

A Changing Paradigm: The American Right, Left, and Israel

Dani Lefkowitz
Senior Thesis in History
Thesis Advisor: Professor Robert McCaughey
Barnard College, Columbia University
April 17, 2019

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Acronyms	4
Introduction	5
Chapter I: From Truman to Reagan: a “Special Relationship”	9
Chapter II: “To Stand Against Israel is to Stand Against God”	24
Chapter III: Israel as a “Strategic Asset”	41
Chapter IV: Democrats and Israel: Increasing “Daylight”	55
Conclusion	75
Bibliography	80

Acknowledgments

It's hard to believe that this chapter in my academic life has come to an end. This thesis has been a year in the making, and has been shaped by my conversations with many people I would like to thank.

First, thank you to my advisor Professor McCaughey. Thank you for encouraging me to take on this topic, despite how controversial it seemed initially. Thank you for trusting my instincts and writerly decisions, and for pushing me to think critically and broadly. Your feedback and advice have guided me, and I am so grateful to have been one of your “hearties.”

Thank you to the many individuals who gave generously of their valuable time to speak with me about their experiences and impressions: Elliott Abrams, Peter Wehner, Gary Bauer, Peter Beinart, Congressman Lee Zeldin, and Professor Alan Dershowitz. Thank you for trusting me with your words. I could not have written this thesis without your accounts, and I feel so fortunate that I was able to learn from each of you.

Thank you to my parents for always nourishing my academic pursuits, encouraging me to follow in their footsteps as a history major, and being fantastic editors and therapists throughout this process. A special thanks to my dad, for helping me choose this topic, and for the countless conversations and debates we have shared over the past year. I truly could not have done this without you.

Thank you to my friends and siblings, who patiently listened to me rant about my thesis over the past year. And finally, thank you to all those who challenged me and to those who supported me; it was through these conversations that I learned the most.

List of Acronyms

U.S.	United States
W.H.	White House
FDR	Franklin Delano Roosevelt
JFK	John F. Kennedy
LBJ	Lyndon B. Johnson
GOP	Grand Old Party
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)
PM	Prime Minister
UN	United Nations
CUFI	Christians United for Israel
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
JPMG	Joint Political Military Group
NSD	National Security Directive
SDI	Strategic Defense Initiative
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPD	Committee on Present Danger
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
BDS	Boycott, Divest, and Sanctions
AIPAC	The American Israel Public Affairs Committee
SDS	Students for a Democratic Society
EU	European Union

Introduction

“Israel is not a partisan issue, but it is becoming one.” – Alan Dershowitz, 2019.¹

“The parties are diverging – because debates about Israel are increasingly proxies for debates about America” – Peter Beinart, 2019.²

During its first 30 years of statehood, Israel enjoyed broad bipartisan support in the United States.³ Today, support for Israel is becoming increasingly politicized along partisan lines with right-wing Republicans turning support for Israel into a catechism and left-wing Democrats growing increasingly critical of Israel.⁴ These results, which mark a historically unprecedented gap with respect to views about Israel in America, are a reversal of both parties’ traditional stances. Beginning with President Truman’s recognition of the State of Israel in 1948 (overriding the advice of his State Department), and continuing until the late 1970s, the Democratic Party was more reliably pro-Israel than the Republican Party. During this period, the Republican party was measured in its embrace of Israel and more concerned with promoting the United States’ relationships with the oil-rich Arab nations, some of whom pledged to destroy Israel. This thesis will trace the shifting attitudes toward Israel within the two major American political parties and offer insights into how and why the Republican party has emerged in the second decade of the

¹ Private Interview with Alan Dershowitz, February 24, 2019.

² Peter Beinart in a lecture at Boston University, April 11, 2019.

³ See: Amnon Cavari, “Six Decades of Public Affection: Trends in American Public Attitudes Toward Israel.” In Robert Freedman (ed.), *Israel and the United States: Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2012), 100-123; Eytan Gilboa, *American public opinion toward Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict*. (Lexington, KY: Lexington Books, 1987).

⁴ Gallup’s latest survey, published on March 6, 2019, reports that sympathy for Israel is down from 64% in 2018 to 59%, marking its lowest percentage favoring Israel since 2009. Meanwhile, the 21% of Americans sympathizing more with Palestinians is the highest by one point in Gallup’s trend since 2001. When assessing sympathy for Israel by party ID, it recorded Republican support for Israel at 76% (they supported Israel at a high of 87% in 2018), and Democratic support for Israel at 43%, which approaches the lowest level of Democratic support for Israel since 2005. The pollsters further report that among liberal Democrats, the net sympathy for Israel has declined from +17 in 2013-2016 to +3 in 2017-2019, indicating that nearly as many liberal Democrats now sympathize more with the Palestinians (38%) as they do with Israelis (41%). Lydia Saad, “Americans, but Not Liberal Democrats, Mostly Pro-Israel,” *Gallup*, March 6, 2019.

21st Century as a staunch supporter of Israel, while the Democratic party has grown increasingly, and sometimes even sharply, critical of Israel.

This analysis is organized according to four historical developments that I believe have contributed most significantly to this political shift. Chapter I (From Truman to Reagan: a “Special Relationship”) traces the history of Democratic and Republican presidential approaches to Israel from 1948 to 1979. This chapter concludes that support for Israel was largely bipartisan, yet Democratic presidents tended to be more supportive of Israel in both their rhetoric and policies than their Republican counterparts. Chapter II (“To Stand Against Israel is to Stand Against God”) examines the rise of evangelical Christian political action in America and explores how their support for Israel has transformed the Republican base. Chapter III (Israel as a “Strategic Asset”) analyzes how Ronald Reagan’s perception of Israel as a “strategic partner” shifted support for Israel from a moral imperative into a bona fide foreign policy objective and transformed Republican foreign policy regarding Israel. Chapter IV (Democrats and Israel: Increasing “Daylight”) traces the Democratic party’s increasing criticism of and distancing from Israel during the same period of time in which Republican voters and party leaders were becoming ever more supportive of Israel. This chapter concludes that the Democratic party’s growing criticism of Israel stems from the American Left’s growing sympathy for the Palestinians and increased criticism of Israel’s right-wing leadership.

Because this history is evolving and contemporary events are developing in the historical record, this thesis draws from private interviews conducted over the past year with:

- Elliott Abrams, a senior fellow for Middle Eastern studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, who served under Presidents Reagan, George W. Bush, and Trump as a senior foreign policy advisor.
- Peter Wehner, a former speechwriter for President Reagan and a current Senior Fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

- Gary Bauer, a former domestic policy advisor for President Reagan and a Christian evangelical, who now heads the advocacy organization American Values.
- Peter Beinart, an author, journalist, and liberal supporter of Israel who has been critical of Israel's policies in his writing. He is an associate professor of journalism and political science at CUNY.
- Alan Dershowitz, a prominent lawyer and advocate for Israel. He is a retired Harvard Law School professor who served as an informal advisor to President Obama.⁵

This thesis also draws frequently from the writings of Dennis Ross, who worked for several presidents (of both parties) during his expansive career in the State Department,⁶ and ambassador Michael Oren, who served as Israeli ambassador to the U.S. during the Obama and Netanyahu administrations. Importantly, this thesis does not aspire to be a comprehensive account of all the voices in this narrative; if it were, a series of additional interviews of more critically disposed liberals would have been in order. I sought to include the perspectives of several individuals who were active participants in this history, and my interviews were, by necessity, limited to those individuals to whom I had access. Finally, while many of my ideas are informed by my interviewees' interpretations of the events and their personal anecdotes, the conclusions and arguments in this thesis are entirely my own.

This thesis takes on new urgency given the current political climate. As I was researching and writing, significant events in the U.S.-Israel relationship took place, including President

⁵ Although not quoted in this thesis, I also interviewed Congressman Lee Zeldin and Robert Nicholson. Zeldin is currently serving as the U.S. Representative for New York's 1st congressional district since 2015 and previously served as the New York State Senator from the 3rd district from 2011-2014. Nicholson is the founder and director of the *Philos Project*, a nonprofit organization that seeks to promote Christian engagement in the Middle East.

⁶ During Carter's administration, Dennis Ross worked under Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, in the Pentagon. Under Reagan, Ross served as director of Near East and South Asian affairs in the National Security Council. Under George H. W. Bush, Ross served as director of the U.S. State Department's Policy Planning Staff. In the summer of 1993, President Bill Clinton named Ross Middle East envoy; in this position, he helped the Israelis and Palestinians reach the 1995 Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and brokered the Protocol Concerning Redeployment in Hebron in 1997. He also facilitated the Israel-Jordan peace treaty and worked on talks between Israel and Syria. During the Obama years, Ross was appointed Special Advisor for the Persian Gulf and Southwest Asia to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2009. On June 25, 2009, Ross left the State Department and joined the National Security Council staff as a Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for the Central Region.

