateral relations with key Arab states, not least in the economic realm. Public evidence of this was the first visit ever of a German chancellor to the Arab world: in April 1974 Brandt travelled first to Algiers, then to Cairo. The focus of this journey lay on Egypt, for both political and economic reasons. Already in the immediate aftermath of the October War, Brandt had thanked Sadat in a personal letter, as the Egyptian president had argued amongst the Arab states against an inclusion of the FRG

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Gerlach, *Doppelte Front* (2006): 192ff.

⁹⁹ PA/AA (B130 9982A, unfoliated) 13.11.1973. *Notes by Redies*.

¹⁰⁰ AAPD 03.03.1974. Document 67. *Notes by Simon*. See also Kissinger, Henry. *Memoiren*. (Munich, 1979): 1083f.

¹⁰¹ AAPD 06.03.1974. Document 71. *Conversation of Frank with Luns*.

in the OPEC boycott.¹⁰² Moreover, Sadat was about to embark on economic liberalisation, which made the country attractive for West German investment. Egypt was “on the eve of an economic boom”, as West Germany’s ambassador in the country, Steltzer, remarked.¹⁰³ Simultaneously, Steltzer saw a strategic dimension to stronger economic engagement by the FRG in Egypt: Sadat, he mused, wanted peace but needed economic growth and domestic stability to achieve that. While the political power of the US could push the peace process forward, West Germany could flank the process economically.¹⁰⁴ Even though in April 1974 Brandt also met with President Houari Boumedienne in Algiers, it was clear that the visit to Egypt carried more importance for both sides. “He [Brandt] was delivering greetings from his countrymen, expressing the readiness, desire and will to deepen their relations to the peoples and the region, if possible with a new quality,” was the rather emotional opening line of Brandt at his first meeting with Sadat.¹⁰⁵ Conversations in Cairo went into much further detail than those between the West Germans and Algerians, and concrete results such as an Egyptian-West German commission for economic cooperation were agreed upon.¹⁰⁶ Sadat even invited Brandt to his private country house, signalling how he not only wanted to build up a political but also a personal relationship with the West German chancellor. Summing up the state visit, Steltzer happily noted that “a friendly relationship between our two states has by now become a matter of fact”.¹⁰⁷ At times, he could not hide his astonishment as to the development of West German-Egyptian relations after the October War: “One wonders where this staggering phenomenon of Germanophilie [...] is coming from.”¹⁰⁸

Brandt’s ‘Arab journey’ happened in close coordination with the US. In March 1974, one month ahead of the trip, the West German chancellor and Kissinger discussed Brandt’s travel plans and agreed to stay in close contact about the issue.¹⁰⁹ A stronger economic engagement by the West Germans was well in line with the US Secretary of State’s own schemes for the Middle East. Later, Kissinger informed Scheel that he would change his own travel plans to the region so that they would not collide with those of Brandt.¹¹⁰ Finally, already

¹⁰² AAPD 21.11.1973. Document 384. *Eppler (currently Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*. A copy of the letter can be found in the foreign office archive (PA/AA (B36 104668, unfoliated). November 1973 (exact date unknown). *Brandt to Sadat*).

¹⁰³ PA/AA (B36 104663, unfoliated) 04.02.1974. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁰⁴ PA/AA (B36 104663, unfoliated). Date unknown. *Conversation proposal*.

¹⁰⁵ AAPD 22.04.1974. Document 125. *Conversation of Brandt with Sadat*.

¹⁰⁶ PA/AA (B36 104684, unfoliated) 23.04.1974. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁰⁷ PA/AA (B36 104686, unfoliated) 06.09.1974. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁰⁸ PA/AA (B36 104662, unfoliated) 13.08.1974. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁰⁹ AAPD 04.03.1974. Document 68. *Conversation of Brandt with Kissinger*.

¹¹⁰ AAPD 12.04.1974. Document 120. *Circular by Dannenbring*.

on the day of his return to West Germany Brandt informed Kissinger by letter about the key results of his journey and his personal, very positive impression of Sadat.¹¹¹ No similar exchange of information or coordination with Brandt's European colleagues can be found in the archives.

However, by the second half of the 1970s, Bonn's expectations into US peace efforts were disappointed. In March 1975 Kissinger abruptly ended one of his trips through the Middle East, travelling between Egypt, Israel, Syria, Jordan and Saudi-Arabia.¹¹² As the Americans informed their West German allies, there simply was not enough willingness for compromise amongst all actors concerned to make an agreement workable.¹¹³ Even though the American Secretary of State managed to broker the Sinai II agreement between Israeli and Egypt in September of that year, a comprehensive peace deal with all Arab states remained off the cards.¹¹⁴ For the West Germans, Kissinger seemed unable to transform ceasefires into long-lasting peace. Scepticism in Bonn rose, but there was also no immediate alternative to playing the American card. As one of Genscher's diplomats put it, a "substantial change of direction" did not seem necessary yet.¹¹⁵ As Chapter V will show, this led to an increasing West German focus on a European role in a Middle Eastern peace process, which, however, was a slow and cumbersome affair.



Picture 5: Brandt meeting Boumedienne in Algiers (left) and Sadat in Cairo (right). He was the first West German chancellor to pay a visit to an Arab state.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ AAPD 24.04.1974. Document 131. *Brandt to Kissinger*.

¹¹² AAPD 24.03.1975. Document 62. *Notes by Lahn*.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Meital, Yoram. *Egypt's Struggle for Peace: Continuity and Change, 1967-1977*. (Gainesville, 1997): 149.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ For the picture on the left, see *Münchener Merkur* (26.04.1974); for the picture on the right, see Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. "Brandt: Leben und Werk."

By 1977, hopes in Bonn for a “global solution” (*Globallösung*) of the Arab-Israeli conflict, as it had been termed by now, had mostly faded.¹¹⁷ “Kissinger’s shuttle diplomacy has reached its limits”, the *Auswärtiges Amt* noted.¹¹⁸ Moreover, Bonn was disappointed by the electoral victory of hardliner Menachem Begin in the 1977 Israeli election. Finally, the FRG did not believe that a will to compromise amongst key Arab states, which Genscher observed in Egypt, Syria and Saudi-Arabia, would be enough to reach some sort of peace deal.¹¹⁹

How did the 1974 change of leadership in West Germany make itself felt on Bonn’s stance towards the Middle East conflict? New chancellor Helmut Schmidt generally took a more detached view on the Middle East than his predecessor Brandt. In a conversation with Turkey’s prime minister Demirel he talked about the Arab-Israeli conflict almost *en passant*, as he saw the real challenges of his time in the realm of the global economy: “After the abatement of the Middle East conflict and, to an extent, the conflict over Cyprus, the most pertinent problem was the situation of the world economy in a worldwide recession [...]”¹²⁰ Genscher, by contrast, engaged more directly in the Arab-Israeli conflict than Scheel before him in the *Auswärtiges Amt*. He attempted to work towards a “consolidation of the group of moderate Arab states”.¹²¹ But his engagement had limits, as he was not willing to directly confront Israel about its foreign policy.

Ultimately, the FRG was still bound by the past when it came to Israel, under Schmidt much more than under Brandt: the latter had been forced into exile himself by the Nazis, whilst the former had fought on the Eastern front as officer in the German *Wehrmacht*. Schmidt, already much more sceptical towards visionary politics of world peace than his predecessor, felt the burden of history more than Brandt. Maybe that explains why in the second half of the 1970s it was Genscher who pushed West German engagement in the Arab-Israeli conflict rather than Schmidt, as the new foreign minister’s travel activity in the region clearly suggests. With Schmidt as chancellor, the *Auswärtiges Amt* also did not anymore try to fight the shadow of history, which still lay over the FRG’s Middle Eastern policy, but rather accepted difficulties arising from it. Israel “hands the Germans a beating when it disagrees with the Europeans. The Germans had to accept beatings from the Israelis because of the historic situation, but they had

¹¹⁷ PA/AA (B36 108834, unfoliated) 18.07.1975. *Notes by 310*.

¹¹⁸ PA/AA (B2 178382, unfoliated) 03.05.1976. *Notes by Auswärtiges Amt planning unit (Planungsstab)*.

¹¹⁹ AAPD 15.04.1977. Document 90. *Conversation of Genscher with Swedish foreign minister Söder*.

¹²⁰ AAPD 28.05.1976. Document 161. *Conversation of Schmidt with Demirel*.

¹²¹ PA/AA (B36 135608, unfoliated) 31.01.1977. *Notes by 310*.

a strong back,” as Genscher told Assad in a private conversation.¹²² All the while, the FRG kept paying the same level of capital aid (DM 140 million) to Israel since 1968.¹²³

In the aftermath of the October War, Bonn had stepped into second rank and left the political stage of the Middle East to the Americans. Schmidt in particular was more reluctant to get as involved as Brandt in debates about peace in the Middle East. But the failure of Kissinger’s step-by-step approach would challenge the West German chancellor and his foreign minister to re-evaluate their stance.

5. To the side-lines: Bonn’s attitude to the civil war in Lebanon and to Camp David, 1975-1979

While Bonn had been waiting for the US to succeed in brokering a peace settlement and had mostly focused on Egypt as a steppingstone for a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the latter had been moving on to Lebanon. So far, research has mostly neglected West Germany’s stance on this episode of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Bonn did not ignore the escalation of fighting in Lebanon, but its unwillingness to acknowledge its link to the Arab-Israeli conflict limited its engagement on the issue. Towards the end of the decade, it reacted with caution and scepticism to the Camp David process in the aftermath of Sadat’s trip to Israel. But despite a final effort by Genscher on behalf of a comprehensive peace process in the summer of 1979, Bonn had to acknowledge the limits of its leverage in the Middle East and accepted its role as bystander on the question of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In the run-up to the Lebanese civil war, the *Auswärtiges Amt* had not been oblivious to increasing tensions and violent incidents in Lebanon, as the PLO and key Palestinian organisations had migrated there from Jordan in the aftermath of Black September.¹²⁴ Then, in March 1975, the West German embassy in Beirut reported a wave of violence went through the country.¹²⁵ With the Ayn al-Rummaneh bus massacre, the event which is considered the starting point of the Lebanese civil war happened shortly thereafter, on 13 April.¹²⁶ A few months later, the gravity of the situation was clear to Bonn, as the *Auswärtiges Amt* instructed

¹²² AAPD 27.08.1979. Document 241. *Conversation of Genscher with Assad in Damascus.*

¹²³ AAPD 24.06.1976. Document 203. *Conversation of Schmidt with Allon.*

¹²⁴ Bonn’s awareness of how the PLO presence challenged the political balance within Lebanon is illustrated by an embassy report entitled “Relevance of the Palestinians and future of the country” (PA/AA (B36 104828, unfoliated) 23.04.1975. *Lankes (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

¹²⁵ AAPD 21.01.1976. Document 13. *Conversation of Genscher with Saudi foreign minister Saud al-Faisal.*

¹²⁶ Hirst, David. *Beware of small states: Lebanon, battleground of the Middle East.* (London, 2010): 99.

its diplomats in Beirut “to report by cable on a daily basis on the situation in Lebanon”.¹²⁷ In January 1976, the *Auswärtiges Amt* spoke of “civil war-like confrontations [dominated by] right-wing forces under (Christian) Kataeb-leader Pierre Gemayel; left-wing, almost exclusively Muslim forces, whose temporary leader is Joublatt (Druse); [and] the PLO”.¹²⁸ Further complicating the picture was “a complex involvement by third countries” such as Syria, Libya, Iraq or Saudi-Arabia.¹²⁹ Interestingly, for the moment the *Auswärtiges Amt* omitted Israel from that list and would not acknowledge Tel Aviv’s role in Lebanon until 1978.¹³⁰

The above quoted documents show that the *Auswärtiges Amt* was well aware of the situation in Lebanon and of its gravity. From July 1976 onwards, it therefore had evacuated most of its staff from Beirut. This included its ambassador Rüdiger von Pachelbel, although despite his expressed wishes and a request for transfer to another post he was ultimately ordered back to the Lebanese capital.¹³¹ The *Auswärtiges Amt* also soon drew a clear connection between the conflict in Lebanon and the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole. In mid-1976, a foreign office cable stated that “we are of the opinion that today the chances for a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict would be higher without the civil war in Lebanon”.¹³² However, Bonn also did not feel that it had much leverage in the country. In an early European meeting on the topic, Genscher noted that he put little faith in verbal notes and UN resolutions, but at least that was the one thing one could try – an admission of powerlessness, if there ever was one.¹³³

As a result, Bonn put some faith in the Syrian intervention in Lebanon which started in May 1976 and would basically continue until 2005. Shortly after the intervention, the *Auswärtiges Amt* noted: “We still believe that Syria now sincerely wishes for peace in Lebanon [...]”.¹³⁴ Only by 1978, when it had become clear that the Syrian intervention would not bring peace, scepticism as to Damascus’s role rose. In July 1978, the then head of the Middle East unit Alfons Böcker cabled to the West German ambassador in Syria, Joachim Peckert: “Everyone knows that the Syrians did not pursue altruistic goals when they intervened [in Lebanon] with their troops. One should also not forget that the Syrians significantly promoted the initial outbreak of violence in April 1975 through weapons deliveries to left-wing forces [...]”.¹³⁵ Shortly afterwards Peckert even recommended a “German initiative in the Lebanon

¹²⁷ PA/AA (B36 104828, unfoliated) 22.09.1975. *Jesser to Beirut embassy*.

¹²⁸ AAPD 21.01.1976. Document 13. *Conversation of Genscher with Saudi foreign minister Saud al-Faisal*.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ AAPD 20.03.1978. Document 83. *Notes by Böcker*.

¹³¹ AAPD 18.11.1976. Document 326. *Notes by Lahn*.

¹³² AAPD 18.08.1976. Document 266. *Jesser (Bonn) to Steltzer (Cairo)*.

¹³³ AAPD 31.10.1975. Document 327. *Circular by von der Gablentz*.

¹³⁴ AAPD 18.08.1976. Document 266. *Jesser (Bonn) to Steltzer (Cairo)*.

¹³⁵ PA/AA (B36 119898, unfoliated) 05.07.1978. *Böcker (Bonn) to Peckert (Damascus)*.

crisis” through a European framework, as the Syrian intervention had clearly failed.¹³⁶ But there is no indication whatsoever that anyone in Bonn ever seriously considered such a direct involvement in Lebanon.

Overall, while Bonn was well aware that the Lebanese civil war was closely related to and interlinked with the Arab-Israeli conflict, it never saw or sought a clear role in it for itself. In Genscher’s grand 1979 tour of the Middle East Lebanon was one of the seven Arab countries he visited. However, as the *Auswärtiges Amt* admitted internally, this was merely a symbolic visit to illustrate West German support for Lebanon’s territorial integrity.¹³⁷ The FRG acknowledged the link between the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Lebanese civil war. But its support for the resolution of the latter remained largely superficial, which once again shows how in the second part of the 1970s the FRG was increasingly comfortable with the role of bystander in the Middle Eastern peace process. If there was a part of the Arab world that Bonn focused on in this regard, it was Egypt.

It was indeed Egypt which would shake up the quest for Middle Eastern peace for good by the late 1970s. More than anyone, Sadat himself seems to have been frustrated by the stagnation of the peace process. At home, protests signalled public dissatisfaction,¹³⁸ while new research suggests that by the summer of 1977 his greatest international worry was not so much a new war with Israel but rather with Libya – something which is corroborated by West German foreign office reporting from that period.¹³⁹ The Egyptian president clearly felt that something had to give – and in an unexpected violation of all three ‘No’s’ of Khartoum opted for his visit to Israel on 19 November 1977, even giving a speech in the Israeli *Knesset*.¹⁴⁰

The West Germans were as surprised by this move as anyone else. As the next chapter will show, Bonn was embroiled in the ‘German autumn’ at the time, fighting off the challenge of domestic terrorism at home. For weeks it had only viewed the Middle East through the lens of counterterrorism, as Palestinian terrorists had captured the Lufthansa-airplane *Landshut* and led it on a wild goose chase through the Arab peninsula.¹⁴¹ It seems as if Schmidt and Genscher were not in the mindset to give Sadat’s initiative their immediate, full attention.

¹³⁶ PA/AA (B130 121010, unfoliated) 06.10.1978. *Peckert (Damascus) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹³⁷ PA/AA (B21 112902, unfoliated) 04.09.1979. *Fiedler (Bonn) to Dublin embassy*.

¹³⁸ PA/AA (B36 119868, unfoliated) 19.01.1977. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹³⁹ Daigle, Craig. *Sadat’s African dilemma. Libya, Ethiopia, and the making of the Camp David Accords*. Cold War History 19:2 (2019): 295-313; in a similar vein, the West German military attaché to Cairo speculated about a war between Egypt and Libya in the summer of 1976 (PA/AA (B36 108718, unfoliated). 15.09.1976. *Memorandum by the Auswärtiges Amt*).

¹⁴⁰ Quandt, *Peace Process* (2001), 191.

¹⁴¹ See chapter III on Palestinian terrorism.

Ultimately, the West German government's initial response to Sadat's journey was marked by restrained positivity. There was no clear statement of public support; in an EPC meeting Genscher pushed for a positive message by the Nine in support of Sadat. However, Paris, intent on placating more radical Arab states, objected to this, which Genscher openly called "remarkable" in the meeting.¹⁴² In their final communique, the Nine thus merely applauded Sadat's "bold" initiative on a sidenote.¹⁴³ However, as much as anyone else Genscher was also well aware that there remained the challenges of splits in the Arab camp and Israeli demands. In Tel Aviv, Israeli prime minister Begin invited the West German ambassador Klaus Schütz for an "extensive explanation of Israeli security needs, for which [he] used a map which he held in front of my eyes again and again", as the diplomat reported back to Bonn.¹⁴⁴ This rather bizarre episode illustrated for Schütz that the Israeli prime minister was not willing to drop his hard-line attitude towards the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In this situation, the West German government agreed that while peace talks between Sadat and Begin were to be encouraged, they would only represent a success if they resulted in a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace treaty. As the *Auswärtiges Amt* concluded:

All will depend upon re-constituting the unity of the confrontational states and to prevent anything which would lead to a polarisation of Egypt and the West on the one and the other Arab states [...] as well as the Soviet Union on the other side. We have to assume that a separate Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, which does not address the Palestinian question, would cause such a polarisation.¹⁴⁵

Bonn communicated this message to both the Israelis and the Egyptians. In late November 1977, Schmidt told Israeli foreign minister Dayan that a separate peace treaty between Tel Aviv and Cairo would represent a severe problem for the EEC.¹⁴⁶ Bonn had the same message for the Egyptians, but not without also showing principal support for Sadat's initiative. For Schmidt not only travelled to Egypt at the end of 1977, but also prolonged his stay in the country after his official state visit for a short holiday. Sadat and Schmidt even celebrated New Year's Eve together on a Nile boat, symbolising a closeness of both their personal and political relationship which would have been unthinkable only a few years earlier. Almost a decade after launching its Arab policy, the FRG could show for some success in strengthening its bilateral relations with at least some of the Arab states. Moreover, in their "most important

¹⁴² AAPD 22.11.1977. Document 335. *Circular by Engels*.

¹⁴³ Bulletin of the European Communities, 11/1977: 52.

¹⁴⁴ AAPD 25.11.1977. Document 337. *Schütz (Tel Aviv) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁴⁵ PA/AA (B36 108716, unfoliated) 15.12.1977. *Notes by 310*. 'Confrontational states' (*Konfrontationsstaaten*) was the term used within the *Auswärtiges Amt* for the rejectionist Arab states, who were most strongly opposed to Sadat.

¹⁴⁶ AAPD 28.11.1977. Document 339. *Conversation of Schmidt with Dayan*.

conversation” Sadat had assured Schmidt that he “seriously and exclusively sought a global solution of the Middle East conflict; a separate peace treaty between Egypt and Israel seems unthinkable”.¹⁴⁷ Schmidt and Genscher thus felt comfortable to support Sadat’s efforts as long as he followed this premise.

But the bilateral talks between Egypt and Israel, which had commenced in the aftermath of Sadat’s trip to Israel, soon reached a deadlock due to Israeli intransigence.¹⁴⁸ The Egyptians hoped that the Europeans and in particular the West Germans could convince the US to keep their peace initiative alive and to move Israel towards concessions. It was certainly no coincidence that Sadat’s new foreign minister as of December 1977, Muhammad Kaamel, had been his ambassador to Bonn over the preceding years.¹⁴⁹ To an extent, Bonn played along with this strategy. Over the following months, Schmidt and Genscher stressed the need for keeping the peace process alive in their communications with the US, the Arab states and Israel.¹⁵⁰ They also underlined that this should lead to a comprehensive solution, rather than to a separate peace. It was enough to put off the Israelis, who, ambassador Schütz reported from Tel Aviv, complained that the West Germans were becoming more critical of Israel than the French.¹⁵¹ But there were limits in Bonn’s advocacy of Sadat’s position. Bonn would not get involved as a peace broker itself or push for a European initiative in this regard, at least not for the moment.¹⁵² Without a doubt, however, the Egyptian president had won the significant respect of both Schmidt and Genscher. The West German chancellor told Greek prime minister Karamanlis that Sadat’s initiative had won him worldwide sympathies, regardless of whether it would succeed or not, while Genscher explained to Waldheim: “Sadat’s initiative has changed the world.”¹⁵³ Even years later, in a 2008 television interview, Schmidt said about Sadat: “In my view, the man was a hero.”¹⁵⁴

By the summer of 1978, when it had become clear that direct talks between Egypt and Israel would not succeed, US president Jimmy Carter took it upon himself to broker an

¹⁴⁷ PA/AA (B36 108715, unfoliated) 02.01.1978. *Notes by 310*.

¹⁴⁸ AAPD 14.01.1978. Document 10. *Schütz (Tel Aviv) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁴⁹ AAPD 15.02.1978. Document 49. *Conversation of Genscher with Kaamel*.

¹⁵⁰ AAPD 26.01.1978. Document 21. *Notes by Wentker*; AAPD 12.02.1978. Document 42. *Conversation of Genscher with Dayan*; AAPD 30.03.1978. Document 91. *Conversation of Genscher with US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher*; AAPD 21.06.1978. Document 195. *Conversation of Schmidt with Saudi crown prince Fahd*.

¹⁵¹ AAPD 03.02.1978. Document 39. *Notes by Meyer-Landrut*.

¹⁵² On debates about a European initiative in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the West German role therein, see Chapter V.

¹⁵³ AAPD 31.01.1978. Document 26. *Conversation of Schmidt with Karamanlis*; AAPD 24.07.1978. Document 228. *Notes by Gorenflos*.

¹⁵⁴ Beckmann. *Helmut Schmidt bei Reinold Beckmann*. (ARD, 22.09.2008).

agreement. In September 1978, he invited Sadat and Begin to the presidential country retreat Camp David. The West Germans cautiously welcomed the initiative, hoping that it might bring Sadat's 1977 journey to Israel to a successful conclusion.¹⁵⁵ Just before talks were about to start, Schmidt sent Carter a personal letter, urging the US president to not lose sight of the Palestinian issue and warning of a separate Egyptian-Israeli peace deal.¹⁵⁶

The Camp David accords, which were ultimately agreed upon by Israel, Egypt and the US on 17 September 1978 had two elements: the 'Framework for Peace in the Middle East' and the 'Framework Peace Treaty Egypt and Israel'. The latter was supposed to represent a steppingstone for a bilateral peace treaty between Tel Aviv and Cairo, the former for a global peace solution in the Middle East, which would have included a settlement of the Palestinian question.¹⁵⁷ Schmidt was sceptical but did not reject the outcome of the talks outright. As long as Sadat would only proceed with the latter framework after progress on the former, a comprehensive solution could be salvaged. West German efforts therefore focused on promoting the 'Framework for Peace in the Middle East' in the hope that it could lead to a global solution. But private talks by Schmidt with Sudanese president Jaafar Nimeiry or Jordan's king Hussein confirmed the public Arab rejection of Camp David.¹⁵⁸ Before the deal was announced, Syria's president Hafez al-Assad had already informed Schmidt in a "45-minute lecture on the situation in the Middle East" that he rejected all aspects of Sadat's policy and whatever Camp David would bring.¹⁵⁹

By late October, it increasingly became clear that Sadat might indeed be willing to proceed with the 'Framework Peace Treaty Egypt and Israel' without any progress on the 'Framework for Peace in the Middle East'.¹⁶⁰ Scepticism rose in Bonn and a position paper on Camp David by the *Auswärtiges Amt* written shortly thereafter called the talks "an important step on the path to a just and encompassing peace. At the same time, we are aware of its unsolved, substantial problems [...]. It is now vital to expand the number of negotiation partners."¹⁶¹ Bonn was increasingly losing its faith into the Camp David process. At the

¹⁵⁵ PA/AA (B36 112935, unfoliated) 18.08.1978. *Notes by 310*.

¹⁵⁶ AAPD 05.09.1978. Document 255. *Schenk to Washington embassy*.

¹⁵⁷ See Quandt, *Peace Process* (2001): 177ff.

¹⁵⁸ AAPD 03.10.1978. Document 292. *Conversation of Schmidt with Numeiri*; AAPD 07.11.1978. Document 343. *Conversation of Schmid with Hussein*.

¹⁵⁹ AAPD 12.09.1978. Document 261. *Conversation of Schmidt with Assad*.

¹⁶⁰ AAPD 20.10.1978. Document 317. *Behrends (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁶¹ PA/AA (B36 135613, unfoliated) 24.10.1978. *Notes by 310*.

Guadeloupe summit of Carter, Callaghan, Giscard and Schmidt in January 1979 “the West German chancellor held back” in the discussion on the issue.¹⁶²

On 26 March 1979, Israel and Egypt signed their separate peace treaty in Washington D.C. The West Germans were not unhappy with this partial peace, but certainly disappointed with the fact that a more comprehensive solution had not been achieved. “Only now are we entering the tunnel at the end of which we cannot necessarily see the light yet”, Schmidt told Waldheim merely one day after the signing of the treaty.¹⁶³ On the one hand, one can sympathise with the FRG’s hope that Sadat’s 1977 trip to Israel might culminate in a comprehensive Middle Eastern peace deal. On the other hand, in view of the scepticism, which Schmidt and Genscher had encountered throughout the late 1970s in this regard at various governmental talks, the lack of realism within Bonn is striking.

There still was a glimmer of hope to “preserve the momentum of the Camp David process”, as State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt* van Well put it at a NATO meeting.¹⁶⁴ Genscher now undertook a major journey through the Middle East, visiting seven Arab states throughout the summer of 1979 in an effort to find a common ground between the various Middle Eastern actors and “to promote the peace process in [the Arab] capitals”, as Sadat acknowledged with approval.¹⁶⁵ But the differences were too stark and Genscher’s position too careful to convince anyone. In his conversations with Assad, Hussein or Sadat he had no difficulties to point to issues which should now be addressed, such as the Palestinian question. Also, like Schmidt, he was quick to distance himself from the talks between Egypt and Israel. As Genscher told the Iraqi foreign minister: “He [Genscher] was a good friend of the Americans, but he had never been to Camp David.”¹⁶⁶ Ultimately, however, he was unable or unwilling to take a clearer stance on key questions. Trying not to offend anyone, he also won no-one over.

Since 1973 Bonn had been distancing itself from becoming involved in the quest for peace in the Middle East. By 1979, it was no longer in a position to act as intermediary of any sort. Genscher’s comment on Camp David in his conversation with four Arab ambassadors in

¹⁶² AAPD 06.01.1979. Document 5. *Conversation of Schmidt with Callaghan, Carter and Giscard at Guadeloupe.*

¹⁶³ AAPD 27.03.1979. Document 92. *Conversation of Schmidt with Waldheim.*

¹⁶⁴ AAPD 01.06.1979. Document 159. *Blech (NATO/Brussels) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

¹⁶⁵ AAPD 02.09.1979. Document 250. *Behrends (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt.* The West German foreign minister visited Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Libya.

¹⁶⁶ AAPD 06.07.1979. Document 201. *Conversation of Genscher with Iraq’s foreign minister Hammadi;* see also PA/AA (B21 112902, unfoliated) 04.09.1979. *Fiedler (Bonn) to Dublin embassy.*

November 1979 is exemplary not only for this West German restraint, but also for the passivity of West German policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict by the end of the decade: “We acknowledge what has been agreed as a fact, but have no opinion on it.”¹⁶⁷ Beginning with the EEC’s Venice declaration, from 1980 onwards West Germany would mostly channel any efforts for a Middle East peace process through the European level, rather than engage as an actor in its own right.¹⁶⁸

6. Conclusion: West Germany’s decade of engagement in the Arab-Israeli conflict

The Middle East conflict was not the primary reason why the FRG engaged in an ‘Arab policy’ from 1970 onwards, but it remained the key factor preventing Brandt’s ‘even-handed’ Middle Eastern policy to unfold in a sustainable way. The conflict split the Arabs from Israel, and ultimately the Arabs themselves. Without the ability to overcome the Arab-Israeli conflict, the West German project of an ‘Arab policy’ itself had become redundant by 1979.

Still, the 1970s were the years when the FRG engaged in the Arab-Israeli conflict more directly than ever. Before, it had not considered an engagement either necessary nor adequate; later, it would work through the European framework of EEC and EU. As has been shown, Brandt in particular attempted to get much more involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict than previously known. Moreover, this chapter also covered ground which has been largely neglected by scholarship to date, showing how, after Sadat’s 1977 trip to Jerusalem, Genscher in particular attempted to re-activate the FRG’s role in the Middle East peace process. He tried to promote – in the end unsuccessfully – the search for a comprehensive agreement instead of a separate Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.

Cooperation with Western allies on the Arab-Israeli conflict was sporadic and largely unsuccessful. Noteworthy are also attempts in the run-up to the October War by European middling powers to cooperate across blocs on the topic without involving their superpower peers, as Brandt’s conversations with Ceaușescu and Tito illustrate.

Brandt’s and Scheel’s attempts to promote *Ostpolitik* as blueprint for peace in the Middle East are noteworthy, too. Less so due to their historiographical value, as at least Brandt’s attempts to float this idea in his conversations with Meir has already been mentioned by Fink.¹⁶⁹ But they highlight the political psychology of international diplomacy by

¹⁶⁷ AAPD 27.11.1979. Document 349. *Conversation of Genscher with four Arab ambassadors.*

¹⁶⁸ Neustadt, *Deutsch-Israelische Beziehungen* (1983). See also Chapter V of this thesis on the Venice declaration and its aftermath.

¹⁶⁹ Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019): 241.

illustrating how much subjective perspectives and egocentrism shape the use of historical comparison in international diplomacy. In 1968 the *Auswärtiges Amt* had strongly rejected linking German-German relations with the situation in the Middle East, when Arab diplomats compared the division of Jerusalem with that of Berlin in order to gain sympathy in Bonn. But the West Germans argued forcefully that the two could not be compared.¹⁷⁰ A mere five years later, it was the West Germans who attempted to convince the Arabs that, just like they themselves talked directly with their counterparts in order to improve the situation in Central Europe, now Arabs and Israelis should engage with each other through direct negotiations. This time, it was the Arabs who forcefully rejected this idea.

There were also stark differences between the two personal constellations of the social-liberal coalition when it comes to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Up to 1974, Brandt was certainly the one to think more about an active West German role in conflict resolution, whereas Scheel was less enthusiastic in this area. A fact that did not go unnoticed, as one Arab ambassador complained on the eve of the October War: “The chancellor speaks one way and his foreign minister in another way. So what could one rely on in the future?”¹⁷¹ From 1974 onwards, it was the exact opposite way. Schmidt, sober and calculating, showed more personal restraint on the Middle East than his predecessor, who had been prone to visionary idealism. At the same time, Genscher in the *Auswärtiges Amt* displayed a markedly increased travel activity in the region and attempted to reconcile different positions on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

After 1973, Bonn had purposefully left the geopolitics of the Middle East to the Americans. Also, West Germany’s unwillingness to address the civil war in Lebanon within the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict illustrates how after the October War the FRG settled into the role of a bystander in the Middle East peace process. Genscher’s 1979 journey to reignite a broader peace process was too little, too late. As the man who shaped the FRG’s foreign policy over twenty years told Assad in 1979: “Before we used to overestimate ourselves, now it is others who overestimate us.”¹⁷² While the former part of the statement most likely referred to Germany’s foreign policy in the first part of the 20th century, it is also an apt description of Bonn’s stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict throughout the 1970s.

¹⁷⁰ AAPD 27.11.1967. Document 404. *Pauls (Tel Aviv) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁷¹ AAPD 04.10.1973. Document 309. *Notes by Lahn*.

¹⁷² AAPD 27.08.1979. Document 241. *Conversation of Genscher with Assad in Damascus*.

Chapter III: Terrorism and West Germany's stance on the Palestinian question*

The Palestinian guerrilla organisations [...] document their political independence and reject any peaceful solution of the Middle East conflict. Thereby, a new element as emerged in the Middle East, whose long-term importance cannot currently be assessed clearly.¹

Background paper by the Auswärtiges Amt, 1969.

We consider the Palestinian problem to be at the core of the Middle East conflict.²

Memorandum by the Auswärtiges Amt, 1979

1. Introduction: a gradual process of Palestinian recognition by Bonn

The Six-Day War moved the Palestinian question into the centre of Middle Eastern politics due to the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza strip by Israel. As a result, almost by default West Germany had to give it more attention in its attempts to engage more in the region. However, Bonn only picked up on the issue of Palestine with a delay. Between 1967 and 1980, the FRG went through a process of gradual formulation and re-formulation of its position towards the Palestinian question. First it ignored the issue and only started to acknowledge it as pertinent as of 1970. Then, after the October War of 1973, Bonn moved to publicly acknowledge rather vague “legitimate rights of the Palestinian people”.³ Finally, the completion of the Camp David agreements between Israel and Egypt, insufficient in the eyes of the FRG, led the administration of chancellor Schmidt and his foreign minister Genscher to a stance which, in a nutshell, still defines the FRG's policy on the Palestinian question today: recognition of the need for an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel as well as the acknowledgement of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) as representative of the Palestinian people.

Three factors were crucial in this process of policy transformation. First, in the analysis of the *Auswärtiges Amt* the Palestinian question became the key issue for any attempt towards a Middle Eastern peace process, in particular after 1973. It could no longer be ignored. Second, the FRG accepted revisions to its stance on the Palestinian issue for the broader purpose of

* Some of the research of this chapter is also the basis of a separately published journal paper (Hirsch, Philipp. *Politics as counterterrorism: the role of diplomacy in the West German response to Palestinian terror, 1970-75.*” Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression 12:3 (2020): 186-202).

¹ PA/AA (B130 2809A, unfoliated) 12.02.1969. *Notes by Söhnke.*

² AAPD 09.08.1979. Document 220. *Memorandum by Petersen.*

³ EEC, *Declaration of the Nine Foreign Ministers on the Situation in the Middle East* (06.11.1973).

managing its relations to the Arab states more generally. Finally, and crucially when it comes to the bilateral relations between Bonn and the Palestinian movement, terrorism pushed the FRG down a path of recognition of both the Palestinian question and the PLO.⁴ West Germany became entangled in terrorism from 1970 onwards. Consequently, West German officials hoped that denser networks of communication and cooperation with Palestinian representatives would prevent attacks on West German soil. Moreover, the links between Palestinian and West German left-wing terror groups such as the RAF made the Bonn government engage more with the Palestinian question as a whole. This is not to claim that the history of the Palestinian movement is solely one of terrorism. Yet, to understand the gradual emergence of a West German ‘Palestinian policy’ in the 1970s one has to acknowledge the close links between political violence and West German politics: the former pushed the latter into an ever more overt recognition of the principle of Palestinian statehood.

This chapter represents the first coherent, historically grounded analysis of the emergence of West German policy towards the Palestinian question throughout the 1970s. So far, West German engagement with the Palestinian question has mostly been covered through research on individual events or terror attacks. Fink, Wolffsohn and Gerlach include analyses of the 1970 Dawson’s Field Hijackings and the 1972 Munich Massacre in their books on West German Middle Eastern policy during the 1970s.⁵ Munich is also the focus of a book by Dahlke.⁶ Geiger’s paper on the *Landshut*-hijacking focuses on the late 1970s.⁷ All these works do well in covering the spill-over of Palestinian terrorism to West Germany, but rather focus on individual incidents. Unlike Blumenau’s book on West German efforts to coordinate counter-terrorism at the UN or Dahlke’s paper in the *Wischnewski-Protokoll*, in this chapter I link West German responses to both terrorism and the Palestinian question.⁸ Finally, I can show that unofficial contacts between West German diplomats and violent elements of the Palestinian

⁴ Definitions of terrorism are inherently contested (Schmid, Alex. *The Revised Academic Consensus Definition of Terrorism*. *Perspectives on Terrorism* 6:2 (2012): 158-9). Here, I follow Hoffman’s approach, according to whom terrorism is “ineluctably political in aims and motives; violent – or, equally important, threatens violence; designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target; conducted by an organization with an identifiable chain of command or conspirational cell structure (whose members wear no uniform or identifying insignia); and perpetrated by a subnational group or non-state entity.” (Hoffman, Bruce. *Inside Terrorism*. (New York, 2006): 43.

⁵ Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019); Wolffsohn, *Friedenskanzler* (2018); Gerlach, *Doppelte Front* (2006).

⁶ Dahlke, Matthias. *Der Anschlag auf Olympia '72: die politischen Reaktionen auf den internationalen Terrorismus in Deutschland*. (Munich, 2006).

⁷ Geiger, *Landshut in Mogadischu* (2009).

⁸ Blumenau, *The United Nations and Terrorism* (2014); Dahlke, *Das Wischnewski Protokoll* (2009); see also Riegler, ‘*Spinnennetz’ des internationalen Terrorismus* (2012); and Hürter, Johannes. *Anti-Terrorismus-Politik*. *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 57:3 (2009): 330-48.

movement date back to 1970, three years earlier than, for example, Fink asserts.⁹ Overall, then, this chapter links a study of both diplomacy and counterterrorism within the FRG's emerging Palestinian policy. It thus contributes both to research on the relationship between foreign policy and the fight against terrorism as well as on the emergence of the Palestinian movement and its international dimensions more generally.¹⁰

Today, the fact that the FRG has an official policy towards the issue of Palestine seems self-explanatory. But in 1967, Bonn did not even acknowledge that a Palestinian question existed. Then, more than a decade later, the FRG by 1980 had recognised the need for a two-state solution with a role therein for the PLO. In a nutshell, this has remained the FRG's policy on the question of Palestine to this day. The following is an explorative analysis of the trajectory of how the West German stance on 'Palestine' evolved as part of Brandt's and Schmidt's 'Arab policy' throughout the 1970s.

2. Blissful ignorance and a silver lining: the absence of the Palestinian question from West German Middle Eastern policy, 1967-1969

Before the June war, the Palestinian question had not been of great importance for West Germany. In the years running up to 1967, a 'Palestinian question' simply did not exist in the minds of policymakers in Bonn. Instead, one would refer to a 'refugee problem'.¹¹ Of this latter issue, however, the *Auswärtiges Amt* was well aware. In fact, it even represented a political opportunity for West German policy makers. The Palestinian refugees were spread over several countries, which meant that dealing with them had a pan-Arab element. Moreover, most of them lived in countries which had broken their relations with the FRG, such as Egypt or Lebanon. For these states, the West German cabinet had passed a ban on any new financial aid or support in 1965.¹² If Bonn wanted to improve its relations to these Arab states with financial

⁹ Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019); Dahlke (*Das Wischnewski Protokoll* (2009)) dates similar West German efforts to 1977, only.

¹⁰ On the former, see, for example, Vultee, Fred. *Securitization: A new approach to the framing of the 'war on terror'*. *Journalism Practice* 4:1 (2010): 33-47; Coolsaet, Rik. *EU counterterrorism strategy: value added or chimera?* *International affairs* 8:4 (2010): 857-73; Savun, Burcu, and Brian Phillips. *Democracy, foreign policy, and terrorism*. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53:6 (2009): 878-904; Gardner, Hall. *American global strategy and the 'war on terrorism'*. (Aldershot, 2005); Pillar, Robert. *Terrorism and US foreign policy*. (Washington, 2003); on the latter, see, for example, Pappé, Ilan. *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples*. (New York/ Cambridge, 2004); or Sayigh, Yazid. *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement 1949-1993*. (Oxford, 1997).

¹¹ AAPD 13.06.1967. Document 217. *Von Braun (New York/UN) to Auswärtiges Amt*. On the history of the Palestinian question, see, for example, Gelvin, James. *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War*. (Cambridge, 2007); Shlaim, Avi. *The Politics of Partition: King Abdullah, the Zionists and Palestine, 1921-1951*. (Oxford, 1998); Khalidi, Rashid. *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*. (New York, 1997).

¹² PA/AA (B130 8822A, unfoliated) 14.08.1967. *Memorandum by D III*.

means, aid to the Palestinians was a handy backdoor to legally circumvent its own previous ban; the issue of Palestinian refugees had a silver lining for the *Auswärtiges Amt*.

When in late 1966 it looked like there might be a chance to re-establish diplomatic relations with the Arab states, foreign minister Brandt soon turned to the Palestinians as a vehicle to catalyse this development. Bonn had already given aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the previous years, but Brandt now suggested a significant increase of this support. In January 1967, he proposed to the West German cabinet an extraordinary aid package for Palestinian refugees of DM 50 million over five years, to be paid to UNRWA.¹³ This represented a sharp rise when compared to the total of DM 22 million which the FRG had given to UNRWA since 1952.¹⁴ For example, in 1965 the FRG's contribution to UNRWA had been a mere DM 2 million; Brandt now suggested to quintuple that annual amount.¹⁵

Officially, the aid package was conceived of as a humanitarian project, but it comes out very clearly from the internal documents of the *Auswärtiges Amt* that the real reasons lay elsewhere. By giving money to the Palestinians, Brandt hoped to spur on a general West German-Arab rapprochement. When the West German cabinet discussed the proposition, Brandt very directly pointed to the broader considerations of West Germany's relations to the Arab world for this aid package. Finance minister Franz-Joseph Strauß opposed the idea for reasons of financial discipline, but Brandt's arguments won over the West German chancellor. As Kiesinger stated, he was "in principle of the opinion that for political reasons the proposition could be accepted" and later added that "he would veto any aid to the Palestinians if there was not the previously explained political dimension to it".¹⁶ Moreover, after the cabinet session Brandt was very clear about the *quid-pro-quo* nature of the decision: "Confidentially, it was also recorded that payments shall only be made once diplomatic relations with the Arab states had in fact been re-established."¹⁷ The motion passed. But as the big wave of West German embassy openings failed to materialise in spring 1967, no payments were made for the moment.

¹³ PA/AA (B130 2563A, unfoliated) 26.01.1967. *Excerpt from cabinet minutes*.

¹⁴ Defrates John F. *UNRWA, The Federal Republic of Germany and the Palestine Refugees*. Orient 13:3 (1972): 124. Quoted in: Lewan, Kenneth. *How West Germany Helped to Build Israel*. Journal of Palestine Studies 4:4 (1975): 41-64.

¹⁵ Yearbook of the United Nations 1965. *Chapter XIV – Questions relating to the Middle East*. Office of Public Information. United Nations, New York. The year book gives USD 500.000 as West German contribution to UNRWA. Historic exchange rate data puts the exchange of USD to DM at 1:4.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ PA/AA (B130 2565A, unfoliated) 26.01.1967. *Notes by Brandt*.

However, a few months later the June War fundamentally transformed the nature of the Palestinian question. The war resulted in the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan heights and the Sinai Peninsula. This quadrupling of Israel's size reconfigured the geopolitical map of the modern Middle East and introduced the Palestinian question on its political agenda. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians had fled from the occupied territories to neighbouring countries, while a significant number of them fell under Israeli administration in the West Bank, Gaza and Golan.¹⁸ This was immediately recognised by Bonn as a major new aspect of the Middle East conflict.¹⁹

The June War brought up the humanitarian aid package again. In the June memorandum, which discussed the West German response to the Six-Day War, the idea of the 50 million DM fund for Palestinian refugees was revived immediately.²⁰ After all, Bonn was deeply worried about its reputation in the Arab states in the aftermath of the war, given the perception that it had sided with Israel in the conflict.²¹ In this situation, the project of humanitarian aid for Palestinian refugees once more became the preferred public relations instrument through which Bonn hoped to improve its image. Furthermore, the *Auswärtiges Amt* went even further by proposing the establishment of a special West German representative for aid to the Palestinians. Again, this was about more than just aiding Palestinian refugees. As a senior West German diplomat noted: “[This] approach should achieve that the appointed representative *nolens volens* [italics added] becomes an interlocutor for the Arab governments on other political topics, too.”²²

Overall, in the late 1960s the Palestinians served the FRG with quite a useful purpose: whenever Arab leaders asked for a gesture of sympathy to the Arab world, Bonn would refer to its special assistance programme for Palestinian refugees.²³ Of course, the *Auswärtiges Amt* had recognised in the June memorandum that the Palestinian question had now changed in nature. While the document had originally referred to the need for the FRG to improve its relations with the Arab states, Brandt himself changed the original draft and by hand turned “states” into “people” – a clear reference to the Palestinians.²⁴ Ultimately, however, foreign office

¹⁸ See, for example, Bunton, *Palestinian-Israeli conflict* (2006).

¹⁹ See, for example, AAPD 13.06.1967. Document 217. *Von Braun (New York/UN) to Auswärtiges Amt*; or AAPD 30.06.1967. Document 242. *Grewe (Paris/NATO) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

²⁰ AAPD 23.06.1967. Document 232. *Memorandum by Meyer-Lindenberg*. On the June Memorandum, see Chapter I.

²¹ AAPD 11.07.1967. Document 257. *Meyer-Lindenberg to Paris embassy*.

²² PA/AA (B130 2575A, unfoliated) 22.08.1967. *Notes by Frank*.

²³ See, for example, AAPD 27.07.1967. Document 283. *Memorandum by Meyer-Lindenberg*; or AAPD 08.02.1968. Document 50. *Conversation of Duckwitz with the head of the office of the Arab League, Cabani*.

²⁴ AAPD 23.06.1967. Document 232. *Memorandum by Meyer-Lindenberg*. This is also the document's interpretation brought forward by Gerlach (in: *Doppelte Front* (2006): 56ff.).

memoranda in the late 1960s relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict mostly circled around the War of Attrition between Israel and Egypt, UN mediation or the continued closure of the Suez Canal.²⁵

In the Middle East, the PLO was only just stepping out of the shadow of its previous sponsor, Egypt. Under its new leader Yasser Arafat, it started to claim the role as representative of the Palestinian people.²⁶ The first specific reference in the files of the *Auswärtiges Amt* to this development noted “increasing attempts to create an ‘entité Palestinienne’ [...] [which adds] a specific Arab-Palestinian dimension to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is hardly conceivable that the Palestinian National council or the other resistance movements can be passed over by the current parties in a potential solution of the conflict”.²⁷ From this document onwards, written in March 1969, Bonn started to refer to a ‘Palestinian issue’, rather than a ‘refugee problem’.

There were also first warning signs that violent elements of the Palestinian movement might take aim at the FRG. In late 1969, the West German delegation in Beirut started to receive reports on potential terrorist attacks by Palestinian groups in the FRG. Informants visited the premises and, in return for money or requests for asylum in West Germany, shared plans about possible attacks.²⁸ Yet, the challenge with such incidents was how to judge their reliability, as at times informants were not considered trustworthy and interested only in cash.²⁹ But a much more general warning was sent by the FRG’s representative in Beirut, Walter Georg Nowak, to Bonn only shortly thereafter: “Have been informed by third party that leader of Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] is considering attacks in Europe. Representative of [PFLP leader] Dr. Habash has engaged in relevant preparations from 20 to 25 October via flight route London – Brussels – Frankfurt – Amsterdam.”³⁰ It is not clear whether this message caused any sort of reaction in Bonn, but Brandt’s administration could and should have been warned about impending Palestinian attacks on West German soil.³¹

²⁵ AAPD 23.06.1967. Document 232. *Memorandum by Meyer-Lindenberg*; see also PA/AA (B36 312, pp. 66ff.) 24.01.1968. *Notes by I B 4*; PA/AA (B130 2890A, unfoliated) 27.01.1969. *Notes by Gehlhoff*.

²⁶ Aburish, Said. *Arafat: From defender to dictator*. (London, 1998): 69-98.

²⁷ PA/AA (B130 2804A, unfoliated) 11.03.1969. *Notes by Gehlhoff*.

²⁸ PA/AA (B130 2812A, unfoliated) 30.09.1969. *Nowak (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt*; PA/AA (B130 2812A, unfoliated) 04.10.1969. *Nowak (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt*; PA/AA (B130 2812A, unfoliated) 06.10.1969. *Gehlhoff to Fröhlich (Ministry of the Interior)*.

²⁹ PA/AA (B130 2812A, unfoliated) 09.10.1969. *Nowak (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

³⁰ PA/AA (B130 2812A, unfoliated) 30.10.1969. *Nowak (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

³¹ No reaction to these cables was found in the archives of the *Auswärtiges Amt*. Similarly, Guttman describes a similar level of unawareness of terrorism trends in the Swiss administration of the late 1960 (Guttman, *Origins of counterterrorism* (2017): 27-43). As she points out, by this time Bonn had already joined the secret network of the *Club de Berne*, which as of 1969 facilitated intelligence sharing on terrorist threats amongst West states (ibid.: 183f.). However, the FRG still was unable to assess the threat level of Palestinian terrorism.

For the moment, however, both the transformation of the Palestinian movement and warnings about terrorism remained without consequences. After all, Bonn did not consider itself one of the “current parties” actively working on containing or ending the Arab-Israeli conflict; no change of policy was undertaken or even discussed in the *Auswärtiges Amt*.³² The extent to which the FRG had misjudged the relevance and risk associated with a transformed and, at least in part, violent Palestinian movement is also illustrated by a report on the topic by the *Auswärtiges Amt* to its NATO delegation from April 1970. It does not mention any European dimension to Palestinian terrorism and merely notes the latter’s “nuisance value” in the occupied territories.³³ But this perception would be challenged soon.

The Palestinian question as such did not exist in the minds of West German foreign policy makers in the 1960s. Consequently, the question of Palestinian refugees played no important role in the re-calibration of Bonn’s Middle Eastern policy after the June War of 1967. The transformation of the Palestinian movement was only noted with marginal interest in the *Auswärtiges Amt*, which did not expect West Germany to be embroiled in the escalation of what Bunton calls “the Palestinian-Israeli conflict” in the 1970s.³⁴

3. The year that terrorism reached West Germany

1970 was the year in which Palestinian terrorism arrived in West Germany through an attack at Riem airport near Munich. Then, in September 1970, the FRG was closely involved in the Dawson’s Field Hijackings. On top of that, the core of what would become the Baader-Meinhof Group turned up in the Middle East, connecting Palestinian terrorism to German left-wing terrorism. Bonn, caught unprepared, was surprised by these developments. The main response of the *Auswärtiges Amt* was to set up sporadic channels of communication on a working level with the Palestinian movement, including its violent elements.

In February 1970, three Palestinians tried to hijack an El-Al plane on its way to London while stopping in Munich.³⁵ The attack failed but killed an Israeli and seriously injured two more. The three hijackers were arrested by the West German police. It was the first ever Palestinian attack on West German soil.

³² Ibid.

³³ PA/AA (B130 2804A, unfoliated) 06.04.1970. *Bente to Brussels (NATO)*.

³⁴ Bunton, Martin. *The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict. A Very Short Introduction*. (Oxford, 2013).

³⁵ Herzinger, Richard. *Deutschland hätte gewarnt sein müssen*. (Die Welt, 17.07.2012).

Bonn now wanted to know more about what it was actually dealing with. On 17 April 1970, the *Auswärtiges Amt* cabled its representations in Amman, Cairo, Damascus and Beirut asking for reports to be compiled about the status of “Palestinian Resistance Organisations”, whose “military but more importantly political importance has increased continuously since [...] 1967”.³⁶ The reports Bonn subsequently received illustrate well where the Palestinian movement was concentrated at the time: the West German representatives in Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt sent back 42, 30 and 13 pages, respectively.³⁷

But the West German government was willing to go even further in getting to know the Palestinians. New material found in the archive of the *Auswärtiges Amt* in Berlin shows that soon after the Riem attack, a West German diplomat in Amman met with Issam Sartawi, head of the ‘Active Organisation for the Liberation of Palestine’ (AOLP), which had been behind the attack. Sartawi told his interlocutor that he regretted the exchange of fire in Munich. It was supposed to have been a bloodless operation. But the FRG “had been chosen purposefully as venue for the hijacking [as it] was important for the struggle of the Palestinians due to economic size, political influence and previous sympathies of its people to the Arabs”.³⁸ Sartawi ended by indicating that there would be no further attacks on West Germany if the three terrorists were released quickly.

Bonn did not immediately take up Sartawi on the offer, but internal discussions on the issue continued. In August, West German ambassador to Jordan Hans-Joachim Hille reported a case in Greece where Athens had simply freed and deported Palestinian terrorists after Arab diplomats had assured the Greeks that no further attacks would happen. Hille recommended that Bonn follow the same strategy.³⁹ His advice was not heeded, but only a month later the three terrorists would be free anyway.

At the start of September 1970, PFLP commandoes took control of four international airplanes, redirected them towards Jordan and landed them on the Dawson’s Field airstrip near Amman. Several hundred passengers, many of them West Germans, were now in the hands of Palestinian terrorists. What followed was a short but intense drama, in which several crises, dilemmas and levels of interaction overlapped.

³⁶ PA/AA (B36 402, p. 312ff) 21.05.1970. *Hille (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*; PA/AA (B36 402, p. 381ff) 09.06.1970. *Nowak (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt*; PA/AA (B36 402, p. 354ff) 22.05.1970. *Jesser (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*. The original directive could not be found in the archives, but all three report refer to a directive by the *Auswärtiges Amt* from 17 April 1970 to report on “Palestinian Resistance Organisations” to Bonn.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ PA/AA (B36 372, p. 290) 23.02.1970. *Hille (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

³⁹ PA/AA (B36 372, p. 500f) 18.08.1970. *Hille (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*. On this episode and consequent discussions within the Swiss government, see Guttman, *Origins of counterterrorism* (2017): 32.

The hijackings coincided with skirmishes between the Jordanian army and Yasser Arafat's PLO, which would soon escalate into outright civil war: Jordan's *Black September*. At the time, West German ambassador Hille was away on holiday. Given the tense situation in Jordan, the *Auswärtiges Amt* decided that it was too dangerous to let him return to Amman.⁴⁰ Instead, the only other West German diplomat in the country would be responsible for managing the crises on the ground. It was Hille's deputy, Peter Mende, who was only 36 years of age.⁴¹

Soon, the PFLP demanded the release of several terrorists in European prisons in exchange for the hostages, amongst them the three terrorists engaged in the February 1970 Riem attack.⁴² The situation in Amman itself was characterised by chaos and uncertainty. In Mende's words: "Work after sundown significantly hindered, as scattered heavy shootings in some suburbs of Amman, and [Palestinian] Fedayeen largely control traffic through 'black lists'."⁴³

The difficult situation in Jordan was compounded by a complex international setting. Amongst the other hostages were British, American, Swiss and Israeli citizens. Thus, Bonn not only had to consider its own unilateral response to the crisis but also needed to coordinate its actions on a multilateral level. To ensure this, the Americans, West Germans, British and Swiss set up an *impromptu* coordination group in Bern on 8 September 1970.⁴⁴ The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) took over negotiations between the Bern group and the PFLP in Amman.

Brandt and Scheel decided that the FRG would in principle support multilateral efforts to free the hostages due to an "absolute requirement for solidarity".⁴⁵ This was not just a choice but reinforced by intense pressure on the FRG by its allies in Bern. At some point, the American ambassador there even said to the West German representative "jokingly [that] we should not step out of line, otherwise we had to be careful in Berlin".⁴⁶ If it really had been a joke, the West Germans did not find it funny. The *Auswärtiges Amt* took the comment seriously, citing it as evidence that the Americans might hold back support to the West Germans in the future if the FRG stepped out of line.⁴⁷ Thus, the West German government intended to support an international solution for as long as possible. Only when there was no prospect of success for

⁴⁰ PA/AA (B36 374, p. 389) 16.09.1970. *Draft (author unknown)*.

⁴¹ Der Spiegel. *Personalien*. (21.09.1970).

⁴² PA/AA (B36 374, unfoliated) 07.09.1970a. *Mende (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁴³ PA/AA (B36 374, unfoliated) 07.09.1970b. *Mende (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁴⁴ PA/AA (B36 375, p. 62) 08.09.1970. *Notes by Redies*.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ PA/AA (B36 375, p. 146) 12.09.1970. *Memorandum by crisis group (Auswärtiges Amt)*.

⁴⁷ PA/AA (B36 375, p. 177) 15.09.1970. *Müller to Frank*.

such a multilateral approach and when West German hostages were considered in severe danger would Bonn opt for the unilateral action of dealing its prisoners in Munich for the West German hostages.

The tense atmosphere of crisis comes out clearly in the archival material. Within days, inter-ministerial coordination had to be moved from telex to the telephone, as the typing, sending and receiving of messages from *Auswärtiges Amt* to the Ministry of the Interior took too much time in view of the amount of communication.⁴⁸ All the while, news from Amman pointed to a worsening situation on the ground. “Since 15[.]15 local time heaviest shooting in Amman, army shoots with artillery and grenade launchers, [...] Fedayeen use rockets and smaller grenades [...]”.⁴⁹ At times, the employees of the West German embassy, too, had to take cover.⁵⁰ Misfortune was added to crisis when the automatic deciphering machine in the West German embassy in Amman broke down. Now, Mende asked Bonn to send telegrams openly, as his staff now had to decipher classified messages “letter for letter by hand, which is very time consuming”.⁵¹

Meanwhile, international negotiations reached a dead end, as the PFLP was only willing to release hostages in two stages and was ambivalent over its treatment of prisoners with dual Israeli-American citizenship.⁵² Washington in particular was afraid that they would be considered Israelis by the PFLP and not let go. Now, Brandt decided to take some sort of unilateral action and, against US wishes, sent Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski to Jordan.⁵³ Wischnewski was supposed to use his contacts with and good reputation amongst the Arabs to facilitate a solution and prevent any damage to the West German citizens.⁵⁴

Upon his arrival, Wischnewski immediately rang the alarm bell. On the morning of 12 September, he sent a confidential message for the eyes of Brandt, Scheel and interior minister Genscher, only. He strongly recommended a unilateral exchange of the three Palestinians detained in Munich for all West German hostages.⁵⁵ In the afternoon he cabled again. “The three airplanes have been blown up [by the PFLP]. [...] Situation is becoming more critical.

⁴⁸ PA/AA (B36 375, p. 94f) 09.09.1970. *Notes by Redies*.

⁴⁹ PA/AA (B36 374, p. 32) 09.09.1970. *Mende (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*.

⁵¹ PA/AA (B36 375, p. 126) 11.09.1970. *Notes by ZB 6-10*.

⁵² PA/AA (B36 375, p. 120) 11.09.1970. *Notes by Bente*; see also Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019): 146.

⁵³ FRUS 1969-76, Volume XXIV. 11.09.1970. Document 225. *Kissinger to Nixon*.

⁵⁴ PA/AA (B130 2799A, unfoliated) 11.09.1970. *Notes by Bente*. On Wischnewski's standing amongst the Arab states, see Chapter I.

⁵⁵ PA/AA (B130 2799A, unfoliated) 12.09.1970. *Mende (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*. The telex was sent by Mende but drafted by Wischnewski and marked as personal message to chancellor and the foreign and interior ministers.

Have been waiting for hours on a reply to my telex.”⁵⁶ Rumours of an impending US and Israeli raid on the airplanes had led the PFLP to blow up the airplanes (see Picture 6).⁵⁷



Picture 6: The image of the exploding airplanes on Dawson's Field is amongst the most well-known pictures in the history of 20th century terrorism.⁵⁸

Brandt and his government did not immediately follow Wischnewski's advice.⁵⁹ However, based on his report Bonn now started to give a unilateral solution more consideration. Later on 12 September, Wischnewski received the following message by the *Auswärtiges Amt*: “We ask you to tell your Arab interlocutors the following: the readiness of the federal government to release the three Palestinians in German custody is confirmed. Further information only possible Sunday [tomorrow] morning.”⁶⁰ Some hours later, around midnight, Wischnewski went to meet Abu Maher, spokesperson of the PFLP.⁶¹ As per instruction, the West German politician declared Bonn's willingness to release the three Palestinians. He even gave Abu Maher a letter confirming the respective message.⁶² In return, Abu Maher declared that the

⁵⁶ PA/AA (B130 2799A, unfoliated) 12.09.1970. *Mende (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁵⁷ Guttman, *Origins of counterterrorism* (2017): 47.

⁵⁸ Shortwave Radio Archive. *Palastinian Hijackings in Jordan (1970)* (10.12.2016).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ PA/AA (B130 2799A, unfoliated) 12.09.1970. *Frank to Wischnewski (Amman)*.

⁶¹ PA/AA (B130 2799A, unfoliated) 13.09.1970. *Mende (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*. Also present were Mende, Dingels (head of the department for International Relations of the SPD) and a representative of the Palestinian Red Crescent.

⁶² PA/AA (B130 2799A, unfoliated) 13.09.1970. *Mende (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*. According to Fink (*West Germany and Israel* (2019): 147), Wischnewski that day also met Arafat for a conversation, which did not yield any result. He later unsuccessfully tried to buy out the West German hostages, too.

PFLP was willing to release all male West German hostages.⁶³ The PFLP gave Bonn four days to officially declare an acceptance of this deal.⁶⁴ The clock was ticking.

Therefore, already on 12 September Brandt's government had decided to switch to a dual strategy.⁶⁵ It had started to actively prepare the option of a unilateral deal with the PFLP. The increasingly dangerous situation and Wischnewski's urgent warnings were clearly one reason for this. Another one was the growing West German frustration with the inability of international negotiations to achieve any sort of progress. Finally, the Bonn government knew that it might not have been the only one keeping its options open. Mende, in his urging for Bonn to accept Abu Maher's offer, gave as one of the reasons for his recommendation "similar negotiations of the English side".⁶⁶

On 13 September, the PFLP decided to allow all women and children under their control to leave Jordan immediately. But 54 male hostages remained, were paraded in front of the press and then scattered amongst different locations in Jordan as "prisoners-of-war".⁶⁷ That included two West German hostages.

Increasingly, Bonn was "disappointed" by the slow progress of work in the Bern Group.⁶⁸ On the evening of 15 September, the *Auswärtiges Amt* cabled the following message to Amman: "If by midday tomorrow [16 September] Bern group not with a new negotiator and clear negotiating mandate with adequate participation of all governments, then federal government will have to look for other solutions."⁶⁹

Then, on 16 September, events in Amman escalated. Jordanian King Hussein decided to break the power of the PLO in his country. The Jordanian civil war had started for real, putting the hostage crisis on temporary standstill, as its outcome would now depend on the course of war. On 17 September, the Syrian army marched into the north of Jordan in support

⁶³ PA/AA (B130 2799A, unfoliated) 13.09.1970. *Mende (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*. The fact that Wischnewski and Maher discussed only male hostages can only mean that by this time the release of all women and children was already decided upon by the PFLP and thus not caused by Brandt's message through Wischnewski.

⁶⁴ PA/AA (B130 2799A, unfoliated) 13.09.1970. *Mende (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁶⁵ This is three days earlier than Fink's account of the events lets on (Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019): 147).

⁶⁶ PA/AA (B130 2799A, unfoliated) 13.09.1970. *Mende (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*. That very evening the BBC World Service in fact broadcasted an announcement in Arabic stating that the British government would exchange Palestinian terrorist Leila Khaled for the British hostages (BBC News. *Black September: Tough negotiation* (01.01.2001)). London had publicly budged into PFLP demands before Bonn did.

⁶⁷ Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019): 147.

⁶⁸ PA/AA (B36 375, p. 164) 14.09.1970. *Memorandum by Fiedler*.

⁶⁹ PA/AA (B130 2799A, unfoliated) 15.09.1970. *Bente to Mende (Amman)*. Both the Bern group as well as the British and American government were informed of the contents of this message by the West Germans.

of the Palestinians. But due to Israeli air support for Hussein, it had to withdraw again by 22 September. The Jordanian government had prevailed.⁷⁰

On 25 September, the Jordanian army announced that it had freed fifteen hostages, including the two West German ones.⁷¹ They arrived at Amman airport on the morning of 26 September, “all in good physical condition and good mood”.⁷² Mende as well as the Swiss and British consul were present when they were flown out, putting an end to the 1970 Jordanian hostage crisis.

But the episode had not quite finished yet. None of the Palestinian terrorists in Europe had actually been released. In a way, the Bern group states might just as well have considered the issue concluded, as all hostages still alive had been saved. But promises to the Palestinians had been made, and one can only suppose that the concerned states did not want to go back on their word in view of potential future crises. After some confusion, a British plane with a PFLP terrorist on board flew to Syria on 30 September 1970, landing in Munich for a quick stop to take the three West German prisoners on board.⁷³ For the West Germans, *Black September* seemed to have ended.

Wischnewski managed to leave Amman in late September, after having been stuck there for almost a week.⁷⁴ Celebrated in West Germany for the role he had played in ensuring an end to the crisis (after all, all West German hostages came out alive and well from the event), he personally seems to have been quite critical of Brandt’s and Scheel’s performance. In the archive of the *Auswärtiges Amt*, a draft reply of Scheel to an earlier Wischnewski letter can be found. In it, Scheel shows understanding for Wischnewski’s criticism, but “larger political interests did not allow the federal government to follow any other path than the one it took to free the hostages”.⁷⁵ Wischnewski’s original letter is not in the files, and it is not clear whether Scheel actually sent off his reply. But it is hard to think of another explanation for the presence of this draft than internal criticism by ‘Ben Wisch’, as Wischnewski was now nicknamed by the West German media.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ On the Jordanian civil war of 1970, see, for example, Salibi, Kamal. *Modern history of Jordan*. (London, 1998).

⁷¹ PA/AA (B36 374, unfoliated) 25.09.1970. *Mende (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁷² PA/AA (B36 374, p. 71) 26.09.1970. *Mende (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁷³ PA/AA (B36 375, unfoliated) 30.09.1970. *Notes by Redies*.

⁷⁴ PA/AA (B130 2799A, unfoliated) 23.09.1970. *Nowak (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁷⁵ PA/AA (B36 375, unfoliated). December 1970 (exact date unknown). *Draft letter by Scheel*.

⁷⁶ The other main West German protagonist, Mende, got out well from the crisis. Brandt himself was full of praise for the young diplomat, telling Scheel: „He belongs to the new generation of diplomats. They are great. At some point you have to tell them how much I like how they are different from the others.” (Der Spiegel *Personalien* (21.09.1970).) Mende would go on to later become German ambassador in Sudan (1993-96) and Jordan (1996-99).

The 1970 Dawson's Field Hijackings represented the first thorough engagement of West Germany with international terrorism. It was a novel experience, which West German foreign policy makers both in Bonn and abroad had to deal with. Both Fink and Guttman provide excellent and well researched accounts of what has also been called 'Skyjack Sunday', though neither found or used the cables of the *Auswärtiges Amt* on the matter.⁷⁷ Fink argues that despite criticism by its allies the FRG had gained stature during the crisis by showing its willingness to go it alone in the Middle East.⁷⁸ But what comes out more than before in view of the new archival material from the *Auswärtiges Amt* is how close negotiations between Bonn and the PFLP were all along. Moreover, the intense pressure the FRG felt itself, most importantly from the Americans, is noteworthy. The comments on Berlin by the American representative in the Bern group were heard loud and clear in Bonn. Palestinian terrorism had certainly moved beyond the stage of being a mere "nuisance" for the FRG.⁷⁹ Best to not be in a situation like Dawson's Field again, Brandt and Scheel might well have thought to themselves.

The FRG's concerns about terrorism in the Middle East went beyond Palestinian attacks. In June 1970, West German left-wing terrorist Andreas Baader, who had only recently escaped custody in West Berlin, arrived in Beirut together with Ulrike Meinhof, Gudrun Ensslin and Horst Mahler. Due to passport problems, they had been temporarily taken into custody by the Lebanese police. Bonn immediately, yet unsuccessfully tried to achieve their extradition. As Bonn's representative in Beirut explained to his superiors, the Baader-Meinhof Group had links to the Palestinian movement so that "the Lebanese treat the matter with a light hand".⁸⁰

Within a day, Baader and his fellow travellers had been freed, and it was unclear where they went next. Information pointed to Syria or Jordan as potential destinations.⁸¹ In Amman, Hille pleaded to not be instructed to seek the group's extradition if they were indeed in the city. The situation, only months before the civil war was about to break out, was sensitive enough and he did not want to increase tensions between the king and the PLO by asking the former to arrest allies of the latter.⁸² It is a telling example of how counterterrorism and foreign policy can overlap. Years before left-wing terrorism would escalate in West Germany, Hille clearly considered the demands of the latter to surpass those of the former.

⁷⁷ Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019): 144-9; Guttman, *Origins of counterterrorism* (2017): 27-56.

⁷⁸ Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019): 147.

⁷⁹ PA/AA (B130 2804A, unfoliated) 06.04.1970. *Bente to Brussels (NATO)*.

⁸⁰ PA/AA (B36 372, p. 231f) 09.06.1970. *Notes by Strothmann*.

⁸¹ PA/AA (B36 372, p. 235ff) 10.06.1970. *Nowak (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt*; PA/AA (B36 372, p. 238) 18.06.1970. *Nowak (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁸² PA/AA (B36 372, p. 242f) 06.07.1970. *Hille (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

From 1970 onwards, the FRG was embroiled in Palestinian terrorism. Diplomacy and counterterrorism became intricately linked, as the West German government hoped to avoid further Palestinian terror on West German soil through direct communication with the Palestinian movement. Bonn's perspective on the Palestinian question was starting to change fundamentally.

4. Politics as counterterrorism: talking to the Palestinians, 1971-1973

The most important consequence of this West German embroilment in terrorism was an increased effort by Bonn to set up communication channels to the Palestinian movement. Sporadic contacts on a working level, which had been established in the aftermath of the Riem attack and Dawson's Field Hijackings, failed to prevent further violence such as the infamous 1972 Munich Massacre. In its aftermath, the FRG's Middle Eastern policy was temporarily unhinged, as relations to both Israel and the Arabs were in crisis. The *Auswärtiges Amt* significantly stepped up its engagement with the Palestinian movement, imploring Arab leaders to lean on Arafat to stop further violence on West German soil. It also set up regular communications to the PLO, but stopped short of recognising the organisation outright.

The meeting with Sartawi in reaction to the Riem attacks in February 1970 might have been a one-off affair, but more regular conversations between officials of the *Auswärtiges Amt* with Palestinian representatives started soon after Dawson's Field. In November 1970, Nowak in Lebanon talked to the chairman of the PFLP Beirut branch. Their meeting, Nowak stated, was influenced by Black September. This "let it appear advantageous to have the opportunity for contact in special circumstances [...]. We exchanged phone numbers."⁸³ In Cairo, the West German head of the delegation, Walter Jesser, reported talks between one of his staff members with the deputy head of the PLO headquarters in the city.⁸⁴ The picture is completed by a telex from Mende to Bonn in January 1971, in which he reports a conversation with a "close confidant of Jassir [sic] Arafat".⁸⁵ There was also an effort made to strengthen informal West German-Palestinian networks outside the Middle East, as is shown by a message of Nowak to Bonn. A senior Fatah representative was about to take up a position in the Geneva delegation of the Arab League. The West German diplomats there, Nowak proposed, should get in contact

⁸³ PA/AA (B36 402, p. 441ff) 02.11.1970. *Nowak (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

⁸⁴ PA/AA (B36 402, p. 451ff) 11.11.1970. *Jesser (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

⁸⁵ PA/AA (B36 403, p. 16f) 27.01.1971. *Mende (Amman) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

with the delegate, as he spoke German and had a German wife.⁸⁶ On a working level, networks between the *Auswärtiges Amt* and the Palestinian movement started to form.

This effort was motivated by a sense of necessity in Bonn, as contacts were considered useful to avert future crises. However, there was now also an element of anxious awe and maybe even of fear in Bonn when it came to the question of Palestinian terrorism. When in June 1972 the *Auswärtiges Amt* was informed by the FRG's domestic security service that Wadi Haddad, leader of the PFLP's military arm, might be travelling to Bonn with a fake Syrian diplomatic passport, the *Auswärtiges Amt* advised against an arrest.⁸⁷ It would be hard to prove Haddad's involvement in terror attacks in a West German court, and in any case there would be a risk of retaliation by his followers.⁸⁸ The government in Bonn still thought that the cup of Palestinian terror might pass the FRG. But these hopes would be disappointed.

1972 would bring the most infamous of all Palestinian attacks to West Germany. Munich was hosting the summer Olympics when a Palestinian commando group of the Black September Organisation (BSO) took eleven Israeli athletes hostage on 5 September. A failed attempt to free the hostages by the Munich police ended in the death of the athletes and a number of the terrorists.⁸⁹

Bizarrely enough, the attack's most immediate negative impact did not concern West Germany's relations with Israel. While the Israeli public was fuming at West German incompetence in dealing with the crisis, Israeli prime minister Golda Meir publicly defended Brandt for political reasons.⁹⁰ Instead, a severe crisis in relations to the Arab states ensued, which at times even threatened the recently re-established diplomatic relations with states such as Egypt.

In Munich, the Palestinian commandos had demanded to be flown out to Egypt. Calling President Sadat, Brandt had been told that the Egyptian president was unavailable and in his absence Egypt's prime minister refused to allow the Palestinians to fly to Cairo.⁹¹ Thus, after the attack, a West German government spokesperson publicly complained about this Egyptian behaviour.⁹² Moreover, in response to domestic pressure Brandt felt compelled to show a tough reaction against the attack. His government therefore banned two Palestinian student

⁸⁶ PA/AA (B36 403, p. 80f) 30.06.1971. *Nowak (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

⁸⁷ Haddad would soon thereafter be expelled from the PFLP and set up his own, more militant, organization called "PFLP – External Operations".

⁸⁸ PA/AA (B130 9863A, unfoliated) 09.06.1972. *Von Schenk to State Secretary.*

⁸⁹ Dahlke, *Anschlag auf Olympia* (2006).

⁹⁰ Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019): 185ff.; see also AAPD 25.09.1972. Document 289. *Puttkamer (Tel Aviv) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

⁹¹ AAPD 05.09.1972. Document 257. *Notes by Niemöller.*

⁹² PA/AA (B36 525, unfoliated) 11.9.01972. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt.* See also AAPD 07.09.1972. Document 259. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

organisations (GUPS and GUPA) in West Germany and introduced special security measures for Arab travellers from and to the FRG. Every visa application was to be checked against lists of suspects, and “[e]very Arab, for whom it cannot be excluded that he is a security risk, is to be rejected.”⁹³ An internal document, in which the West German Ministry for the Interior outlined the new security procedures to the *Auswärtiges Amt*, went even further: “If the Arab is travelling to the FRG as tourist, a security risk cannot be routinely excluded.”⁹⁴

Taken together, these measures caused outrage in the Arab states generally and in Egypt specifically. Shortly after the Munich attack, Bonn’s ambassador Hans-Georg Steltzer was summoned by the Egyptian foreign minister, who heavily reproached the West German government for its allegedly anti-Arab reaction to the crisis. The Arab media in particular slammed West Germany. “Right now, the Federal Republic of Germany unfortunately comes out in the local press as an emotionless, brutal police state with racist tendencies, as subservient to Israeli interests, of whom from an Arab viewpoint nothing positive can be expected anymore.”⁹⁵ The Tunisian foreign office even demanded that the West Germans extend the special security measures to Israeli travellers to the FRG, too, in the spirit of “even-handedness”.⁹⁶ Ultimately, however, the crisis cooled down over time. By November, Steltzer in Cairo reported that it was “in the process of subsiding”.⁹⁷ He explained that the Egyptian government had wielded anti-West German rhetoric mostly in order to not look weak in the public eye, without a real interest to substantially hurt the West German-Egyptian relations.⁹⁸

But there was little respite in Bonn. By November the FRG was in Israel’s bad books, as Brandt’s administration had freed the three surviving Palestinian attackers from Munich in exchange for an airplane hijacked on 29 October. The architect of the Munich Massacre, Abu Daoud, even claimed in his autobiography that the West German government had offered him USD 9 million to engineer the attack on Lufthansa Flight 615. Wolffsohn finds the argument credible, but to date there is no evidence found in German archives to substantiate this assertion.⁹⁹ Moreover, Wolffsohn argues that the entire episode must have been staged with the consent of the West German government, as Bonn’s agreement to swap the imprisoned Palestinian prisoners came too quickly and smoothly for it to have been a spontaneous decision.¹⁰⁰ On this latter observation he is right, but most likely for the wrong reasons: after

⁹³ PA/AA (B36 509, p. 26) 07.09.1972. *Smoydzin (BMI) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ AAPD 09.10.1982. Document 318. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁹⁶ AAPD 12.09.1972. Document 265. *Naupert (Tunis) to Frank*.