Trump's decision to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem and his recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. This year also witnessed the historic election of two Muslim-American congresswomen, whose Twitter posts and other public statements have instigated a national conversation about anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism.⁷ And just last week, Israelis elected Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of the right-wing Likud Party in Israel, to an unprecedented fifth term as Prime Minister.⁸ There is no question that Israel is a hot-button issue in American politics that is becoming increasingly politically divisive. This thesis will analyze the political history that led to this current reality.

⁷ See: Sheryl Gay Stolberg, "Ilhan Omar Apologizes for Statements Condemned as Anti-Semitic," *The New York Times*, February 11, 2019; Melanie Sanona and Heather Caygle, "Ilhan Omar apologies after Pelosi denounces tweet as anti-Semitic," *Politico*, February 11, 2019; Tom Williams, "Rep. Ilhan Omar blasted again for what critics call anti-Semitism," *NBC News*, February 13, 2019, etc. Following the controversy that erupted after Rep. Omar's tweets, many members of Congress mobilized in an effort to combat anti-Semitism. The 116th House of Representatives, which is controlled by Democrats, approved a resolution condemning anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim discrimination and other forms of bigotry by a 407-23 vote, just a week after Omar's tweets. Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) also introduced a resolution declaring that "anti-Semitism has for hundreds of years included attacks on the loyalty of Jews." And Senators Tim Scott (R-SC) and Bob Casey (D-PA) reintroduced a bipartisan bill they had initially sponsored in 2016, called the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act, to use resources in the Education Department's Civil Rights Division to combat antisemitism on college campuses.

⁸ The April 9, 2019 Israeli election resulted in a tie between Netanyahu's Likud party and Benny Gantz "Blue and White" coalition. On April 10, Benny Gantz conceded the race, realizing that Netanyahu's Likud bloc has a strong numerical advantage and will likely be able to form a governing coalition. "Israel Election Live Updates: As Gantz Concedes, Netanyahu Set for Victory," *The New York Times*, April 10, 2019. While Netanyahu is poised to win, he will not officially be confirmed as Prime Minister until he finalizes his coalition and is approved by President Rivlin. After Netanyahu's coalition is finalized, the most immediate issue will be Netanyahu's looming indictment. Netanyahu is expected to try to build support for a proposed law that would immunize him from prosecution while in office; if that fails, and the indictment proceeds this summer as is expected, his coalition could fracture under the pressure – leading to a new Likud prime minister or potentially new elections. Zack Beauchamp, "Benjamin Netanyahu won Israel's Election. Here's what comes next," *Vox*, April 10, 2019.

Chapter I: From Truman to Reagan: a “Special Relationship”

“The United States has a special relationship with Israel in the Middle East, really comparable only to that which it has with Britain over a wide range of world affairs.” John F. Kennedy, 1962.⁹

“There is no question that the Democratic party was more supportive of Israel. Jews were Democrats and the Republican party was not the party of Jews, and not supportive of Israel.” Elliott Abrams, 2019.¹⁰

From the 1940s until the late 1970s, almost every president, Republican or Democrat, paid lip service to America’s “special relationship” with Israel. While support for Israel was bipartisan during these decades, the presidents during this period approached Israel differently. By examining each President’s policies, rhetoric, and arms deals to Israel, this chapter will demonstrate that prior to Reagan’s Inauguration in 1981, Democratic presidents were generally perceived as more pro-Israel, while Republican presidents were seen as more supportive of Arab oil interests. This chapter helps to explain how President Reagan’s approach to Israel (which will be expounded upon in Chapter III) not only diverged from that of his Republican and Democratic predecessors, but also how the Reagan Administration’s relationship with Israel launched a pro-Israel shift in the Republican Party that has continued to grow stronger over the last 38 years, even as the Democratic Party’s relationship with Israel has grown more strained.

Truman: Forming a Jewish-Democratic Base

When Harry Truman was thrust into the role of President in 1945 upon the passing of Franklin D. Roosevelt, he inherited a party that had become home to most American Jews. Despite what we now know about FDR’s tepid efforts to help rescue European Jewry during the

⁹ John F. Kennedy said this to Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir in 1962, when he hosted her at his family home in Palm Beach. Camille Mansour, *Beyond Alliance: Israel and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 82.

¹⁰ Private Interview with Elliot Abrams, conducted on January 7, 2019.

Holocaust,¹¹ he remained enormously popular during his political tenure with American Jews. In both his third and fourth election campaigns for President, in 1940 and 1944, FDR won 90 percent of the Jewish vote against Republicans Wendell Willkie and Thomas Dewey. FDR was also seen as personally friendly to the Jews, appointing many Jews as trusted advisers,¹² including his speechwriter Samuel Rosenman, Felix Frankfurter, whom he appointed to the Supreme Court, and Treasury Secretary Hans Morgenthau. Some anti-Semites privately called him President Franklin “Rosenfeld,” the head of the “Jew Deal,” due to his close ties.¹³ American Jews revered FDR because he helped them feel like they belonged in America at a time where Jews were being persecuted in Europe. According to historian Gil Troy, “the New Deal helped this generation of American Jews achieve what they never achieved in Eastern Europe: a mixture of acceptance and respectability.”¹⁴

FDR therefore left his predecessor, Harry Truman, with a staunch Jewish coalition. When President Truman immediately recognized the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, only twelve minutes after David Ben Gurion declared the existence of the new nation,¹⁵ he cemented FDR’s Democratic-Jewish alliance. Truman recognized Israel against the counsel of his advisers and his Secretaries of State and Defense, who believed that explicit support for Israel would be detrimental to America’s strategic and political interests in the oil-rich region. Secretary of State

¹¹ Michael J. Neufeld and Michael Berenbaum, *The Bombing of Auschwitz: Should the Allies Have Attempted It?* (KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000); David A. Wyman, “Why Auschwitz Was Never Bombed,” *Commentary* 65 (May, 1978): 37-46; Dino A. Brugioni and Robert G. Poirier, *The Holocaust Revisited: A Retrospective Analysis of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Extermination Complex*, CIA Report 79-10001 (1979); Joseph Robert White, “Target Auschwitz: Historical and Hypothetical Responses to Allied Attack,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 54-76., etc.

¹² Some historians have estimated that up to 15 percent of FDR’s appointees were Jewish. Gil Troy, “The Jewish Vote: Political Power and Identity in U.S. Elections,” *Ruderman Family Foundation* (Sep., 2016): 12.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Gene Currivan, “Zionists Proclaim New State of Israel; Truman Recognizes it and Hopes for Peace,” *New York Times*, May 14, 1948.

George Marshall was so incensed about Truman's decision that he notified the President that he would vote against Truman in the upcoming presidential election later that year.¹⁶ In opposing Truman on this matter, Marshall was amplifying the State Department's long-standing approach to Israel, a view expressed clearly by Dean Acheson, another of Truman's closest advisers, who warned that the recognition of the State of Israel would "imperil . . . all Western interests in the Far East."¹⁷ This view persists to this day in some foreign policy circles, and it has led many American presidents to try to avoid being perceived as *too* close to Israel.

Many historians suggest that Truman voted as he did for political purposes. After all, they contend, 1948 was an election year and Truman was running a close-race against Thomas Dewey. And Truman was well aware of the potential benefit of winning the Jewish vote;¹⁸ in November, 1947, Truman's aide Clark Clifford wrote in a memo to Truman that no president could win the presidency without New York's 47 Electoral votes, and later suggested that the Jewish vote was "largely centered in New York City, normally Democratic and, if large enough . . . sufficient to counteract the upstate vote and deliver the state to Truman"¹⁹

Clifford's memoirs cite other leading items on Truman's agenda in 1948 that shaped his decision to recognize the Jewish state. First, Truman was guided by humanitarian concerns for

¹⁶ "If the president were to follow Mr. Clifford's advice and if in the election I were to vote, I would vote against the President," remarked Marshall in a cabinet meeting. Clark Clifford, *Counsel of the President: A Memoir*, (NY: Random House, 1991), 12-23.

¹⁷ Dennis Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, (NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), 21; Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, (NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969), 196. In a similar vein, Truman's Secretary of Defense James Forrestal reasoned, "[t]here are four hundred thousand Jews and forty million Arabs. Forty million Arabs are going to push four hundred thousand Jews into the sea. And that's all there is to it. Oil – that is the side we ought to be on." Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men*, (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1986), 452.