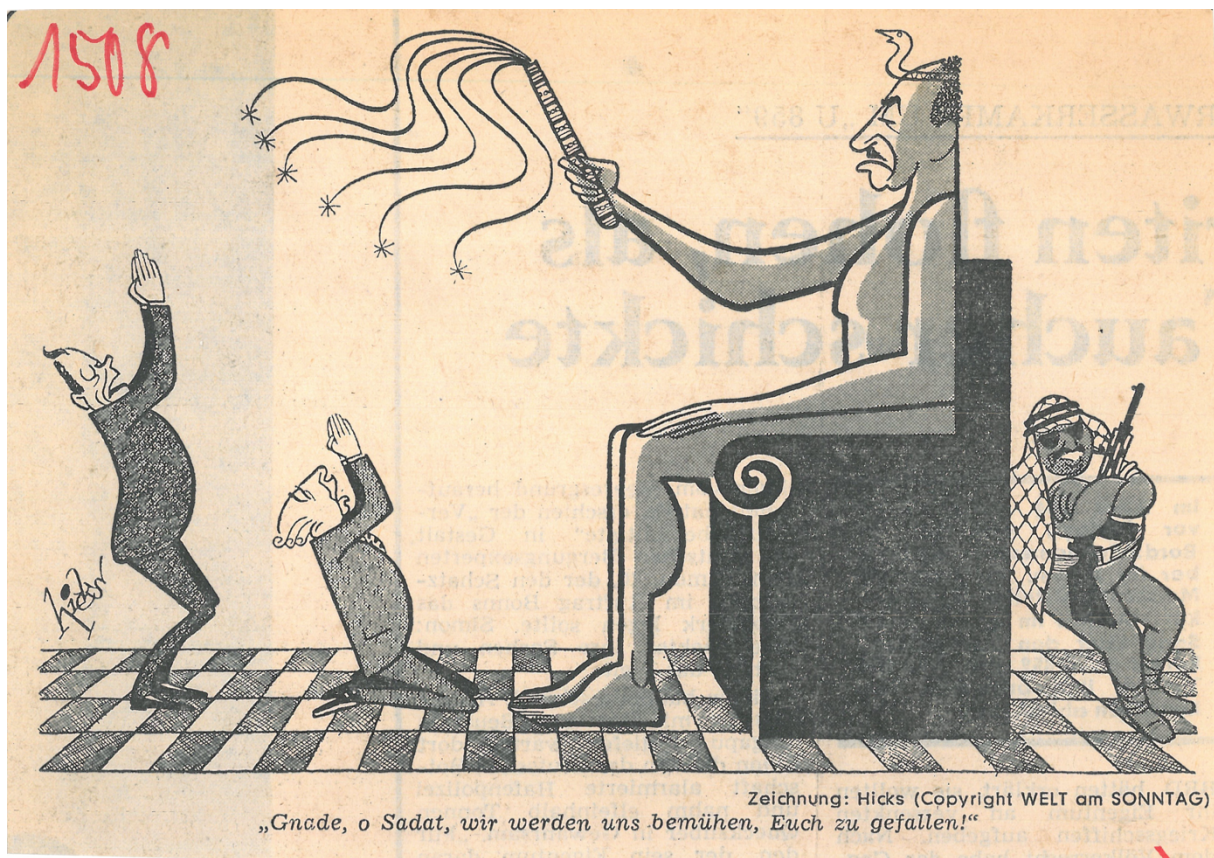
⁹⁷ PA/AA (B36 525, unfoliated) 16.11.1972. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁹⁸ PA/AA (B36 525, unfoliated) 19.10.1972. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁹⁹ Wolffsohn, *Friedenskanzler* (2018): 98ff.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*: 84.

all, such a debate about the benefit of releasing terrorists before they are freed through further terror acts happened already in the summer of 1970.¹⁰¹ At the time, the *Auswärtiges Amt* had ruled out such a deal, only for the West German government to release the Riem attackers a few weeks later after the Dawson's Field Hijackings. It is quite possible that Brandt's government felt they were learning from past experience – all much less conspiratorial than Wolffsohn would let on. Guttman also refutes the notion that the attack was staged by the West Germans, pointing to classified communication between the FRG and its Western allies. She shows that Bonn feared an event like the Tripoli hijacking for weeks and continuously asked for and shared intelligence with its partners on possible attacks. Why would the West Germans have done this if they were planning the hijacking themselves?¹⁰² In any case: whether the attack had been engineered or not, now not even Meir was willing to defend Brandt.¹⁰³ In late 1972, West Germany had few friends in Israel for a while. Once again, terrorism had shown its ability to unhinge West Germany's Middle Eastern policy.



Picture 7: West Germany newspaper *Welt am Sonntag* takes aim at its government's handling of the Munich Massacre: Scheel and Brandt portrayed kowtowing before Sadat and Palestinian terrorism. This is yet another illustration of how significant the foreign political dimension of the terror attack was.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ See subchapter 3 (pp 117ff.).

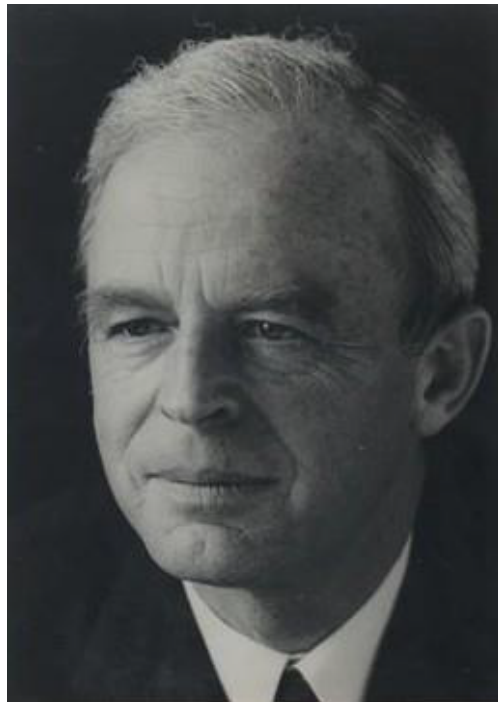
¹⁰² Guttman, *Origins of counterterrorism* (2017): 221ff.

¹⁰³ AAPD 30.10.1972. Document 352. *Puttkamer (Tel Aviv) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁰⁴ Courtesy of the AdL; Source: *Welt am Sonntag*, 17.09.1972. The caption reads: "Mercy, oh Sadat, we aim to please you!"

Bonn responded to Palestinian terror attacks by further intensifying its attempts to establish networks with the Palestinian movements. This happened on two levels: below and above a direct line of communication to the PLO's central committee. In the months following the Munich Massacre, Bonn's diplomats engaged both with Arab leaders who could lean on Arafat as well as with lower-level PLO functionaries linked to the organisation's leadership.

The initiative for this came out of the Middle East. Merely a week after Munich, Tunisian president Habib Bourguiba told West Germany's ambassador to Tunis "that he would ask [...] Arafat to come for a meeting in order to make clear to him that new terror acts would only harm the Palestinian effort."¹⁰⁵ Unsurprisingly, Bonn tried to take advantage of this top-down lever of influence on the Palestinians.¹⁰⁶ As a result, the State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt*, Paul Frank, headed to the Maghreb. He met Bourguiba as well as Muammar al-Ghaddafi, asking them to put pressure on Arafat on the FRG's behalf.¹⁰⁷



Picture 8: Hans-Georg Steltzer, West German ambassador to Egypt from 1972 to 1978. Less than a month after his arrival in Cairo, he successfully managed the severe crisis in bilateral relations in the aftermath of the Munich Massacre.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ AAPD 12.09.1972. Document 265. *Naupert (Tunis) to Frank*.

¹⁰⁶ While it was acknowledged in Bonn that the BSO had split up from the PLO and was not under Arafat's direct control (AAPD 19.09.1972. Document 280. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Frank*.), an analysis of the West German intelligence service (*Bundesnachrichtendienst – BND*) left no doubt that there was a clear link between the BSO and Fatah, the largest faction within the PLO and the one founded by Arafat himself (PA/AA (B130 9863A, unfoliated) 09.10.1972. *Report by Herrmann (BND)*.). See also Guttman, *Origins of counterterrorism* (2017): 205; Herf, *Undeclared wars with Israel* (2016): 158ff.

¹⁰⁷ AAPD 22.12.1972. Document 422. *Notes by Redies*.

¹⁰⁸ German Embassy, Cairo.

Both told Frank they would do so, and in January 1973 the West German embassy in Tunis reported of a conversation between Bourguiba and Arafat, according to which “the circles of the Palestinian resistance organisations, as far as they are united under Arafat, have decided to carry out no more terror acts in or against the Federal Republic”.¹⁰⁹ But of course, all this came at a price. Shortly before leaving for Tunis, Frank managed to gain, with some difficulty, an agreement by the West German Ministry of the Interior for “the intake of 2000 Tunisian guest workers for a Volkswagen plant and a corresponding increase of the ceiling [of guest workers] for Tunisia by 2000, if the Tunisians agree to cooperate in the security sector.”¹¹⁰ Today, migration is often discussed in the public in relation to the risk of terrorism. In 1972, it was the price to facilitate counterterrorism, and Bonn was willing to pay it.

To establish lines of communication to the PLO from bottom-up, the *Auswärtiges Amt* also focused on more contacts to Palestinians on a working level. For Frank “[this] is the pathway that promises the most success [for the prevention of further Palestinian attacks against the FRG] to [...] continue connections with the Palestinian organisations in order to quite generally clarify our relationship with the Palestinians”.¹¹¹ He was aware that such a policy did not guarantee success, as due to its fragmented nature the Palestinian movement did not have “one point of contact”.¹¹² But clearly the situation was considered grave enough to at least give it a try. In January 1973, the head of the *Auswärtiges Amt*’s Middle Eastern unit, Helmut Redies, had a number of meetings with Abdallah Frangie. Frangie had been the informal PLO’s representative in the Arab League’s office in Bonn from 1970 onwards.¹¹³ As a result, he now became the PLO’s point man for the FRG. In their conversation, Frangie made several points as to a “clarification of the relationship to the Federal Republic”.¹¹⁴ Amongst them was the demand that Bonn’s special aid package for Palestinian refugees, which had run out in 1972, would be extended. Moreover, unlike before the money should no longer go through UNRWA but directly to the PLO. Ultimately, the cabinet agreed to an extension of the aid package, and while it would still go through the UN, “the Palestinian side is content with some participation in the distribution of the fund (right of proposal for projects)”.¹¹⁵ Thus, there is a clear indication that both the extension of the aid package and its design were shaped by Palestinian demands and Bonn’s desire to prevent further attacks on West German soil.

¹⁰⁹ AAPD 29.01.1973. Document 29. *Naupert (Tunis) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

¹¹⁰ PA/AA (B130 9863A, unfoliated) 19.12.1972. *Frank to D3.*

¹¹¹ PA/AA (B130 9720A, unfoliated) 10.01.1973. *Frank to Rutschke (BMI).*

¹¹² PA/AA (B36 104941, unfoliated) 04.06.1973. *Frank to Bahr (Chancellery).*

¹¹³ Die Zeit. *Arafats Mann in Bonn.* (31.08.1979).

¹¹⁴ AAPD 05.01.1973. Document 4. *Notes by Redies.*

¹¹⁵ AAPD 22.02.1973. Document 63. *Notes by Redies.*

Shortly thereafter, in April 1973, the West German embassy in Beirut was ordered to establish contact with the Palestinians again “in as inconspicuous a manner as possible”: “It is our desire to improve [...] the FRG’s image amongst the Palestinians, in order to thereby simultaneously prevent new attacks in the FRG or against its institutions abroad.”¹¹⁶ For this, Frangie introduced a West German diplomat in Beirut to Mohammed Youssef Al-Najjar, or Abu Youssef, a close confidant of Arafat’s. Abu Youssef was, unlike Frangie, a leading member of the PLO, part of its central committee and thus a much more direct channel of communication for Bonn to the Palestinian leadership.¹¹⁷

However, the complicated situation of the Middle East made it challenging for West German diplomats to maintain such networks. In April 1973, the embassy in Beirut informed the *Auswärtiges Amt* that during an “Israeli raid on Beirut” the “Palestinian leadership has been decimated”.¹¹⁸ Amongst the victims of the attack, which had been carried out by the Israelis to kill several of the planners of Munich, was Abu Youssef. One can read between the lines the disappointment by the West German embassy staff, which considered the victims members of the Palestinian “moderate wing”.¹¹⁹ It would take the West Germans almost two years to re-establish a link to the PLO at such a high level again.

Overall, one has to concede that in the early 1970s terror had paid off for the Palestinians to a certain extent. It was in response to events such as the Dawson’s Field Hijackings and the Munich Massacre that the West German government acknowledged the need to set up networks of communication with the Palestinian movement, including its violent components. Contacts were, at least for the moment, unofficial and did not signify a recognition of the PLO as representative of the Palestinian people. Nonetheless, on a working level the FRG was beginning to live with the PLO as an independent factor of Middle Eastern politics, which was a significant success for Arafat’s organisation. These contacts were motivated by the expectation that such channels of communication could help to avert further attacks on West Germans. Bonn increasingly felt the impact of the Arab-Israeli conflict and, as Chapter II has shown as well, no longer remained on the latter’s side-lines.

¹¹⁶ AAPD 07.04.1973. Document 98. *Nowak (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹¹⁷ PA/AA (B130 9720A, unfoliated) 08.01.1973. *Notes by Redies*.

¹¹⁸ AAPD 07.04.1973. Document 98. *Nowak (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* Officially, Bonn remained silent on the raid, but summoned the Israeli ambassador to the foreign office, complaining that Mossad had used a West German passport as cover for one of its agents. The passport had been found on the site of the attack (PA/AA (B26 104931, unfoliated) 19.04.1973. *Niemöller to D3.*).

5. The October War and the emerging issue of Palestinian statehood

Up to the 1973 October War, the FRG had reacted to the emergence of the Palestinian question by covertly establishing lines of communication with the Palestinians on various levels. But after the war, the issue had moved into the focus of international public attention and no longer could only be addressed behind the scenes. As Brandt admitted to two Arab oil ministers by January 1974: “In regard to the Palestinian problem there has been a profound change, not only with us but also in the Arab world.”¹²⁰ Various UN debates on the issue forced the FRG to refine its international stance on the Palestinian question, leading it ever closer to recognition of a two-state solution.

Initially, the key arena for a West German re-assessment of the Palestinian question in the aftermath of the October War was the European level. The French in particular argued for a more pronounced European attitude towards the Arab-Israeli conflict once the fighting had stopped. Upon their insistence, a declaration was formulated which the nine European foreign ministers published on 6 November 1973 at a meeting in Brussels. Its fourth point demanded “recognition that in the establishment of a just and lasting peace account must be taken of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians”.¹²¹ A month later, the European heads of government confirmed this declaration at their summit in Copenhagen.¹²² For European policy in the Middle East, 1973 was a turning point which will be described in detail in Chapter V of this thesis.¹²³ More importantly from a perspective of the Palestinian question, Copenhagen represented a ground-breaking moment, as for the first time there was a significant public acknowledgment of a role for the Palestinians in achieving peace in the Middle East.¹²⁴

Why did the FRG and its European allies change their position and publicly recognise a role for the Palestinians within the Arab-Israeli conflict? In effect, the October War had clarified that some sort of peaceful solution would be necessary for the Middle East. The war had challenged the aura of Israel’s overwhelming military superiority. It could not afford to live in an entirely hostile environment forever.¹²⁵ But the Arab states made clear that any sort of solution would have to include a settlement of the Palestinian question. As a Palestinian

¹²⁰ AAPD 16.01.1974. Document 10. *Conversation of Brandt with Abdessalam (Algeria) and Yamani (Saudi Arabia)*.

¹²¹ EEC, *Declaration of the Nine Foreign Ministers on the Situation in the Middle East* (06.11.1973). See also Chapter V.

¹²² Zakariah, M. *Oil, War and European Initiatives for Peace in the Middle East 1973-74*. *Middle Eastern Issues* 48:4 (2012): 591.

¹²³ See Moekli, *European foreign policy during the Cold War* (2009): 204.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ On Israel’s strategy towards its neighbours, see, for example, Shlaim, Avi. *Iron Wall. Israel and the Arab world*. (London, 2014).

representative told West German ambassador Steltzer in Cairo just after the war had ended, it was a “question of political principle to what extent the rights of the Palestinians were supported by the international community”.¹²⁶ Steltzer sent a warning to his superiors in Bonn: a Palestinian state was becoming a realistic possibility, and the FRG should start to prepare for it.¹²⁷

Shortly after, there were even rumours that a Palestinian ‘government-in-exile’ might be formed in London.¹²⁸ Whilst considered unrealistic, the *Auswärtiges Amt* still decided to give the question its full attention. An internal memorandum was drafted by its international law unit, concluding that “from a traditional legal perspective, the recognition of the PLO as government in exile for a Palestinian state would represent an anomaly”.¹²⁹ After all, the FRG would thereby recognise a state which did not even exist yet. For the moment, the memorandum concluded, a recognition of any Palestinian government in exile was therefore incomprehensible for the ministry’s lawyers, but their advice ended on a warning: attempts by the ‘Third World’ to introduce “a ‘new’ international law” could change this interpretation.¹³⁰

Even without a Palestinian government in exile, the FRG was still required to engage further with the Palestinian question. By late 1974, Arab states and their allies from the non-aligned movement proposed in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to include the PLO as an observer in the UN and officially recognise it as representative of the Palestinian people. This challenged Bonn to be more precise about its public position towards the Palestinian question. After all, the Copenhagen Declaration had been rather vague and unspecific. What exactly were these “legitimate rights of the Palestinians” that the Europeans had acknowledged in Brussels?¹³¹ And who should represent the Palestinians in their efforts to claim these rights?

Bonn’s first reaction to the emergence of the Palestinian question on a UN level was to seek a European response. But the EEC states were unable to reach a unified stance on any of the resolutions tabled in autumn 1974 at the UNGA. Bonn would abstain on two of them, while voting against a resolution granting the PLO observer status at the UN. All resolutions were accepted by the UNGA with overwhelming majority nonetheless.¹³²

¹²⁶ PA/AA (B36 104865, unfoliated) 14.11.1973. *Steltzer (Cairo) to foreign office*. A conference of Islamic states further strengthened the position of the Palestinians by stressing the need to recognise their rights in a 1974 conference in Lahore (PA/AA (B36 104864, unfoliated) 27.02.1974. *Lankes (Beirut) to Auswärtiges Amt*).

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ PA/AA (B130 9907A, unfoliated) 23.01.1974. *Schmidt-Pauli (London) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹²⁹ PA/AA (B36 104864, unfoliated) 08.04.1974. *Memorandum by Petersmann*.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ EEC, *Declaration of the Nine Foreign Ministers on the Situation in the Middle East* (06.11.1973).

¹³² See Chapter V for a detailed analysis of the unsuccessful negotiations for a united European vote.

Importantly, however, the UN debate on the Palestinian question had confirmed to the *Auswärtiges Amt* that it could no longer close its eyes before a larger role for the PLO in Middle Eastern politics. Moreover, the West German government increasingly seemed to lose control over the issue. In December 1974, CDU politician Gerhard Schröder independently organised a meeting with Arafat in Damascus. Schröder had been West German foreign minister from 1961 to 1966, under Adenauer and Erhard. Since 1969, he was chairman of the select committee on foreign affairs in the West German *Bundestag* and thus something of a shadow foreign minister in the FRG. His decision to meet Arafat, it would appear, was not coordinated either with his own party or the *Auswärtiges Amt*, as both distanced themselves from the entire affair.¹³³ Still, it was the first meeting of such a senior West German politician with Arafat, and while it remained an isolated incident the entire episode illustrated that the West German government was increasingly unable to uphold its previous stance on the Palestinian question.¹³⁴

By early 1975, West German foreign policy underwent an internal shift. It started with a memorandum by Walter Jesser, by now assistant director (*Ministerialdirigent*) in the *Auswärtiges Amt* with responsibility for the Middle East and as such one of the most senior diplomats on that topic. He wrote a memorandum entitled “the German position on the Palestinian question” and concluded that the FRG would have to accept that “as sole representative of the Palestinian people the Arab side [...] is considering the PLO. [...]. We have to live with the PLO – and the PLO has to live with us”.¹³⁵

Jesser’s conclusions went far and in effect would have represented a fundamental U-turn for West German policy on the Palestinian question. In the long run, he recommended an extension of unofficial contacts that already existed with the PLO in Beirut, Damascus, Cairo and Bonn and an inclusion of the PLO into the new Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD).¹³⁶ Moreover, public West German declarations on the Arab-Israeli conflict should move away from what Jesser considered one-sidedness, as they only included demands for the PLO but not for Israel to make compromises for a peace settlement. Even though Jesser’s recommendations were not implemented right away, they are significant as his memorandum represents the first time that

¹³³ AAPD 13.12.1974. Document 371. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹³⁴ Wischnewski’s meeting with Arafat during the Dawson’s Field Hijackings happened in a crisis situation. Moreover, Wischnewski neither was nor had been a government minister at the time.

¹³⁵ AAPD 17.02.1975. Document 29. *Memorandum by Jesser*.

¹³⁶ A later memorandum clarifies that contacts in Beirut and Cairo happened on embassy level, whereas in Damascus they were „limited on occasional meetings at social gatherings“ (AAPD 24.03.1975. Document 62. *Memorandum by Lahn*).

the *Auswärtiges Amt* engaged in a principal fashion with the political dimension of the Palestinian question.

By March 1975, a much less ambitious yet still significant policy shift was instead decided upon in the *Auswärtiges Amt*. It emerged through another memorandum, this time written by Alfons Böcker, Redies successor as head of the Middle Eastern unit in the *Auswärtiges Amt*. In it, it comes out clearly that a major worry for the West Germans was to be left behind by international trends. Böcker stressed that “the most important reason for our extremely restrained attitude towards the PLO was our consideration for American efforts towards a gradual solution of the Middle East conflict.”¹³⁷ By 1975, however, these efforts were stagnating and an international recognition of the PLO was likely.¹³⁸ West Germany’s allies, Böcker noted, had already established regular contacts with the PLO: French and Italians on ambassadorial level, British and Americans on a working level. “It cannot be our interest to be left behind by such a development.”¹³⁹ Moreover, the desire of the PLO to be included in peace talks would also represent an incentive for it to curb any terrorism. As a conclusion, the memorandum recommended a subtle intensification of working level contacts with the Palestinians, still hesitating to cross the line of official contacts on the highest levels of policymaking. However, similar to Jesser, Böcker recommended a more nuanced approach in West Germany’s public communication.

Indeed, in line with Böcker’s memorandum soon three things changed in West German policy on the Palestinian question. Firstly, the West German government started to publicly equate Israeli and Palestinian rights and obligations with the search for peace in the Middle East. In an interview of the West German foreign minister with an Egyptian newspaper in April 1975, Genscher linked the rights and responsibilities of Israel and the Palestinians: “There is an internal relationship between the secure existence of the state of Israel and the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians in the sense that I am talking about: both rights have to be respected, without compromising each other.”¹⁴⁰

Secondly, the West German government gave up its resistance against PLO representation in the FRG by the following year.¹⁴¹ A ‘Palestinian Information Office’ in Bonn would be tolerated, although the *Auswärtiges Amt* did not confer any special diplomatic status

¹³⁷ AAPD 24.03.1975. Document 62. *Memorandum by Lahn*.

¹³⁸ On Kissinger’s mission, see Chapter II.

¹³⁹ AAPD 24.03.1975. Document 62. *Memorandum by Lahn*.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ AP news report, *Bonn wants to be more flexible towards the PLO* (25.03.1976).

to it.¹⁴² The office was led by Abdallah Frangie, who had been the PLO's point man for West Germany since 1970.¹⁴³

Finally, in the European arena Bonn supported a recognition of Palestinian statehood at least as an abstract concept. In their 1977 London Declaration, the EEC member states pointed to a Palestinian "national identity [...] which would take into account the need for a homeland for the Palestinian people".¹⁴⁴ This was not quite an acceptance of the idea of a separate Palestinian state, but it stopped just short of it.¹⁴⁵

The PLO's breakthrough at the UN had triggered to a cascade of policy shifts in West Germany's attitude to the Palestinian question in the mid-1970s. Almost within a year, the West German government had increased contacts to the PLO, allowed it a de-facto political representation in Bonn and rhetorically equated the Israeli right of existence with some sort of similar right for the Palestinians. The latter's shape was left unclear, as was – at least officially – the role of the PLO in the path towards a Palestinian entity. The *Auswärtiges Amt* under Genscher felt that global trends forced the FRG to accept a stronger role for the PLO in Middle Eastern politics.

6. A third crisis of terror and the recognition of the PLO

By 1977, terrorism once again entered the fray of West German Middle Eastern policy. This time, it was the link between Palestinian and West German left-wing terror groups that caused what has become one of the most memorable terrorism-related crises in modern German history. In the 'German autumn' (*Deutscher Herbst*) of 1977, Schmidt's government was faced with terrorism both at home by the Red Army Faction (*Rote Armee Fraktion* – RAF) and internationally by the hijacking of the Lufthansa plane *Landshut*. Ironically, however, the PLO gained stature in Bonn through the crisis as it was not associated with the event. Later, a secret written deal between the FRG and PLO solidified cooperation on security questions. This, together with West German disappointment about Sadat's inability to provide a solution to the Palestinian question at Camp David, led the FRG to the culmination of its Palestinian policy: public support for a two-state solution, and an indirect recognition of the PLO via the 1980 Venice Declaration by the EEC.

¹⁴² PA/AA (B36 108756, unfoliated) 24.05.1976. *Notes by 310*.

¹⁴³ *Die Zeit*, *Arafats Mann in Bonn* (31.08.1979).

¹⁴⁴ AAPD 04.07.1977. Document 174. *Circular by Engels*.

¹⁴⁵ See also PA/AA (B36 109111, unfoliated) 04.11.1976. *310 to UN delegation (New York)*.

On 5 September 1977, RAF members kidnapped Hans-Martin Schleyer, the chairman of the Federation of German Industries (*Bundesverband der deutschen Industrie* – BDI).¹⁴⁶ Their aim was to force the release of leading imprisoned RAF members such as Andreas Baader or Gudrun Ensslin by the West German government. But the Schmidt administration was unwilling to give in to the terrorists' demands and instead hoped that a large-scale manhunt would allow it to track down the kidnappers and free Schleyer. Thus, the leader of a PFLP splinter group, Wadi Haddad – the same man whose arrest the *Auswärtiges Amt* had advised against in 1972 – proposed to the RAF a plan to put more pressure on the FRG: on 13 October 1977, a Palestinian commando hijacked the Lufthansa airplane *Landshut* with 90 passengers and personal on board and demanded the release of Baader, Ensslin and the other imprisoned RAF members.¹⁴⁷

Not for the first time, the West German government was confronted with a dilemma between steadfastness and risking the lives of hostages. Schmidt himself was deeply troubled by the question, discussing it not only with his confidants and cabinet colleagues in Bonn but also with international partners.¹⁴⁸ Ultimately, he and his government concluded that the FRG's newly formed special police force GSG 9 should free the passengers of the *Landshut*.

By 14 October, the *Landshut* had reached Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where it remained for two days. Here, Schmidt hoped for a police operation by the GSG 9, but in view of the large number of Palestinian guest workers in his country the ruler of Dubai refused.¹⁴⁹ Schmidt held various conversations with politicians from the Emirates and even with British prime minister Callaghan, hoping that Britain, the former protective power of the Gulf states, could swing Emirati opinion in the FRG's favour.¹⁵⁰ In a desperate final phone call, Schmidt personally leaned on the UAE's ruler, Sheikh Zayed, to not let the *Landshut* leave Dubai as the airfield there was considered well-suited for a police operation.¹⁵¹ He impressed upon Zayed the urgency of the situation and asked “in the name of humanity” to prevent the *Landshut* from taking off, if need be even by shooting at its tires if it were to start moving.¹⁵² Zayed, however, was unwilling to comply, and instead urged Schmidt to let the RAF prisoners

¹⁴⁶ The BDI was and still is the leading association of German industrial companies.

¹⁴⁷ Peters, Butz. *Hundert Tage: Die RAF-Chronik 1977*. (Munich, 2017).

¹⁴⁸ On the internal deliberations and decision-making processes of the West German government during the crisis, see Kraushaar, Wolfgang. *Die Geschichte der RAF. Staatliches Handeln*. In: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. “Dossier: Die Geschichte der RAF.” (2007). See also AAPD 14.10.1977. Document 284. *Telephone call between Schmidt and Giscard d'Estaing*.

¹⁴⁹ AAPD 15.10.1977. Document 288. *Lewalter to Genscher (currently Teheran)*.

¹⁵⁰ See AAPD 16.10.1977. Document 289. *Telephone call between Schmidt and Callaghan*; AAPD 16.10.1977. Document 290. *Telephone call between Schmidt and UAE minister of defence Sheikh al-Maktum*.

¹⁵¹ AAPD 15.10.1977. Document 288. *Lewalter to Genscher (currently Teheran)*.

¹⁵² AAPD 16.10.1977. Document 291. *Telephone call between Schmidt and Sheikh Zayed Sultan al-Nahayan*.

go free. Schmidt pointed to political and practical difficulties for doing so. The protocol of their conversation captures the drama of these minutes. It ends on the following note:

He [Schmidt] once again asked to consider that the departure of the airplane would certainly lead to the death of all passengers. The chancellor closed with assurances of the highest respect for Sheikh Zayed. In this moment the chancellor was informed by his situation centre [added by hand by Schmidt] that the hijacked plane took off in Dubai one minute ago [added by hand by Schmidt].¹⁵³

In the end, all but one of the hostages were successfully freed the following day in Mogadishu, where finally GSG 9 was authorised to carry out a rescue operation. Schleyer, however, could not be saved and was found executed two days later in the trunk of a car in France.¹⁵⁴

Pushed to its limits by terrorism at home, the social-liberal coalition was intent to cut the link between domestic left-wing terrorism and international Palestinian terrorism. As a result, the FRG lobbied for an international convention against terrorism, which proved a difficult endeavour.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, it tried to find bilateral agreements to end state support for terrorism linked to West Germany. These efforts were successful in the case of Algeria,¹⁵⁶ but not with Iraq.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, security cooperation was increased with pro-Western states such as Qatar, Tunisia, Morocco and, in particular, Saudi Arabia.¹⁵⁸ This included more exchange of information and visits to GSG 9 facilities for learning purposes.¹⁵⁹

Maybe the most important consequence of the *Landshut* incident in the context of the Palestinian question, however, concerned Bonn's relationship to the PLO. The latter had acted quite cooperatively during the crisis. The mainstream Palestinian umbrella organisation had long broken with Wadi Haddad's much more radical approach.¹⁶⁰ At the start of the *Landshut* crisis, the airplane had landed shortly in Cyprus, where PLO representatives had attempted to negotiate with the terrorists about the release of the hostages. Although they had been unsuccessful, their efforts were considered genuine and recognised by the *Auswärtiges Amt*, as was Arafat's dissociation from the action.¹⁶¹

The West German government tried to build on this. Just a month after the *Landshut* affair had ended, on 24 November, Wischnewski – by now State Secretary in the Chancellery

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ On the 'German Autumn', see also Varon, Jeremy. *Bringing the war home: the Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and revolutionary violence in the sixties and seventies*. (Berkeley, 2004); Aust, Stefan. *Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex*. (Hamburg, 1985).

¹⁵⁵ See Blumenau, *The United Nations and Terrorism* (2014).

¹⁵⁶ PA/AA (B36 119905, unfoliated) 17.11.1977. *Fröhlich (BMI) to Van Well (AA)*.

¹⁵⁷ PA/AA (B36 119912, unfoliated) 09.12.1977. *Notes by Jesser*.

¹⁵⁸ PA/AA (B36 135632, unfoliated) 08.03.1978. *Notes by Montfort*.

¹⁵⁹ PA/AA (B36 135632, unfoliated) 23.02.1978. *Notes by Schattmann*.

¹⁶⁰ New York Times. *Wadi Haddad, Palestinian Hijacking Strategist, Dies*. (02.04.1978).

¹⁶¹ AAPD 17.10.1977. Document 293. *Telephone call between Schmidt and Wischnewski (currently Mogadischu)*.

(*Bundeskanzleramt*) – took part in a secret meeting. Dahlke found the protocol of this meeting 1977 in Wischnewski's personal papers.¹⁶² Organised by Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky, its main participants from the Palestinian side were two men officially sought for terrorism by the authorities. The first was Arafat's 'crown prince' and 'interior minister' of the PLO Ali Hassan Salameh, who years before in 1972 had headed the BSO's intelligence unit.¹⁶³ The second was another close confidant of Arafat: Issam al-Sartawi, the same man who had been behind the 1970 Riem attack and who had initiated contacts to the FRG's diplomats thereafter.¹⁶⁴ Seven years before he had helped to bring Palestinian terrorism to West Germany. Now, he was part of a group of people who would work together to permanently keep attacks out of the FRG. They made a simple deal: in return for "some sort of recognition", the PLO would share its knowledge about European terror cells.¹⁶⁵ However, Dahlke unfortunately was not able to show to what extent the agreement was actually implemented. On the one hand, the Austrian government shortly afterwards granted the Palestinian observer at the UN International Development Organisation (UNIDO) full diplomatic status, which would have been in the spirit of the deal. On the other hand, Dahlke's claim that in 1978 the 'Palestinian Information Office' was recognised as unofficial Palestinian representation in Bonn is somewhat surprising; the archive of the *Auswärtiges Amt* shows that the office had been established already in late 1976 and there is no evidence that the step to its formal recognition was undertaken two years later.¹⁶⁶ Therefore, it is unclear how exactly the FRG held its side of the bargain. Maybe the PLO was satisfied with the Austrian action for the moment, or there was a normalisation of working-level relations between the informal Palestinian representation and the *Auswärtiges Amt* in Bonn, which has not been documented in archived material. Be that as it may, "some sort of recognition" for the PLO would soon ensue by the FRG.¹⁶⁷

The *Landshut* hijacking and Wischnewski's negotiations with the PLO almost coincided with Sadat's trip to Jerusalem, which initiated the Camp David process and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979.¹⁶⁸ Sadat's inability to link the latter to a solution of the Palestinian question would result in heavy criticism from the Europeans and is crucial to understand the West German shift towards supporting an independent Palestinian state.

¹⁶² Dahlke, *Das Wischnewski-Protokoll* (2009).

¹⁶³ Guttman, *Origins of counterterrorism* (2017): 203.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*: 208.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*: 211.

¹⁶⁶ PA/AA (B36 108756, unfoliated) 24.05.1976. *Notes by 310*.

¹⁶⁷ Dahlke, *Das Wischnewski-Protokoll* (2009): 211.

¹⁶⁸ See Chapter II.

As has previously been shown, by the late 1970s the concept of Palestinian statehood had already emerged. However, there were two opposing views as to how a Palestinian state could manifest itself: would it have to be independent, in which case the PLO was more likely to take over its administration, or could it also consist in confederation with Jordan? In September 1978, shortly before the Camp David accords, the West German government indicated its support for the former, less revolutionary option. In a letter to Carter, chancellor Schmidt clarified that while he recognised the right of the Palestinians to their own homeland, “a close link with Jordan would correspond both to the political constellation and the demographic conditions”.¹⁶⁹

But at Camp David, Sadat failed to reach any *de facto* agreement on Palestinian self-determination. While the agreement with the Israelis set a three-month deadline for the finalisation and implementation of measures concerning Egypt and Israel, the same deadline with respect to the occupied territories was set at five years.¹⁷⁰ Thus, Israel could and ultimately would simply pull out of efforts for the settlement of the Palestinian question after normalisation of relations with Egypt.¹⁷¹ In early 1979, it became clear that Camp David’s ultimate outcome would be a separate Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty without a settlement for the Palestinian question. At this point, the Schmidt-Genscher administration seems to have lost faith in Arab statesmen to successfully advocate for Palestinian self-determination and would subsequently support an independent Palestinian state. As Genscher himself made clear in conversation with Ghaddafi in June 1979: “The Palestinians have to be enabled to enact their right to self-determination. For this, they need to have their own homeland.”¹⁷² No more references to a confederation. A month later, Willy Brandt – still chairman of the SPD – took part in a meeting with Kreisky and Arafat in Vienna. It is unclear to what extent this was coordinated with chancellor Helmut Schmidt, but the meeting certainly confirmed the trend towards acknowledging a role of the PLO in a genuine two-state approach.¹⁷³

Since 1974, the Palestinian question had been identified by Bonn as the core issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict. With the failure of Camp David to facilitate broader agreement on the latter, Bonn increasingly and informally switched to all-out support for an independent Palestinian state. One year later, the West Germans used the European arena to complete their *volte-face*.

¹⁶⁹ AAPD 05.09.1978. Document 255. *Schenk to Washington embassy*.

¹⁷⁰ AAPD 27.09.1978. Document 282. *Behrends (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁷¹ On developments in the implementation of Camp David, see AAPD 20.10.1978. Document 317. *Behrends (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁷² AAPD 19.06.1979. Document 180. *Conversation of Genscher with Ghaddafi*.

¹⁷³ Merseburger, *Willy Brandt* (2002): 756.

At the 1980 Venice Declaration, the EEC states not only recognised the right of the Palestinians to their own homeland, but would also for the first time openly acknowledge a role for the PLO in a peace settlement.¹⁷⁴

7. Conclusion: the link between diplomacy and counterterrorism

By the end of the 1970s the West German stance towards the Palestinian question had, after going through several iterations, reached a point where – in essence – it has remained up to this day: support for a two-state solution with an independent Palestinian state and recognition of the PLO as representative of the Palestinian people.¹⁷⁵

The West German government did not reach this point overnight. Initially, in the 1960s, it merely recognised the presence of a ‘refugee problem’, to which the FRG even saw a silver lining. Bonn hoped that humanitarian gestures towards Palestinian refugees could improve its standing in the Arab world as a whole. But from 1970 onwards, a gradual process led the FRG from ignoring to acknowledging the Palestinian question as pertinent. Then, it started to informally engage with the Palestinian movement and finally publicly acknowledged the legitimacy of the PLO’s claim to an independent state.