¹⁸ The election of 1948 is considered by most historians as the greatest election upset in American history. Virtually every prediction indicated that Truman would be defeated by Thomas Dewey. Truman won, overcoming a three-way split in his own party. Truman's 70% of the Jewish vote surely helped him. "U.S. Presidential Elections: Jewish Voting Record," Accessed January 08, 2019. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-voting-record-in-u-s-presidential-elections>; L. Sandy Maisel and Ira Forman, Eds. *Jews in American Politics* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 153.

¹⁹ Gil Troy, "The Jewish Vote: Political Power and Identity in U.S. Elections," 13.

the millions of refugees in Europe after the Second World War and the Holocaust. Shortly before he died, Roosevelt sent then-General Eisenhower to tour the concentration camps in mid-April 1945. Shocked by what he saw, Eisenhower invited leading members of the American media to report on the horrific reality. The most famous of these reports was authored by Earl G. Harrison, who wrote, referring to American immigration and displaced persons policy: “[a]s matters now stand, we appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazis treated them except that we do not exterminate them.”²⁰ Harrison recommended that 100,000 Jewish displaced persons be permitted to go to Palestine, concluding that “the civilized world owes it to this handful of survivors to provide them with a home where they can settle down and begin to live as human beings.”²¹ Harrison’s report had a profound impact on President Truman, who regarded the roughly one and a half million displaced persons, a quarter of a million of whom were Jewish, as a new American responsibility, because Americans now wielded control over the camps.²² In 1945 he declared that he would not “stand idly by while the victims of Hitler’s madness were not allowed to build new lives,” and asserted, “the Jews [need] someplace where they could go.”²³ Once president, Truman sent a copy of the Harrison Report to the British Prime Minister asking him to lift the quota limiting Jewish immigration into Palestine and to permit 100,000 refugees to enter.²⁴

Truman was also guided by Cold War concerns and a desire to weaken Arab power in the region. Truman therefore hoped to cement American support for Israel before the USSR could

²⁰ Harrison to Truman, n.d., 1945, in David Niles Papers, box 29, Harry S Truman Presidential Library; Memoirs of Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs: Years of Trial and Hope*, 1946-1952, vol. 2, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1956), 137.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 8.

²³ Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 438.

²⁴ Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, 142; When PM Atlee refused Truman’s request, Secretary of State James Byrnes sent a letter to the British ambassador indicating that Truman was not walking away from this request. “The Secretary of State to the British Ambassador (Halifax),” October 24, 1945, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-inx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS1945v08.p.0797&id=FRUS.FRUS1945v08>.

capitalize on another Middle Eastern nation. And he listened to Clifford, who advised him that appealing to the Arabs would harm America's larger interests, by questioning, "why should Russia or Yugoslavia, or any other nation treat us with anything but contempt in light of our shillyshallying appeasement of the Arabs?"²⁵

Despite the instrumental role that Truman played in the creation of the State of Israel, his relationship with Israel was not uniformly supportive. In fact, shortly after Israel declared its independence and the neighboring Arab nations invaded Israel, Truman imposed an arms embargo on Israel, which led Israel to seek arms from Czechoslovakia and even the Soviet Union.²⁶ Yet, despite his actual policies, Truman presented himself as Israel's guardian; most notably, in November 1953, when he was introduced to a Jewish delegation as the "leader who helped create the State of Israel," Truman interjected, "what do you mean, 'helped create?' I am Cyrus, I am Cyrus."²⁷

Truman's presidency is an appropriate starting point for understanding the Democratic Party's traditional perception of Israel. Due to humanitarian and political motivations, Truman supported the idea of the State of Israel in earnest; yet, cognizant of his State Department's concerns, his policies toward Israel were less resolute. Truman's approach toward Israel was repudiated by his Republican successor, Eisenhower, but then continued by the succeeding Democratic presidents, Kennedy and Johnson. Moreover, the debate over Israel within Truman's

²⁵ "Memorandum by the President's Special Counsel (Clifford) to President Truman, March 8, 1948, *FRUS* 5, part 2, no. 77, 690-96, history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v05p2/d77.

²⁶ Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 25.

²⁷ In this quote he was referring to Cyrus II ("the Great"), the Persian king who overthrew the Babylonian empire in 539 B.C. and subsidized the return to Jerusalem of the Jewish population that had been captive in Babylon for 70 years. Throughout the two and a half millennia that followed, Cyrus served as the symbol, to both readers of the Old and New Testament, of the righteous gentile ruler who would make possible the ultimate return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel. Michael Oren, *Power, Faith and Fantasy*, (London: Norton & Company, 2007), 501.

inner circle demonstrates the conflicting views about the U.S.-Israeli relationship that have dominated the U.S.' approach to Israel to this day.

Eisenhower: "Woo the Arab Goodwill"

Eisenhower came into office with a different understanding of Israel from that of his predecessor – one that would shape Republican policy on Israel. Knowing that American Jews mainly voted Democratic, Eisenhower treated Israel coolly from the onset, explaining to his Secretary of State John Dulles, “we conduct our policy as if there were not one Jew in the country. They don’t vote for us anyway.”²⁸ Eisenhower’s view was not guided by humanitarian interests, but instead by his preoccupation with countering the Soviet Union. And in this pursuit, Eisenhower considered the Arabs States, and particularly Egypt, to be more critical allies than Israel.

Dulles was not subtle about Eisenhower’s preference for the Arabs; he assured Egyptian President Nasser that domestic considerations would not limit the assistance the U.S. provided his country because “the Republican Administration does not owe the same degree of political debt as did the Democrats to Jewish groups.”²⁹ In October 1953, Eisenhower suspended assistance to Israel when the Arabs complained that Israel was trying to develop hydroelectric power by diverting water from the Jordan River. In doing so, Eisenhower made clear the U.S. would not hesitate to reprimand Israel in pursuit of its partnerships with Arab countries.³⁰ Eisenhower’s tilt away from Israel was most pronounced in his approach to the Suez Crisis, which was precipitated in early 1956 when Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal and blocked the

²⁸ Jerome Chanes, "For Israel, A Foreign Policy Camelot," *The Jewish Week*, November 11, 2013. <http://www.thejewishweek.com/news/national-news/israel-foreign-policy-camelot>.

²⁹ “Memorandum of Conversation, Prepared in the Embassy in Cairo,” May 12, 1952, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, The Near and Middle East, Volume IX, Part 1.

³⁰ Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 29.

straights of Tiran from Israeli shipping traffic. Two of the U.S.' most important allies – Great Britain and France – reacted sharply to Nasser's provocation, joining Israel in condemning the Egyptian action, and assisting Israel in its military action against Egypt. Nevertheless, because of his concern that the Soviets might come to Nasser's aid, Eisenhower pressured the parties to accept a UN ceasefire and then led the U.S. in joining a UN resolution condemning the invasion.

Eisenhower's approach toward Israel thus diverged sharply from Truman's. He looked at Israel not through the prism of the Holocaust but rather through the hard-headed world of geopolitics. Eisenhower articulated his approach to Dulles, writing that if the U.S. were to side with Israel, "in such an event the only hope of the Arab countries would be found in a firm association with the Soviet Union. Should this occur, it would spell the failure of the Eisenhower Doctrine."³¹ Eisenhower thus decided it was in the U.S.' interest to "woo the Arab goodwill."³²

Kennedy and Johnson: Maintaining the "Democratic Tradition"

Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson attempted to restore Truman's legacy on Israel, both describing themselves, in pointed contrast with Eisenhower, as true friends of Israel. Like Truman, Kennedy's support of Israel was motivated by humanitarian concerns. He had visited Palestine in 1939 and the new state of Israel in 1951, and in his 1960 campaign speech, he affirmed that he "left [Israel] with the conviction that the United Nations may have conferred on Israel the credentials of nationhood; but its own idealism and courage, its own sacrifice and generosity, had earned the credentials of immortality." And while he insisted that

³¹ Dwight Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, (NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 185; Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 37.

³² Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 46. In February 1953, Governor Theodore McKeldin of Maryland and Judge Simon Sobeloff met Eisenhower at the White House. When they conveyed to Eisenhower the prevailing anxiety among American Jewry that Israel might be "sold down the river" to placate the Arab world, Eisenhower assured them not to worry about that. But, he did say "[the Israelis] can't expect the U.S. to bail them out," and that Israel should attempt to "woo the Arab goodwill" by "sell[ing] to their neighbors." Zvi Ganin, *An Uneasy Relationship: American Jewish Leadership and Israel, 1948-1957*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 184-185.