Throughout this process, the FRG was merely reacting to specific events rather than proactively shaping its Palestinian policy. It was reluctant to engage with the issue, as it guaranteed clashes with Israel. Thus, any change in its position happened only when it seemed unavoidable due to Arab pressure and the overarching demands of relations to the Arab states as a whole or due to a particularly vicious terror attack. Important were also fears about being left behind by international trends and the perceived link between the Palestinian question and a peace process in the Middle East. While debates about ‘solidarity with Palestine’ were no doubt present in domestic West German politics, these discussions did not play a significant role within foreign policy elites.¹⁷⁶ Overall, Bonn would recalibrate its Palestinian policy only to the slightest degree necessary until the next key event necessitated that it concede more ground to the Palestinian movement. By 1980, the FRG’s government had fundamentally altered its stance on the Palestinian question, but ironically enough the gradual process that led it there was shaped by passivity.

Ultimately, one has to acknowledge that, in the context of the 1970s, Palestinian terror attacks affecting the FRG had to an extent strengthened the position of the Palestinian

¹⁷⁴ EEC, *Venice Declaration* (13.06.1980). See also Chapter V of this thesis on the Venice Declaration and its impact.

¹⁷⁵ The FRG officially recognized the PLO in 1993 (see Dahlke, *Wischnewski-Protokoll* (2009): 214.)

¹⁷⁶ Prestel, *Palästina-Solidarität* (2019); Slobodian, *Foreign Front* (2012).

movement within West German policy making circles. Brandt might have recognised the increasing importance of the Palestinian question after 1967 in the June Memorandum. But it was really the 1970 Riem attack and *Black September* which kickstarted on-the-ground, working level contacts between West German diplomats and representatives of different Palestinian organisations. Several attacks later these contacts had ultimately grown into broad networks of communication with the PLO and its *de-facto* recognition through the 1980 Venice Declaration. In response to terror attacks, politicians often like to state that they will not negotiate with terrorists. In West Germany's dealings with Palestinian terrorists during the 1970s, one has to recognise that the opposite was the case.

This chapter has shed light on the evolving and increasingly dense networks of contact, which the *Auswärtiges Amt* built to various elements of the Palestinian movement, including its violent ones, throughout the 1970s. This happened much earlier and more systematically than has so far been known.¹⁷⁷ As a result, this chapter also points to the role that diplomacy plays in counterterrorism.¹⁷⁸ Most importantly, however, previous research dealt with the West German stance on the Palestinian question merely as a side-aspect of Bonn's broader Middle Eastern policy or with a focus on the role of the topic for the West German left.¹⁷⁹ Crucially, then, this chapter provides the first comprehensive account of the evolving West German stance on the Palestinian question from 1967 to 1980 onwards; this is a key period, as it covers the years from West German ignorance of the topic to a position which broadly remains in place to this day. In essence, support for a two-state solution and a recognition of a key role for the PLO remain the pillars of Germany's stance on the question of Palestine.¹⁸⁰ The position which Bonn formulated on this issue in the 1970s still shapes the approach Berlin takes towards it today.

¹⁷⁷ Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019); Riegler, *Das 'Spinnennetz' des internationalen Terrorismus* (2012); Dahlke, *Das Wischniewski Protokoll* (2009); Hürter, *Anti-Terrorismus-Politik* (2009).

¹⁷⁸ See also Hirsch, *Politics as counterterrorism* (2020).

¹⁷⁹ On the former, see Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019); Wolffsohn, *Friedenskanzler* (2018); Gerlach, *Doppelte Front* (2006); on the latter, see Prestel, *Palästina-Solidarität* (2019); or Slobodian, *Foreign Front* (2012).

¹⁸⁰ Deutsche Welle. *Nahost-Konflikt: Für Maas gibt es nur eine Zwei-Staaten-Lösung*. (09.06.2019); Deutscher Bundestag/Antrag der Fraktionen der CDU/CSU und SPD. *Frieden, Sicherheit und Stabilität im Nahen Osten fördern – Am Ziel der verhandelten Zweistaatenlösung festhalten*. (30.06.2020).

Chapter IV: Schizophrenic foreign policy – the geopolitics of oil and West German relations to the Gulf

The Arab ‘oil weapon’ will most likely not be of crucial importance in the near future yet¹
From a meeting of European diplomats in Brussels, September 1973

Relations [to the oil producing states] might remain in the schizophrenic state of coexistence of good bilateral and tense multilateral relations for a long while.²
Workshop by the Auswärtiges Amt, 1975

The presence of high-ranking personalities from the business world would underline the link between foreign and economic policy.³
Foreign office briefing in preparation of a trip by Genscher to Saudi Arabia and Egypt, 1975

1. Introduction: West Germany and its discovery of the Gulf in the 1970s

In July 1974, Karl-Heinz Kunzmann sent a lengthy report to the *Auswärtiges Amt* in Bonn. Kunzmann had only recently been appointed as West Germany’s first ever ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The report, written in an unusually vivid style, contains his impressions of a first tour of the country and visits to the UAE’s seven emirs. His depiction of the country as the “living tension between tradition and modernity, between the middle ages and the nuclear age, between desert and civilisation, between oil, date palms and camel caravans” reads more like an ancient travel report, rather than the memorandum of a West German civil servant.⁴ The narrative culminates in a banquet given by the ruler of Ras-al-Khaimah, Mohammad al-Qassami, at the end of Kunzmann’s journey.

Around 60 native dignitaries and advisors have been ordered to dinner. As the ruler arrives and I meet him by the car, all of them stream into the night in order to pay him their respect. We are not talking about gestures of subordination, but *next to it* [English in original]. Here, there clearly still exists real rule. On enormous plates several lambs in oversize rice bowls are carried in. All the tables are filled with dishes of Arabic specialties. Most eat with their hands, only a few with fork and knife. Large meat chunks are ripped off the animals by hand. This colourful picture

¹ AAPD 06.09.1973. Document 276. *Notes by Redies.*

² PA/AA (B36 109107, unfoliated) 02.06.1975. *Third inter-departmental workshop of the planning unit on energy policy.*

³ PA/AA (B36 104869, unfoliated) 07.03.1975. *Böker to Genscher.*

⁴ PA/AA (B36 104921, unfoliated) 13.07.1974. *Kunzmann (Abu Dhabi) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

is impossible to forget. Fascinated, I am looking at the head of an animal, from which two sheep eyes stare at me menacingly. Will they really be offered to me?⁵

They were not, to Kunzmann's relief. He ends this report of his journey, which left an obvious and somewhat orientalist impression on him, with an almost enthusiastic verdict: "Now I am absolutely certain: the adventure South Arabia will happen."⁶

Kunzmann had good reason to provide his colleagues and superiors in the *Auswärtiges Amt* with such a colourful first impression of the Gulf, reminiscent of Marco Polo's travel account. After all, in diplomatic terms, by the mid-1970s the Gulf truly was *terra incognita* for West German foreign policy. Before 1973, Bonn had hardly paid attention to the Gulf. However, after the 1973 oil shock, the FRG not only had to reconsider the significance of energy security, but also fundamentally changed its attitude to the Gulf region. Both themes are the key topics of this chapter.

Throughout the 1960s, the FRG had been dependent on Arab, in particular Libyan oil. However, policymakers in Bonn did not consider energy dependence a matter of foreign policy – not even when some Arab oil producers organised a 'mini oil boycott' against Western states in the aftermath of the Six-Day War in 1967. At the time, Bonn responded by establishing its own, West German oil company to ensure the country's oil supply: DEMINEX. It took the West German government, including the *Auswärtiges Amt*, until 1972 to draw up a formal 'oil strategy'. By then, the spectre of the oil weapon had emerged, as changes in the structure of the oil market enabled Arab oil producers to use their key economic resource as political ammunition. The 1973 oil crisis found West Germany largely unprepared. Suddenly, oil became a major factor of West German-Arab relations. Bilaterally, Bonn quickly invested heavily into stronger relations to the Arab Gulf countries. It is no coincidence that diplomatic relations to states such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the UAE or Kuwait were not (re-) established before 1973. Multilaterally, the FRG attempted to mediate between the Arab oil producing and the Western oil consuming countries, hoping that compromise would avert future oil crises. Here, Helmut Schmidt's government was often pitted against members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) cartel. The *Auswärtiges Amt* characterised this discrepancy of cordial bilateral and tense multilateral relations to the Arab oil producers as a

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. Kunzmann most likely referred to the south of the Arabian Peninsula with the term of 'South Arabia', even though historically it rather describes the southern coastline of the peninsula (present-day Oman and Yemen). But given Kunzmann posting in the UAE, it is very unlikely that he would have meant Yemen or Oman and not the Gulf with his statement.

“schizophrenic parallelism”.⁷ This characterisation of a superficially contradictory foreign policy resembles the concept of “hedging”, which over the past few years has been used frequently to describe the foreign policies of Asian states towards China.⁸ Overall, the West German focus on the Gulf and its relations to Saudi Arabia in particular grew ever closer, until in 1979 multiple crises – the Iranian revolution, the Siege of Mecca and the second oil crisis – shook Bonn’s faith in the value of its political investment into the Gulf.

This chapter also covers the dynamics and importance of West German trade to and from the Middle East. Exports and imports grew throughout the 1970s, but never reached the levels which West German diplomats at times had hoped for. The open fracturing of Arab political unity towards 1979 hampered the formation of a coherent Arab market. Disappointed West German expectations about the Arab market’s potential came alongside a realisation that the political, ‘geo-economical’ influence deriving out of the FRG’s economic weight had its limits.⁹

The relevance of Middle Eastern oil for the FRG’s economy has been dealt with by previous authors such as Maull, Karlsch and Stokes or Kaiser and Steinbach.¹⁰ Hohensee focuses on the impact of the 1973 oil crisis on West Germany as a whole, and obviously the importance of oil as a factor of Bonn’s Middle Eastern policy has not gone unnoticed for authors such as Gerlach or Hünseler.¹¹ However, this chapter represents the first comprehensive analysis of oil as a factor for West Germany’s Middle Eastern policy after World War II. It links questions of energy security and foreign policy making in a new way, and many of the documents quoted here have not been used by other scholars. Moreover, from an international perspective, it complements existing research on the multilateral political reactions to the oil crisis with a depiction of one state’s – the FRG’s – bilateral response to this seminal event.¹² Finally, it engages with a topic which is less well covered in international

⁷ PA/AA (B36 109107, unfoliated) 02.06.1975. *Third inter-departmental workshop of the planning unit on energy policy.*

⁸ “Hedging normally refers in that context to a national security or alignment strategy, undertaken by one state toward another, featuring a mix of cooperative and confrontational elements.” (Ciorciari, John, and Jürgen Haacke. *Hedging in international relations: an introduction.* International Relations of the Asia-Pacific 19:3 (2009): 367-74.)

⁹ Luttwak, *From geopolitics to geo-economics* (1990).

¹⁰ Karlsch and Stokes, *Faktor Öl* (2003); Maull, *Economic relations with the Middle East* (1992); Kaiser and Steinbach, *Deutsch-Arabische Beziehungen* (1982).

¹¹ Gerlach *Doppelte Front* (2006); Hohensee, *Der erste Ölpreisschock* (1996); Hünseler, *Außenpolitische Beziehungen der BRD zu den arabischen Staaten* (1990).

¹² Bini, Elisabetta, Guliano Garavini and Federivo Romero (eds.). *Oil shock. The 1973 crisis and its economic legacy.* (London/New York, 2016); Stern, Roger. *Oil scarcity ideology in US foreign policy, 1908–97.* Security Studies 25:2 (2016): 214-57; Painter, David. *Oil and geopolitics: The oil crises of the 1970s and the cold war.* Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung 39:4 (2014): 186-208; Licklider, Roy. *The power of oil: the Arab oil weapon and the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, and the United States.*

relations research: the impact of the second oil crisis, as compared to the first, which is analysed here in conjunction with the Iranian revolution and the Siege of Mecca, the other key political events happening in the Gulf in 1979.¹³

Collective memory of the oil shock and terms such as ‘petrodollars’ have created the popular assumption that oil was by definition a key factor of any foreign power’s Middle Eastern policy. But, as this chapter establishes, the shift of West German foreign policy towards the Arab states under Brandt and Scheel long neglected the political relevance of oil. After 1973, the question of oil was closely interlinked with two other factors dealt with in this thesis: the Arab-Israeli conflict and a common European Middle Eastern policy. For several years, Schmidt and Genscher feared that continued failure to resolve the former kept the prospect of a second use of the oil weapon alive. Simultaneously, the Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD) as part of the latter suffered from the diametric opposition between French hopes and American objections to addressing the question of oil supplies.

Today, Germany has overcome its reliance on Arab oil. But the legacy of its oil policy, formulated in the 1970s, remains through its links to the Arab Gulf states, which Bonn only really started to discover in a political sense – so vividly described by its ambassador Kunzmann – from 1973 onwards.

2. The mini oil-boycott of 1967 and the formation of a West German oil ‘champion’

In the 1960s, oil was not a major factor in West German foreign policy making. Of course, the FRG was reliant on Arab oil. Almost half of West German petroleum imports came from Libya alone, which therefore made it the most important supplier for the FRG.¹⁴ But oil dependence was not yet understood as a geopolitical, strategic issue in Bonn. As has already been mentioned in Chapter I, the 1967 June Memorandum, in which the *Auswärtiges Amt* and Willy Brandt conceptualised a fundamental reevaluation of West Germany’s relations to the Arab states, does not mention energy security at all – something that would be unimaginable for any Middle East-related foreign office memo less than ten years later.¹⁵

International Studies Quarterly 32:2 (1988): 205-26; Ikenberry, John. *The irony of state strength: comparative responses to the oil shocks in the 1970s*. International Organization 40:1 (1986): 105-37.

¹³ On this topic, see, for example, Bösch, Frank, and Rüdiger Graf. *Reacting to Anticipations: Energy Crises and Energy Policy in the 1970s*. Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung 39:4 (2014): 7-21.

¹⁴ PA/AA (B52 337, unfoliated) 09.06.1967. *Memorandum by Bismarck-Ohnken*.

¹⁵ See Chapter I for an analysis of the 1967 June Memorandum.

In the area of energy, too, the June War heralded change. At the end of the war, some Arab states half-heartedly attempted an oil-boycott. At a conference of Arab oil ministers in Baghdad on 4-5 June 1967, it was decided that Arab oil should be denied to those countries directly or indirectly supporting Israel.¹⁶ However, the boycott came too late to change the outcome of the war and was badly coordinated. Moreover, as Mann shows, the structure of the oil market at the time limited the leverage Arab oil producing states had.¹⁷ In hindsight and in full knowledge of the 1973 oil crisis it might thus seem odd how little prominence has been given to the 1967 mini-boycott, but in the context of the 1960s this cannot come as too much of a surprise. At the time, the power in the oil market mostly lay with the large Anglo-American oil companies.¹⁸

Thus, a memo by the *Auswärtiges Amt* from June 1967 on the oil question is markedly calm in its tone. It noted that West German oil reserves were high, that the closure of the Suez Canal was more of a nuisance than a significant problem and with coordinated Arab action on oil matters practically non-existent the FRG had little to fear.¹⁹ The only major risk was a long-term cessation of oil deliveries from Libya. But good relations with the government in Tripoli, which, after all, was one of only four Arab countries in which Bonn had an embassy at the time, ensured that a temporary halt of oil production for the West German market ended after less than a month already.²⁰

As a result, Bonn concluded that on the political level all was well as far as oil was concerned. The key risk for the FRG was instead located in the realm of private business. After all, West Germany's ability to import oil was dependent on the reliability of international consortia from which it was buying, such as Shell. These companies had no direct attachment to the FRG and thus in a crisis could not be relied upon to keep up oil-deliveries to the West German market. Therefore, a memorandum by the West German Ministry of Finance concluded that "first and foremost [...] German [oil] companies needed to be made more competitive as well".²¹ Another issue were technical questions, such as tanker storage.²² Thus, in its reaction to the 1967 mini-boycott of oil the West German government saw the key to

¹⁶ FRUS 1964-68, Volume XXXIV. 06.06.1967. Document 232. *Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq to the Department of State.*

¹⁷ Mann, Joseph. *A reassessment of the 1967 Arab oil embargo.* Israel Affairs, 19:4 (2013): 693-703.

¹⁸ For a history and analysis of the global oil markets, see Lehmann, Timothy (ed.). *The Geopolitics of Global Energy. The New Cost of Plenty.* (Boulder/London, 2017); Bridge, Gavin, and Philippe Le Billon. *Oil.* (Hoboken (NJ), 2013); Yergin, Daniel. *The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power.* (New York, 1991).

¹⁹ PA/AA (B52 337, unfoliated) 09.06.1967. *Notes by Bismarck-Ohncken.*

²⁰ PA/AA (B130 8822A, unfoliated) 13.07.1967. *Seydel (Tripoli) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

²¹ PA/AA (B52 238, unfoliated) 22.02.1968. *Notes by Mitzka (Ministry of Finance).*

²² Larger tankers would make a journey around Africa in view of the closed Suez Canal profitable.

energy security in the international oil market rather than in the geopolitics of oil as they were to emerge after 1970.²³

Consequently, the *Grand Coalition* increasingly felt the need to engage more directly in the oil market and initiated the establishment of a German oil company in March 1969.²⁴ It was called DEMINEX, which stood for ‘German oil supply corporation’ (*Deutsche Erdölversorgungsgesellschaft*). It was a consortium made up of eight West German companies already active in the energy sector.²⁵ Whilst a private enterprise, the records clearly show that the government pushed forward its creation: The merger of the eight companies was driven by the West German Ministry of Economy (*Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft – BMWi*); the *Auswärtiges Amt* was charged with international negotiations in the attempts to establish DEMINEX in the oil market.²⁶ The purpose of the new company was “to reduce our 75% dependence on big international oil companies und instead support the independent German oil companies”.²⁷ It had taken the FRG almost two years to react to the 1967 oil boycott with the creation of what it hoped would be a new, West German oil ‘champion’. Now, the challenge for Bonn was to ensure that DEMINEX would emerge as a serious player on the international oil market.

But this proved to be more complicated than expected. DEMINEX’s first major project was supposed to be the purchase of a concession for an Iranian oil field in Kermanshah. It was judged a rich field by the company, but a pipeline would have to be built in order to transport the oil from there. The West German government was asked to support its financing, but Bonn was hesitant.²⁸ Furthermore, Western friendship seems to have stopped where oil was concerned, as US and French oil companies, the *Auswärtiges Amt* complained, obstructed DEMINEX from entering the Iranian market.²⁹ Ultimately, a Japanese consortium got the Kermanshah concession.³⁰

Then, focus shifted to the opposite shore of the Gulf. BP seemed willing to give DEMINEX a share of one of its new projects in Abu Dhabi.³¹ But, again, there were problems.

²³ PA/AA (B52 239, unfoliated) 02.02.1968. *Memorandum by Harkort*.

²⁴ Bundesarchiv. 12.03.1969. *Minutes of the 159th cabinet meeting*.

²⁵ GBAG, Scholven-Chemie AG, Wintershall AG (18,5% of shares respectively), Union Rheinische Braunkohlen Kraftstoff AG, Wesseling (13,5%), Schachtbau Thyssen GmbH, PREUSSAG, C. Deilmann AG, Saarbergwerke AG (rest of shares). (PA/AA (B52 234, unfoliated) 22.07.1969. *Memorandum by Herbst*.)

²⁶ Ibid. See also PA/AA (B52 234, unfoliated) 22.07.1969. *Memorandum by Herbst*; or Bamberg, *British Petroleum and Global Oil, 1950-1975* (2008).

²⁷ PA/AA (B52 234, unfoliated) 10.03.1971. *Notes by III A1*.

²⁸ PA/AA (B52 234, unfoliated) 14.04.1970. *Lantzke (BMW) to Rohwedder (BMW)*.

²⁹ PA/AA (B52 231, unfoliated) 28.01.1971. *Foreign office to diplomatic missions*.

³⁰ PA/AA (B52 234, unfoliated) 30.06.1971. *Schöller (Tehran) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

³¹ PA/AA (B52 231, unfoliated) 10.05.1971. *Lantzke (BMW) to Rohwedder (BMW)*.

Firstly, the British initially only envisaged an indirect West German holding for the project, which would have decreased DEMINEX's influence on its management.³² A personal letter of Brandt to prime minister Heath was drawn up to support DEMINEX in its negotiations.³³ Second, and more importantly, the *Auswärtiges Amt* had doubts about the political risks associated with the problem. By 1971, the British were retreating from the Gulf and it was unclear what order would follow. A new, united emirate was in the making – what, to a large extent, would become the UAE. But Bonn wondered whether Iran might assert itself more aggressively in the Gulf as a whole, causing disruption to the oil industry therein as well.³⁴ Neither Bonn's representative in Kuwait nor the Americans, who were both consulted on the issue and saw no disproportionate risk in the Gulf project, could soothe West German worries.³⁵ The Abu Dhabi project, too, failed.³⁶ By 1972, two years into its operations, DEMINEX had still not landed a major contract. The whole affair seems to have bemused the FRG's allies. After a meeting in Paris, the West German delegate summed up what, in his own words, the French were really thinking:

If you Germans are not ready to take the economic, financial but also political risks that our companies – usually without state support – are willing to bear, then leave your hands off the oil business which, alas, is costly and risky. But then you rob yourself of the chance to enter the international oil business in large manner and win a place for DEMINEX.³⁷

It increasingly transpired that in response to the FRG's oil dependence DEMINEX was not the magic wand which policy makers in Bonn had hoped it would be. The West Germans were simply too cautious and risk averse. Moreover, as members of the administration themselves noted on several occasions, the financial backing for DEMINEX was thin.³⁸ For instance, in support of the Abu Dhabi project DEMINEX was supposed to pay DM 750 million, with further investments of DM 700 million following over the next few years for a 30% share of the project. This was already more than the DM 600 million the West German government had initially provided DEMINEX with as a subsidy.³⁹ DEMINEX was a top-down project, pushed on by the state, but still the federal government's engagement – as the French had well noted

³² Ibid.

³³ PA/AA (B52 234, unfoliated) 18.08.1971. *Fischer (chancellory) to Schönfeld*.

³⁴ PA/AA (B52 234, unfoliated) 30.07.1971. *Notes by Simon*.

³⁵ PA/AA (B52 239, unfoliated) 07.09.1971. *Freundt (Kuwait) to Auswärtiges Amt*; PA/AA (B52 234, unfoliated) 05.10.1971. *Notes by Schlaich*.

³⁶ PA/AA (B52 244, unfoliated) 20.07.1972. *Telex from London*.

³⁷ PA/AA (B52 244, unfoliated) 05.10.1971. *Herbst to DIII*.

³⁸ PA/AA (B52 244, unfoliated) 08.08.1972. *Herbst to State Secretary*; PA/AA (B52 244, unfoliated) 05.07.1972. *Notes by III A1*.

³⁹ PA/AA (B52 234, unfoliated) 09.06.1971. *Schlaich to D III*.

– appeared half-hearted. As so often with West Germany’s ‘Arab policy’ at the time, what looked convincing and self-evident on paper turned out to be much more complicated to implement.

However, the problems with DEMINEX went deeper than that. It was not only that the project was not pursued with the necessary vigour; the whole approach to remedy West Germany’s oil dependence by means of a private company turned out to be flawed. By 1970, at the time DEMINEX was established, the structure of the oil market was changing profoundly. As no one in Bonn had foreseen after the June War, and maybe no one could have foreseen, power in the oil market was starting to shift from the big companies to the oil producing countries.

In 1970, a new spectre started to haunt Europe – that of the oil weapon. In January 1970, the Americans announced at an OECD meeting that in case of a Middle Eastern oil crisis they would be unable to supply the Europeans from their own oil fields. “For the FR[G] the consequences from this new situation are of particular importance, as of all the other great European industrial nations it has the lowest oil reserves”, the *Auswärtiges Amt* concluded.⁴⁰ Simultaneously, the oil producing countries started to organise themselves more efficiently in OPEC and the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC).⁴¹

Bonn remained slow to acknowledge not only the economic, but also the political risks associated with its dependency on Arab oil. It is notable how only a few months earlier, in reaction to the Libyan coup, oil did not figure on the list of risks which the *Auswärtiges Amt* associated with the new regime in Tripoli around Colonel Ghaddafi. On the contrary: the *Auswärtiges Amt* had even ventured that it might profit from the coup through stronger engagement in the country’s oil sector, if necessary at the expense of its ‘imperialist’ Western partners such as the US, France or the UK.⁴² Bonn had not recognised the momentous shifts taking place on the global oil markets.

The ability of oil producing countries all over the world to increase control over their own oil industries turned into a challenge for the FRG and the industrialised West in general. The process increased the leverage particularly of the Arab oil producing countries both economically on the oil market and politically in the arena of international relations. This

⁴⁰ PA/AA (B52 238, unfoliated) 19.01.1970. *Lantzke (BMWi) to Rohwedder (BMWi)*.

⁴¹ Garavini, Giuliano. *The Rise and Fall of OPEC in the Twentieth Century*. (Oxford, 2019); Painter, *Oil and geopolitics* (2014). Both OPEC and OAPEC had been founded back in the 1960s, but only started to grow in importance in the following decade.

⁴² PA/AA (B36 412, pp. 214ff.) 28.11.1969. *Gehlhoff (Bonn) to Turnwald (Tripoli)*.

leverage, or indeed potential for blackmail, was what would later become known and feared in the energy-dependent West as the 'oil weapon'.⁴³

In February 1971, the oil producers landed a first punch against the big Western oil companies at negotiations in Tehran by enforcing a higher posted price, the minimal amount that oil companies had to pay to oil producing countries per barrel of oil. On the one hand, a higher posted price meant larger revenues for the oil producing countries. On the other hand, the Tehran agreement marked the first occasion when the oil producing countries managed to coherently make their influence felt on the international stage against the large oil companies of the West.⁴⁴

In light of this, Brandt's government now attempted to remedy its reliance on Arab oil. To begin with, emergency oil reserves were planned for. In September 1970, the cabinet agreed in principle to increase them to 20 million tons, enough to cover 30 days of supplies in West Germany.⁴⁵ Moreover, a West German tanker programme was envisaged to increase shipping opportunities. But all this would take time. For oil reserves, new cavern storage facilities had to be outfitted. The estimated time frame for all reserves to be set up was 1975.⁴⁶

In all this, Bonn still largely neglected the area of foreign policy. This becomes very clear when one considers the role, or rather the lack thereof, of the Arab Gulf in West German foreign policy up to the early 1970s. There, since 1965 the FRG's only diplomatic representation was a consulate in Kuwait.⁴⁷ It had no embassy in Saudi Arabia, even though relations with Riyadh were mostly free of tensions. Maybe that was because, as a 1967 foreign office report notes, "trade has hardly suffered from the breaking of diplomatic relations in 1965".⁴⁸

⁴³ On the oil weapon, see, for example Hughes, Llewelyn, and Austin Long. *Is there an oil weapon? Security implications of changes in the structure of the international oil market*. *International Security* 39:3 (2015): 152-89; Licklider, *The power of oil* (1988); Maull, Hanns. *Oil and influence: The oil weapon examined*. *The Adelphi Papers* 15:117 (1975): 1-37.

⁴⁴ See Bridge and Le Billon, *Oil* (2013); Yergin, *The Price* (1991).

⁴⁵ PA/AA (B52 233, unfoliated) 29.09.1970. *Keilig (BMW) to Auswärtiges Amt*; PA/AA (B52 231, unfoliated) 20.01.1971. *Notes by III A1*.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Technically, Kuwait had not been a state which had broken off relations with Bonn in 1965. At the time, the opening of a West German embassy had been agreed upon between the two governments, but the move was not carried out due to the 1965 crisis around Ulbricht's visit and West German-Israeli relations. But, of course, all this amounted to the same thing: Bonn was politically largely absent from the country by the 1970s (PA/AA (B36 383, p. 60ff) 03.01.1970. *Country briefing Kuwait*). When the GDR managed to turn its trade delegation there into a general consulate in 1971, the West Germans also increased their representation from consulate to general consulate, but only after some internal back and forth (see PA/AA (B36 442, p. 19) 07.01.1971. *Redies to Montfort (Kuwait)*).

⁴⁸ PA/AA (B36 273, pp. 182ff.) 07.02.1967. *Notes by I B 4*.

Only slowly did the geopolitics of oil start to enter West German foreign policy discourse. If anything, this development was promoted bottom-up, as West German diplomats on the ground started to complain about the neglect of the oil topic in West German foreign policy making. In January 1971, West German ambassador to Libya Wilhelm Turnwald wrote an angry letter to his superiors in Bonn. At the outset, he stated: “From the perspective of the embassy [in Libya] there is a sensitive gap in German oil policy”.⁴⁹ He saw the writing on the wall. If, or rather when the oil producers organised into a powerful cartel, the oil companies would lose out. Instead of putting its money on DEMINEX, the FRG should rather focus on strengthening bilateral ties with key oil producers. Slowly, his complaints bore fruit. When in late 1971 the West Germans started negotiations with Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the UAE over the establishment of diplomatic relations, oil was a key consideration. The West German negotiator was instructed: “In your talks with the representatives of Abu Dhabi and other Gulf emirates, you can [...] point to the fact that we consider the future relations with the Gulf states important not least because of our demand for oil [...]”.⁵⁰

At the same time, however, the prospect of more sovereign states in the Gulf led to a bizarre discussion in Bonn which illustrates how underdeveloped the relevance of the Gulf states in the FRG’s Arab policy was. Who, the *Auswärtiges Amt* wondered, should take over West German diplomatic representation in Oman, Abu Dhabi, Qatar and Bahrain? The West German consul general in Kuwait could do the job, but it was rather unusual to let a consul general in one country be the part-time ambassador in another.⁵¹ An alternative option was to give the task to the West German envoy to Saudi Arabia, but maybe this would be an insensitive signal. After all, the smaller sheikdoms were already afraid of Saudi domination. Better to not symbolically fuel this fear even more and create a negative West German image in the region by the representation of the FRG through Bonn’s envoy in Jeddah.⁵² Another option brought up was Walter Georg Nowak, West Germany’s envoy in Beirut. No risk for political insensitivities there, one might rightly assume. Then again, given the distance of Lebanon to the Gulf of almost 2000 miles, this was not too convincing a solution either.⁵³ When relations were re-established with Oman on 16 May and with Kuwait, the UAE and Bahrain on the 17 May 1972, the question of diplomatic representation was left open for the moment.⁵⁴ All the

⁴⁹ PA/AA (B52 231, unfoliated) 31.01.1971. *Turnwald (Tripoli) to Bonn*.

⁵⁰ PA/AA (B52 241, unfoliated) 24.11.1971. *Lebsanft to III B 6*.

⁵¹ PA/AA (B36 532, p. 212f.) 15.05.1972. *Notes by Redies*.

⁵² PA/AA (B36 532, p. 232ff.) 28.08.1972. *Jung to Dg I B*.

⁵³ PA/AA (B36 532, p. 212f.) 15.10.1972. *Notes by Redies*.

⁵⁴ PA/AA (B36 532, pp. 21ff.) 10.05.1972. *Notes by Redies*; PA/AA (B130 9864A, unfoliated) 17.12.1972. *Freundt (Kuwait) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

while, early informal talks between West German and Saudi representatives about a resumption of diplomatic relations were stagnating.⁵⁵ Truly, relations between West Germany and the Gulf were still “in limbo”, as a West German diplomat had noted succinctly in the same year.⁵⁶

Only slowly, oil became a theme of West German foreign policy. A memorandum by the *Auswärtiges Amt* from June 1972 for the first time, and a good five years after the mini-boycott of 1967, established a direct link between West German Arab policy and oil: “Minister strongly interested that we put oil aspect in the foreground of regularising our relations to Near East countries.”⁵⁷

The June War of 1967, which had led Bonn to fundamentally reconceive its policy towards the Arab states, also affected the energy sector in the form of the unsuccessful mini-boycott of oil to the West. The West German government noted the warning shot. But rather than including the oil question within its foreign policy agenda, for example through stronger bilateral engagement with the oil producing states, it engaged in – largely insufficient – efforts in the area of economics and business with the foundation of a new German oil company: DEMINEX. In part that is understandable in view of the structure of the oil industry at the time, but it also was too little, too late. Bonn was slow to read the signs of the times when the Tehran conference of 1971 heralded the beginning of a new period in the history of the oil markets: the rise of the oil producers as economic and political actors. Now, the oil weapon started to loom over world politics. Brandt’s government needed to take energy security into account in its efforts for an ‘Arab policy’.

3. Oil weapon and oil crisis, 1971-1973

In February 1973, West Germany’s consul general in Kuwait wired a report back to Bonn: the Kuwaiti crown prince had stated in an interview that “Kuwait will not hesitate to use the oil weapon in a new conflict with Israel or the USA”.⁵⁸ It is the first time that specific mention of the ‘oil weapon’ can be found in the archival material reviewed for this thesis.

By this time, Bonn had noted the political ramifications which resulted from the revolution within the oil market. In response, the BMWi and the *Auswärtiges Amt* had jointly drafted a

⁵⁵ See Chapter III of this thesis.

⁵⁶ PA/AA (B36 494, p. 161f.) 15.03.1972. *Country briefing Qatar*.

⁵⁷ PA/AA (B52 244, unfoliated) 16.06.1972. *Notes by III A1*.

⁵⁸ PA/AA (B36 104822, unfoliated) 28.02.1973. *Freundt (Kuwait) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

memorandum in August 1972, which in effect represented the first take on a comprehensive West German oil strategy. The memorandum introduced the term of a “German oil policy”, whose “main task should be to ensure the West German oil supply”.⁵⁹ It then went on to recognise the vast extent to which the FRG depended on foreign, in particular Middle Eastern oil. “Currently, 54.6% of the West German energy demand is covered by oil. We assume that the [West] German annual oil consumption will increase from 120 million tons to 200 million tons by 1980.”⁶⁰ 85 percent of oil imports came from the Middle East, an information which the *Auswärtiges Amt*’s State Secretary Paul Frank underlined when he read the memorandum. The document then went on to name a number of technical points to respond to the situation. DEMINEX, which “so far has not been able to explore any new sources of oil”, was to be strengthened in order to decrease reliance on foreign companies.⁶¹ In particular, it should be encouraged to search for oil projects outside of the Middle East, in Africa and the North Sea. However, the document also made clear that – at least in the near future – there was no realistic alternative to Arab oil.

Therefore, it appears necessary to utilise all means – including our trade and development policy – to create or maintain good bilateral relations to the oil producing countries. Otherwise, it will be almost impossible to protect our oil interests in the long term. The [West] German oil policy should therefore also be used as part of our foreign policy aims in the relevant regions, in particular the Middle East and the African Mediterranean countries.⁶²

Thus, for the FRG, oil had at last entered the realm of foreign policy, and the Brandt administration worked towards the formulation of an official energy policy which was supposed to be finalised in the summer of 1973.⁶³

One result of this was that Bonn now decided to give more attention to the Gulf. First and foremost, it worked towards a re-establishment of relations with Riyadh. Saudi Arabia was of vital importance in the oil market for two reasons. By the early 1970s it had moved to second place in the list of oil suppliers to the FRG, covering approximately a quarter of West German oil demand.⁶⁴ But that was only half the story, and – with Libya singlehandedly still providing almost half of the FRG’s oil imports – arguably the less important half. More importantly, then, Saudi Arabia’s dominant position in the oil market at the time needs to be taken into account. The country had easy access to vast amounts of oil, making it an important swing producer

⁵⁹ AAPD 08.08.1972. Document 225. *Memorandum by Herbst*.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ PA/AA (B36 104991, unfoliated) 02.04.1973. *Kruse to Jeddah representation*.

⁶⁴ PA/AA (B36 104840, unfoliated) 19.12.1972. *Berghaus (Tripoli) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

with substantial leverage on overall developments on the oil market. Moreover, it “belongs to the category of oil producers with huge oil reserves at their disposal, but only limited ability to invest the profits from oil sales in their own country”.⁶⁵ Its own financial dependency on oil sales was, therefore, limited. As a result, the political relationship to Saudi Arabia had a particular, strategic dimension as far as the geopolitics of oil were concerned.

Initial attempts to re-establish diplomatic relations between Bonn and Riyadh around 1971 soon reached an impasse due to temporary anti-West German sentiments in some Arab states in the aftermath of the 1972 Munich massacre.⁶⁶ However, a coincidental meeting reinvigorated the negotiations. On a flight from Jeddah to Paris in July 1973, West German envoy to Saudi Arabia Peter Metzger ended up in a seat behind the Saudi foreign minister Omar al-Zaqqaf. They started a conversation, which soon turned to the possibility of exchanging ambassadors. At the end of their talk, Zaqqaf invited Metzger to his private home for a “chat amongst friends”.⁶⁷ When Metzger noted the possibility of a meeting between Zaqqaf and Scheel during the UN General Assembly that year, the Saudi minister replied: “I shall be pleased, I shall be very pleased, I feel we should cooperate.”⁶⁸ This chance meeting on an airplane kicked off a round of meetings and negotiations, which by September 1973 climaxed in the re-establishment of West German-Saudi diplomatic relations. As the newly appointed State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt*, Hans-Georg Sachs, noted: “Due to the important status of Saudi Arabia in the entire region, its oil wealth and its financial strength, the importance [of this event] comes close to the re-establishment of German-Egyptian relations in the past year.”⁶⁹ The statement is just another indicator which shows that by 1973 the West German administration had started to move on from its initial view of oil as a merely economic issue; it was now clearly acknowledging it as belonging to the sphere of politics. This was also noted amongst West Germany’s Arab interlocutors. A West German diplomat summarised comments by an Arab League official in July 1973 “with some irony” as: “you [the West Germans] are arriving [in the Arab states] with a delay, but at least you are arriving”.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ PA/AA (B36 104868, unfoliated) 07.09.1973. *Notes by Jesser*.