“friendship for Israel is not a partisan matter. It is a national commitment,”³³ he stressed the Democrats’ “special obligation” to Israel. Remembering the support for Zionism offered by Presidents Wilson, Roosevelt, and Truman, Kennedy “pledge[d] to continue this Democratic tradition – and to be worthy of it.”³⁴

As it had been with Truman, the importance of the Jewish vote was a key consideration for Kennedy. He was aware that the Jewish vote had been crucial in his election victory.³⁵ In a 1960 statement to the Zionist Organization of America, Kennedy acknowledged “I was elected by the Jews of New York. I have to do something for them. I will do something for you”³⁶

Kennedy admired and supported Israel but he also recognized the importance of developing relationships with the Arab states. And he, too, was concerned about appearing too pro-Israel.³⁷ Thus, when Ben-Gurion’s successor, Levi Eshkol, wrote to Kennedy asking the U.S. to pledge to come to Israel’s defense as it had with its NATO allies, Kennedy wrote back that “a bilateral security relationship [such as the one suggested] would, I fear, have a distinct contrary effect”³⁸ and therefore informal arrangements would have to suffice. The correspondence between Eshkol and Kennedy demonstrates that while the President had a “constant and special . . . concern for the security and independence of Israel,”³⁹ he would not dismiss entirely the

³³ John F. Kennedy, “Speech by Senator John F. Kennedy, Zionists of America Convention, Statler Hilton Hotel, New York, NY.” Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, August 26, 1960. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=74217>.

³⁴ Ibid; Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 71.

³⁵ The electoral vote in this election was the closest in any presidential election since 1916. In the popular vote, Kennedy’s margin of victory was among the closest in American history (winning 34,227,096 votes to Nixon’s 34,107,646 votes). Kennedy won 82 percent of Jewish vote; “1960 Presidential Election.” Split Electoral Votes in Maine and Nebraska. Accessed January 08, 2019. https://www.270towin.com/1960_Election/.

³⁶ “Z.O.A. Convention Opens; Kennedy Lauds Experience of Zionism,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, June 29, 1962.

³⁷ Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 75; Bass, *Support Any Friend*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2003), 122.

³⁸ JFK letter to Eshkol, October 2, 1963, MH 3377/10, Israel State Archives, Jerusalem, as quoted in Bass, *Support Any Friend*, 236.

³⁹ Ibid.

arguments from his State Department that siding with Israel risked America's influence with the Arabs.

Following Kennedy's assassination, President Johnson sought to continue Kennedy's Israel policy. Shortly after becoming president, Johnson told Israeli diplomats, "[y]ou have lost a very great friend, but you have found a better one."⁴⁰ Johnson also had a personal affection for Israel, which he regarded as a frontier state not unlike his home state of Texas. Johnson's aide John Roche recalled that the president once told him, "I look at the Israelis as Texas, and Nasser as Santa Ana."⁴¹ Johnson was not only loyal to the American Jews in his own party, but he was also fond of the Israelis. Johnson quickly befriended Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol, remarking at a conversation in the White House: "I like Eshkol – I got along with him fine."⁴² And when he welcomed Eshkol for a state visit in June 1964, he assured the prime minister: "the United States is foursquare behind Israel on all matters that affect their vital security interests."⁴³

While he pledged support for Israel, Johnson was constrained by domestic pressures⁴⁴ and the Vietnam War, and was never able to link his grand strategic vision he pledged to Eshkol with actual policies. Despite Kennedy and Johnson's shortcomings, both presidents began America's first major arms sales to Israel, which transformed the relationship. In 1962, Kennedy began formal American arms sales to Israel, including the first sale of defensive anti-missile systems.⁴⁵ Johnson continued Kennedy's lead by increasing arms sales to Israel. In 1968, after Israel's primary arms supplier, France, imposed an embargo on Israel as a means of cultivating

⁴⁰ Troy, "The Jewish Vote: Political Power and Identity in U.S. Elections," 18.

⁴¹ Robert David Johnson, "Lyndon Johnson and Israel: The Secret Presidential Recordings," *The S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies*, (Jul., 2008): 17.

⁴² *Ibid*, 14.

⁴³ Michael Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Presidio Press, 2002), 26, 50.

⁴⁴ Such as the collapse of the Democratic base, the rising countercultural riots, urban unrest, draft dodgers, etc.

⁴⁵ David Rodman, "Phantom Fracas: The 1968 American Sale of F-4 Aircraft to Israel," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, No. 6 (Nov., 2004): 130-144.

ties with the Arab world, the U.S. became Israel's main supplier of weapons. And in Johnson's final year in office, he authorized the sale of 50 F-4 Phantom jets to Israel, the largest arms deal to that point in Israeli history.⁴⁶

Nixon: Master of Realpolitik

Richard Nixon's approach to Israel established a more nuanced Republican position toward Israel. As Vice President during the Suez crisis of 1956, Nixon had experienced the political outrage from Jewish groups over the years when he was delegated to explain to them Eisenhower's policies, which they perceived as anti-Israel. As a result, Nixon assumed his presidency informed about the intricacies of the Middle East and with a desire to create his own policy, unencumbered by the political influence of Israel's supporters in America. Henry Kissinger, Nixon's Secretary of State, observed that Nixon "considered himself less obligated to the Jewish constituency than any of his predecessors had been and was eager to demonstrate that he was impervious to its pressures."⁴⁷

While Nixon had no interest in appeasing the "Jewish lobby," writing in a memo to Kissinger, "we cannot let the American Jews dictate policy,"⁴⁸⁴⁹ he was also aware that Eisenhower's approach of "woo[ing] the Arabs" was not a productive response and that the Republican position had to be amended. Because Nixon viewed U.S. foreign policy within a Cold War context, he viewed peace efforts in the Middle East as a means of preventing war with the Soviets and advancing American interests. Nixon explained this attitude at a press conference

⁴⁶ Ibid; Mitchell Bard, "The 1968 Sale of Phantom Jets to Israel," accessed January 16, 2019, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/phantom.html>.

⁴⁷ Donald Neff, "Nixon's Middle East Policy: From Balance to Bias," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 1/2, Winter/Spring 1990, 122; Kissinger, *White House Years*, (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1979), 559-64; Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Filmways, 1978), 481.

⁴⁸ Seymour M. Hersh, *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House* (New York: Summit Books, 1983), 214.

⁴⁹ Kissinger also records in his memoirs that Nixon "delighted in telling associates and visitors that the 'Jewish lobby' had no effect on him." Kissinger, *White House Years*, 564.

on January 27, 1969: “I believe we need new initiatives in order to cool off the situation in the Mideast. The next explosion in the Mideast, I think, could involve very well a confrontation between the nuclear powers, which we want to avoid.”⁵⁰

Nixon also hoped to improve what he perceived as America’s damaged position with the Arabs. Nixon entered office shortly after Israel’s success in the Six-Day War, a war which he regarded as a loss for the U.S. and a gain for the Soviets.⁵¹ As he explained to Kissinger, “we have been gloating over Soviet ‘defeats’ in the Mideast since ’67 – & State et al said the June war was a ‘defeat’ for Soviets. It was *not*. They became the Arabs’ friend and the U.S. their enemy.”⁵² In his eyes, the U.S. had to improve its position with the Arabs, which meant reaching out to those who had broken relations with Israel – especially Egypt and Syria.

Nixon, like Eisenhower, believed that Israel’s policies had created problems for the U.S. in the region. Unlike Eisenhower, he understood that as part of the U.S.’ strategy in the Cold War, it benefitted the U.S. to support Israel. He explained this to Kissinger in 1970, “Our interests are basically pro-freedom . . . we are *for* Israel because Israel . . . is the only state in the Mideast which is *pro*-freedom and an effective opponent to Soviet expansion.”⁵³ Nixon’s instincts thus led him in two different directions: he distanced America from Israel, which meant withholding arms from Israel in an effort to reduce the Arabs’ dependence on Soviet aid. He also stated his intentions to stand by Israel when it was threatened, and did so in 1973 during the Yom Kippur War. After the war, however, he reversed his allegiances again, putting pressure on the Israelis due to oil considerations during the energy crisis.

⁵⁰ William B. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions: American Policy toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 82.

⁵¹ Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 141.

⁵² Kissinger, *White House Years*, 564.

⁵³ *Ibid*; 481-2.

Nixon's realpolitik approach was discontinued by President Gerald Ford. Ford had been a staunch supporter of Israel during his career in the House of Representatives, but as President, he held the view that the U.S. needed something in return. "I wanted the Israelis to recognize that there had to be some *quid pro quo*," he wrote in his memoirs, "[i]f we were going to build up their military capabilities, we in turn had to see some flexibility to achieve a fair, secure and permanent peace."⁵⁴ Thus, for example, while trying to negotiate Israel's disengagement from Sinai in 1975, Ford applied great pressure on the Israelis in a letter:

I wish to express my profound disappointment over Israel's attitude in the course of the negotiations . . . failure of the negotiations will have a far-reaching impact on the region and on our relations. I have given instructions for a reassessment of the United States policy in the region, including our relations with Israel with the aim of ensuring that overall American interests . . . are protected. You will be notified of our decision.⁵⁵

Ford, like Eisenhower, believed that America should "woo the Arabs." Accordingly, during his 30 months as president, he made a \$7.5 billion arms sale to the Saudis, sold weapons to Jordan, and concluded the first sale to Egypt of C-130 Hercules transport aircraft.⁵⁶ He also pledged to take up the "Palestinian issue,"⁵⁷ which previous presidents had avoided. William Scranton, Ford's UN ambassador, gave a speech on the topic in 1976, in which he criticized Israel's unilateral measures and referred to the settlements in the occupied territories as "illegal" and "obstacle[s] to the success of the negotiations for a just and final peace between Israel and its neighbors."⁵⁸ Ford's rhetoric and policy marked a retreat from Nixon, and a return to that of Eisenhower. His term demonstrates that prior to Reagan, the Republican party had yet to commit itself as Israel's staunchest defender.

⁵⁴ Gerald Ford, *A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald R. Ford* (New York: Harper, 1979), 245.

⁵⁵ Yitzhak Rabin, *Memoirs*, (LA: University of California Press, 1979), 255.

⁵⁶ Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 140.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ William Scranton, "Statement of March 23," *Department of State Bulletin*, April 19, 1976, 528.

Carter: Seeking Peace, Choosing Sides

Entering the presidential office on the heels of Watergate and the Vietnam War, Jimmy Carter assessed that American politics had become morally corrupt. “For too many years, we’ve been willing to adopt the flawed and erroneous principles and tactics of our adversaries, sometimes abandoning our own values for theirs,” he remarked in 1977, arguing “this approach ha[s] failed, with Vietnam [as] the best example of its intellectual and moral poverty.”⁵⁹ Carter beckoned a new foreign policy approach, rooted in “an historical vision of America’s role, derived from a larger view of global change, [and] rooted in our moral values.”⁶⁰

Carter’s commitment to human rights quickly turned to the Middle East and colored his opinions. Early in his administration he called for a “Palestinian Homeland,” which was the farthest any president had gone in supporting Palestinian nationalism. Carter saw parallels between the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. and the plight of the Palestinians, and he recalled expressing this view to Egyptian President Sadat on one of their walks: “We discussed that my being from the South gave me a sensitivity to the problems of the Middle East. My region had suffered, lived under an occupying power, for generations had been torn apart by racial prejudice, and was resurgent.”⁶¹ Carter viewed the Israelis as occupiers, explaining, “[s]ince I had made our nation’s commitment to human rights a central tenet of our foreign policy, it was impossible for me to ignore the very serious problems on the West Bank. The continued deprivation of Palestinian rights was not only used as the primary lever against Israel, but was contrary to the basic moral and ethical principles of both our countries.”⁶²

⁵⁹ Jimmy Carter, “Commencement Address at Notre Dame University,” May 1977; U.S. Department of State. Accessed January 08, 2019. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/short-history/carter>.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Carter, *White House Diary*, (NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010), 245.

⁶² Carter, *Keeping Faith*, (NY: Bantam Books, 1982), 277.

Carter was earnest in his desire for peace, and some historians have asserted that his approach ultimately was very beneficial to Israel. Indeed, although Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Begin largely negotiated their historic peace agreement bilaterally, there is no question that President Carter's imprimatur was critical to the achievement of the peace treaty. Yet, despite the historic Camp David Accords, the American Jewish community did not view Carter as a friend to Israel. He came under heavy political fire from the Jewish community in 1979 when it was revealed that Carter's UN ambassador, Andrew Young, had arranged secret meetings with representatives of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Carter's vocal preference for the Palestinians and denunciation of Israel ultimately fractured the Democratic-Jewish base,⁶³ and caused many former Democratic Jews to switch parties.⁶⁴

A New Paradigm

From the creation of the State of Israel through the end of the 1970s, U.S. support for Israel, as seen both through the policies of a succession of U.S. Presidents and by public opinion polls, was largely bipartisan. Every president from Truman through Carter expressed his support for Israel and considered Israel an ally, while at the same time taking steps to ensure that the U.S. was not perceived as embracing Israel too closely. On balance, during these three decades and seven presidents, Democratic presidents had warmer relationships with Israel than did Republicans. Carter broke this paradigm, both by taking a clear position that the Palestinians

⁶³ Carter's exit polls reveal that he had lost a significant portion of the Jewish vote, with Reagan winning an unprecedented 39 percent of the Jewish vote in 1980 against Carter. Caitlin Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace: Liberals, Protestants, Evangelicals and Israel*, (NY: NY University Press, 2012), 198; Jonathan Tobin, "The Deepening Divide Between Red and Blue Jewish America," *The New York Jewish Week*, November 13, 2018, accessed February 4, 2019.

⁶⁴ Elliott Abrams is an example of a Democrat who flipped parties in response to Carter's Middle East policy. In a private interview, Abrams asserted "there was a feeling on the part of American Jews that Carter was not friendly to Israel. That made this switch a lot easier [for me and others] to become a "Democrat for Reagan." Our view was that we are not risking our support for Israel but moving to solidify it by supporting an administration that would support Israel." Private Interview with Elliott Abrams, conducted on January 7, 2019.

should have their own State and by legitimizing the PLO, which many Americans had considered a terrorist organization,⁶⁵ as a political entity. At the same time, two important trends were beginning to take hold in the Republican Party, which would have long-term consequences for support of Israel. We turn to this part of the story next.

⁶⁵ Daniel Byman, “The Rise of the PLO and the Birth of International Terrorism (1956-1970s),” in *A High Price: The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*, (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2015). So strong was this sentiment among Americans that in 1987, the U.S. district court for the southern district of NY ruled that “the PLO and its affiliates are a terrorist organization and a threat to the interests of the U.S., its allies, and to international law.” U.S. Code, Title 22, Foreign Relations and Intercourse. Chapter 61. Anti-Terrorism – PLO > Section 5201. Findings; determinations. *Legal Information Institute, Cornell Law School*. Published December 22, 1987, retrieved April 10, 2019. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/22/5201>.

Chapter II: “To Stand Against Israel is to Stand Against God”

“To stand against Israel is to stand against God . . . [w]e believe that history and scripture prove that God deals with nations in relation to how they deal with Israel.” *Moral Majority Report*, 1980.⁶⁶

With these assertions, Reverend Jerry Falwell, the leader of the Moral Majority, introduced a different understanding of the importance of Israel and beckoned a new union of religion and foreign policy. Beginning in the late 1960s and culminating in the 1980s, the Christian Right underwent a political and religious transformation that changed both the Republican party and Israel’s lobbying base. Since then, white evangelicals have become the GOP’s most reliable constituency, providing about a third of Republican votes.⁶⁷ And, according to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, evangelicals now represent Israel’s most loyal and vocal supporters.⁶⁸ This chapter explores the basis for the Christian Right’s support for Israel, how they mobilized as a political force for Israel, and how their influence transformed the Republican party.

The rapid rise of the Christian Right astonished observers of American politics. As historian Kenneth Wald wrote in 1987, looking back at major political shifts in American politics, “perhaps none was so wholly unexpected as the political resurgence of evangelical Protestantism in the 1970s.”⁶⁹ Their strength was unprecedented because from the early 1930s through the 1960s, Christian evangelicals had largely retreated from politics. Some historians have traced their withdrawal to the aftermath of the 1925 Scopes trial, when many

⁶⁶ *Moral Majority Report*, March 14, 1980; Jerry Falwell, *Listen, America!* (New York: Bantam Books, 1981).

⁶⁷ Frances Fitzgerald, “The Evangelical Surprise,” *The New York Review of Books*, April 26, 2007.

⁶⁸ Paul Miller writes that the most supportive American constituency of Israel is not the Jews, but fundamentalist and evangelical Christians. In 2013, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life found that 82% of white evangelicals believed that Israel was given to the Jewish people by God – more than double the percentage of American Jews who held this belief – and almost half of them thought that the U.S. was not sufficiently supportive of Israel. White evangelicals made up 23% of the Republican electorate in 2012. Paul D. Miller, “Evangelicals, Israel and U.S. Foreign Policy.” *Survival* 56, no. 1, (2014): 7-9.