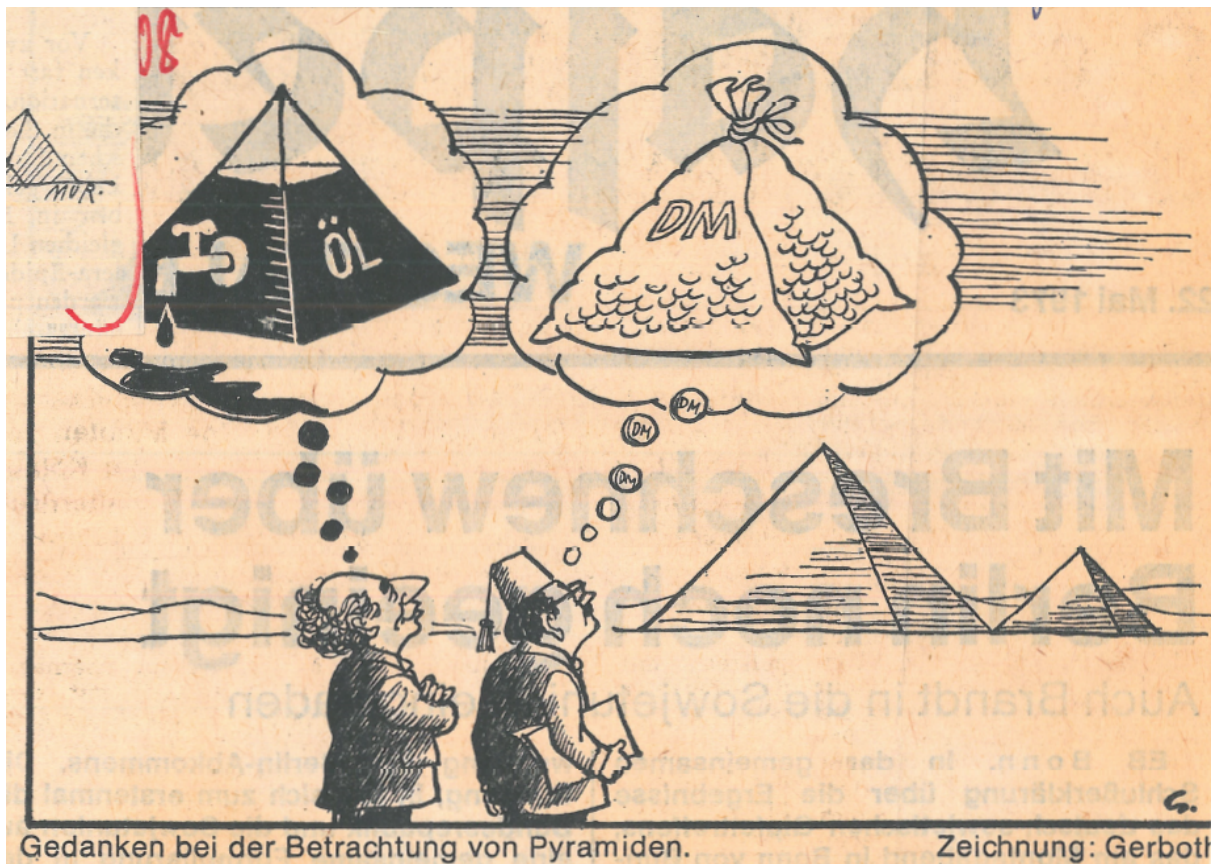
⁶⁶ See Chapter III of this thesis.

⁶⁷ PA/AA (B36 104868, unfoliated) 26.07.1973. *Notes by Metzger*.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ AAPD 21.09.1973. Document 291. *Sachs (currently Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁷⁰ PA/AA (B36 104870, unfoliated) 24.07.1973. *Notes by Wentzel*.



Picture 9: Cartoon in a West German newspaper about Scheel's 1973 journey to Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon. The caption reads: "Thoughts while watching the pyramids"; Scheel sees oil, his Egyptian counterpart West German capital aid. The cartoon illustrates how by 1973 oil had started to emerge as a theme of West German-Arab relations.⁷¹

Above all of this, the oil weapon was hanging like the sword of Damocles. In September 1973, the European Political Cooperation (EPC) convened an expert group meeting on the Middle East, bringing together its member states' senior diplomats on the topic. Two years into the EPC, these meetings had become quite regular. For the FRG, Walter Redies, head of the Middle Eastern unit in the *Auswärtiges Amt*, took part. Summarising the conclusions of the meeting, he wrote: "The Arab 'oil weapon' will most likely not be of crucial importance in the near future yet", although this would change "with the increasing demand of the industrialised countries in the coming years".⁷² Exactly one month after his report, Egypt and Syria attacked Israel and thereby kicked off the October War. The first use of the oil weapon had not been years, but merely weeks away.

Soon after the fighting began, the *Auswärtiges Amt* started to worry about the energy dimension of the October War. In a directive from the 10 October 1973, four days into the war, all embassies and delegations in the Middle East were instructed to provide "continuous and

⁷¹ Courtesy of the AdL; source: *Hasper Zeitung*, 22.05.1973.

⁷² AAPD 06.09.1973. Document 276. *Notes by Redies*.

immediate reporting about relevant plans or actions by your host governments ('oil as weapon').⁷³ Even though Bonn had started to plan for this worst-case scenario, it knew that it was by no means ready for it yet. The federal government had decided to provision oil reserves of 10 million tons, but these would be ready by late 1974 at the earliest. A legal basis for emergency measures in the energy sector had been planned for January 1974.⁷⁴ However, importers were already required to keep about two months' worth of reserves in their own storage. Short delivery interruptions of one or two weeks of even half the oil supply would therefore not represent a significant problem, but a reduction of imports over a longer term, even in the range of a mere 20%, would be "more unpleasant".⁷⁵ In this case, a plan by the BMWi envisioned to first convince oil companies to voluntarily provide their commercial oil reserves, before in a second step a law would oblige them to give out their mandatory reserves.⁷⁶ The ministry was keen to keep any such plans under wraps for the moment in order to prevent a run on the petrol stations. The need to plan for the worst case and the necessities of secrecy were thus diametrically opposed.

On 16 October 1973, the Saudi foreign ministry handed the European ambassadors in Jeddah an *aide-memoire* which threatened the use of the oil weapon if direct US support for Israel were to continue.⁷⁷ It was, as the West German representative at the meeting reported, clearly an attempt to move the Europeans to convince Washington of ending the airlift to Israel. As has already been established in Chapter II, the FRG did not act accordingly. In fact, the conversation between US ambassador Hillenbrand and Scheel, in which Bonn gave the unofficial nod to the use of West German territory for the weapons deliveries, happened on the exact same day. One day later, on the evening of 17 October, the Arab oil ministers agreed to cut oil production by five percent on a monthly basis "until the full Israeli retreat from the occupied territories and the re-constitution of the full rights of the Palestinian people".⁷⁸ Moreover, oil boycotts against countries considered particularly pro-Israel were announced: the US, South Africa, Rhodesia (present day's Zimbabwe) and two European countries with Portugal and the Netherlands.⁷⁹

⁷³ PA/AA (B36 104991, unfoliated) 10.10.1973. *Bartels to several embassies and delegations.*

⁷⁴ PA/AA (B36 104991, unfoliated) 10.10.1973. *Notes by Bartels.*

⁷⁵ PA/AA (B36 104991, unfoliated) 17.10.1973. *Notes by Kruse.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ PA/AA (B36 104991, unfoliated) 16.10.1973. *Metzger (Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

⁷⁸ PA/AA (B36 104991, unfoliated) 18.10.1973. *Freundt (Kuwait) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

⁷⁹ PA/AA (B36 104868, unfoliated) 30.11.1973. *Conversation notes.*

As a result, the oil price jumped from three to five dollars a barrel.⁸⁰ The oil price had doubled over night at a time when cheap oil seemed self-evident. Also, further price increases were now only a matter of time. Crucially, on a psychological level, the industrialised world for the first time had to confront its vulnerability due to resource dependence.

Chapter II has shown that it took the *Auswärtiges Amt* almost two weeks to formulate an official position on the October War.⁸¹ In fact, the respective circular was distributed within the ministry on 19 October, a mere two days after the meeting of Arab oil ministers in Kuwait. This certainly was no coincidence. The oil question forced the FRG to a more concrete position on the conflict. The circular underlines the European dependency on Arab oil, while the US only imported a fraction of its oil from the Middle East.⁸² “Not least for this reason we are working towards convincing the Arabs that Europe is neutral in this conflict.”⁸³

Bonn now concentrated on two levels to achieve this aim. Saudi Arabia was the first focal point of its diplomacy due to its importance within OPEC. On the 23 October, the Saudi foreign ministry passed on an *aide-memoire* to Peter Metzger, number two in the West German embassy in Jeddah. It stated that Saudi Arabia was “extremely offended because of the latest American stand”.⁸⁴ It threatened consequences for the EEC should the Europeans not succeed in changing America’s stance on the conflict. Two days later, Frank basically told US ambassador Hillenbrand that the FRG would no longer accept US weapons deliveries to Israel via the FRG.⁸⁵ Clearly, the decision to ultimately pressure the US to end the airlift via West Germany – after Israel’s victory had been ensured – was not due to abstract fears of the oil weapon, but rather to concrete threats. The timing of the *Auswärtiges Amt* worked. On 30 October, a relieved Metzger reported back to Bonn that since the reception of the *aide-memoire* “the position of the FRG has improved significantly. Media and Saudi businessmen are full of praise of the documented neutrality of the FRG in the current crisis.”⁸⁶

The FRG’s second priority was its diplomacy towards Tripoli, as Libya was still the most important oil supplier for the FRG. Here, the *Auswärtiges Amt* relied on a personal letter by Brandt, as well as support by Egypt’s president Sadat, to prevent any direct boycott against

⁸⁰ On the oil crisis, see, for example, Painter, *Oil and geopolitics* (2014); Bösch and Graf, *Reacting to Anticipations* (2014).

⁸¹ See Chapter II.

⁸² AAPD 19.10.1973. Document 329. *Circular by Dohms*.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ PA/AA (B36 104991, unfoliated) 23.10.1973. *Metzger (Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt*. See also Graf, Rüdiger. *Gefährdungen der Energiesicherheit und die Angst vor der Angst. Westliche Industrieländer und das arabische Ölembargo 1973/74*. (Göttingen, 2010).

⁸⁵ AAPD 25.10.1973. Document 337. *Conversation of Frank with ambassador Hillenbrand*.

⁸⁶ PA/AA (B36 104991, unfoliated) 30.10.1973. *Metzger (Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

the FRG.⁸⁷ Despite some heated conversations between West German and Libyan officials in Tripoli, Bonn ultimately got its way.⁸⁸

It is worthwhile to stress that at no point was there an oil boycott against the FRG. The biggest impact on the West German oil supply came from the Arab oil boycott against the Netherlands, which remained the only boycotted EEC country throughout the crisis. But indirectly, this also affected the FRG, as international oil deliveries to West Germany usually went through Rotterdam. Of course, driving bans on Sundays as well as speed limits for motorways were introduced in Germany. The images of empty West German motorways today create the impression of a widespread fuel shortage in the FRG at the time. However, these measures had rather been introduced by Bonn for psychological reasons, to convince the broader population of the need to save fuel. Today, the saving effect of the car-free Sundays is considered to have been marginal.⁸⁹

Ultimately, the impact of the oil weapon on the FRG was as much psychological as it was material. As other Western nations, too, the FRG had recognised the dangers of the oil weapon before the oil crisis took place. Bonn had reacted to it, for example through increased efforts towards better bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia. Still, like all Western European states, West Germany was by no means ready for the energy crisis when it started. On the one hand, this was out of Bonn's control. Measures such as the increases of oil reserves simply took time to be implemented. On the other hand, both the Kiesinger and Brandt governments had miscalculated: first by placing too much emphasis on industrial measures such as the creation of DEMINEX, then by misjudging both the ability and willingness of the Arab oil producers to wield the oil weapon. In October 1973 itself, however, this chapter shows how meticulous and relentless diplomacy by the *Auswärtiges Amt* averted the worst-case scenario for the FRG: a direct oil boycott.

By November 1973, the fighting between Syria, Egypt and Israel had stopped. But on another front the conflict was just about to start. The oil crisis had opened a significant rift between the EEC states and the US as the industrialised world now discussed how to respond to the ongoing energy crisis.

⁸⁷ AAPD 30.10.1973. Document 346. *Müller-Chorus (Tripoli) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Hohensee, *Der erste Ölpreisschock* (1996).

4. Fighting over the future: Bonn between multi- and bilateral responses to the energy crisis, 1974-1979

The oil crisis had profound political, economic and even social effects. It challenged existing assumptions about the nature of growth and the availability of resources. Global political dynamics changed, as suddenly some members of the so-called ‘Third World’ disposed of more capital than countries of the ‘First World’ – something which in the view of the *Auswärtiges Amt* led to “a change of consciousness amongst the states of the Third World”.⁹⁰ Debates about limits of growth and sustainable energy savings emerged then, with some of them lasting to this very day. While all of these changes are of great interest and importance, this chapter only focuses on the impact of the oil crisis on West German relations to the Arab states, both in a multilateral and a bilateral setting.

After the oil shock, it was clear that the FRG now had to “make great efforts to become independent of blackmail in the long term”, as Brandt had told Brezhnev by the end of the October War.⁹¹ Bonn would follow a two-pronged approach for this. On the one hand, it strengthened its bilateral relations with the oil producing countries in the Gulf. On the other hand, it engaged in a strenuous cooperation with the other industrialised, oil importing countries of the West to reach some sort of agreement with the oil exporters.

The industrialised countries of the West – almost all of them relying on oil imports to a greater or smaller extent – now faced two questions. Firstly, they obviously were intent on finding a political response to the risk of their oil dependence. Secondly, the less obvious question pertained to the issue of so-called ‘petro-dollar recycling’. After all, billions of dollars moved from the West to the oil producing countries. Now, states like the US were keen to ensure that at least some of that wealth would be re-invested in the West and thus not be lost for good. Both these questions required negotiations with the oil producers, and there was a great deal of disagreement between Washington and its European allies as to how to approach these talks.

The underlying problems of Western cooperation on the energy issue were lack of trust and a divergence of interests. The FRG’s faith in the Nixon administration was undermined by the misunderstanding between Washington and Bonn around the airlift to Israel as well as a general feeling that the US did not do enough to keep their European allies informed throughout

⁹⁰ PA/AA (B36 109107, unfoliated) 09.12.1974. *Memorandum by planning unit.*

⁹¹ AAPD 07.11.1973. Document 364. *Brandt to Breschnev.*

the October War.⁹² Moreover, the Europeans felt that the US – who only imported a fraction of their oil from the Middle East – did not take the massive European overreliance on Arab oil seriously enough.⁹³ It has been argued in Chapter I of this thesis that the clash between Washington and Bonn over the Middle East conflict was merely superficial. Ultimately, Brandt and later Schmidt strongly supported Kissinger’s Middle Eastern policy after 1973. However, in the area of energy politics, the rift between the US and both Bonn as well as the EEC states was real, substantial and profound.

In the aftermath of the October War, Kissinger urged the Western oil importers to build a united front against the oil producers, creating influence through a cartelisation of consumers, so to speak. For this purpose, the US government invited eight consumer countries to an energy conference in Washington, DC, in January 1974.⁹⁴ Scheel accepted the invitation only reluctantly, as he feared that the event would upset the OPEC countries.⁹⁵ In the end, France declined to join the follow-up coordination group, setting back Kissinger’s approach. The other countries continued with their work on a common position of the consumer countries before entering into a dialogue with the oil producers.

At the same time, the EEC states were pressured by the US to shelve their schemes for a new conference format between European and Arab states to address the energy issue. Kissinger feared that such a project would represent a fatal division of the West in face of Arab pressure.⁹⁶ The Americans viewed the entire project as a “stab in the back of their peace efforts in the Middle East”, as a senior West German civil servant warned Brandt.⁹⁷ But the French in particular were intent on going ahead with what would become the EAD. Bonn took a mediating position, as it was torn between its commitment to European solidarity and the transatlantic alliance. It had always wanted for the Energy Conference and the EAD to continue in unison, but now recognised the political contradictions between the two.⁹⁸ As a result, it successfully lobbied the French to accept that both oil and the Arab-Israeli conflict would have to be left off the EAD’s agenda for the moment, whilst it convinced Washington that such a dismantled dialogue forum would not undermine US policy in the Middle East.⁹⁹ Subsequently, both the EAD and the Energy Conference could go ahead.

⁹² See Chapter 2.

⁹³ PA/AA (B130 9982A, unfoliated) 13.11.1973. *Notes by Redies*.

⁹⁴ AAPD 05.01.1974. Document 5. *Von Staden (Washington) to foreign office*. The eight countries were the FRG, UK, France, Italy, Japan, Canada, Netherlands and Norway.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ AAPD 10.02.1974. Document 42. *Conversation of Scheel with Kissinger in Washington*.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ PA/AA (B36 104969, unfoliated) 23.01.1974. *Lautenschlager to ministerial office*.

⁹⁹ See Chapter V on the formation of the Euro-Arab dialogue.

It took until October 1974 for the latter to conclude consultations of the ‘energy coordination group’, resulting in an International Energy Program (IEP). It focused on a common crisis mechanism, transparency of the oil market, a reduction of oil dependency by promoting alternative energy sources as well as the preparation of a consumer-producer dialogue.¹⁰⁰ By now, France – where the more moderate Jean Sauvagnargues had replaced the aggressive Michel Jobert at the *Quai d’Orsay* – supported the program. In 1975, a pre-conference of oil-producing and -consuming countries met in Paris. However, no agreement could be reached. The biggest success, as the West German representative noted, was that a “hard confrontation of both groups” had been avoided, leaving the chance for another conference in the future.¹⁰¹

Once again, when it came to addressing energy questions and oil dependency, the FRG took a middling position in multilateral efforts to produce an international agreement. It needed to address its energy dependency and thus could not afford the somewhat nonchalant attitude that Kissinger at times displayed towards the OPEC’s blackmail potential. At the same time, there was a real fear that Euro-American divergences on the energy issue could threaten the alliance as such. Thus, Schmidt, who became chancellor a few months after the Energy Conference had started, did his best to convince Paris of the use of the format, which might have helped to secure French support for the IEP.¹⁰² By the summer of 1975, when the consumer-producer dialogue, now termed ‘North-South dialogue’, was stuck, Schmidt sent Wischnewski on a fact-finding mission to Algeria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, India and Venezuela. His task was to get a better sense of the interests of the producer countries and convey them to Bonn’s Western allies.¹⁰³ Schmidt even launched his own, as he stressed, “private initiative” in December 1975 to facilitate an agreement between producers and consumers through informal, secret meetings of private experts, who would, however, be nominated by their respective governments.¹⁰⁴ They were to pre-negotiate an agreement, which at a later stage would then be taken up on an official level.¹⁰⁵ But this Track II approach ultimately failed, as Algeria was unwilling to commit itself to it.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰ AAPD 17.10.1974. Document 302. *Notes by Fischer (Chancellery)*.

¹⁰¹ AAPD 18.04.1975. Document 87. *Notes by Robert*.

¹⁰² AAPD 22.07.1974. Document 220. *Notes by Steffler*; AAPD 31.08.1974. Document 247. *Conversation of Schmidt with Rumor*.

¹⁰³ AAPD August 1975 (no exact date given). Document 259. *Memorandum by Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁰⁴ AAPD 23.12.1974. Document 382. *Schmidt to Ford*.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ AAPD 30.04.1975. Document 97. *Notes by Sanne (Chancellery)*; AAPD 09.05.1975. Document 108. *Conversation of Schmidt with Iran’s minister of the economy Ansari*; AAPD 29.05.1975. Document 138. *Conversation of Schmidt with Ford in Brussels*.

Alongside multilateral efforts to address the oil crisis the FRG further geared up its bilateral relations with the Arab states in the Gulf. One episode from January 1974 alone shows how much Bonn had neglected the region for years: the West German embassy in Jeddah had to apply for the construction of a radio station on its premises, as at the time urgent cables to Bonn took up to six days to arrive in the West German capital!¹⁰⁷ But now, the *Auswärtiges Amt* was intent to upgrade the Gulf region on its list of priorities. Norbert Montfort, who had been nominated as West German ambassador to the Saudi kingdom, left his current posting in Mauritania prematurely so that the FRG's representation in Jeddah at the highest level was ensured.¹⁰⁸ Almost immediately he demanded – and was granted – two more diplomats to work in his embassy, one of which focused solely on matters of oil.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the *Auswärtiges Amt* now planned the construction of an embassy in Abu Dhabi.¹¹⁰ The representation to Bahrain and Qatar was to be taken over by the West German ambassador to Kuwait. Moreover, in February 1974 the FRG was able to announce the resumption of diplomatic relations with another oil-rich Arab country neighbouring the Gulf: Iraq. The first political conversations surrounding the resumption of diplomatic relations circled, as could be expected, around “Iraqi wishes for economic cooperation, the question of outstanding debt and negotiations about DEMINEX in Iraq”.¹¹¹

The linchpin of West German Gulf policy, however, was Saudi Arabia. Not only because by 1974 it was West Germany's main supplier of oil and Bonn hoped for stronger economic ties with the kingdom. But the *Auswärtiges Amt* now also recognised “the leadership function of King Faisal in the Arab world”.¹¹² Saudi Arabia was viewed as “the crucial anchor of stability in the region” by the West German government.¹¹³ It is certainly no coincidence that Genscher's first journey as foreign minister to the Arab states led him first to Egypt and then to Saudi Arabia.¹¹⁴ In May 1976, Schmidt became the first German chancellor ever to visit the kingdom.¹¹⁵ Even key members of the West German opposition such as the Bavarian *Ministerpräsident* (chief minister) Franz-Joseph Strauß personally visited Saudi Arabia.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁷ PA/AA (B36 104870, unfoliated) 22.01.1974. *Notes by Redies*.

¹⁰⁸ PA/AA (B36 104870, unfoliated) 30.10.1973. *Jesser to D3*.

¹⁰⁹ PA/AA (B36 104870, unfoliated) 17.02.1974. *Montfort (Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt*. At that time, the only other diplomat solely focused on oil questions was stationed in the West German embassy in Libya.

¹¹⁰ PA/AA (B36 104870, unfoliated) 28.02.1974. *Memorandum by 110*.

¹¹¹ AAPD 26.02.1974. Document 59. *Sachs (currently Bagdad) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹¹² PA/AA (B36 104870, unfoliated) 17.02.1974. *Montfort (Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹¹³ PA/AA (B36 104869, unfoliated) 12.03.1975. *Hauthal to Jesser*.

¹¹⁴ AAPD 18.04.1975. Document 89. *Lahn (currently Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹¹⁵ AAPD 30.05.1976. Document 164. *Conversation of Schmidt with crown prince Fahd in Riyad*.

¹¹⁶ AAPD 23.10.1977. Document 300. *Schlagintweit (Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

Relations focused on bilateral economic cooperation, the Arab-Israeli conflict and, of course, energy policy. Again, the dominant Saudi position in the oil market made Riyadh an important target of bilateral diplomacy. For example, in December 1976 Schmidt sent a personal letter to crown prince Fahd, who was considered the *eminence grise* of the kingdom at the time. In the letter, the West German chancellor gave his thanks for Saudi Arabia's recent role in preventing an oil price increase of more than 5% by OPEC.¹¹⁷ A 1979 memorandum on Saudi Arabia sums up the West German policy towards the country succinctly:

The core aim of our Saudi Arabia policy is to find a political consensus with the Saudi leadership, so that we can support what has so far been a moderate and responsible position by Saudi Arabia regarding energy supply, global economic questions and the Near East conflict. Through visits of the heads of government, several visits of the Saudi foreign minister and also of several other ministers in Bonn throughout the last two years, a stable bond of trust between our two governments has emerged.¹¹⁸

The new-found closeness in West German-Saudi relations came with expectations that almost overwhelmed the *Auswärtiges Amt*. Saudi Arabia “puts a lot of hopes into its relations to the FRG, but overestimates the latter's potential influence”, a West German diplomat warned Bonn in late 1974 as if to keep expectations on a realistic level.¹¹⁹ Looking at the archival evidence, it seems as if there was a sort of hype around Saudi Arabia in Bonn for a few years. Riyadh was about to overtake Cairo as prime focus of West Germany's ‘Arab policy’.

In June 1975, an inter-departmental workshop on energy policy in the *Auswärtiges Amt* concluded that the FRG's relationship to the Arab oil producers had been and for a while would remain in “a schizophrenic state of coexistence of good bilateral and tense multilateral relations”.¹²⁰ Indeed, in response to the oil crisis, the FRG had followed a delicate dual strategy. On a multilateral level, it ultimately supported US efforts to coordinate a more or less united consumer position towards the energy issue, pitted Bonn against the OPEC countries. Although in the end no substantial agreements with the oil producers could be found, it probably was considered a success in Bonn that there was at least no open breakdown of transatlantic cooperation and no obvious failure on the multilateral level. At the same time, on a bilateral level Bonn worked hard to strengthen its relations to the Arab, oil producing countries of the Gulf. In particular, this pertained to its policy towards Saudi Arabia, now welcomed as a leader

¹¹⁷ PA/AA (B36 108835, unfoliated) 23.12.1976. *Nowak (Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹¹⁸ AAPD 09.02.1979. Document 34. *Memorandum by Meyer-Landrut*.

¹¹⁹ PA/AA (B36 104868, unfoliated) 02.04.1974. *Monfort (Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹²⁰ PA/AA (B36 109107, unfoliated) 02.06.1975. *Third inter-departmental workshop of the planning unit on energy policy*.

of the moderate Arab states. Not only did the FRG switch the focus of its oil supply from Libya to Saudi Arabia, but Riyadh was also relied upon to mitigate an aggressive OPEC price policy. At least in regard to Saudi Arabia, Bonn's "schizophrenic" foreign policy bore some fruits, as there was a remarkable increase in bilateral exchange.¹²¹ As Genscher noted in a speech, "the close exchange of opinions of our two governments has gained tradition and continuity [...] [and] our several meetings, which have taken the form of a conversation between good friends, illustrate how closely our countries are connected."¹²² Had it not been for the events of 1979, a lasting strategic partnership with Riyadh might well have developed that could have looked like the bond between Cairo and Bonn.

5. 1979: year of crisis and disappointment

1979 tested the West German approach to both the economics and geopolitics of oil. In regard to the former, the second oil crisis challenged the FRG's post-1973 responses to its oil dependency. In regard to the latter, the Iranian revolution and the Siege of Mecca dashed West German assumptions about stability in the Gulf. Instead of the enthusiasm of the mid-1970s, now a more careful attitude entered West Germany's stance on the Gulf, mutually re-enforced by and re-enforcing the general fading out of Bonn's attempts at a coherent 'Arab policy' by 1980.

Five years after the 1973 oil crisis, the West once again had to confront its energy dependency. The second oil crisis was caused largely by the Iranian revolution of 1978-79, as strikes and unrest within the country hampered the oil production of one of the world's biggest producers.¹²³ On the one hand, the crisis in Iran represented a particular challenge for the FRG, as by 1979 Tehran had overtaken Saudi Arabia as the FRG's main oil supplier, providing a fifth of West German oil imports. Moreover, "for our economy Iran is the most important export market of the Third World", as a memo by the *Auswärtiges Amt* noted in late 1978. On the other hand, there obviously also was a more global dimension to the crisis.¹²⁴ Schmidt in particular feared that a repetition of price spikes like in 1973 would throw the world economy into turmoil once again.¹²⁵ "A crisis in this [the energy] sector could cause great difficulties for global trade balances and the monetary system", the West German chancellor told Poland's

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² PA/AA (B36 119949, unfoliated) 22.06.1979. *Meyer-Landrut to Genscher*.

¹²³ See Gross, Samantha. *What Iran's 1979 revolution meant for US and global oil markets*. Brookings (05.03.2019); Ikenberry, John. *Reasons of state: oil politics and the capacities of American government*. (Ithaca, 1988).

¹²⁴ AAPD 11.09.1978. Document 258. *Notes by Meyer-Landrut*.

¹²⁵ AAPD 19.01.1979. Document 17. *Conversation of Schmidt with Saud al-Faisal*.

leader Edward Gierek.¹²⁶ In a conversation with French prime minister Barre he noted oil price increases amongst the four foreign policy threats to his re-election in 1982.¹²⁷

However, 1979 was not 1973. Much of the crisis was due to panic and misperception. If the West had underestimated its oil dependency in 1973, it now overestimated it. A mere 4% decrease of global oil production caused oil prices to triple over the next two years.¹²⁸ This shows that most of the price increase reflected the fear that global oil production might collapse rather than the actual state of global oil supply. To an extent, therefore, the crisis was about perception, brought about by the memories of the original 1973 ‘oil shock’. The saying that generals always fight the last war seems just as adequate to politicians dealing with oil crises.

The second key difference to 1973 lies in the level of cooperation that now characterised international energy diplomacy. This time, the oil crisis was the accidental by-product of political turmoil in one country, rather than a purposeful oil boycott for political reasons. Quite the opposite. Initially, Schmidt had feared that other OPEC countries would try to use the turmoil in Iran to further increase prices and their profits.¹²⁹ But after a visit of his economics minister Otto Graf Lambsdorff to Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE, Bonn was assured that the Arab oil producers would rather try to increase their production to offset the loss of Iranian oil in the global supply chain.¹³⁰ In the end, this move covered almost half of what Iran had produced before its year of revolution.¹³¹ This higher level of cooperation between the Arab oil producers in the Gulf and the consumer countries was matched by better coordination amongst the consumers themselves as compared to the 1973 oil crisis. Unlike in 1973, when Europe and the US were almost continuously at loggerheads, by June 1979 Schmidt noted after a conversation with Carter in Washington, DC: “He [Schmidt] had gotten the impression that in the energy sectors their interests were aligned quite closely.”¹³² Within the EEC, the Europeans themselves agreed to diversify towards “coal, nuclear energy and hydrocarbons”.¹³³

Overall, in 1979 the ‘oil weapon’ had gone off by accident and in effect weakened the Arab oil producers themselves. OPEC’s unity started to fade and broke completely when the Iran-Iraq war began in 1980. New energy markets in the North Sea and the Soviet Union allowed the FRG to diversify. Between 1980 and 1982, West Germany decreased its oil imports

¹²⁶ AAPD 17.08.1979. Document 236. *Conversation of Schmidt with Gierek.*

¹²⁷ AAPD 01.19.1979. Document 284. *Conversation of Schmidt with Barre.*

¹²⁸ Gross, *What Iran’s 1979 revolution meant for US and global oil markets* (05.03.2019).

¹²⁹ AAPD 27.03.1979. Document 92. *Conversation of Schmidt with Waldheim.*

¹³⁰ PA/AA (B36 137648, unfoliated) 28.04.1979. *Notes by von Würzen.*

¹³¹ Gross, *What Iran’s 1979 revolution meant for US and global oil markets* (05.03.2019).

¹³² AAPD 06.06.1979. Document 162. *Conversation of Schmidt with Carter in Washington.*

¹³³ AAPD 05.12.1979. Document 362. *Circular by Ellerkmann.*

from the Middle East and North Africa by more than a third.¹³⁴ Although for the FRG the political necessity to engage in the Gulf for reasons of energy security did not disappear, it was reduced. The first oil crisis had brought the Gulf in particular to Bonn's attention. The second oil crisis led it to shift its focus away from the region again.

If the Iranian revolution sunk one half of the political capital Bonn had invested in the Gulf throughout the 1970s, then the Siege of Mecca in Saudi Arabia stirred up fears in Schmidt's administration that the other half was about to vanish as well. On 20 November 1979, several hundred heavily armed militants around two leaders - Mohammed Abdullah al-Qahtani and Juhayman al-Otaybi – stormed the Grand Mosque of Mecca, killing security personnel and taking hostages amongst the pilgrims within the complex. Claiming to represent the true form of Islam, they called for the overthrow of what they perceived to be decadent and impious rule by the al-Saud family. In fact, this religious aspect was heavily intertwined with the tribal politics of Saudi Arabia, making the event more than just an attack of religious fanatics. It took more than two weeks for Saudi security forces, with secret help by French special forces, to reassert control over the Mosque and either kill or capture the attackers.¹³⁵

In recent years, the Siege of Mecca has mostly been interpreted as part of the larger trend of radicalising political Islam towards the end of the 20th century. One example is a French-German documentary from 2018 which argued that the attack in fact represented the beginning of modern jihadism.¹³⁶ Similarly, Lawrence Wright places it in a chain of events culminating in the 9/11 attacks.¹³⁷ At the time, the attack also received enormous attention within the foreign policy community in Bonn, but for an entirely different reason. The Iranian people had just surprised the West with overthrowing their regime; was the Saudi regime now the next to fall? The French immediately made this connection, as they described the attack as “a symptom of unrest, which emanates from the Iranian revolution”.¹³⁸ West German ambassador Schlagintweit, however, doubted foreign meddling and mostly saw religious motivation at play.¹³⁹ Over the next few weeks, he was asked time and again to assess the

¹³⁴ Bischof, Gerhard, and Werner Gocht. *Energietaschenbuch Deutschland*. (Braunschweig/Wiesbaden, 1984): 185ff.

¹³⁵ Hassner, Ron. *War on Sacred Ground*. (Ithaca, 2009); Trofimov, Yaroslav. *The Siege of Mecca. The forgotten uprising in Islam holiest shrine*. (London, 2008).

¹³⁶ Dirk van den Berg (director), *The Siege of Mecca* (2018).

¹³⁷ Wright, Lawrence. *The Looming Tower: Al Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*. (London, 2006).

¹³⁸ PA/AA (B36 119948, unfoliated) 21.11.1979. *Herbst (Paris) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹³⁹ PA/AA (B36 119948, unfoliated) 22.11.1979. *Schlagintweit (Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

stability of the Saudi regime.¹⁴⁰ The conclusion he drew only two days into the siege, on 22 November 1979, proved prescient:

The government will easily handle this leftover of a past period [of fanatical-religious aggression]. But the attack [...] will lay bare to the government the extent of domestic tensions which have been caused by economic development and the opening of the former Bedouin state to the world. Therefore, a more conservative approach [by the Saudi government] has to be expected in the future.¹⁴¹

Saudi Arabia might not have fallen, but Bonn's belief in the value of its alliance with Riyadh was shaken.

Another disappointment in West German-Arab relations pertained to the area of economics.¹⁴² In the 1960s, the Arab world had been considered a region of great opportunity for economic development.¹⁴³ In particular after the oil crisis there had been high hopes for a boost of German investment in key Arab states such as Egypt or Saudi Arabia.¹⁴⁴ From Cairo, ambassador Steltzer sent several reports in the mid-1970s about the "boom" that Egypt was on the brink of and the potential this offered for the FRG.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, trade and foreign policy were often seen as interlinked. With the absence of diplomatic relations to most of the Arab states in the late 1960s, the *Auswärtiges Amt* had hoped that it could "[...] focus on first improving our relationship with the Arab states below the diplomatic level, that is on the economic and cultural level."¹⁴⁶ Later, too, the West German government had thought that stronger economic links would increase its political leverage in the region. 'Geo-economics' is what Luttwak terms this logic of using a state's economic strength for foreign political leverage.¹⁴⁷ The pervasiveness of this notion in West German foreign policy-making is illustrated well by an episode from early 1975. When asked whether a delegation of businessmen should accompany him on a visit to Saudi Arabia and Egypt, foreign minister Genscher immediately agreed: "The presence of high-ranking personalities from the business world would underline the link between foreign and economic policy."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁰ PA/AA (B36 119948, unfoliated) 29.11.1979. *Schlagintweit (Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt*; PA/AA (B36 119948, unfoliated) 04.12.1979. *Meyer-Landrut to Genscher*.

¹⁴¹ PA/AA (B36 119948, unfoliated) 22.11.1979. *Schlagintweit (Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁴² On this, see also Maull, *Economic relations with the Middle East: weight and dimensions* (1992).

¹⁴³ Henry and Springborg, *Globalisation and the Politics of Development in the Middle East* (2010): 314.

¹⁴⁴ PA/AA (B36 104663, unfoliated) 04.02.1974. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*; PA/AA (B36 104868, unfoliated) 30.11.1973. *Notes on visit of foreign minister Saqqaf in Bonn*.

¹⁴⁵ PA/AA (B36 104662, unfoliated) 13.08.1974. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁴⁶ PA/AA (B130 4533A, unfoliated) 13.01.1970. *Frank to Scheel*.

¹⁴⁷ Luttwak, *Geopolitics to Geo-Economics* (1990): see also Kundnani *Germany as Geo-economic Power* (2011).

¹⁴⁸ PA/AA (B36 104869, unfoliated) 07.03.1975. *Memorandum for Genscher*.

But two factors impeded both the market potential and the effectiveness of geo-economics in West Germany's 'Arab policy'. Firstly, while West German trade with the region had grown throughout the 1970s, the Arab states never became a priority for West German companies. At no time between 1967 and 1979 did imports or exports to the Arab states exceed a tenth of overall West German trade. Even though the numbers go up significantly in 1974 because of the oil crisis, trade to the Arab states still fluctuated between a mere five to seven percent of all West German imports and exports in those years.¹⁴⁹ By the end of the 1970s it was clear that there would be no united Arab state or entity, and thus no coherent Arab market. Not even the oil crisis and the new-found wealth of the Gulf states fundamentally changed that.

WEST-GERMAN ARAB TRADE, 1967-1979													
	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
IMPORTS	4,2	5,4	5,8	5,7	6,4	6,5	7,5	17,4	12,9	16,9	16,8	12,9	18,5
SHARE	6,0%	6,7%	5,9%	5,2%	5,3%	5,0%	5,2%	9,7%	7,0%	7,6%	7,2%	5,3%	6,0%
EXPORTS	1,6	1,9	2,3	2,3	2,8	2,9	3,6	7,3	11,2	15,4	16,0	15,7	17,1
SHARE	1,8%	1,9%	2,0%	1,8%	2,1%	1,9%	2,0%	3,2%	5,1%	6,0%	5,9%	5,5%	5,4%
DEFICIT	-2,6	-3,5	-3,5	-3,4	-3,6	-3,6	-3,9	-10,1	-1,7	-1,5	-0,8	2,8	-1,4

Figure 2: West German-Arab Trade, 1967-1979 (in billion Deutschmark). The 'share'-row denotes the percentage of exports/imports to all Arab states as compared to the overall share of West German exports and imports in the respective years.¹⁵⁰

On the ground, too, enthusiasm for West German economic engagement waned. "This is the story of an industrial project in Egypt", is how a 1976 report on the state of the Egyptian economy by the West German embassy in Cairo started.¹⁵¹ It had the unflattering title "economic situation in Egypt; here: factor human inadequacies" and was a damning judgement on the economic reforms Sadat had initiated in 1974: "Everywhere one comes across a hardly bearable mix of disinterest, arrogance, intrigue, rivalries, personal incompetence, technical inabilities and intentional destruction."¹⁵² Already earlier in that year ambassador Steltzer had reported of "the catastrophic state of the budget, increasing public debt and trade deficit, inflation, corruption, brain-drain and social injustice".¹⁵³ The *Auswärtiges Amt* had attempted

¹⁴⁹ See Graph 1.