⁶⁹ Kenneth D. Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States* (New York: St Martins, 1987), 82.

fundamentalists believed their theology had been discredited.⁷⁰ Historian Susan Harding maintains that the “Scopes trial constituted the beginning of a half century of liberal Protestant and secular dominion in America.”⁷¹ Moreover, for many decades, evangelicals and fundamentalists had followed a policy of strict separation from worldly affairs, based on the conviction that the political world was sinful and not worthy of their involvement.⁷² By the late 1970s, however, mainline liberal Protestants were declining in numbers and their retreat from politics created a vacuum.⁷³ Responding to the political and cultural upheavals of the 1960s and early 1970s, Christian evangelicals, led by charismatic preachers, abandoned their political passivity and tradition of quietism and became a force in American politics.

The State of Israel was a mobilizing factor in the evangelical resurgence.⁷⁴ When Israel was declared a State in 1948, many Christians believed that this was a key moment in the fulfillment of a Biblical prophecy – the return of the Jews to Zion. Many evangelicals subscribed

⁷⁰ The Scopes Trial (commonly known as the “Monkey Trial”) was an American legal case in which a high school teacher, John Scopes, was accused of violating Tennessee’s Butler Act, which made it unlawful to teach human evolution in any state-funded school. Scopes was found guilty. The trial publicized the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, which set Modernists, who said evolution was not inconsistent with religion, against Fundamentalists, who said that the word of God took priority over all human knowledge. Many historians, such as Matthew Avery Sutton in *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), have argued that the Scopes trial led fundamentalists into retreat, because with this trial “fundamentalism” was transformed into a pejorative term. Sutton argues that the press, liberal intellectuals and theological modernists began using it generally to refer to all socially conservative, antimodernist, anti-science, anti-education Christians.

⁷¹ Susan Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 65.

⁷² Mokhtar Ben Barka, “The New Christian Right’s relations with Israel and with the American Jews: the mid-1970s onward,” *E-rea*, 2.

⁷³ Beginning in the late 1950s, Carenen assesses, the mainline Protestant churches began steadily losing congregants to evangelical and fundamentalist denominations. “This statistical shift resulted in an erosion of the cultural dominance of mainline Protestantism in American society and left evangelicals poised to organize into a formidable political force.” Caitlin Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace: Liberal Protestants, Evangelicals and Israel*, 175, 189.

⁷⁴ While 1948 was an important year in the evangelical Zionist resurgence, evangelical support for Israel dates back farther. The first U.S. lobbying effort on behalf of a Jewish state in Palestine was organized and initiated by evangelical Christians in 1891, when the popular fundamentalist Christian preacher, William Blackstone, organized a national campaign that appealed to President Harrison, urging support for the establishment of a Jewish state. His project gained a sense of urgency as violent pogroms were erupting in Russia and Eastern Europe against many Jews, and he introduced the notion that Israel would be important in their end-days. Yet, his proposal was rejected by President Harrison. Donald Wagner, “From Blackstone to Bush: Christian Zionism in the United States” (1890-2004) in Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Maurin Tobin., ed., *Challenging Christian Zionism: Theology, Politics and the Israel-Palestine Conflict* (Jerusalem, Melisende, 2005), 32-33.

to premillennial dispensationalist theory, the idea that the world was divided into various “dispensations,”⁷⁵ all leading up to the second arrival of Christ. Adhering to a strict interpretation of their Bible, they believed that Israel belonged to the God’s “chosen people” and that “Armageddon”⁷⁶ would come only when Israel was returned to Abraham’s descendants.⁷⁷ A 1948 *Weekly Evangelical* article demonstrates early evangelical excitement regarding the recognition of Israel: “We may wonder whether we are awake or lost in sleep or merely having a very exciting dream . . . it can’t be long until our blessed Lord takes us home to be forever with him.”⁷⁸ In 1949, an evangelist from Missouri wrote to Chaim Weizmann, the new President of Israel, inquiring if animal sacrifices by Orthodox Jews had resumed in Jerusalem, as rumors had indicated. “We understand that this has taken place recently,” wrote James Reeves, and “we are very much interested and would be grateful for full details as to the date that the daily sacrifice will be renewed.”⁷⁹ The Minister of Religious Affairs wrote back, “I have the honor to inform you that according to Jewish law no sacrifices may take place before the rebuilding of the temple.”⁸⁰ Reeves’ letter not only displays the early evangelical fervor for Israel, but his inquiry about animal sacrifices demonstrates how the evangelicals perceived Israel through a biblical lens.

⁷⁵ According to dispensationalists, these dispensations are “Innocence” (before the Fall), “Conscience” (Fall to the Flood), “Human Government,” “Promise” (Abraham to Moses), “Law” (Moses to Christ), “Grace” (the church age), and “Kingdom” (the millennium). Timothy Weber, “Dispensational Premillennialism: The Dispensationalist Era,” *Christianity Today* 61 (1991). <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-61/dispensational-premillennialism-dispensationalist-era.html>.

⁷⁶ According to the Book of Revelation in the New Testament, “Armageddon” refers to the prophesized location of the gathering of armies for a battle during “end times.” “Armageddon” and “end-times” are synonymous and, in this chapter, my sources will refer to this Christian concept as both.

⁷⁷ Miller, “Evangelicals, Israel and U.S. Foreign Policy,” 10-12.

⁷⁸ Wagner, “From Blackstone to Bush: Christian Zionism in the United States (1890-2002),” 33.

⁷⁹ James Kensley Reeves to Chaim Weizmann (November 4, 1949), Office of the Prime Minister File, ISA 5807/7, Jerusalem.

⁸⁰ Letter from E. Etayen, Information Office of the Ministry for Religious Affairs to James Reeves, December 22, 1949, Ministry for Religious Affairs File, Isa 5807/7, Jerusalem.

While evangelicals exhibited early excitement for Israel, they only began to demonstrate their political support for Israel in 1967, following the Six-Day War. When Israel defeated the neighboring Arab nations and captured territory in Gaza, the Sinai Desert, the Golan Heights, the West Bank of the Jordan River, and most importantly, re-united Jerusalem under Jewish sovereignty for the first time in almost 2,000 years, many evangelicals interpreted the victory as another prophetic sign; to them, the homecoming of the Jews described in the Bible had finally been actualized. A 1967 article in *Christianity Today* records this sentiment: “for the first time in more than 2,000 years Jerusalem is now in the hands of the Jews and gives the students of the bible a thrill and a renewed faith in the accuracy and validity of the bible.”⁸¹ Writing for the *Moody Monthly*, John F. Walvoord, president of the Dallas Theological Seminary affirmed, “this return constitutes a preparation for the end of the age, the setting for the coming of the Lord for His Church, and the fulfillment of Israel’s prophetic destiny.”⁸² From that point onward, evangelicals embraced dispensationalism rapidly. While Israel surely was not the evangelicals’ most pressing issue, and their political platform focused mostly on social issues throughout their political revival, their faith in the inerrancy of the bible gave them the confidence to exert themselves in politics and become a critical voice in support of Israel. Defending Israel as a guarantor of the coming Armageddon became an article of political faith for the Christian Right.

The mobilization of the Christian Right peaked in 1976, the year *Newsweek* Magazine christened “the Year of the Evangelical.”⁸³ That year, and in the immediate aftermath, several developments changed the religious and political landscape in the U.S., and led to increased support for Israel from the Christian Right. The first was the rapid expansion of the evangelical

⁸¹ L. Nelson Bell, *Christianity Today*, Editorial, July 16, 1967; Wagner, “From Blackstone to Bush Christian Zionism in the United States (1890-2002),” 33-34.

⁸² John F. Walvoord, “The Amazing Rise of Israel!” *Monthly Moody*, (Oct., 1967): 22.

⁸³ *Newsweek*, October 25, 1976, “BORN AGAIN! THE EVANGELICALS,” accessed February 4, 2019.

base and the growth of fundamentalist and evangelist churches at a time when mainline Protestant churches were diminishing in strength.⁸⁴ The 1950s had triggered both a demographic boom and a surge in religiosity, with the U.S. population increasing from 150 million in 1950 to 180 million in 1960.⁸⁵ Throughout the 1960s, mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic churches disagreed about how to respond to the new cultural debates. Reacting against what they perceived as “moral decay”⁸⁶ in the U.S. and fearful of the threat of nuclear war due to the Cold War, many baby-boomer Christians turned to literal Biblicism and joined evangelical churches.

Televangelism, the practice of evangelical ministers preaching on national television, also helped enlarge the evangelical base.⁸⁷ Famous televangelists, beginning with Billy Graham and continuing later with Pat Robertson and Oral Roberts, capitalized on the increasing number of televisions in American homes⁸⁸ to air their grievances against contemporary mainstream America and attack a “secular humanism” that they believed embraced pornography, abortion, homosexuality, and the de-legitimization of the traditional family, while allowing socialism and

⁸⁴ Historians have disagreed over the causes of the mainline defections. Some argue that the cultural permissiveness of the 1960s alienated many American Protestants who grew increasingly unhappy with their churches’ perceived willingness to accommodate modernity and abandon biblical literalism. Other scholars, though not disputing the decline in mainline memberships, argue that such trends reflected not so much a reaction to contemporary events of the 1960s and 1970s but rather longer populist impulses visible in American culture. Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace*, 133, 176-7.

⁸⁵ Robert Ellwood, *The Fifties Spiritual Marketplace: American Religion in a Decade of Conflict* (NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

⁸⁶ This term, popularized by Falwell, referred to the domestic changes occurring in the 1960s that worried evangelicals: the counterculture, women’s liberation movements, the gay rights movement, the sexual revolution, secularism in schools, and fears of social disintegration.

⁸⁷ The evangelicals took advantage of the rising number of televisions in American homes to preach and promulgate their sermons. Jerry Falwell hosted the program *The Old Time Gospel Hour* and Marion “Pat” Robertson, created *The 700 Club*, a national broadcast aimed at ministering to Americans’ spiritual needs while commenting on the issues of the day. These networks helped disseminate evangelical thought to wider audiences.

⁸⁸ In the years immediately following WWII the number of televisions in American homes substantially increased. In 1946, there were only 7,000 active TV sets in the nation. By 1960, that number had risen to 50 million sets, with ninety percent of American homes owning at least one TV. Tindall, G. B. and David Emory Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, 8th Edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009), 1244.

welfare dependency to expand.⁸⁹⁹⁰ They argued that a moral degeneracy “characterized by godlessness, moral relativism, and permissiveness”⁹¹ had come to exist in secular American society and that it was time that Christians reclaimed and reformed American society. Hal Lindsey and Carole Carlson’s *The Late Great Planet Earth* had great influence in enlarging the dispensationalist evangelical base, in particular. The book compared end-times prophecies with current events, and argued that the seven years of tribulation that preceded the return of Christ would occur “sometime in the near future,” but could not begin until “the Jewish people reestablished their nation in their ancient homeland of Palestine”⁹² The book sold over 10 million copies in 1970.⁹³

Political discontent was the second development that changed the religious and political landscape and mobilized the Christian Right. By 1976, many evangelicals had grown disgusted with the state of American politics. The political turbulence of the ‘60s, the Great Society liberalism of Lyndon Johnson, and then the impeachment of Richard Nixon, whom many evangelicals regarded as immoral,⁹⁴ caused evangelicals to start searching for new political leadership that would be respectful of their religious values. Nixon’s successor, Gerald Ford, who immediately pardoned Nixon,⁹⁵ did little to quell their unease. The 1976 election was therefore a political watershed for the emerging New Christian Right; it was in this moment that Christian activists banded together to thwart Ford and promote their own nominee. These

⁸⁹ Donald Heinz, *The New Christian Right: Mobilization and Legitimation* (NY: Aldine Publishing Co., 1983), 134.

⁹⁰ Falwell articulated this impression in his missive *Listen, America!*, asserting, “humanism promotes the socialization of all humanity into a world commune.” Falwell, J. *Listen, America!* (NY: Bantam Books, 1980), 56.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Hal Lindsey and Carole Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, (MI: Zondervan, 1970), introduction.

⁹³ The book would sell more than 28 million copies by 1990, and an estimated 35 million by 1999 and was translated into more than 50 languages. A 1977 movie version was later broadcast on HBO. Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace*, 167.

⁹⁴ Richard A. Viguerie, *The New Right: We’re Ready to Lead*, (Viguerie Co., 1981), 50

⁹⁵ President Gerald Ford’s Proclamation 4311, September 8, 1974, accessed April 13, 2019. *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum*. <https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/speeches/740061.asp>

activists were almost successful in removing Ford from the Republican presidential ticket in 1976, and they emerged from the election year mobilized and incentivized to identify candidates who would embrace their values and to help lead the Republican Party in the years to come.

Notably, when Southern Baptist Jimmy Carter won the Democratic nomination for President in 1976, many evangelicals had high hopes due to Carter's assertion to be "born again."⁹⁶ And he seemed to contrast sharply with Ford in that he promised to bring morality back into politics. Evangelicals were also fascinated by his frankness about his faith; during his campaign, Carter openly announced his belief that "I'll be a better president because of my deep religious convictions."⁹⁷ Christian leaders preached for him; in the summer of 1976, Bailey Smith, a mega-church pastor in Oklahoma, advocated for Carter, declaring the nation needed "a born-again man in the White House, and his initials are the same as our Lord's!"⁹⁸ Carter's candidacy mobilized a greater number of white evangelicals than had voted in the past elections. Nearly 50 percent of evangelicals voted for Carter, a significant achievement, because evangelicals had generally tilted Republican in the postwar era.⁹⁹

As Carter's presidency progressed, however, evangelicals became angered by his policies,¹⁰⁰ especially with regard to Israel. The turning point for many came in March 1977,

⁹⁶ During his campaign in 1974, Carter released an autobiography called *Why Not the Best?*, in which he identified himself as a "born again" Christian. Jimmy Carter, *Why Not the Best?* (AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1975): xxi.

⁹⁷ Jimmy Carter, *The spiritual journal of Jimmy Carter: In his own words*. (NY: Macmillan, 1978), 117.

⁹⁸ Neil J. Young, "'Worse than cancer and worse than snakes:' Jimmy Carter's Southern Baptist Problem and the 1980 Election," *Journal of Policy History* 26, No. 4, (2014): 486.

⁹⁹ Randall Balmer, "Jimmy Carter's Evangelical Downfall: Reagan, Religion and the 1980 Presidential Election." *Salon*. May 23, 2014. Accessed January 28, 2019.

¹⁰⁰ Many evangelicals became deeply disillusioned and angered by Carter's presidency, signified by their sharp decline in votes for him in 1980 (as opposed to 1976). Magnuson, Ed. "The Mood of the Voter." *CNN*. September 15, 1980. Accessed March 05, 2019; David Swartz, "How Evangelicals Turned from a Born-Again Divorced Hollywood Actor," *Anxious Bench*, May 25, 2016; Richard Harley, "The Evangelical Vote and the Presidency," *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 25, 1980. Accessed March 4, 2019.

when Carter asserted “Palestinians deserve a right to their homeland.”¹⁰¹ Christian religious activists immediately responded by placing pro-Israel advertisements in major American newspapers: “The time has come for evangelical Christians to affirm their belief in biblical prophecy and Israel’s divine right to the land,” an ad proclaimed in the *Chicago Sun Times*, and it ended with a direct attack on Carter’s statement: “We affirm as evangelicals our belief in the Promised Land to the Jewish people ... We would view with grave concern any effort to carve out of the Jewish homeland another nation or political entity”¹⁰² Their discontent was heightened after Carter suggested that Israel should give away ‘land for peace’ during the Camp David Accords. Evangelicals declared that such a position directly contradicted the biblical mandate for Israel’s claims to the Holy Land, and they insisted that any pressure by UN or Europeans to force Israel to return its pre-1967 borders should be resisted.¹⁰³¹⁰⁴

Discontent with Carter was the third major development in the political transformation of the Christian Right. It was at this point that Christian support shifted from Carter and his Democratic party to the Right. “The first time I voted was for Carter,” Reverend Rick Scarborough, founder of the advocacy organization Vision America, recalled in a *NYTimes* piece, “the second time was for ‘anybody but Carter,’ because he betrayed everything I [held] dear.”¹⁰⁵ In 1979, incensed in large part by Carter’s presidency, a branch of the Christian Right banded together and formed the Moral Majority, with Reverend Falwell as its leader. The

¹⁰¹ David Landau, “Israelis Disturbed over Carter's Reference to Palestinian Homeland.” *Daily News Bulletin*. Accessed February 4, 2019.

¹⁰² *Christian Science Monitor*, November 3, 1977.

¹⁰³ Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace*, 198.

¹⁰⁴ This position still holds sway among many evangelicals; in his 2006 book *Jerusalem Countdown*, CUFI leader John Hagee declared “God’s word is very clear! There will be grave consequences for the nation or nations that attempt to divide up the land of Israel.” John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown: A Warning to the World* (Lake Mary, FL: Frontline, 2006), 194.

¹⁰⁵ David Kirkpatrick, “The Evangelical Crackup.” *The New York Times*. October 28, 2007. Accessed January 28, 2019.

mission of the organization was to serve as a political organ to promulgate the Christian Right's views. The Moral Majority played an outsized role in Reagan's 1980 election¹⁰⁶ and in mobilizing support for Israel.