¹⁵⁰ Calculation by author; data taken from *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Stuttgart, 1968-80). The Arab countries included in the table are Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Arab Republic Yemen, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Oman (Muscat and Oman from 1967-69), United Arab Emirates (after 1969), Qatar and Kuwait.

¹⁵¹ PA/AA (B36 108917, unfoliated) 15.09.1976. *Strenziok (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ PA/AA (B36 108714, unfoliated) 18.02.1976. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

to promote trade in the region, for example by urging West German trade delegations to visit states such as Egypt or Saudi Arabia.¹⁵⁴ But this top-down trade policy clashed with and was unable to overcome setbacks such as the ones described in the above-mentioned report.

Secondly, geo-economics is an ambivalent source of political power. Luttwak considers it a measure of strength and, of course, the ability to wield influence through economic capacity indicates greater authority. It was, after all, on the back of the 1950's *Wirtschaftswunder* and its translation into stronger exports and developmental aid that the FRG was able to return to the arena of international relations as serious player as of the 1960s. But the West Germans also turned to economics as instrument in the making of their Middle Eastern policy due to the lack of alternatives. Power projection through military means, networks of post-colonial patronage or symbolic power, as compared to the permanent Security Council members like Britain or France, were not available to the young West German republic. Therefore, economics was not only an instrument of choice, but also of necessity for Bonn. As such, it was to an extent a measure of last resort. Here, once again the example of Egypt is telling. Despite its significant support for Sadat's government with capital aid and a promotion of trade, Bonn ultimately was unable to shape Egyptian attitudes towards key political issues such as the Camp David Accords. Geoeconomics did not automatically pay a political dividend and was to an extent merely pursued for the lack of alternative approaches.¹⁵⁵

The enthusiasm of West German diplomats about the economic potential of West German investments in the Arab states after the oil crisis in particular was premature. The *Auswärtiges Amt* and BMWi did what they could to promote West German industrial engagement top-down, but West German companies were less enthusiastic about local market conditions. The gap between business mentalities was too large to bridge, and geo-economics in any case only a semi-effective instrument in the toolbox of West German diplomacy.

1979 was the year of crisis in the Gulf.¹⁵⁶ Three crises – of oil, in Saudi Arabia and in Iran – shook the West German confidence in the value of its political investment in the region. In the case of Saudi Arabia, the country underwent a fundamental social and political transformation

¹⁵⁴ Archive of the Federation of German Industries (BDI) (A 232) 17.03.1975. *Report about delegation visit to Egypt*; see also PA/AA (B36 104872, unfoliated) 11.11.1974. *Notes by Montfort about the visit of West German business delegation in Saudi Arabia*.

¹⁵⁵ On Germany and geo-economics, see also Szabo, Stephen. *Germany, Russia, and the Rise of Geo-Economics*. (London, 2015); Staack, *Handelsstaat Deutschland* (2000); Damm, Ullrich. *Versuch einer Darstellung der politischen Beziehungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zu den Entwicklungsländern unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Entwicklungshilfe*. (Geneva, 1965).

¹⁵⁶ On the events of that year, see Bösch, Frank. *Zeitenwende 1979: als die Welt von heute begann*. (München, 2019); or Lesch, *1979* (2001).

after the 1979 Mecca uprising. This created an emotional distance between it and the West. The events of 1979 convinced Bonn of the confines that its political engagement in the Gulf region should have. Moreover, throughout the 1970s the FRG also faced the limits that its economic engagement had in the Middle East as a whole. The desire for a stronger West German economic role in the Arab states was met with much more caution within the West German business community. More trade and investment followed, but the Arab world never became a market of the highest priority for the FRG. Bonn also had to acknowledge that economic power did not automatically translate into political leverage. After some lows and highs for West German foreign policy in the Gulf, by the end of the 1970s the FRG's diplomacy ended up on a level of political engagement in the region which might be described as sufficient. Not less, but also not more.

6. Conclusion: from industry to diplomacy

The FRG joined the geopolitics of oil with some delay. When the spectre of the oil weapon first emerged with the mini-boycott of 1967, Bonn's initial reaction was to focus on business as a remedy for its oil dependency. The West German government promoted the creation of its own, West German oil company DEMINEX in 1969. But that was too little, too late. The oil markets were changing, and power migrated to the – mostly Arab – oil producing countries. By 1971, the Brandt administration had realised that it needed to react to these changes. It ultimately underestimated the threat of a sudden oil boycott, but that probably did not make too much difference – the late formulation of a German oil policy meant that the FRG would have been caught unprepared to defend against the oil weapon in 1973 in any case.

The oil shock had political, economic, social, psychological and diplomatic effects. In regard to the latter, the important ones were West German attempts to mediate between consumer and producer countries, which at times led Bonn into severe conflict with Washington. Also, the oil crisis kickstarted a diplomatic turn towards the Gulf which stands in stark contrast to the previous, open neglect of that region by policy makers in Bonn. New embassies in the Gulf were established, and existing ones reinforced. Saudi Arabia became a linchpin of West German diplomacy both in regard to oil and to broader political issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict. Of course, this did not make Bonn an arbiter of oil politics. But the constant exchange with the Saudis on formulation of international energy policy and the setting

of the oil price certainly illustrates how much more Bonn was part of the conversation about oil after 1973 as compared to before.¹⁵⁷

The 1973 crisis had pulled the FRG into the Gulf; the 1979 crises limited the extent of this engagement. On the one hand, the second oil crisis did not hit West Germany as hard as the first. On the other hand, notwithstanding its significant political investment in the Gulf, the Schmidt administration had been unable to prevent the crisis from happening. Moreover, turmoil on both sides of the Gulf shook the belief of West German policy makers in the alliance with Saudi Arabia. By the end of the 1970s, the FRG had established a diplomatic presence that was sufficient to secure key foreign policy goals. The ‘year of crisis’ 1979 illustrated both Bonn's limited need and its limited ability to engage in the Gulf.

Overall, this chapter has shown that the Middle East is indeed “more than oil and conflicts”, as a book title by Steinbach stipulates.¹⁵⁸ Oil did not factor into the formulation of a West German ‘Arab policy’ in 1970 – it only entered the frame from 1973 onwards. It also never dominated political considerations – even when facing an Arab oil boycott, the Brandt government prioritised indirect support to Israel during the October War of 1973 over directly securing its oil supplies from the Middle East. But oil became a factor of West German Middle Eastern policy from 1973 onwards and was the foremost reason for Bonn’s much stronger engagement in Saudi Arabia and the smaller Gulf states.

This chapter represents the first analysis of oil as component of West German post-war foreign policy more generally and Middle Eastern policy more specifically. It provides a cohesive previously missing narrative of the link between Bonn’s energy and foreign policy.¹⁵⁹ It adds to existing works on the legacy of the oil shock by analysing its impact in the area of diplomacy.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, it contributes to the foreign political analysis of the second oil crisis.¹⁶¹ It shows that West Germany’s ‘schizophrenic’ diplomacy predates the more contemporary foreign policy concept of “hedging”.¹⁶² Finally, it also elaborates on the role of trade for West Germany’s ‘Arab policy’ and on both the potential and limits of geo-economics as source of the FRG’s political power in the post-war era.

¹⁵⁷ PA/AA (B36 104976, unfoliated) 07.05.1976. *Notes by 405*; AAPD 31.05.1976. Document 165. *Conversation of Schmidt with Yamani in Riyadh*; AAPD 24.06.1979. Document 186. *Schlagintweit (Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁵⁸ Steinbach, Udo. *Arabien: Mehr als Erdöl und Konflikte*. (Berlin, 1992).

¹⁵⁹ Karlsch and Stokes, *Faktor Öl* (2003); Maull, *Economic relations with the Middle East* (1992); Hohensee, *Der erste Ölpreisschock* (1996); Kaiser und Steinbach, *Deutsch-Arabische Beziehungen* (1982).

¹⁶⁰ Painter, *Oil and geopolitics* (2014); Licklider, *The Arab Oil Weapon and the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, and the United States* (1988).

¹⁶¹ Bösch and Graf, *Reacting to Anticipations* (2014).

¹⁶² Ciorciari and Haacke. *Hedging in international relations* (2009).

The FRG's relations to the Gulf in the second part of the 1970s were shaped by its attraction to the region's political and economic potential, and a simultaneous profound sense of cultural distance to it. The latter comes out well in ambassador's Schlagintweit's verdict on the 1979 Siege of Mecca: "Now, it was the turn of Arab fanaticism to raise its voice again – according to the character of the desert inhabitant in its emotional, bloody, irrational way, totally constrained by religious and moral criteria."¹⁶³ Even today, this dualism can still be observed in German relations towards the Gulf – on the one hand repeated scepticism to weapons deliveries for Riyadh, on the other hand the inclusion of Saudi Arabia as a strategic partner into the *Auswärtiges Amt*'s 2012 concept of "shaping powers" (*Gestaltungsmächte*).¹⁶⁴ It is exactly this dualism of attraction and cultural repulsion which we also encounter in Kuntzmann's report about the UAE. The 'South Arabian adventure' which began for him in 1974 has continued for the FRG to this day.

¹⁶³ PA/AA (B36 119948, unfoliated) 29.11.1979. *Schlagintweit (Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁶⁴ Auswärtiges Amt. *Globalisierung gestalten - Partnerschaften ausbauen - Verantwortung teilen: Gestaltungsmächtekonzept der Bundesregierung*. (2012).

Chapter V: The European dimension of West German Middle Eastern policy

With all its weaknesses [...] this ‘Europe’ of the Six or the Ten might be the only ‘community’ we can have. A deviation from the long and cumbersome path to a political unification of Europe would lead back to a policy of the ‘concert of great powers’, to which the European middling powers individually do not count anymore.¹

Memorandum by ministerial director Bernd von Staden, 1971

European unification is based upon integration within EEC and EPC, which help to avoid interfering or even destructive effects on the community from areas where willingness to integration does not exist yet.²

From a memorandum by the Auswärtiges Amt, 1978

1. Introduction: the legacy of European Middle Eastern policy

In February 2019, the EU and the Arab League (or League of Arab States – LAS) came together for a joint summit at the Egyptian holiday destination of Sharm el Sheikh. The main topics of discussion were economic cooperation, migration and the fight against terrorism. European Council president Donald Tusk hailed the meeting as a “new step forward” in the relationship between Europe and the Arab world.³ According to a press release by the German government, the event was supposed to “inaugurate a new era of cooperation and coordination”.⁴ But, in fact, the summit was not entirely unprecedented. In 1974, in the aftermath of the October War, the leaders of the EEC agreed to launch a new institutional platform aimed at strengthening the ties between Europe and the Arab states: the Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD).⁵ It was promoted by Paris, loathed by Washington and cautiously embraced by West Germany. Its trials, tribulations and failure encapsulate the main theme of this chapter: the emergence of a European Middle Eastern policy during the 1970s, and its configuration within West Germany’s attempts at an ‘Arab policy’ in this period.

¹ AAPD 26.10.1971. Document 369. *Notes by von Staden.*

² PA/AA (B21 112902, unfoliated) 07.04.1978. *Notes by 200.*

³ European Council. *Remarks by President Donald Tusk at the press conference after the EU-LAS summit in Egypt.* (25.02.2019).

⁴ Die Bundesregierung. *Treffen in Sharm el-Sheikh – EU und Arabische Liga vertiefen Zusammenarbeit.* (25.02.2019).

⁵ As the EEC is the forerunner of today’s EU, throughout the text “European“ will at times be used in reference to what has in fact before the 1990’s only been Western European policy.

When the FRG reformulated its Middle Eastern policy in the aftermath of the 1967 June War, there was no European dimension to consider. Foreign policy was not yet part of the European project. Three years later, the members of the EEC agreed to launch a forum to strengthen foreign policy cooperation and coordination by forming the European Political Cooperation (EPC). Its initial focus lay solely on relations to Eastern Europe and the Middle East, with one of its first outcomes being a 1971 working paper on the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, the document was considered so close to pro-Arab positions that, upon Israeli criticism, Scheel quickly distanced himself from it. The entire episode almost led to the premature end of the EPC. Two years later, the October War and the oil crisis rekindled the interest of the EEC members in developing a common approach towards the Middle East. In a three-pronged strategy, the EPC was supposed to strengthen Europe's leverage on the Arab-Israeli conflict, the EAD was to expand relations to the Arab states and a policy termed *Approche Globale* served as a comprehensive European Mediterranean policy. Despite some progress, all three would ultimately stagnate.

Yet, for West Germany, the European dimension of its Middle Eastern policy became more important despite, or perhaps even because of, the shortcomings of the Nine's common efforts. On the one hand, Bonn looked to Europe as a genuine instrument to leverage its influence in the Middle East through common action. On the other hand, the *Auswärtiges Amt* always considered policies such as EPC or EAD within the broader framework of ongoing European integration. Admitting failure in the former might have implied failure of the latter. Thus, Bonn's usual response to the EPC's difficulties and shortcomings was more Europe.

European foreign policy in the Middle East has been explored extensively by previous research.⁶ A seminal study is provided by Moeckli, who uses French, British and German archival material to analyse EPC in its early years.⁷ A number of authors deal more descriptively with the topic, covering large periods after 1970.⁸ One issue which has garnered particular attention is the EU's attitude towards the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Middle East

⁶ See, for example, Kaya, Taylan Özgür. *The Middle East Peace Process and the EU: foreign policy and security strategy in international politics*. (London/New York, 2013); Musu, Constanza. *European Union policy towards the Arab-Israeli peace process: the quicksands of politics*. (Basingstoke, 2010); or Dosenrode, Soren, and Anders Stubkjaer. *The European Union and the Middle East*. (London/New York, 2002).

⁷ Moeckli, *European foreign policy during the Cold War* (2009).

⁸ Dosenrode and Stubkjaer, *European Union and the Middle East* (2002); Nuttall, Simon. *European foreign policy*. (Oxford, 2000); Regelsberger, Elfriede, et al. *Foreign policy of the European Union: from EPC to CFSP and beyond*. (Boulder/London, 1997).

peace process.⁹ Jacobs or Jawad focus exclusively on the EAD.¹⁰ Ultimately, all these scholars highlight internal coordination, transatlantic tensions and a lack of European leverage as key challenges for early European foreign policy making in the Middle East.

The main contribution of this chapter lies in providing a study of EPC and EAD from the perspective of a single member state: West Germany. It analyses the European dimension as a component of Bonn's Middle Eastern policy. As such, this chapter is not as much about European foreign policy in the Middle East, but rather about how the latter served, influenced and interacted with the Middle Eastern policy of a single member state. One of its key findings is that, following a functionalist logic, the link between the EPC and European integration was more important for Bonn than previously known.¹¹ Moreover, as this chapter is based on archival material, it helps to better illustrate the details and dynamics of West German attitudes to European policies on the Middle East during the 1970s. It therefore goes further than Neustadt's much older book on the European dimension of West German-Israeli relations and links to Sattler's recent study on French policy within the formative years of the EPC.¹²

A key variable moderating the FRG's stance towards European initiatives was the relationship to the US. In principle, Bonn was supportive of European policies. At the same time, it was also careful not to undermine American efforts. Therefore, in the early days of the EAD Bonn very much curtailed the extent of the project. However, this chapter shows that, as a result of the breakdown of Kissinger's step-by-step approach to a Middle Eastern peace process in 1975, the FRG suddenly became a main driver of the EAD. Additionally, the idea for a joint European initiative on the Arab-Israeli conflict in the same year, which ultimately culminated in key European statements on the conflict such as the 1977 London or 1980 Venice Declaration, goes back to Genscher personally. Overall, a much more nuanced and detailed picture emerges as to the importance and development of European foreign policy cooperation from a member state's perspective.

There is an important caveat to this chapter: it only deals with EPC and similar measures in as much as they relate to the Middle East. Any conclusions are therefore also limited to this policy subfield. As has already been mentioned, EPC was not a project exclusively focusing

⁹ Kaya, *Middle East Peace Process and the EU* (2013); Mueller, Patrick. *Europe's Foreign Policy and the Middle East Peace Process: The Construction of EU Actorness in Conflict Resolution*. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 14:1 (2013): 20-35; Musu, *European Union policy towards the Arab-Israeli peace process* (2010).

¹⁰ Jacobs, *Problematische Partner* (2008); Jawad, *Euro-Arab Relations* (1992).

¹¹ On functionalism, see Rosamond, Ben. *Theories of European Integration*. (New York, 2000): 20-74; also Haas, Ernst. *The uniting of Europe: political, social and economical forces, 1950-57*. (London, 1958).

¹² Sattler, *Institutionalisierung europäischer Nahostpolitik* (2017); Neustadt, *Deutsch-israelische Beziehungen im Schatten der EG-Nahostpolitik* (1983).

on the Middle East. Its ability to coordinate a European stance within the CSCE-process is widely recognised as a success story.¹³ This view is not challenged here.

Ultimately, the early days of European policy making in the Middle East were not such a success story. One can forgive Tusk for his neglectful take on European policymaking in his remarks on the EU-LAS summit, omitting any reference to the EAD as its historical predecessor, which after all in theory ran from 1974 to 1991. Presumably, failures do not make good material for memory. Nonetheless, despite all its shortcomings, the European dimension, which entered the FRG's Middle Eastern policy in 1970, has remained part and parcel of Germany's engagement with that region to this day.

2. Prologue: 1967 and the failure of Western solidarity

When the Six-Day War profoundly reconfigured the Middle East in 1967, nothing which resembled a coherent European foreign policy existed. And yet, the events surrounding the war serve as a prologue to the multilateral, European dimension of West German Arab policy that developed during the 1970s, involving two other organisations which brought together the Western European allies: NATO and the Western European Union (WEU).

Ambitions at stronger political cooperation within Western Europe – which would have included the issue of foreign policy – date back to the 1950s with the 1952 project of 'European Political Community'. The latter would have combined the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) with a new European Defence Community (EDC). But the French National Assembly torpedoed the entire project by voting down the EDC. Instead, in 1954 Britain, France, West Germany, Italy and the Benelux countries established the WEU, a much looser European collective defence pact, which was soon to be eclipsed by NATO.¹⁴

In the absence of a stronger European forum for foreign policy cooperation, these two organisations – WEU and NATO – were the only multilateral frameworks in which the Western alliance would discuss the Six-Day War. Indeed, Bonn considered the fall-out of the June War to be of great significance for the Western allies and therefore expected more of a joint response to the conflict. The 1967 June Memorandum by the *Auswärtiges Amt*, after all, mentions the need to protect Europe's South-Eastern flank, a task for the Western alliance as a whole.¹⁵

¹³ Romano, Angela. *The EPC main task: fostering détente in Europe*. In: Poul Villaume, and Odd Arne Westad (eds.). *Perforating the Iron Curtain: European Détente, Transatlantic Relations, and the Cold War, 1965-1985*. (Copenhagen, 2010): 123-41.

¹⁴ Duke, *Elusive quest for European security* (2000); Griffiths, *Europe's First Constitution* (1994).

¹⁵ See Chapter I.

Moreover, as a bystander of Middle Eastern politics in 1967, the FRG was more reliant on exercising influence through its allies than some of the other NATO or WEU member states.

But the experience of the Six-Day War left no illusions in Bonn about the ability to engage on Middle Eastern topics in existing Western institutional frameworks. Chancellor Kurt-Georg Kiesinger in particular voiced his disappointment that the topic had not even made it on the agenda at the Rome meeting of the WEU on the eve of the war.¹⁶ After the cessation of hostilities, the West attempted to find a mechanism for tackling the issue through NATO, and a consultation process for the Middle East was agreed upon.¹⁷ But there were hardly any substantial outcomes, as the Western allies were split: some states leaned more towards the Arabs, others towards Israel; some wanted NATO to engage actively in the Middle East and others preferred having NATO stay out.¹⁸ The West German ambassador to NATO offered a damning judgement on the performance of the alliance: “One can only hope that the council shows more willingness to action in case of a crisis that directly affects alliance territories.”¹⁹ This sentiment of disappointment persisted after the war. In later West German government documents on Middle Eastern politics, neither WEU nor NATO are mentioned anymore.²⁰ West German policy makers had to realise that if multilateral efforts were to be included in Bonn’s re-calibrated Middle Eastern policy, existing structures such as NATO or the WEU would be of little use.

3. The emergence of a European Middle Eastern policy, 1970-1973

From 1970 onwards, a common European foreign policy started to emerge through the EPC. It seemed to yield a quick result on the Middle East in the form of a working paper, wherein the Six agreed upon a common position on the Arab-Israeli conflict. But Scheel quickly had to distance himself from the so-called Schumann Document (*Schumann-Papier*) due to what in Israel was perceived as the document’s pro-Arab line. Paris was furious and only temporary inactivity saved the Middle Eastern dimension of EPC from immediate cessation.

The European project went through some difficult years during the 1960s. De Gaulle’s empty chair policy and his veto against British membership of the EEC set back further European

¹⁶ AAPD 19.06.1967. Document 225. *Conversation of Kiesinger with the US ambassador McGhee*; see also Kaya, *Middle East Peace Process and the EU* (2013): 63.

¹⁷ Di Nolfo, *Cold War and transformation of the Mediterranean* (2010): 245.

¹⁸ AAPD 24.05.1967. Document 181. *Grewe (Paris/NATO) to Auswärtiges Amt*; AAPD 09.06.1967. Document 210. *Grewe (Paris/NATO) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁹ AAPD 31.05.1967. Document 198. *Grewe (Paris/NATO) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

²⁰ AAPD 14.06.1967. Document 220. *Grewe (Paris/NATO) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

integration for several years.²¹ By 1969, however, de Gaulle was out of office and the much more pro-European Georges Pompidou had taken over the French presidency. In July 1969, the EEC leaders came together for their pivotal Hague summit, which was to reinvigorate the European project. There, the EEC agreed both to include Britain into its ranks and to widen European integration. As a result, some sort of stronger foreign policy cooperation was to be added to the European project. Belgian diplomat Etienne Davignon was charged with drafting proposals for the Europeanisation of foreign policy. Within a year, he had produced the ‘Davignon report’, which outlined an information exchange and coordination mechanism on foreign policy issues on a European level. This was the EPC. Thirty years later it would culminate in today’s Common European Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). EPC ran outside the EEC’s regular institutional framework. It was not supervised by the Commission or the Council, but by an entirely intergovernmental process, consisting of regular meetings by the – then six – EEC member states’ foreign ministers and key diplomats. EPC initially had two focus areas, which covered the two main flanks of European foreign policy: relations to Eastern Europe and the Middle East conflict.²²

From a West German perspective, it made sense to include the Arab-Israeli conflict on the EPC’s first agenda. In response to the June War, NATO and WEU had proved ineffective platforms for developing a more coherent Western approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The EPC was the logical next step in the search for a better platform. For Bonn, it had two great advantages: on the one hand, together the Europeans might develop more diplomatic firepower on the ground, in particular at a time when the Americans were focused on Vietnam and not giving their full attention to the Middle East. On the other hand, Bonn would be able to relay controversial decisions – in particular in view of its difficult past in relation to Israel – to the European level, thus absolving itself of complicated choices either for or against Israel or the Arab states.²³

Initially, the EPC seemed to go off well. The first task of the Six was to agree on common formulae and positions. This had begun even before the Davignon report had been finalised, as a briefing for Scheel from February 1970, more than half a year before the report’s publication, shows.²⁴ It outlined five dimensions of the Arab-Israeli conflict on which the

²¹ On the early years of European integration, see, for example, Dinan, Desmon. *Europe Recast: A History of European Union*. (Boulder, 2014); Dedman, Martin. *The Origins and Development of the European Union 1945-1995: A History of European Integration*. (London, 1996).

²² On the early years of the EPC, see Moeckli, *European foreign policy during the Cold War* (2009).

²³ Abu Samra, *Deutschlands Außenpolitik gegenüber Ägypten* (2002): 174.

²⁴ PA/AA (B36 397, p. 49ff) 15.02.1970. *IB 4 to Scheel*.

Europeans needed to coordinate positions: “freedom of the seas, demilitarised zones, composition of international control troops, the sovereignty of an internationalised Jerusalem, the refugee problem”.²⁵ To do so, at a meeting in Munich on the 19 November 1970, the foreign ministers of the Six instructed their senior diplomats to prepare a report on the Middle East along those points.²⁶ A year later, the *Auswärtiges Amt*’s head of the Middle Eastern unit, Helmut Redies, jubilantly informed Scheel about the successful conclusion of preliminary talks in the “Political Committee” (*Politisches Komitee* – PK) of the EPC. The PK brought together diplomats of all member states to prepare meetings of their respective foreign ministers.

On all important elements of the topics we discussed, an agreement could be reached [...]: This has to be viewed as a great success – in particular in view of the difficult topic of Near East questions – and will have an encouraging effect on the continuation of the political cooperation by the Six [EPC states].²⁷

This agreement within the EPC framework included a system of collective security guarantees in return for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories (with the exception of small border corrections), an internationalisation of the old city of Jerusalem and a common European support scheme for Palestinian refugees. It represented a clear position and, at least in the mind of Redies, a balanced compromise for an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Of course, it had the slight drawback that it had been agreed upon in Brussels, far away from the Middle East and without the participation of any of the conflict parties. It was a solution which, in essence, had been negotiated in a geopolitical vacuum.

In May 1971, the foreign ministers of the Six met in Paris to finalise their EPC consultations. They approved the report on the Middle East which the PK had prepared. It was not intended for publication. Instead, “it is planned to send it to the representatives of the Six at the United Nations and directly to interested governments (Near-East countries, great powers), in order to inform the UN Secretary General [...] about essential results of the consultations and to use [the] report as common position”.²⁸

The West Germans were happy, and so were their European partners. A month after their Paris meeting, an enthusiastic French foreign minister Schumann told diplomats in Brussels: “Dealing with the Near East questions has shown three things: for the first time, the Six had the opportunity to find a common position. This common position consists not only of vague formulas but is very specific. [It] is not only academic but crafted for practice.”²⁹ This

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ PA/AA (B36 109111, unfoliated) 21.01.1975. *Memorandum by Richter*.

²⁷ AAPD 28.04.1971. Document 143. *Notes by Redies*.

²⁸ AAPD 15.05.1971. Document 174. *Circular by von Staden*.

²⁹ PA/AA (B36 398, p. 235) 14.06.1971. *Sachs (Brussels) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

latter comment is important, as it shows that EPC on the Middle East was not just seen as a theoretical exercise, but instead was envisaged as a concrete policy instrument.

Ironically, even though Redies foresaw Israeli resistance to this new, European position, both he and State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt* Paul Frank considered the compromise even-handed.³⁰ Unfortunately for them, it turned out that this view was not shared. It was so close to the more pro-Arab French position on the Arab-Israeli conflict that observers dubbed it the Schumann Document in reference to the French foreign minister. Maybe this explains the latter's enthusiasm over the report. Unsurprisingly, the Israelis openly rejected Europe's new, united view on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Their reservations pertained not only to the position of the Six, but to the entire exercise as such. "Israel finds it odd that the EEC governments deal with questions of the Near-East conflict, as the latter primarily touches on Israeli interests; at least Israel could have expected that the discussions would not happen 'behind its back', that is, that it would have been permitted to participate", Israel's ambassador in Bonn Ben Horin told Frank.³¹

Complications turned into embarrassment when Scheel visited Israel in July 1971. By the time of the much anticipated first visit of a German foreign minister to the Jewish state the Schumann Document had been leaked to the press. In Israel, it was received with outrage. Pressed by his hosts, Bonn's foreign minister had to publicly distance himself from the report. For instance, even though the Schumann Document had been written in French, Scheel stated that the West Germans still supported the English translation of UN Security Council resolution 242.³²

In Paris, Schumann was fuming. As soon as he heard of Scheel's statements, he immediately summoned the West German ambassador to the *Quai d'Orsay*. Schumann, "in the highest state of excitement", stated that only recently Scheel had told him that the West German government considered itself bound to the contents of the EPC report.³³ Scheel, Schumann complained, would have had the duty to defend the paper in Israel, rather than distance himself from it. The French foreign minister even questioned the EPC itself. "It would, in his [Schumann's] view, [...] no longer make sense to cooperate in the Near East question, and he was considering to instruct the French side to stop the discussion of Near East matters amongst

³⁰ AAPD 28.04.1971. Document 143. *Notes by Redies*.

³¹ AAPD 03.05.1971. Document 153. *Notes by Redies*.

³² Weinberg, *Deutsche Israel- und Nahostpolitik* (2002): 200f. The French version of resolution 242 calls upon Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories ("des territoires occupés"), whereas the English version more vaguely calls for withdrawal from occupied territories.

³³ PA/AA (B130 10084A, unfoliated) 09.07.1971. *Ruete (Paris) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

the Six.”³⁴ Ultimately, the French calmed down, but the initial fervour of EPC Middle East consultations had quickly subsided.³⁵

Why did the Six not simply bury the topic at this point and take the Middle East out of the EPC altogether? The answer lies in a memorandum written by Bernd von Staden from the *Auswärtiges Amt*, a senior diplomat and later West Germany’s influential ambassador in Washington D.C. (1973-79) as well as State Secretary in the foreign ministry (1981-83). In an internal memorandum from October 1971, he acknowledged that the EPC in the Middle East had, unlike in Eastern Europe, fallen short of expectations. But he was careful to note that no consequences should follow from that.

With all its weaknesses [...] this ‘Europe’ [...] might be the only ‘community’ we can have. A deviation from the long and cumbersome path to a political unification of Europe would lead back to a policy of the ‘concert of great powers’, to which the European middling powers individually do not count anymore.³⁶

Thus, the success of EPC was linked to the success of European integration as a whole, a much more important issue. To paraphrase Angela Merkel’s famous dictum during the European debt crisis: If EPC fails, Europe fails. Thus, as far as the Middle East was concerned, the EPC, rather than dying off, went into a temporary coma.

The feeling of an early success within the EPC was quickly replaced by consternation about the episode surrounding the Schumann Document. Bonn’s hopes to unburden itself from its historical obligation to Israel within a multilateral setting did not materialise. But the link which policymakers in Bonn saw between EPC and European integration in general meant that rather than abandoning efforts of European coordination on Middle Eastern questions, the Six merely halted the project temporarily.

4. Copenhagen, the EAD and a reinvigoration of EPC in the Middle East, 1973-75

The October War of 1973 brought the EPC out of its slumber again. In the face of open conflict in the Middle East, a possible Arab oil boycott and the threat of a military clash between the superpowers of the Cold War, the EEC states concluded that unity was their best response to crisis. The October War re-invigorated European engagement with the question of Middle Eastern affairs, for which the EEC’s 1973 Copenhagen Declaration represents the starting point. The – now Nine – EEC members envisaged a European Middle Eastern policy resting

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ AAPD 13.07.1971. Document 244. *Frank to Ruete (Paris)*.

³⁶ AAPD 26.10.1971. Document 369. *Notes by von Staden*.

on three pillars: the EPC, a dialogue exclusively with the Arab states and a comprehensive Mediterranean policy.

Coordinating a European approach throughout October 1973 was a slow and tedious process. It took almost a week of argument for the Nine to agree on a communiqué, which urged all parties to stop fighting and start peace negotiations on the basis of UN Security Council resolution 242. Towards the end of the war, on 25 October, the Belgians proposed the participation of an EEC contingent in a UN peacekeeping force. To their dismay, there was no support for such a move among their European friends, including the West Germans. A few days later, it took the French threat to boycott an EPC meeting by the foreign ministers to agree on a declaration which stressed the role of the UN security council in finding a solution to conflict in the Middle East. Clearly, this was an – unsuccessful – attempt to prevent an exclusion of permanent security council member France from any peace process. Ultimately, the peace conference in Geneva would go ahead without European participation.³⁷ Finally, on 6 November, the EEC members published what Moeckli considers a “breakthrough” declaration which for the first time mentioned the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and ended “by recalling the ties of all kinds which had long linked Europe to the littoral states of the south and east of the Mediterranean”.³⁸

It is hard to make out the West German position within the European arena on these questions. Bonn seems to have accepted a stronger engagement with the Middle Eastern conflict on the European stage, but nothing suggests that it pushed for a greater European role in any particular way. Unlike the French, it was willing to accept an exclusion of the Europeans from the peace conference which Kissinger was organising in Geneva. Notes prepared by the *Auswärtiges Amt* for a meeting of Brandt with his European colleagues stated that the FRG considered it “unfortunate” that the Europeans had been excluded from the conference, but that the focus now was to ensure the cessation of hostilities in the Middle East.³⁹ “Right now, therefore, Europe should avoid anything which could disturb the efforts of the superpowers.”⁴⁰

Bonn’s focus lay much more on the question of oil. As mentioned in previous chapters, for the West Germans the crisis of Euro-American relations was about energy, not the Arab-Israeli conflict. Europe depended on Arab oil to a significantly larger extent than the US, and

³⁷ PA/AA (B130 8790A, unfoliated) date unknown. *Notes by 200*. Even though no exact date is given, the document carries a stamp indicating it was written at some point in December 1973.

³⁸ Moeckli, *European foreign policy during the Cold War* (2009): 204.

³⁹ PA/AA (B130 9994A, unfoliated) 06.12.1973. *Notes by Redies*.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*.

Bonn pushed for a European response to this question. In early November, the European council of ministers agreed on a statement stressing a joint European effort to overcome the energy crisis “against strong initial British and French resistance”.⁴¹ In December, a meeting of European finance and foreign ministers agreed to work on a pooling mechanism to share energy resources more efficiently. Once again, the FRG was at the helm of the effort. It was passed despite French and British misgivings with the support of Italy, Denmark and the Netherlands.⁴²

By the end of 1973, the French proposed an entirely new concept for European engagement with the Middle East: a conference between the European and the Arab states. This idea derived from discussions between French foreign minister Michel Jobert and several Arab ministers in November 1973, followed up by similar talks at European level around the EEC’s Copenhagen summit in December that year.⁴³ It arose from French misgivings about their exclusion from the Geneva peace conference by Kissinger. In January 1974, the foreign ministers of the Nine instructed their diplomats to carve out the details for what had by then already been termed the Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD).⁴⁴

Bonn was open to the idea, but it also had some reservations. The first PK meeting on the topic was a quite open discussion concerning purpose, structure and timing of the new dialogue format. Helmut Redies, present for the *Auswärtiges Amt*, mostly posed a number of questions: should the dialogue involve all Arab states? If so, would that be productive? What topics should be discussed, and which third countries would have to be informed?⁴⁵ Clearly, the EAD would be more complicated than the French had hoped. Their representative limited his reply to Redies to the comment that “the Europeans had to make their attention to the Arab sphere more visible”.⁴⁶

Of all the open questions surrounding the EAD which Redies had mentioned, the most important one in Bonn’s view regarded the question of third countries. Or, in fact, one third country: the USA. Kissinger made no secret of his misgivings about the EAD. As he told Scheel in February 1974: „Efforts towards a conference with the Arabs contain the risk that thereby the radicals would succeed over the moderates. The Europeans could not allow themselves to join one side over another. [...] Everything which the Americans had achieved over the past

⁴¹ AAPD 06.11.1973. Document 360. *Lebsanft (Brussels) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁴² AAPD 04.12.1973. Document 399. *Lebsanft (Brussels) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁴³ PA/AA (B36 104937, unfoliated) 20.08.1974. *Memorandum by 310*; see also Moeckli, *European foreign policy during the Cold War* (2009): 254.

⁴⁴ AAPD 15.01.1974. Document 8. *Circular by van Well*.

⁴⁵ PA/AA (B130 9897A, unfoliated) 22.01.1974. *Notes by Niemöller (310)*.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

four months would be put at risk.”⁴⁷ Jobert, however, was unwilling to sacrifice his project on the altar of good transatlantic relations and did not hide his personal dislike of Kissinger.⁴⁸ Bonn and the other EEC-members were stuck between a French rock and an American hard place, a situation well characterised by a comment which the Dutch ambassador made to State Secretary Frank in February: “The EEC-partners should now simultaneously plead with France and America” – as if France was not itself an EEC state, and both countries not also NATO allies.⁴⁹

Bonn tried to find a middle way in this situation. Frank told the French that progress on the EAD could hardly be expected if Paris continued to stay out of the energy dialogue of consumer countries organised by Washington.⁵⁰ Simultaneously, as has already been alluded to in the previous chapter, the FRG helped to water down the EAD to address key US concerns. In April 1974, the Nine agreed at an EPC meeting to keep the Arab-Israeli conflict and oil off the EAD’s agenda for the moment.⁵¹ Moreover, the structure of the EAD was turned upside-down: instead of starting with a conference of European and Arab foreign ministers, such a meeting would now stand at the end of the dialogue, probably not earlier than 1975. Instead, the EAD would kick off with a meeting of the ‘General Commission’ (*Allgemeine Kommission*), wherein experts would “determine substance and priorities of cooperation and set up working groups on the individual areas of cooperation (industry, agriculture, energy, resources, science, technology, vocational training)”.⁵² On 31 July 1974, the EAD was officially initiated.⁵³

A second and oft-neglected pillar of European policy towards the Middle East after 1973 was the so-called *Approche Globale*. The purpose of this policy, which had already been drawn up in 1972, was “the regulation of historical and unsystematically growing relations between EEC and Mediterranean countries”.⁵⁴ The idea was to make an offer of closer relations to basically all Mediterranean countries, starting off in the area of trade, in the hope that many or most of them would consequently be bound closer to the EEC.⁵⁵ In essence, it was supposed to form a sort of common European Mediterranean policy. It was considered ‘global’ as, on the one hand, it brought together several separate trade agreements from the 1960s and, on the

⁴⁷ AAPD 10.02.1974. Document 42. *Conversation of Scheel with Kissinger*.

⁴⁸ AAPD 01.03.1974. Document 65. *Conversation of Scheel with Jobert*.

⁴⁹ PA/AA (B21 108882, unfoliated) 26.02.1974. *Notes by von der Gablentz*.

⁵⁰ AAPD 23.01.1974. Document 23. *Circular by von der Gablentz*. See Chapter IV on the energy conference.

⁵¹ AAPD 03.04.1974. Document 111. *Circular by Dohms*.

⁵² PA/AA (B36 104937, unfoliated) 20.08.1974. *Notes by 310*.

⁵³ On the EAD, see also Sattler, *Institutionalisierung europäischer Nahostpolitik* (2017); Jacobs, *Problematische Partner* (2008); Jawad, *Euro-Arab Relations* (1992).