Ronald Reagan's first presidential election solidified the Christian Right's transformation. Peter Wehner, a former speechwriter for Reagan, observed that support for Reagan was a major impetus for many of his peers to join the Republican party. Though Reagan was divorced and not an active churchgoer, Wehner noted that in the policies he advanced, "Reagan was in so many ways the embodiment of what Christians wanted in a president."¹⁰⁷ Gary Bauer, a former domestic policy advisor to Reagan, concurred that it was Reagan's personality and political values – as opposed to his religious practice – that drew so many evangelicals into the Republican party. He recalled that he became a "Reaganite" after hearing him speak while campaigning for Barry Goldwater in 1964. Bauer noted that he and his peers have since referred to Reagan's "A Time for Choosing Speech"¹⁰⁸ as "*the* speech." This was the moment when Reagan articulated his political views to the nation for the first time and positioned himself as a Republican. Bauer recalls being "on the edge of [his] seat" when Reagan suggested that 'just as America could not remain half-slave and half-free, and there inevitably was a Civil War, so too, the world could not remain half-slave and half-free, and it was imperative that freedom prevail,' "These were things I hadn't thought much about," remembered

¹⁰⁶ Analysts estimate that the Moral Majority delivered four million votes to Reagan; Bruce J. Schulman and Julian Zelizer, ed., *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s* (MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 46. Falwell claimed that these four million voters comprised of "millions of [first-time] voters who otherwise would not have been at the polls" and who pumped \$5 million into the campaign. Bruce Burrsma, "Moral Majority: Crusade Has Just Begun," *Chicago Tribune*, November 6, 1980.

¹⁰⁷ Private Interview with Peter Wehner, conducted on January 28, 2019.

¹⁰⁸ Reagan would state in his 1991 autobiography: "I didn't know it at the time, but that speech was one of the most important milestones of his life." Ronald Reagan, *An American Life*, (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 143.

Bauer, “but at the end of that speech, I said to my father, I don’t think Goldwater has a chance, but I think Regan will be president one day and I will work for him in the White House.”¹⁰⁹

With the breakdown of liberal Protestantism, the proliferation of evangelical churches, the efforts of televangelists and religious authors, the political strength of the Moral Majority, and the deep resentment of Carter and American liberalism, Reagan was in a special position when he ran for president in 1980 to solidify the Christian evangelical base. And Reagan knew how to appeal to this base with unabashed expressions of support for causes the New Christian Right held dear. Indeed, a Republican gushed that Reagan’s election objectives were “right down the line an evangelical platform.”¹¹⁰ Throughout his campaign, Reagan advocated for domestic issues important to evangelicals, such as limiting abortion and opposing gay marriage. He appeased anti-abortionists, who remembered that he had signed the most liberal abortion law in the nation as governor of California, by having his supporters promise privately that he would appoint only pro-life justices.¹¹¹ He promised to lobby against passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and to appoint Christian Right activists to visible posts in his administration.¹¹² Reagan wanted the evangelicals to know that they had *his* support. Therefore, at a speech in Chicago in 1980, he stood before 15,000 evangelicals and told them, “I know this is a non-partisan gathering, and I know that you can’t endorse me. But I want you to know that I endorse you and what you’re doing.”¹¹³ He then appealed directly to them, stating, “[r]eligious America

¹⁰⁹ Private Interview with Gary Bauer, conducted on December 9, 2018.

¹¹⁰ Paul Miller, “The evangelical presidency: Reagan’s dangerous love affair with the Christian right,” May 16, 2014 https://www.salon.com/2014/05/18/the_evangelical_presidency_reagans_dangerous_love_affair_with_the_christian_right/.

¹¹¹ David M. O’Brien, *Storm Center, Sixth Edition* (London: Norton & Co., 2003), 69.

¹¹² Robert Billings of the Moral Majority, for example, took a post in the Department of Education. *Onward Christian Soldiers? The Religious Right in American Politics*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 84-85.

¹¹³ Reagan, “National Affairs Campaign Address on Religious Liberty,” delivered August 22, 1980, Dallas, Texas.

is awakening perhaps just in time for our country's sake. I've seen the impact of your dedication. I know the sincerity of your intent, and I'm deeply honored to be with you tonight."¹¹⁴

As Wehner observed, Reagan "spoke the language of the Religious Right."¹¹⁵ Reagan would take on themes of American exceptionalism and describe them in religious language. For example, he would frequently refer to America as a "city on a hill," harkening John Winthrop's Puritan adage; yet, Reagan's "city on a hill" was a providential place of freedom and prosperity in America. In this way, Reagan was able to appeal directly to the religious sentiments of Christians while also keeping the content of his speeches universal. A prime example of this rhetorical tactic was his 1980 acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention in Detroit. At the end of his hour-long speech, he inquired, "Can we doubt that only a Divine Providence placed this land, the island of freedom, here as a refuge for all . . . who yearn to breathe freely?" Then, striking an explicitly religious tone (with an implicit anti-secularist message), he appeared to go off-script: "I'll confess that I've been a little afraid to suggest what I'm going to suggest. I'm more afraid not to. Can we begin our crusade joined together in a moment of silent prayer?" After a 13-second dramatic pause, he proclaimed, "God Bless America"¹¹⁶¹¹⁷

Evangelicals rushed to the voting booths for Reagan.¹¹⁸ And with his electoral success, Christian leaders, and especially the Moral Majority, felt like they had new political legitimacy.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Private interview with Peter Wehner, conducted on January 28, 2019.

¹¹⁶ Ronald Reagan, "1980 Republican National Convention Acceptance Speech," accessed January 28, 2019, <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/reference/7.17.80.html>.

¹¹⁷ This was the first time "God Bless America" had been uttered in a presidential nomination acceptance speech. And later in 1984, he would become the first president to close a state of the union with the phrase. Bill Scher, "When Reagan Dared to Say 'God Bless America,'" *Politico Magazine*, July 17, 2015.

¹¹⁸ More than 70 percent of white evangelicals voted that November, up from around 61 percent of in earlier elections, and they overwhelmingly backed Reagan. Schulman and Zelizer. *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, 46. Reagan won over two-thirds of the evangelical vote (nearly 20 million votes); *Journal of Church and State*. March 22, 1997. Retrieved August 18, 2007.

The defense of Israel was a top priority for the Moral Majority, and as Falwell gained influence in Washington, he soon focused on influencing the U.S. policy toward Israel. Falwell befriended the Israeli Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, and after meeting him during his first trip to Israel, Falwell wrote to Begin, pledging unwavering support:

As Americans who are committed to the cause of freedom, we share love of liberty, commitment to democratic institutions, and respect for the dignity of the individual fashioned in the image of God with the people of Israel. We also know that the State of Israel plays a crucial and strategic role in protecting the security of our own country and of all freedom-loving peoples. Israel stands as a bulwark of strength and determination against those, who by terror and blackmail, threaten our democratic way of life. At a time when the reliability of America's traditional allies is increasingly called into question, we salute the State of Israel for your steadfast friendship and for your loyalty and devotion to the ties which bind our nations together. Israel has always upheld America, and as Christian leaders, we pledge to uphold Israel.¹¹⁹

Falwell's letter was more than just pragmatic support – it was also a religious commitment. The statement continued: “On theological, as well as historical grounds, we proclaim that the Land, Israel, encompasses Judea and Samaria, as integral parts of the Jewish patrimony, with Jerusalem as its indivisible capital . . . we acknowledge the rights of Jewish settlers in those areas.”¹²⁰

Begin, in turn, valued his independent relationship with Falwell. When Israel destroyed the Osirak nuclear reactor in Iraq in 1981,¹²¹ his first call to the U.S. was not to President Reagan but to Falwell, asking him to explain Israel's rationale in the preemptive strike to his evangelical constituents in the U.S. Falwell responded immediately: “Mr. Prime Minister, I want to

¹¹⁹ “Fellowship Pastors Meet with Begin: Falwell-Dixon-Zimmerman Welcome Him to U.S.,” *Bible Baptist Tribune* (May 2, 1980): 1-2.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ The Osirak reactor bombing, otherwise known as Operation Opera, was a surprise Israeli air strike carried out on June 7, 1981, which destroyed an Iraqi nuclear reactor, and killed 10 Iraqi soldiers and one French civilian. Begin called the operation an act of “national self-defense” and argued that the reactor had “less than a month to go” before “it might have become critical.” The attack introduced controversy and international condemnation. The destruction of Osirak has been cited as an example of a preventative strike in international law yet the efficacy of the attack has been debated by historians; some acknowledge that it took Iraq from the brink of nuclear capability, yet others argue that it drove Iraq's weapon-building underground and cemented Saddam Hussein's ambitions for acquiring nuclear weapons. Donald G. Boudreau, “The Bombing of the Osirak