⁵⁴ PA/AA (B200 105628, unfoliated) 25.04.1974. *Notes by 410*.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

other hand, it was directed to all Mediterranean states, simultaneously addressing the Balkan countries, Greece, Turkey, Spain, Portugal, Israel as well as the Arab states.⁵⁶

However, the *Approche Globale* never took off. Located conceptually somewhere between EAD and EPC, it did not attract much interest from the region. By the end of 1974, the EEC had managed to initiate talks with only six countries.⁵⁷ By the mid-1970s, focus on the Mediterranean was on the possible EEC accession of Greece, Spain and Portugal. As a result, the *Approche Globale* remained exclusively limited to trade topics such as agriculture and the service industry.⁵⁸ Instead of becoming a global policy, the EEC chose the easier option of bilateral trade agreements with Israel (1975), as well as with the three Maghreb states of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia (1976).⁵⁹ Ultimately, the *Approche Globale* never became a policy field of much value during the 1970s. However, it is noteworthy as it represents the origins of what in the 1990s turned into the *European Mediterranean Policy* (EMP) and the *Union for the Mediterranean* (UMP) during the 2000s.⁶⁰ Just as much as these, the FRG was never particularly enthusiastic about the *Approche Globale*, once again confirming the notion that its focus on the Mediterranean as a comprehensive strategic arena had run out of steam by 1973.⁶¹

The third and final pillar of post-1973 European Middle Eastern policy remained the EPC. Unlike EAD or *Approche Globale*, it was almost solely focused on the Arab-Israeli conflict as far as the Middle East was concerned. However, based not least on West German unease the Nine mostly took a back seat as far as peace efforts were concerned and gave Kissinger the space he asked for in pursuing agreements between the conflict parties of the October War.⁶² European engagement should only be viewed as “flanking measures rather than competition for your peace efforts”, as Brandt assured Nixon by letter in 1974.⁶³

Ideas about a more direct European involvement in peace measures, such as a British proposition on robust European participation in guarantees for a peace deal, were talked down

⁵⁶ Berdat, Christophe. *L'avènement de la politique méditerranéenne globale de la CEE*. Relations internationales 130:2 (2007): 92ff.

⁵⁷ Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Spain, Israel, Malta (PA/AA (B200 105628, unfoliated) 26.08.1974. *Notes by 410*).

⁵⁸ PA/AA (B36 104976, unfoliated) 03.05.1976. *Notes by 410*.

⁵⁹ PA/AA (B200 105628, unfoliated) 11.06.1975. *Memorandum by ministry of the economy*; PA/AA (B36 135632, unfoliated) 30.04.1976. *Notes by 311*.

⁶⁰ On EMP and UMP, see Hollis, Rosemary. *Europe in the Middle East*. In: Fawcett, Louise. *International Relations of the Middle East*. (Oxford, 2016): 380-99.

⁶¹ See Chapter I; see also Hirsch, *Cold War, Arab World and West Germany's 'Mediterranean Moment'* (2020).

⁶² PA/AA (B130 9994A, unfoliated) 06.12.1973. *Notes by Redies*.

⁶³ AAPD 08.03.1974. Document 81. *Brandt to Nixon*.

and silently dropped from the agenda of EPC meetings.⁶⁴ Instead, in the aftermath of the October War discussions in the EPC would circle around the Palestinian question. The latter had taken centre stage within the Arab-Israeli conflict following the war. As has already been mentioned in Chapter III of this thesis, by late 1974 the UN were debating resolutions recognising the PLO as legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. When the issue was first discussed at an EPC meeting in September 1974, the Nine could not agree on a common position. While they decided to not actively fight the resolution, their preference was to avoid a vote on it altogether.⁶⁵ A month later, the first of several Palestine-related resolutions made it to the floor of the UN General Assembly, inviting Arafat to give a speech at the UN. Hectic intra-European consultations took place: the French were pushing for ‘Yes’,⁶⁶ the British for ‘No’,⁶⁷ and most of the other EEC members – including West Germany – hoped for a unanimous European abstention.⁶⁸ In the end, UNGA resolution 3210 (XXIX) was accepted by an overwhelming majority of 104 to 4 votes, with 20 abstentions.⁶⁹ Amongst the latter group was the FRG with most of the European states, while at the last minute Italy and Ireland had joined France in the ‘Yes’-camp.

In November, two further resolutions were tabled, the first outlining the rights of the Palestinian people within the Arab-Israeli conflict and the second to make the PLO an observer at the UN. This time, the Nine managed to jointly abstain on the former. But on the latter, France – as so often intent of maintaining its ties to the Arab states – abstained while the other EEC states voted against the resolution.⁷⁰

Once again, the FRG felt let down by Europe when it came to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The West German envoy to the UN, Rüdiger von Wechmar, did not hold back on his criticism of the entire episode: “The effort to achieve a united European vote failed miserably.”⁷¹ A few months later, in March 1975, Bonn successfully proposed to establish a new working group within the EPC to improve European coordination at the UN.⁷² Consequently, the number of unanimous European votes increased in the following years, but, in particular on questions regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Nine often openly displayed disagreement on the global

⁶⁴ See, for example, PA/AA (B130 9897A, unfoliated) 22.01.1974. *Notes by Niemöller.*

⁶⁵ PA/AA (B36 104867, unfoliated) 19.09.1974. *Notes by Redies.*

⁶⁶ PA/AA (B36 104867, unfoliated) 09.10.1974. *Von Wechmar (New York) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

⁶⁷ PA/AA (B36 104867, unfoliated) 11.10.1974a. *Von Wechmar (New York) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

⁶⁸ PA/AA (B36 104867, unfoliated) 11.10.1974b. *Von Wechmar (New York) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

⁶⁹ PA/AA (B36 104867, unfoliated) 14.10.1974. *Von Wechmar (New York) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

⁷⁰ PA/AA (B36 104867, unfoliated) 23.11.1974. *Notes by Jesser.*

⁷¹ PA/AA (B36 104867, unfoliated) 14.10.1974. *Von Wechmar (New York) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

⁷² PA/AA (B36 109107, unfoliated) 14.03.1975. *Intra-ministerial meeting on UN policy.*

stage.⁷³ It would take the establishment of the EU and its CFSP in the 1990s to achieve regular, united European voting behaviour at UN level.⁷⁴



Picture 10: Genscher meeting Tunisian foreign minister Fitouri during the UN General Assembly in New York in 1979. Throughout the 1970s, engagement with the Arab states through the UN became an increasingly important task for Bonn's foreign policy makers.⁷⁵

After the 1973 October War, the Nine reinvigorated their efforts towards a common European approach to the Middle East. Their policy was supposed to rest on three pillars: EAD, EPC and *Approche Globale*. Bonn's initial attitude was mostly cautious, weary of pushing European projects ahead too far out of fear to antagonise the US and undermine their peace efforts in the Middle East. All three policy fields proved hard to implement and ultimately failed to achieve the FRG's desired goals. Yet, they lay the groundwork for the long-term consolidation of EU foreign policy.

⁷³ Elfriede Regelsberger. *EPC in the 1980s: reaching another plateau?* In: Pijpers, Alfred, et al. *European Political Cooperation in the 1980s: A Common Foreign Policy for Western Europe?* (Dordrecht, 1988): 16f, 35.

⁷⁴ Wouters, Jan. *The European Union as an actor within the United Nations General Assembly*. Leuven Institute for International Law, Working Paper 2 (2001).

⁷⁵ Courtesy of the AdL.

5. Stagnation and take-off of EAD and EPC, 1975-1977

The EAD had a difficult start. But the apparent breakdown of Kissinger's efforts towards peace-making in the Middle East shook Bonn's confidence in leaving the political stage to the US, only. As a result, Genscher in particular was now much more supportive of European initiatives, helping to get the EAD off the ground and to move the EPC towards more substantial policymaking on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In July 1974, the Nine and the LAS had initiated the EAD at a meeting in Paris between the president of the EEC commission François-Xavier Ortoli, French foreign minister Jean Sauvagnargues, Kuwait's foreign minister Sabah al-Sabah and LAS Secretary General Mahmoud Riad.⁷⁶ In "friendly and constructive" conversations they had agreed on the European plan to start the dialogue with expert talks.⁷⁷ The grand conference of ministers was spared for the culminating end of the EAD, and the experts were supposed to work towards it through their meetings in the EAD's 'General Commission'.

However, from its start in November 1974, the work of the General Commission did not go as planned. The sticking point was the question of participation. The Arab League insisted that the PLO should be allowed to participate in the meetings of the General Commission. For the Nine, however, this risked the sort of politicisation and inclusion of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the EAD which they had assured Kissinger would not take place. Moreover, it would have indicated an implicit recognition of the PLO as representative of the Palestinian people.⁷⁸ While the French proposed to give in to keep the EAD going, Britain, Denmark, the Netherlands and the FRG objected to the participation of official PLO delegates at the EAD. In essence, for an entire year the project was stuck. The Europeans were caught between their commitment and belief in the value of the EAD on the one and their assurances to the USA on the other hand. Moreover, it is noteworthy that for the West Germans the EAD was not viewed from a perspective of Middle Eastern politics. A memorandum prepared for Genscher in December 1974 mentions the need to have better communication links with the Arabs in case of a renewed escalation in the Middle East. But it also once again connects European Middle Eastern policy to the inward-looking question of European integration: "The dialogue has great significance in terms of integration as to European cooperation."⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Sauvagnargues was present as France at the time held the rotating presidency of the council of the EEC.

⁷⁷ AAPD 24.07.1974. Document 222. *Circular by Steffler*.

⁷⁸ AAPD 18.12.1974. Document 379. *Memorandum by Schirmer*.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Finally, after a year of deadlock, the Nine finally budged. Notes from an EEC foreign minister meeting in early 1975 show that this was linked to Kissinger's inability to provide a peace deal in the Middle East and links the resumption of the EAD with the "abortion of Kissinger's step-by-step approach [in the Middle East]".⁸⁰ In February 1975, the foreign ministers of the Nine met in Dublin and carved out a compromise formula. There would be one European and one Arab delegation at the General Commission, without any further breakdown of the delegations internally. This way, if there were Palestinian delegates at a meeting, they would still only be regarded as 'Arab' delegates. Moreover, the Nine stated that

[t]he presence of Palestinian experts in the Arab delegation does not imply any acceptance by the Nine of claims by the PLO regarding its own status. Accordingly, it would be advisable to avoid any public statement concerning the status of Palestinian experts. In the event of a public statement being made [by the LAS], the Nine would also find it necessary to state their position publicly.⁸¹

The Nine had opted for the EAD and against the Americans, clearly with Bonn's approval. At least, for them the decision paid off in the short term. In July 1975, a second expert meeting within the structure of the EAD took place in Rome, which – as Italian foreign minister Mariano Rumor told Genscher – went "fairly well".⁸² The Arab side ultimately agreed to the so-called "Dublin formula".⁸³

Now, however, the problems within the EAD shifted to another issue. Having found a working compromise on the question of participation, the Nine and the Arabs started to diverge on the matter of topics. The Arabs pushed for an inclusion of political questions on the agenda, by which they obviously meant a discussion of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The *Auswärtiges Amt* was not thrilled about conceding the second red line it had drawn around the EAD in 1974 and wanted to keep discussions focused on technical questions. An expert meeting of the Nine in Rome even touched upon "Euro-Arab cooperation in questions of outer space".⁸⁴ However, this was just bureaucratic euphemism for the idea to sell the Arabs European communication satellites.

But in further discussions on the political dimension it was not the FRG which was blocking compromise. In an April 1976 meeting the Dutch and British openly opposed the expansion of the EAD to include political questions. Wischniewski, by this time minister of state (*Staatsminister*) in the *Auswärtiges Amt* and West German representative at the meeting,

⁸⁰ AAPD 12./13.04.1975. Document 76. *EEC foreign minister conference in Dublin*. See also Chapter II.

⁸¹ PA/AA (B21 108882, unfoliated) 13.02.1975. *Gablentz (currently Dublin) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

⁸² AAPD 11.08.1975. Document 246. *Conversation of Genscher with Rumor*.

⁸³ PA/AA (B36 109107, unfoliated) 22.12.1975. *Intra-ministerial meeting on the Middle East*.

⁸⁴ PA/AA (B36 109111, unfoliated) 10.10.1975. *Memorandum by Weigl*.

pointed out that “the Arabs expect the discussion of political topics, too, and that the EAD would reach a critical stage if the Europeans would not acknowledge this”.⁸⁵ By now the West German government valued the EAD too much to threaten it in principle. It therefore wanted to save the project from failure and push it ahead.

Moreover, the Nine had come up with another compromise idea. They accepted in principle that political topics would feature in the EAD. A memorandum by the *Auswärtiges Amt* from August 1976 lists the issues the Nine were willing to address: Cyprus, the Balkans, the Horn of Africa, collective security in the Gulf, the Law of the Seas and even pollution in the Mediterranean.⁸⁶ The one topic missing from this expansive list: the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Nine had budged on a number of questions and Bonn had turned from brake to catalyst of the EAD. Indeed, after years of stagnation it seemed like the compromises paid off. For the first time, the archival material conveys a sense of optimism and progress. In late 1976, LAS Secretary General Riad assured Brussels “that the Arab side wants to successfully continue the dialogue”.⁸⁷ Notes from the second meeting of the General Commission in February 1977 cherish a “new, restrained negotiation style” of the Arabs.⁸⁸ The meeting had “illustrated that the Arab side attaches increasing importance to the economic and technological dimension of the EAD”.⁸⁹ Finally, the EAD started to pick up speed and develop a positive dynamic.

Just as with the EAD, 1975 was a turning point for the EPC and its engagement with the Arab-Israeli conflict. Until then, the Nine had mostly been passive on the topic, fighting diplomatic rear-guard action on questions such as the Palestine resolution at the UN. But as faith into Kissinger’s ability to deliver a Middle Eastern peace process faltered, the EPC started to move towards a more active attitude on the conflict.

By April 1975, both the Egyptians and Saudis used Genscher’s first trip to the Middle East to float the idea that the Europeans should put pressure on Israel to make concessions in the Middle East. The *Auswärtiges Amt* disapproved of the idea, as Bonn would not support one-sided action against Israel. However, unlike in previous years, Bonn did not reject the principle that the Nine should get actively involved in the region as such, as long as a European initiative would address all states of the Middle East, both the Arabs and Israel.⁹⁰ Two weeks

⁸⁵ AAPD 04.04.1976. Document 130. *Circular by Engels*.

⁸⁶ PA/AA (B43 116912, unfoliated) 25.08.1976. *Memorandum by Jesser*.

⁸⁷ AAPD 19.10.1976. Document 309. *Circular by Engels*.

⁸⁸ PA/AA (B21 111227, unfoliated) 03.03.1977. *Notes by AS 32*.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ PA/AA (B36 109111, unfoliated) 30.04.1975. *Lahn to Genscher*.

after Genscher's return, the *Auswärtiges Amt* drew up an elaborated memorandum on the idea of a European initiative. In essence, it considered different scenarios of a diplomatic demarche in Middle Eastern capitals, carried out either by the EEC presidency or the Nine in unison.⁹¹ In June 1975, the West Germans presented the idea at an EPC meeting. Due to British, Danish and Dutch objections, the idea was put on hold for the moment, as Washington had asked the Nine to wait for an upcoming review of US Middle Eastern policy.⁹² In the end, it was Danish opposition which stopped the demarche from coming to fruition. But it is noteworthy that it was the FRG which put the EPC on track for a more active engagement on the Arab-Israeli conflict after its more restrained attitude in the immediate aftermath of the October War.⁹³

Now, discussions within the EPC focused on an "evolution" of the 1973 Copenhagen Declaration.⁹⁴ Together with France, Italy and Belgium the FRG pushed for a more pronounced recognition of the Palestinian dimension within the Arab-Israeli conflict. By January 1977, it was a West German proposition, coordinated closely with France, which managed to receive support within an EPC meeting.⁹⁵ In June 1977, the European council published its declaration – the first on the Arab-Israeli conflict since November 1973 – in the aftermath of their London summit. The London Declaration repeated many of the points of the Copenhagen Declaration. Its most important addition was on the Palestinian question. The Nine no longer merely demanded a recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, but even went so far as to refer to a Palestinian "national identity [...] which would take into account the need for a homeland for the Palestinian people".⁹⁶ Palestinian representatives should be included in negotiations "in an appropriate manner"⁹⁷ even though French demands to specifically name the PLO in the declaration were rejected.⁹⁸

At the eve of Sadat's trip to Israel, the Nine had significantly stepped up their engagement on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Bonn had played an important role in this. Between 1973 and 1975, it had been crucial in staving off French efforts to push European engagement against US wishes. Then, after Kissinger's inability to convert ceasefire agreements into lasting peace deals became increasingly apparent, the FRG internally drove the progress of the EAD and an

⁹¹ AAPD 30.04.1975. Document 98. *Notes by Lahn.*

⁹² AAPD 23.06.1975. Document 176. *Notes by Lahn.*

⁹³ PA/AA (B36 109111, unfoliated) 08.10.1975. *Memorandum by Richter.*

⁹⁴ PA/AA (B21 108891, unfoliated) 22.09.1976. *Notes by 310.*

⁹⁵ AAPD 02.02.1977. Document 17. *Circular by Engels.*

⁹⁶ AAPD 04.07.1977. Document 174. *Circular by Engels.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ AAPD 03.02.1977. Document 19. *Conversation of Genscher with French foreign minister de Guiringaud.*

evolution of the EPC towards engagement on the Arab-Israeli conflict. On the ground, too, European cooperation improved, as by 1977 the West German embassy in Damascus reported that “the ambassadors of the EEC member states are almost regularly meeting every month for a comprehensive exchange of ideas”.⁹⁹ As a result of all this, the EAD had finally got going and the European position on the Arab-Israeli conflict became more pronounced. However, the fundamental problem of EPC remained its internal focus. In order to reach agreements, the members of the Nine polished texts and debated over wording as to include Dutch worries, French demands, British objections and West German ideas. The effect or meaning of these texts outside of European meeting rooms mattered less. The Arabs were usually disappointed by European restraint in criticising Israel, whereas the latter did not take the Nine too seriously. As Rabin told Genscher in 1975, when the West Germans were pushing the idea of a European demarche in the Middle East: “Whoever takes on a pronounced position (as the Nine had done in their [Copenhagen] declaration), loses the ability to exert influence.”¹⁰⁰

6. The breakdown of the European approach, 1977-1980

Sadat’s trip to Israel shook up the geopolitics of the Middle East and challenged existing assumptions of European Middle Eastern policy. The EAD was now again brought to a standstill, hampered by internal Arab divisions and European indecisiveness. Within EPC, the Nine struggled to agree on a common position and fell back on a wait-and-see attitude. Only when Camp David did not materialise in a solution of the Palestinian question did they, West Germany included, agree on an openly pro-PLO and Israel-critical stance through the 1980 Venice Declaration. But Europe’s statements, formulated far away from the Middle East with a focus on reaching inner-European consensus, proved incapable of developing a lasting impact on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

For the EAD, Sadat’s trip was like a death blow. The dialogue had just started to show some sort of positive dynamic. Now, differences about Palestinian participation or a discussion of the Arab-Israeli conflict were eclipsed by the ostracism of Egypt within the LAS. “Existing difficulties in administrative coordination and topical harmonisation, which were already almost unsurmountable, have only worsened with the current split of the Arab world”, a 1978 memo by the *Auswärtiges Amt* states.¹⁰¹ Even though Bonn acknowledged that the EAD’s

⁹⁹ PA/AA (B21 111227, unfoliated) 23.03.1977. *Damascus embassy to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹⁰⁰ AAPD 11.07.1975. Document 199. *Notes by Böcker*.

¹⁰¹ PA/AA (B200 121772, unfoliated) 13.07.1978. *Notes by Bartels*.

results thus far had been meagre, “the German position is that in the long term the dialogue has a ‘net function’ [*Netzfunktion*] and therefore has to be kept going”.¹⁰² In the words of a West German diplomat, the Nine considered it “unjustifiable to let the EAD fall asleep” and therefore wanted “to invest just about enough activity to keep it alive”.¹⁰³

But the EAD was beyond saving. On the Arab side, the hard-line countries such as Iraq or Syria had gotten the upper hand. Their appetite of engaging with the Nine, who were always so careful to find a compromise acceptable to everyone, was practically non-existent. The Europeans did what they could to salvage the dialogue. They engaged in a much more Israel-critical attitude in their dealings with the EAD and agreed to recognise the new LAS with its headquarters in Tunis, even though this publicly weakened Sadat.¹⁰⁴ Genscher and British foreign minister Owen even discussed launching a new, Euro-Arab-African Dialogue, a desperate and rather bizarre idea in view of the EAD’s stagnation.¹⁰⁵ But nothing the Europeans did would rekindle Arab interest in the EAD. Not even the return of Egypt to the LAS in 1989 changed this, as “[t]he outbreak of the Gulf War in 1990 brought a definitive close to the conversation”.¹⁰⁶ The Nine had invested a lot of political capital in pursuing France’s political pet project against US objections. After initial hesitation, Bonn had gotten behind the EAD, only to ultimately validate Kissinger’s scepticism of the whole idea.

European efforts towards a stronger engagement in the peace process were also challenged by Sadat’s journey to Jerusalem. A common European statement on the issue was blocked by France, to Schmidt’s and Genscher’s displeasure.¹⁰⁷ At the same time, both were as unsure about how to react to the unfolding Camp David process from a European perspective as the other EEC members. On the one hand, Sadat enjoyed a particularly high standing in Bonn. On the other hand, too open support for him would have jeopardised European attempts to build better relations with the other Arab states. In a meeting in December 1977, the European heads of governments and their foreign ministers agreed to wait and see.¹⁰⁸ In the run-up to Camp David, the Nine held back on openly criticising Israel, as per US demands and

¹⁰² PA/AA (B200 121772, unfoliated) 21.03.1978. *Notes by Planitz*. ‘Net function’ in this context should not be understood as a mathematical term. It rather refers to the diffuse and comprehensive nature of the EAD in regard to Euro-Arab relations, as opposed to its value for a specific topic.

¹⁰³ PA/AA (B200 121772, unfoliated) 13.07.1978. *Notes by Bartels*.

¹⁰⁴ AAPD 02.07.1979. Document 196. *Circular by Stabreit*.

¹⁰⁵ AAPD 28.02.1979. Document 56. *Conversation of Genscher with Owen*.

¹⁰⁶ Albinyana, Roger, and Fátima Fernández. *From the Euro-Arab Dialogue to a Euro-Arab Summit: Revamping the EU-Arab Partnership*. *Mediterranean Yearbook* (2018): 255-9.

¹⁰⁷ AAPD 01.12.1977. Document 345. *Conversation of Schmidt with Andreotti*; AAPD 22.11.1977. Document 335. *Circular by Engels*.

¹⁰⁸ AAPD 08.12.1977. Document 357. *Circular by Engels*.

against Egyptian wishes.¹⁰⁹ When after the Camp David accords the Saudis in particular pressed the Nine for a critical statement, the latter refused again.¹¹⁰ For more than a year, EPC was in limbo as far as the Arab-Israeli conflict was concerned. Then, the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty from March 1979 made it clear that a comprehensive solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict would not be achieved. Now, the Nine managed to agree to a cautiously sceptical statement. It applauded the peace treaty but stressed that it could only be a first step towards a broader peace, pointing to the rights of the Palestinians and criticising Israel's settlement policy.¹¹¹

But the European desire to find a balanced stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict had, over the past two years, led to an indecisive back-and-forth which had cost the EEC its credibility in the region. In fact, the Nine's statement did not even meet significant opposition, since, as a West German diplomat noted, it was not given much attention in the Middle East in the first place.¹¹² An informal meeting of the EPC foreign ministers in France in May 1979 showed the dilemma all too clearly. Everyone agreed on their discontent with Camp David. And yet there was no consensus on what should follow from this. The French wanted to put more pressure on Begin personally, but the British and West Germans objected. Genscher preferred to focus on "outlining a perspective for the Palestinian question".¹¹³ Ultimately, the Nine could only agree to postpone further discussions on the topic.

There was a growing sense of frustration with European irrelevance in the Middle East. At the same time, other problems such as the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan led to a shift of focus away from the region. In this context, Bonn agreed to the Nine issuing their strongest statement on the Arab-Israeli conflict yet. In June 1980, a meeting of the European council in Venice passed a new declaration on the Middle East, which called for an end of Israeli occupation as well as for a participation of the PLO in peace talks as representative of the Palestinian people.¹¹⁴ With this, however, the Europeans lost support in Washington and Tel Aviv while gaining fewer friends amongst the Arab states than they had expected.¹¹⁵ Until the EU aligned its position with the Madrid process and later the Oslo peace process in the 1990s, European

¹⁰⁹ AAPD 15.02.1978. Document 50. *Circular by Engels*; AAPD 05.04.1978. Document 101. *Notes by Dannenbring*.

¹¹⁰ AAPD 14.09.1978. Document 266. *Notes by Meyer-Landrut*.

¹¹¹ AAPD 03.04.1979. Document 98. *Dannenbring (Washington) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ AAPD 14.05.1979. Document 137. *Notes by Siebourg*.

¹¹⁴ AAPD 18.06.1980. Document 177. *Circular by Oehms*.

¹¹⁵ On the impact of the Venice Declaration, see Smith, Charles. *Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict*. (Boston, 2007): 276ff.

policy making on the Arab-Israeli conflict would not go much further than the Venice Declaration.

7. Conclusion: Functionalism and early European policy making in the Middle East

The emergence of European Middle Eastern policy lies in the 1970s. During this decade, attempts to coordinate a joint position amongst the Nine, in particular regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict, went through a number of iterations. Starting with high-hopes, EPC immediately reached a dead-end with controversy around the Schumann Document. The crises of 1973 helped to reinvigorate European efforts towards the Middle East. A three-pronged approach of EPC, EAD and *Approche Globale* was supposed to provide a comprehensive European policy towards the Middle East. But in all three areas, the Nine were unable to meet their own expectations. By 1980 the EAD was an empty shell, *Approche Globale* downgraded to a select number of bilateral trade agreements, and EPC stuck in its own contradictions.

An early West German hope about the European element of its ‘Arab policy’ never materialised: initially, Bonn had ventured that it would be able to escape the guardrails of its Middle Eastern policy within a European framework. There, it would be able to think and act more freely, less constrained by the burden of its historical obligations to Israel. But this proved to be wishful thinking, as Israel was deeply critical of European policies towards the Middle East and rightly saw the more pro-Arab hand of France behind many of them. When criticising an EPC project, Israel usually targeted West Germany. “In fact, the Israelis have focused almost exclusively on us in this regard,” Redies complained in 1974.¹¹⁶

Yet, the West German government also saw a value in European engagement in the Middle East. By the late 1970s, Bonn had turned from sceptic to true believer in the EAD, appreciating what the *Auswärtiges Amt* termed the dialogue’s “net function”.¹¹⁷ However, engagement for EPC and EAD was strongly moderated by US policies and demands. Between 1973 and 1975, the FRG held back the French from pushing ahead with formulating stronger European positions on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Only when Kissinger’s peace efforts faltered in 1975 did Bonn support a more pronounced European stance on the Middle East. A similar dynamic can be observed in the aftermath of Sadat’s journey to Israel, as Bonn helped to restrain the EPC before Camp David. It only supported clearer European positions such as the

¹¹⁶ PA/AA (B36 108882, unfoliated) 14.08.1974. *Redies to van Well*.

¹¹⁷ PA/AA (B200 121772, unfoliated) 21.03.1978. *Notes by Planitz*.

1980 Venice Declaration after the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, which had disappointed West German hopes for a more comprehensive peace deal in the Middle East.

Crucially, however, it becomes clear how much for West Germany European Middle Eastern policy ultimately was about something entirely unrelated to the Middle East: in essence, EPC or EAD were soon judged by their contributions to European integration. Their success was largely measured by whether the Nine had achieved internal unity – an endeavour so time-consuming that little thought was actually spared on what effect certain policies would have ‘on the ground’ in the Middle East. The FRG approached European foreign policy from the angle of functionalism, hoping that positive spill over effects would promote the European project as a whole.¹¹⁸ A memorandum by the *Auswärtiges Amt* from 1978 is telling in this regard. At a time when the EAD was halted and EPC in the Middle East in limbo, it hailed European successes such as coordinating the Nine’s voting behaviour at the UN.

European unification is based upon integration within EEC and EPC, which help to avoid interfering or even destructive effects on the community from areas, where willingness to integration does not exist yet. In the long-term, this lays the groundwork for internal development [towards further integration].¹¹⁹

Consequently, despite the shortcomings of European engagement in the Middle East, for West Germany the only response to failure was more Europe. In 1971, Bernd von Staden had argued that despite the escapade surrounding the Schumann Document disengagement from EPC was no option for the FRG.¹²⁰ His assessment remained true for years to come.

This chapter has expanded upon existing research on the emergence of European foreign policy by focusing on the perspective of one EEC member state, the FRG.¹²¹ It has provided a more nuanced and detailed analysis of the interaction between European and West German Middle Eastern policy, adding new understanding to previous work on this topic such as by Neustadt.¹²² It has shown that, for West Germany, the interaction between the European and US dimension of Middle Eastern politics as well as the link between EPC and European integration were crucial. It therefore complements and provides new understanding to existing research strands both on EU studies and German politics.

European policy making on the Middle East during the 1970s was a fundamentally more inward- than outward-looking exercise. But for Bonn, this was often sufficient; it avoided

¹¹⁸ Rosamond, *Theories of European Integration* (2000): 20-74; Haas, *Uniting of Europe* (1958).

¹¹⁹ PA/AA (B21 112902, unfoliated) 07.04.1978. *Notes by 200*.

¹²⁰ AAPD 26.10.1971. Document 369. *Notes by von Staden*.

¹²¹ Moeckli, *European foreign policy during the Cold War* (2009); Sattler, *Institutionalisierung europäischer Nahostpolitik* (2017); Jacobs, *Problematische Partner* (2008); Jawad, *Euro-Arab Relations* (1992).

¹²² Neustadt, *Die deutsch-israelischen Beziehungen im Schatten der EG-Nahostpolitik* (1983).

controversy and served the greater purpose of European integration through instruments such as the EPC. Ironically, the more disappointing the European dimension of its Middle Eastern policy was, the more important it became for Bonn.



Picture 11: European and Arab leaders meet in February 2019 for a summit of EU and Arab League. It is telling that the EAD found no reference at the meeting.¹²³

Today, the EU has mostly been relegated to the role of bystander in the geopolitics of the Middle East.¹²⁴ In 2019, a European project reminiscent of the EAD does not seem to cause too many worries outside of the EU. There was no outcry from Washington and no criticism from Israel in response to the EU-LAS summit in Sharm el Sheikh. Nothing to remind of the bitter infighting amongst the Western allies about the EAD back in 1974. Not even the European leaders themselves seemed to remember the historical precedent of their summit. Of course, this time they went about the whole project the other way around – letting it start with rather than culminate in a conference of ministers. At the end of their Sharm el Sheikh meeting, the conference participants agreed to keep their dialogue going, with the next meeting scheduled for 2021 in Brussels. Perhaps then will we be able to get a better sense as to whether the EU-LAS summits will tie into the legacy of the EAD. In view of how the latter played out, one can only hope that they do not.

¹²³ Deutsche Welle, *Terror, migration dominate EU and Arab League's first summit* (25.02.2019).

¹²⁴ Palacio, Ana. *Europe on the Sidelines*. Project Syndicate (13.02.2016).

Conclusion: Disappointment and West German-Arab relations, 1967-1979

The ‘tradition of German-Arab friendship’ has been more legend than reality.

Beginning of a memorandum by the Auswärtiges Amt, 1969¹

The political relationship with the Federal Republic [of Germany] is still ambivalent; it is characterised emotionally by Arab, in a sense disappointed, love [...], but rationally receptive to German work of quality, for which even a high price will be payed.

Report by West German ambassador to Libya, Günter Franz Werner, 1974²

“The ‘tradition of German-Arab friendship’ has been more legend than reality,” is the first line of a memorandum by the *Auswärtiges Amt* on West German-Arab relations.³ It was written in 1969, at a time when diplomats like the *Auswärtiges Amt*’s State Secretary Ferdinand von Duckwitz regularly referred to this alleged “tradition of friendly relations between Germany and the Arab states”.⁴ The apparent contradiction between such statements and the memo puts in a nutshell the nature, predicament and ambiguity which characterised West German-Arab relations during the period studied in this thesis. Bonn’s high hopes for what it considered an ‘Arab policy’ were often marked by wishful thinking rather than by sober realism.

Still, the 1970s were the only period after World War II when the FRG at least attempted to have a specific ‘Arab policy’. The key finding of this thesis, therefore, is that an ‘Arab policy’ temporarily existed in West Germany, even if it did not unfold as successfully as either the FRG or Arab leaders might have hoped. This West German ‘Arab policy’ evolved around the dimensions of the Cold War, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Palestinian question, as well as oil politics. These factors were increasingly interlinking and overlaid with the emerging element of common European foreign policy making.

The main factor behind this stronger focus on the Arab states were Cold War dynamics. For this, the 1967 June War was a watershed moment, as it embedded the regional, Arab-Israeli conflict into the global Cold War more than ever.⁵ As a result, Bonn feared that an escalation of the Cold War in the Middle East would spill over to Europe and West Germany. In addition,

¹ PA/AA (B36 271, p. 258) 14.11.1967. *Lahn (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

² PA/AA (B36 104844, unfoliate) 09.09.1974. *Werner (Tripoli) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

³ PA/AA (B36 271, p. 258) 14.11.1967. *Lahn (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

⁴ AAPD 08.02.1968. Document 50. *Conversation of Duckwitz with the head of the office of the Arab League, Cabani.* The same wording was used by Brandt in an interview for Egyptian television (AAPD 21.02.1972. Document 35. *Notes by Scheel*) or in a conversation of State Secretary Frank with Egypt’s National Security Advisor Ismael (PA/AA (B130 9981A, unfoliated) 08.03.1973. *Notes by Redies*).

⁵ Citino, *The Middle East and the Cold War* (2019): 449.

from 1969 onwards chancellor Willy Brandt was afraid that his *Ostpolitik* could be unhinged by conflict in the Mediterranean. Secondly, the FRG felt the genuine need to contribute to halting a Soviet advance in the more left-leaning Arab states. One of the prime manifestations of this motivation was Bonn's temporary focus on the Western Mediterranean during West Germany's 'Mediterranean Moment', a key new finding of this thesis.⁶ Cut out from the Mashreq, necessity and opportunity led the FRG to temporarily shift its focus to the Maghreb. But difficult relations with Algeria and Libya, as well as the opening up of Egypt to the West ultimately led Bonn to abandon its prioritisation of North Africa. Moreover, after the October War, the perception of a Soviet advance in the Mediterranean subsided. Even the 1979 split of the Arab League did not, as Bonn had initially feared, lead to a resurgence of the Soviets in Middle Eastern geopolitics. Thirdly, in particular before 1972, German-German antagonism tied the FRG to the Middle East. Bonn was intent on preventing the GDR's diplomatic breakthrough in the Arab states. Even after the end of the Hallstein Doctrine in 1969, "[West German] Arab policy has to be seen in conjunction with our Eastern- and German policy", as Scheel himself stated. It took until the 1972 Basic Treaty between the two Germanies for this linkage to be dissolved.⁷ Unlike Trentin or Maeke, who stress the antagonism between FRG and GDR in the Middle Eastern arena, I find evidence for a significant relaxation of German-German relations there post-1972.⁸ Increasingly, the relationship between East and West German diplomats in most Arab countries was characterised by managed co-existence of cooperation with elements of competition.

The Arab-Israeli conflict shaped West German Middle Eastern policy as a whole, even though it did not initially cause the increased focus of the social-liberal coalition on the Arab states. Before 1970, the FRG quite actively tried to keep out of the Arab-Israeli conflict. But the latter's continuation helped Cold War antagonism persist in the Middle East. Moreover, its presence hindered a smooth implementation of Brandt's concept for an 'even-handed' Middle Eastern policy. On top of that, from 1970 onwards the issue of Israel-Palestine arrived on West German soil through the spill-over of Palestinian terrorism. As a result, Brandt in particular increased his engagement with the Arab-Israeli conflict, even entertaining ideas about a more direct involvement in mediation between key conflict parties. In the aftermath of the 1973 October War, Schmidt and Genscher followed a more restrained attitude. They first put their hopes on Kissinger, then on a European approach to broker lasting peace in the Middle East.

⁶ Hirsch, *The Arab world, the Cold War and West Germany's 'Mediterranean moment'* (2020).

⁷ AAPD 11.02.1970. Document 48. *Memorandum by Gehlhoff*.

⁸ Maeke, *DDR und PLO* (2017); Trentin, *Tough negotiations* (2008).

However, Genscher in particular remained preoccupied personally with the Arab-Israeli conflict, launching a major trip to the Arab states in 1979 to gauge prospects for an expansion of the Camp David accords into a more comprehensive peace deal. But after Brandt had unsuccessfully toyed with the idea of involving the FRG more directly in a Middle Eastern peace process, Bonn seemed to have accepted that such engagement was too costly, too risky and too complex to single-handedly invest in.

Palestinian terrorism had forced West Germany to pay more attention to the Arab-Israeli conflict. As other states, too, the FRG for a long time considered the Palestinian question primarily as one of refugees, not of nationhood. During the 1960s, it even saw a silver lining to the issue of Palestinian refugees, as aid to them allowed to improve Bonn's standing in states such as Egypt or Lebanon. But from 1970 onwards, terrorism and the international transformation of the Palestinian question spurred the development of a West German policy towards Palestine. On this, the Bonn government was merely reactive. By the end of the decade, it in effect recognised both a two-state solution and a role for the PLO in the conclusion of an Arab-Israeli peace deal. More active were efforts by the *Auswärtiges Amt* to establish a variety of links to the Palestinian movement, including its violent elements, throughout the 1970s. These attempts at using diplomacy as counterterrorism meant that by the end of the decade Bonn disposed of an intricate network of communication to the Palestinian movement.⁹

Just as profound as the development of Bonn's stance towards the Palestinian issue was the emergence and transformation of a West German oil policy. The FRG was a latecomer to the geopolitics of oil. In response to the 1967 mini oil-boycott, the West German government focused on the sphere of industry, rather than diplomacy. It initiated the creation of a West German 'oil champion', DEMINEX. But not only was the company underfunded; by 1971, the structure of the oil market was changing profoundly, with power moving away from the large oil companies towards the – mostly Arab – oil producing states. The usefulness of DEMINEX was reducing. Although the West German government had started to conceptualise a coherent oil policy in 1971, the latter's shortcomings were laid bare by the 1973 oil crisis. Now, the energy issue became a priority in West German foreign policy, causing a real rift between Bonn and Washington. In addition, the *Auswärtiges Amt* now turned its attention to upgrading West Germany's thus far underdeveloped relations with the Arab Gulf countries. Saudi Arabia became a particular focal point of West German efforts, before in 1979 the second oil crisis

⁹ Hirsch, *Politics as counterterrorism* (2020).

and the Siege of Mecca caused doubts about both the necessity and the benefit of its focus on the Gulf.

Throughout the 1970s, a previously non-existent European dimension was added to West German relations with the Arab states. As of 1971, the EEC members attempted to coordinate their stance towards the Arab-Israeli conflict through the EPC. From late 1973 onwards, the EAD was added to this. Overall, Bonn's attitude in these forums was supportive, even though this support was conditional: in 1971, Israeli objections led Bonn to distance itself from the Schumann Document, and in 1973/74 the FRG put the brakes on the EAD due to US concerns. Also, EPC and EAD remained slow and complicated institutional frameworks, which hardly yielded any material policy gains in the Middle East itself. However, despite this, Bonn's generally favourable view on a European approach to the Middle East never wavered and even grew stronger regardless of any setbacks. After all, the *Auswärtiges Amt* largely saw a functionalist benefit from EPC or EAD, considering them on the basis of their contributions to further European integration.

Geographically, West Germany's 'Arab policy' shifted its focus from the Maghreb in the late 1960s to the Mashreq in the early 1970s and then to the Gulf in the late 1970s. As for agency, the clearest break was between the *Grand Coalition* and the social-liberal coalition. Chancellor Kurt-Georg Kiesinger never appreciated the strategic value of the Arab states. Willy Brandt, however, had given the Arab states more attention from the Six-Day War onwards, which led his government into taking them more into consideration in 1969. In 1973, he focused strongly on the Arab-Israeli conflict and even entertained the idea of a personal role for himself in a peace process before the October War. His foreign minister Scheel took a more sober view on the West German role in the Middle East and was content with strengthening Bonn's bilateral ties to the Arab states. From 1974 onwards, the distribution of roles would be exactly the other way around: Chancellor Schmidt refrained from too much engagement in the region, whereas his foreign minister Genscher in particular in the context of EPC was time and again willing to turn his attention to the Middle East. Overall, strategic interests had drawn the FRG closer to the Arab states from 1967 onwards, but the constellation of the West German political actors involved considerably influenced the shape of West German-Arab relations in this period.

Attempts at a coherent West German 'Arab policy' dissipated by the end of the 1970s. On the one hand, Bonn's hope that re-opening its embassies in all Arab states would almost automatically ensure smoother political relations with them did not materialise after 1975. On the other hand, any pretences about the existence of a coherent 'Arab world' were no longer

sustainable after Egypt's eviction from the Arab League in 1979.¹⁰ Finally, the dynamics of the Cold War, which had originally tied the FRG's perceived political interests closer to the Arab states, were now moving West Germany's focus away from the region: by 1980, *détente* was threatened by the emergence of the Second Cold War in Europe itself.¹¹ In the Middle East, the Soviet Union mostly found itself locked out of the geopolitical arena. The region was no longer a battleground for German-German antagonism. The Arab-Israeli conflict was not solved, but the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty at least limited the risk of broader war on one of its previous main fronts. Energy security started to be dominated by debates around gas deals with the Soviet Union or oil in the North Sea, rather than focusing on the Middle East. In short, the West German shift of focus to the Arab states had first failed to fully pay off politically, before ultimately both the points of reference and the strategic necessities underlying it disappeared. Of course, the FRG would continue to have relations with the Arab states. But no further attempts at a West German 'Arab policy', or indeed the open formulation of a West German Middle Eastern policy, would be made after 1980. Maybe the repeated setbacks of Bonn's 'Arab policy' explain why so far it has been neglected by studies on the FRG in the Middle East.

As stated in the introduction of this thesis, West German Middle Eastern policy can be understood as a coin, the two sides of which represent relations to Israel and to the Arab states, respectively. This thesis has studied the latter in detail. But what do its results tell us about the coin in its entirety, and of West German Middle Eastern policy more generally?

Brandt's 'policy of even-handedness' in the Middle East was supposed to ensure a balanced West German stance towards Israel and the Arab states. On one hand, this clearly was an upgrade in priority of the Arab states for the FRG. On the other, relations never really were entirely 'even-handed'. Ultimately, as Chapter I has shown, the concept of 'even-handedness' was at its core a symbolic signal to the Arab states as to the increased appreciation of their importance in Bonn. When in doubt, however, Bonn put its relations to Israel over those to the Arab states. There was no even-handedness in financial aid, which disproportionately benefited Israel. During the October War, the FRG tolerated the American airlift to Israel despite threats of an Arab oil boycott. Despite all efforts towards an 'Arab policy', the Bonn government therefore never really followed up attempts to escape the special relationship to Israel. Bonn's

¹⁰ See, for example, AAPD 09.06.1969. Document 193. *Memorandum by political units I and III; reg: German-Arab relations*; or AAPD 06.03.1979. Document 69. *Schlagintweit (Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

¹¹ Halliday, *Making of the Second Cold War* (1983).

support to Tel Aviv remained stable, despite sporadic attempts to cooperate more with the Arab states.

Probably the only author so far who has attempted to conceptualise the two sides of West Germany's Middle Eastern policy in conjunction is Joffe, who sees the FRG conflicted between 'realpolitic' drawing it to the Arab states and 'moralpolitic' drawing it to Israel. But as De Vita has only recently shown, a mere reduction of West German-Israeli relations to morality is too simplistic.¹² Bonn's early relations to Israel, too, followed geo-strategic interests within a Cold War setting.

Rather, as I have shown in Chapter I, West German Middle Eastern policy during the period of study for this thesis resembles the distinction between *diffuse* and *specific support*. Borrowing this concept from Easton, I argue that the FRG reserved diffuse support in the Middle East for Israel, even though on specific issues it would cooperate well with the Arab states.¹³ Ultimately, the nature of diffuse support for Israel related to a multiplicity of factors, such as historical obligation, moral pressure and geostrategic interest regarding Tel Aviv. No similar configuration of factors existed as far as Bonn's relations to the Arab states were concerned.

This thesis relates most directly to a broader strand of research on Germany's role in the Middle East from the beginning of the 20th century onwards. What do its results tell us about "continuities and discontinuities" in Germany's relationship with this region and the Arab states in particular?¹⁴ There are some remarkable continuities. Just as in the first part of the 20th century, the Middle East was not in and of itself an area of strategic relevance; its importance derived from its links to the geopolitics of Central Europe. Also, just as Wilhelmine Germany or the Third Reich, the FRG struggled to naturally assume a political role in the Middle East as a whole. Similar to its predecessors, Bonn's strategy for the Arab states was mostly inward-looking. Foreign policy elites in Bonn overestimated the potential of building stronger bonds to the Arab states and the ease with which that would be possible. Consequently, schemes drawn up to strengthen 'German-Arab friendship' did not materialise.

But, of course, key differences to the first half of the 20th century are visible. The FRG was no longer part of 'great power politics' in the Middle East – nor did it ever see itself as

¹² De Vita, *Israelpolitik* (2020).

¹³ Easton, *A re-assessment of the concept of political support* (1975).

¹⁴ Smith, Helmut Walser. *The continuities of German history: nation, religion, and race across the long nineteenth century*. (Cambridge, 2008).

such. Chapter II has also shown that during the 1970s the link between World War II and West German Middle Eastern policy was becoming weaker. Personal links to the Nazi-period were disappearing. Jelinek and De Vita show how in the 1960s there was some continuity of thinking on the relevance of the Arab states in the *Auswärtiges Amt* from the years of the Third Reich.¹⁵ However, while there certainly were some remnants of such tradition, during the 1970s the personal connections of the *Auswärtiges Amt* to the Nazi-era were breaking. Key diplomats such as State Secretary (1970-74) Paul Frank or Walter Jesser, who worked on the Middle East for more than a decade, had joined the *Auswärtiges Amt* only in the 1950s.¹⁶ Unlike Kiesinger, neither Brandt, Scheel, Genscher nor Schmidt had been NSDAP members.¹⁷ Historical legacies do not disappear from institutions such as ministries over night, but during the period studied for this thesis the shadow of the Third Reich over West German policy towards the Arab states was fading out. The further away we move from 1945, the more discontinuity shaped the FRG's relations to the Arab states.

The study of the FRG's foreign policy from 1949 onwards is also the story of West Germany's return to the international stage as it gradually reclaimed sovereignty and independence in foreign policy making. Authors such as Haftendorn or Ash show how the years of *Ostpolitik* were a key juncture in this endeavour.¹⁸ This representation is confirmed by the results of this thesis, as it becomes clear how in Europe's adjacent region, too, the FRG from 1969 onwards sought its own political path more independently, assertively and confidently.

Finally, as Chapter I has also shown, this thesis provides new insights for the study of external powers in the Middle East, wherein the topic of German-Arab relations after World War II has, so far, not received a lot of scholarly attention. Here, this gap is closed a bit further. Moreover, this thesis provides a detailed foreign political analysis of West Germany's oil policy and the development of its stance on the Palestinian question. To my knowledge, similar studies are missing in such detail for other major external powers in the Middle East such as France or the UK. Finally, this thesis has shown how Brandt's concept of an 'even-handed' Middle Eastern policy struggled with the challenge that a coherent 'Arab world' did not exist.

¹⁵ De Vita, *Israelpolitik* (2020); Jelinek, *Deutschland und Israel 1945-1965* (2004).

¹⁶ Jesser was West German delegate in Cairo (1969-1972) and Ministerial Director with a responsibility for the Middle East (1972-1978).

¹⁷ There is still some unclarity about Scheel's membership in the Nazi party. In 1978, Scheel declared that he had been included in the party in 1942 without him ever applying for membership (Der Spiegel, *Carstens: Ich habe so dunkle Erinnerungen*. (13.11.1978)).

¹⁸ Haftendorn, *Kurswechsel* (2006); Ash, Timothy Garton. *In Europe's name: Germany and the divided continent*. (London, 1993).

In fact, the FRG was usually forced to contend with Israel on the one and at least two Arab camps on the other hand. I argue that this challenge of purporting a ‘policy of dual-evenhandedness’ was not unique to the FRG but might also serve as a suitable framework for the engagement of other external powers in the Middle East during the Cold War.

A number of theoretical conclusions come out of this dissertation. Bonn’s hope that the establishment of embassies in the Arab states would significantly add to its political clout was only fulfilled in part. As literature on diplomatic theory stipulates, diplomatic representation is a necessary condition “to buy into and operate within the system”.¹⁹ But it is by no means sufficient. Fink’s excellent study of West Germany and Israel in the 1960s shows how relations between the FRG and Israel on a diplomatic level were underpinned by network building beyond the level of the state.²⁰ But there were no similar efforts made to organise school class exchanges with Arab states. No West German students worked on Arab farms, as they did in the Israeli *Kibbutz*. Thus, the importance of the substance of diplomatic relations and not just their structure become clear in this study and deserves attention in diplomatic theory more generally.²¹

Similarly, Chapter IV in particular suggests that a sort of cultural distance persisted between West German diplomats and their Arab hosts. Here, one can point to ambassador Schlagintweit’s 1979 lines on the “religious-fanatical aggression which corresponds to the desert” of Saudi Arabia or ambassador Kuntzmann depictions of what he considered archaic practices of rule in the UAE.²² This shows how a focus on diplomatic culture, which so far sadly lacks clear theoretical underpinning, can substantiate a study of diplomatic relations.²³

Finally, this thesis was approached from a perspective of political psychology, attempting not so much to write history ‘as it was’, but trying to understand how key actors perceived the issues, interests and dynamics around their work.²⁴ Today, for instance, we know that from 1967 onwards the Soviet Union was on a back-foot in the Middle East. However, as

¹⁹ Spies, Yolanda Kemp. *Global Diplomacy and International Society*. (Basingstoke, 2018).

²⁰ Fink, *West Germany and Israel* (2019).

²¹ Berridge, *Diplomacy* (2015); Rana, Kishan. *The 21st century ambassador: plenipotentiary to chief executive*. (Msida, 2004).

²² PA/AA (B36 119948, unfoliated) 22.11.1979. *Schlagintweit (Jeddah) to Auswärtiges Amt*; PA/AA (B36 104921, unfoliated) 13.07.1974. *Kuntzmann (Abu Dhabi) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

²³ McDonnell, Fiona, and Jason Dittmer. *Diplomatic Culture*. In: Constantinou, Costas, Pauline Kerr and Paul Sharp (eds). *The SAGE Handbook of Diplomacy*. (Los Angeles, 2016): 104-13; Kappeler, Dietrich. *The birth and evolution of a diplomatic culture*. In: Slavik, Hannah (ed). *Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy*. (Malta/Geneva, 2004): 353-60.

²⁴ Rapport, *Cognitive approaches to foreign policy analysis* (2017); Levy, *Psychology and Foreign Policy Decision Making* (2013).

the first chapter has shown, in the immediate aftermath of the Six-Day War, the FRG and its Western allies instead viewed Moscow's status in the Arab states as strengthened. It is this latter assumption which motivated West German policy towards the Arab states. From a perspective of political psychology, the often inward-looking nature of West German policy making regarding the Arab states is also noteworthy. One example is the functionalist nature of EPC, described in detail in the fifth chapter. Another is the use of comparison by West German policymakers as described in Chapter II of this thesis. As soon as *Ostpolitik* had borne fruit, Brandt, Scheel and later Genscher repeatedly used it as a model to convince both Arabs and Israel to enter direct talks.²⁵ Their personal experiences shaped their perspective on the Arab-Israeli conflict, despite repeated assurances by both Israeli and Arab leaders that the comparison was inadequate for the Middle East.²⁶ Just a few years earlier, in 1967, it had been Bonn's diplomats who openly rejected Arab attempts to link *Deutschland-* with *Nahostpolitik*, as Arab representatives started to compare the division of Berlin by the Soviets with the division of Jerusalem by Israel.²⁷ The compatibility of global phenomena was shaped through an egocentric lens, which tells us something about the possibility, as well as difficulty, of bridging differences of perspective and position in international diplomacy.

What future research agendas come out of this thesis? Through this dissertation, I hope that I have been able to show that there is value in pursuing further studies on German-Arab relations in the post-war period. For example, this thesis has highlighted how diversely the relaxation of German-German relations of 1972 played out internationally. How did what Fulbrook calls the FRG's and GDR's "mutual antagonism and self-definition" manifest itself once the Hallstein-Docctrine and *Alleinvertretung* had been abandoned?²⁸ Chapter I has illustrated how, in Egypt, the West German ambassador reported an immediate improvement of relations 'on the ground' with his East German counterpart, while his colleague in Sudan complained about continued obstruction by the East German embassy. De Vita has only recently shown how a simultaneous study of both East and West Germany can bring new understanding to topics which have already been studied in depth separately. In view of the under-researched nature of Bonn's foreign political relations to the Arab states it was a conscious decision to only focus on the West German dimension in this thesis. Nonetheless, and not least in view of the results of the

²⁵ See Chapter II.3.

²⁶ See, for example, AAPD 30.05.1973. Document 170. *Notes by Redies*; AAPD 05.06.1973. Document 176. *Steltzer (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt*; AAPD 07./08.06.1973. Document 184. *German-Israeli government talks*.

²⁷ AAPD 27.11.1967. Document 404. *Pauls (Tel Aviv) to Auswärtiges Amt*.

²⁸ Fulbrook, *German Identity after the Holocaust* (1999): 2.

research presented here, the trans- and international impact of German-German relations in the second half of the Cold War deserves further scholarly attention.

Moreover, in the plethora of research done over the past decade on Germany in the Middle East, the absence of studies using Arab sources is as obvious as it is regrettable. Of course, access to government archives might be either difficult or even unrealistic to obtain in some cases.²⁹ But then newspaper articles, autobiographies or oral history sources could represent a path into exploring the ‘Arab perspective’ on relations with Germany and its role in the Middle East.

Finally, this thesis as a history of foreign-political relations between Bonn and the ‘Arab world’ has mostly engaged with official sources of diplomacy, such as government material or documents of key politicians. But as I have concluded above, the struggle of West German diplomats to fill relations to the Arab states with life shows us how much successful diplomacy requires social and cultural networks, which go beyond the official channels of embassies and government consultations. The approach of New Diplomatic History conceptualises diplomatic relations beyond the echelons of foreign ministers or senior diplomats.³⁰ More research on the sub-state dimension of German-Arab relations during the Cold War can only be welcomed.

These are all suggestions of where the study of German-Arab relations could or should move in the future. But they go beyond the limits of this thesis, which provides new, explorative research on West German foreign policy towards the Arab states during the 1960s and 1970s. It sheds light on an area which has not often received attention, as the FRG’s Middle Eastern policy has usually been analysed through a focus on Israel – even in studies such as Gerlach’s *Doppelte Front*, where the Arab states are extensively dealt with.³¹ At the centre of this thesis are the Cold War and Central European geopolitics; while the former has subsided, the latter still links Germany to the Middle East. To give but one example, in 2015 a stream of refugees connected the country directly with the civil war in Syria. This thesis has also provided a more nuanced understanding of West Germany’s stance to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the European dimension of Bonn’s Middle Eastern policy, while also providing entirely new analyses on the emergence of the FRG’s oil politics and its diplomatic stance on the question of Palestine. Consequently, I argue with confidence that what has been written here helps us understand German-Arab relations better not only for the period of 1967 to 1979, but also beyond.

²⁹ An example to the contrary is Connelly, Matthew. *Rethinking the Cold War and decolonization: the grand strategy of the Algerian war for independence*. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33:2 (2001): 221-45.

³⁰ Mori, *The State of the Art* (2019).

³¹ Gerlach, *Doppelte Front* (2006).

The prospect of a West German ‘Arab policy’ was indeed “more legend than reality”.³² The Bonn government had put high hopes in the strengthening of its bonds to the Arab states and worked hard to re-open embassies in their capitals. But despite the ultimate success of this endeavour, the relationship remained difficult, complicated and unpredictable. Neither was the hope of naturally closer relations with Bonn, expressed by Arab leaders on several occasions, fulfilled.³³ Disappointment is the feeling which describes the inability to reach one’s expectations. Indeed, in the period studied here, Bonn’s diplomats more than once referred to this sentiment. It is maybe summarised best by West Germany’s ambassador to Tripoli, Günther Franz Werner, who in 1974 described Libya’s relations to the FRG as “characterised emotionally by Arab, in a sense disappointed, love”.³⁴ In a sense, the history of West German-Arab relations during the Cold War is, therefore, also the history of a disappointment.

³² PA/AA (B36 271, p. 258) 14.11.1967. *Lahn (Cairo) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

³³ See, for example, PA/AA (B36 438, p. 21) 21.12.1970. *Moltmann (Tunis) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

³⁴ PA/AA (B36 104844, unfoliated) 09.09.1974. *Werner (Tripoli) to Auswärtiges Amt.*

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- B 14: *NATO und Verteidigung* (NATO and defence)
- B 21: *Europarat, Europäische politische Integration, Schweiz, Liechtenstein, Island, Norwegen* (Council of Europe, European political integration, Switzerland, Lichtenstein, Iceland, Norway)
- B 26: *Länderreferate Mittelmeer und Nordische Staaten, Bulgarien, Rumänien* (country units Mediterranean and Nordic states, Bulgaria, Romania)
- B 28: *Gesamteuropäische politische Strukturen, KSZE, OSZE* (European political structures, CSCE, OSCE)
- B 30: *Vereinte Nationen* (United Nations)
- B 32: *Länderreferate USA, Kanada* (country units USA, Canada)
- B 36: *Länderreferate Naher und Mittlerer Osten* (country units Near and Middle East)
- B 38: *Berlin und Wiedervereinigungsfragen* (Berlin and matters of reunification)
- B 41: *Länderreferate Sowjetunion und GUS* (country units Soviet Union and CIS)
- B 43: *Abrüstung und Sicherheitspolitik* (disarmament and security policy)
- B 46: *Koordinierung, Dritte Welt, Ausrüstungshilfe, Organisierte Kriminalität, Terrorismus* (Coordination, Third World, technical assistance, organized crime, terrorism)
- B 52: *Grundsatzfragen der Handelspolitik* (fundamental questions of trade policy)
- B 110: *Organisation* (organisation)
- B 130: *VS-Registaturen* (classified documents)
- B 200: *Europäische Gemeinschaften Grundsatzangelegenheiten* (fundamental questions European Communities)
- B 201: *Handels- und Agrarpolitik* (European trade and agriculture policy)
- P 14: *Personalakten* (personnel files)

Appendix A

Appendix A contains short biographies of key politicians and diplomats who came up by name throughout the thesis. The details given focus on their relationship with Middle Eastern issues in the years between 1967 to 1979.

For orientation, key roles within the hierarchy of the *Auswärtiges Amt* are explained in the following:

State Secretary (*verbeamteter Staatssekretär*): Most senior civil servants and diplomats within a ministry. During the 1970s, there were always two State Secretaries in a ministry.

Ministerial Director (*Ministerialdirektor*): rank given to diplomats which headed the – at the time seven – divisions (*Abteilungen*) in the *Auswärtiges Amt*.

Assistant Director (*Ministerialdirigent*): the rank held by deputy division heads in the *Auswärtiges Amt* (*Unterabteilungsleiter*).

Head of Unit (*Referatsleiter*): each division in the *Auswärtiges Amt* is made up of several units (*Referate*). For example, the Political Division 3 had a Middle Eastern Unit (*Nahostreferat*), South East Asia Unit (*Südasiereferat*), East Asian Unit (*Ostasiereferat*), and so on. Each of these units had one head (*Referatsleiter*) and one deputy head.

Parliamentary State Secretary (*parlamentarischer Staatssekretär*) / State Minister (*Staatsminister*): a position which is held by a politician and not a civil servant. They act as deputies to the minister. In 1974, the West German government decided to rename the position of Parliamentary State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt* into State Minister.

Appendix A

Bente, Wolfgang: From 1967 to 1969, Bente headed the West German delegation at the French embassy in Beirut, as at the time France was the FRG's protective power in Lebanon in the absence of full diplomatic relations between Bonn and Beirut. Bente then worked in the Middle Eastern unit (*Nahostreferat*) in the *Auswärtiges Amt* until 1972. In 1970, he was temporarily seconded to Amman as deputy for ambassador Hille. The events of the Jordanian civil war fell in this period. From 1985 to 1990, he was West German ambassador in Tunisia and from 1990 to 1992 German ambassador in Saudi Arabia.

Böker, Alexander: After several postings abroad and in Bonn, Böker was promoted to the rank of ministerial director and was responsible for the allocation of West German funds for Palestinian refugees from 1963 to 1968.

Böker, Alfons: Alfons Böker followed Helmut Redies as head of the Middle Eastern Unit in the *Auswärtiges Amt* in 1974 and remained in this post. He then moved on to become deputy ambassador at the West German embassy in London.

Duckwitz, Georg Ferdinand: Duckwitz had joined the *Auswärtiges Amt* in 1941. During World War II, he was posted at the German embassy Copenhagen. In the post-war period, he was sceptical about the usefulness of the *Hallstein Doctrine*. He retired from the *Auswärtiges Amt* in 1965. However, when Brandt became foreign minister, he soon recalled Duckwitz to active service due to the similarity of their views on *Ostpolitik*. Consequently, Duckwitz was one of the State Secretaries in the ministry from 1967 to 1970. He finally retired upon the signing of the Treaty of Warsaw.

Frank, Paul: From 1965 to 1968 assistant secretary with responsibility for the

Appendix A

Political Division, subunit A (Western Europe). In 1968, he was promoted to Ministerial Director and head of the Political Unit I, which also included responsibility for the Middle East and North Africa. He became State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt* in 1970 under Walter Scheel. When Scheel became the FRG's Federal President in 1974, Frank became Head of the Office of the Federal President (*Bundespräsidial-amt*). He remained in this position until 1979.

Harkort, Günter: Harkort had been West German envoy to the EEC before 1965, when he was called back to Bonn to serve as head of the Division III for Trade and International Development in the *Auswärtiges Amt* in the rank of Ministerial Director. In 1969, he became State Secretary in the ministry until his retirement in 1970.

Hille, Hans-Joachim: In 1967, Hille left his posting as deputy ambassador in Turkey

to become West German ambassador in Jordan. He remained there for four years until 1970. After a quick interlude in the Political Division of the *Auswärtiges Amt* in Bonn, in 1971 he moved on to become West German ambassador in Ecuador. In 1978, he became West German envoy to the Middle East (*Beauftragter für Nah- und Mittelostpolitik*) within the *Auswärtiges Amt*. From 1979 to 1982, he was West German ambassador in Egypt.

Jahn, Gerhard: A member of the SPD, Jahn was Parliamentary State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt* from 1967 to 1969. He then served as West German Minister of Justice until 1974.

Jesser, Walter: Jesser was West German envoy in Cairo from 1969 to 1972. At the time, Italy acted as Protective Power for the FRG in Egypt. Upon the resumption of diplomatic relations between Bonn and Cairo, Jesser became ministerial director with a responsibility for the Middle East

Appendix A

and South-East Asia in the *Auswärtiges Amt* in Bonn. From 1978 to 1984, he was West German ambassador in Morocco.

Lahr, Rolf: Lahr was State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt* from 1961 until 1969. He then took over the position as West German ambassador in Italy until his retirement in 1974.

Kunzmann, Karl-Heinz: Kunzmann acted in various positions in the *Auswärtiges Amt*, before he became West German ambassador in the UAE from 1974 to 1975. Later postings led him to Haiti and Peru. His final posting before retirement was that of West German ambassador to Tunisia from 1991 to 1995.

Metzger, Peter: Metzger joined the *Auswärtiges Amt* in 1966. From 1971 to 1974, he acted as West German envoy in Saudi Arabia, where at the time Italy was Protective Power for the FRG. He later served as ambassador in Chad (1977-79),

North Yemen (1983-86), Bulgaria (1995-99) and Norway (1999-2001).

Moersch, Karl: Moersch was a member of the liberal FDP party and member of West German parliament from 1964 to 1976. In July 1970, he became Parliamentary State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt*, which he remained until 1976 (from 1974 onwards, the position had been renamed to State Minister).

Montfort, Norbert: Montfort had held posts in Lebanon and Iraq, before in 1966 he became West German consul in Kuwait. After serving as ambassador in Mauretania from 1971 to 1974, he moved on directly to Saudi Arabia. There, he remained ambassador until 1976. He then became head of the North African Unit in the *Auswärtiges Amt*. In 1979, he followed Hans-Joachim Hille as West German envoy to the Middle East (*Beauftragter für Nah- und Mittelostpolitik*) within the *Auswärtiges Amt*. As his final posting

Appendix A

before retirement, Montfort was West German ambassador in Morocco from 1984 to 1990.

Nowak, Walter Georg: From 1968 to 1973, Nowak was head of the West German delegation in Beirut at a time when there were no diplomatic relations between West Germany and Lebanon. He then moved to the embassy in Teheran as deputy ambassador. From 1985 to 1990, he was West German ambassador in Saudi Arabia.

Redies, Helmut: As a diplomat, Redies repeatedly worked on topics relating to the Middle East. From 1964 to 1967 he was the deputy head of the Middle Eastern Unit within the *Auswärtiges Amt*. He returned from a posting in Uruguay to head the Middle Eastern Unit from 1970 to 1974. He then worked in Bonn on UN issues and later became West German ambassador in Venezuela and Copenhagen.

Sachs, Hans-Georg: From 1965 to 1973, Sachs was West Germany's envoy to the EEC in Brussels. He then became State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt* until 1975, when he was killed in a climbing accident in Austria.

Schlagintweit, Reinhard: Schlagintweit had worked in the Culture Division of the *Auswärtiges Amt*, before he followed Norbert Montfort as West German ambassador to Jeddah. He remained in Saudi Arabia until 1979.

Schütz, Karl: Schütz had not originally been a diplomat, but was active as politician in West Berlin with close links to Willy Brandt. In 1966, he became State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt* under Brandt, but within a year he had returned to West Berlin where he became mayor until 1977. He was then appointed as West German ambassador to Israel, where he remained until 1981.

Appendix A

Steltzer, Hans-Georg: Steltzer had gotten to know Willy Brandt when the former worked for the federal parliament, or Senate, of Berlin. Steltzer then became head of the Culture Division in the *Auswärtiges Amt* in 1970. In 1972, he went to Cairo as West German ambassador to Egypt, where he remained until his retirement in 1978.

Turnwald, Wilhelm: In 1969, Turnwald became West German ambassador in Libya. He retired in 1971.

van Well, Günter: From 1971 onwards, van Well headed the Political Division in the *Auswärtiges Amt*, first in Political Division 2 for the West and the Soviet Bloc, then from 1973 onwards in Political Division 3 with a responsibility for Asia, Africa and Latin America. From 1977 to 1981, he was State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt*.

von Staden, Bernd: Von Staden was head of the Political Division in the *Auswärtiges Amt* from 1970 to 1973. He then moved on to become West German ambassador to the US until 1979. From 1981 to 1983, he was State Secretary in the *Auswärtiges Amt*.

Werner, Günter-Franz:

Werner had been working at the West German embassy in India, before in 1971 he became West German ambassador to Libya. He remained in this position until 1977.

Wischnewski, Hans-Jürgen:

Wischnewski was a member of West German parliament from 1957 to 1990 for the SPD. He was Minister for International Development in the *Grand Coalition* from 1966 to 1968, before giving up this post to become party manager (*Bundesgeschäftsführer*) for the SPD until 1972. From 1974 to 1976, he was State Minister in the *Auwärtiges Amt* and then State Secretary in the Chancellory

Appendix A

(*Bundeskanzleramt*) under Helmut Schmidt

until 1979.

Appendix C: Timeline

1965	
18.03.1965	Resolution of the Arab League to call back all Arab ambassadors from Bonn in view of the possible establishment of diplomatic relations between West Germany and Israel
12.05.1965	Establishment of diplomatic relations between West Germany and Israel; break-up of diplomatic relations between most Arab states and West Germany; only Morocco, Tunisia and Libya maintain diplomatic ties with Bonn
19.09.1965	General election in West Germany, won by the CDU/CSU party around Ludwig Erhardt
1966	
01.12.1966	Election of Kurt-Georg Kiesinger as chancellor by West German parliament; formation of 'Grand Coalition' with Willy Brandt as foreign minister
1967	
24.02.1967	Re-establishment of diplomatic relations between West Germany and Jordan
May 1967	Visit of Abdel-Khaled Hassouna, Secretary General of the Arab League, in Bonn
05.-10.06.1967	Six-Day/June War
06.06.-01.09.1967	Oil embargo by Arab oil states

Appendix C

1967	
19.06.1967	Meeting in the <i>Auswärtiges Amt</i> to discuss consequences of the June War for West German foreign policy. The 'June Memorandum' is the result of this meeting.
29.08.1967	Beginning of the Arab League summit in Khartoum
01.09.1967	Khartoum Declaration of 'Three 'No's' by the Arab League
26.11.1967	First backchannel meeting between Wischnewski and Bouteflika in New York, discussing a possible resumption of diplomatic relations between Bonn and Algiers.
1968	
09.01.1968	Formation of Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) in Beirut
1969	
March 1969	Establishment of West German oil company DEMINEX
May 1969	Establishment of diplomatic relations between the GDR and Iraq, Sudan, as well as Cambodia

Appendix C

1969	
02.07.1969	Establishment of diplomatic relations between the FRG and the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen)
01.09.1969	Libyan coup d'état; takeover of power by the Free Officer's Movement around Colonel Ghaddafi
28.09.1969	General election in West Germany, resulting in an electoral victory of Brandt's SPD; on the same evening, Brandt and Scheel agree in principle on forming of the social-liberal coalition.
September/October 1969	Reports from West German delegation in Lebanon about possible plans for Palestinian attacks in West Germany
30.10.1969	Announcement of the 'Scheel doctrine'; Bonn asks international community to hold off with recognition of GDR until both Germanies have regulated their relations amongst themselves
01.-02.12.1969	EEC summit at the Hague
1970	
08.01.1970	Meeting between Bouteflika and Brandt during the chancellor's private holiday in Tunisia

Appendix C

1970	
10.02.1970	Workshop by the social-liberal coalition on the new government's Middle Eastern policy
10.02.1970	Palestinian attack on Israeli airplane at Riem airport
11.02.1970	Meeting between Scheel and Bouteflika in Brussels
22.02.1970	Meeting between a West German diplomat and Issam Sartawi, head of the AOLP, in Amman
23./24.02.1970	Meetings between West German and Algerian delegation in Rome
17.04.1970	Brandt and Scheel decide to put negotiations with Algiers about the re-establishment of diplomatic relations on hold
20.05.1970	Establishment of diplomatic relations between the GDR and Algeria
06.09.1970	Start of Dawson's Field Hijackings
16.-27.09.1970	Main phase of Jordanian Civil War
29.09.1970	West German cabinet votes to significantly increase oil reserves over a five-year period

Appendix C

1970	
27.10.1970	Publication of the Davignon report
19.11.1970	Inauguration of the EPC by the foreign ministers of the Six at Munich
07.12.1970	Treaty of Warsaw between West Germany and Poland
1971	
14.02.1971	Tehran agreement signed, signaling a shift of power in global oil markets to producer countries
20.10.1971	Willy Brandt receives the Nobel Peace Prize
17.12.1971	Transit Agreement between FRG and GDR
21.12.1971	Re-establishment of diplomatic relations between FRG and Algeria
23.12.1971	Re-establishment of diplomatic relations between FRG and Sudan
1972	
12.03.1972	Arab League decision to allow every member state individually to decide on the establishment of diplomatic relations with the FRG; effective revocation of the 1965 ban on diplomatic relations between Arab states and West Germany

Appendix C

1972	
30.03.1972	Re-establishment of diplomatic relations between FRG and Lebanon
16.05.1972	Re-establishment of diplomatic relations between FRG and Oman
17.05.1972	Establishment of diplomatic relations between FRG and Kuwait, Bahrain as well as the UAE
07.06.1972	Re-establishment of diplomatic relations between FRG and Egypt
19.07.1972	Expulsion of Soviet military advisors from Egypt
08.08.1972	West German 'oil policy' formulated by <i>Auswärtiges Amt</i> and economics ministry
05.09.1972	Hostage crisis around Munich Olympics
19.11.1972	General Election in West Germany; electoral victory for the social-liberal coalition and public affirmation of <i>Ostpolitik</i>
21.-22.12.1972	State Secretary Frank in Tunisia and Libya to discuss Palestinian terrorism with Bourguiba and Ghaddafi

Appendix C

1973	
01.01.1973	Denmark, Ireland and the UK join the EEC, turning the Six into the Nine.
20.-22.05.1973	Scheel in Egypt
22.-24.05.1973	Scheel in Jordan
24.-25.05.1973	Scheel in Lebanon
07.-11.06.1973	Brandt first German head of government to visit Israel
23.08.1973	Brandt letter on the situation in the Middle East to UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim
21.09.1973	Re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the FRG and Saudi Arabia
06.-24.10.1973	October War between Egypt, Syria and Israel
16.10.1973	US ambassador Hillenbrandt informs Scheel about airlift of US weapons and material to Israel
17.10.1973	OPEC countries cut production by 5% overnight; start of the oil crisis
23.10.1973	State Secretary Frank requests from Hillenbrandt that the US no longer use bases in West Germany for airlift to Israel

Appendix C

1973	
24.10.1973	West German newspapers report use of West German bases by US for airlift to Israel
06.11.1973	Brussels Declaration by the foreign ministers of the Nine on the situation in the Middle East; acknowledgment of “legitimate rights of the Palestinians”
14./15.12.1973	EEC summit in Copenhagen
1974	
11.02.1974	Start of the Washington Energy Conference
26.02.1974	Re-establishment of diplomatic relations between FRG and Iraq
19.-21.04.1974	Official visit of Brandt in Algiers
21.-24.04.1974	Official visit of Brandt in Egypt; taken together, the two visits represent the first time that a German chancellor travelled in official capacity to an Arab country.
31.07.1974	Inauguration of the EAD at a meeting between EEC and LAS representatives in Paris
15.11.1974	International Energy Agency (IEA) established in Paris

Appendix C

1974	
22.11.1974	The UN General Assembly adopts resolution 3236 acknowledging the legitimate rights of the Palestinians in a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, as well as resolution 3237 granting the PLO observer status at the UN
13.12.1974	Meeting of former West German foreign minister Gerhard Schröder (CDU) with Yasser Arafat in Cairo
1975	
13.02.1975	The Nine agree on the Dublin Formula regarding the participation of individual Palestinian delegates at the EAD
April 1975	Escalation of violence in Lebanon; Ayn al Rummaneh bus massacre marks beginning of civil war
16.-19.12.1975	Conference on International Economic Cooperation in Paris
1976	
May 1976	Establishment of PLO information office in Bonn
29.-31.05.1976	Schmidt first chancellor to visit Saudi-Arabia

Appendix C

1977	
03.10.1976	General election in Germany; despite losses for the SPD the social-liberal coalition is confirmed in office
04.07.1977	London Declaration by the Nine, mentioning for the first time a “Palestinian national identity”
05.09.1977	Kidnapping of Hans-Martin Schleyer by RAF
13.-18.10.1977	Hijacking of Lufthansa airplane <i>Landshut</i> by PFLP-GC, ending in a successful raid of the airplane in Mogadishu by German special police forces
19.11.1977	Visit by Anwar al-Sadat to Israel
24.11.1977	Secret meeting of Wischnewski with Hassan Salameh and Issam Sartawi in Vienna
1978	
07.01.1978	First anti-government protests starting in Iran
17.09.1978	Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel
November 1978	Strikes bring Iranian oil production to a halt; beginning of Second Oil Crisis

Appendix C

1979	
16.01.1979	Shah leaves Iran
26.03.1979	Separate Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty
18.-20.06.1979	Genscher in Libya
23.-24.06.1979	Genscher in Saudi-Arabia
04.-06.07.1979	Genscher in Iraq
1979	
26.-28.08.1979	Genscher in Syria
28.08.1979	Genscher in Lebanon
28.-31.08.1979	Genscher in Jordan
31.08.-02.09.1979	Genscher in Egypt
20.11.-04.12.1979	Siege of Mecca
1980	
13.06.1980	EEC summit in Venice; declaration stressing the need to involve the PLO in negotiations about a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict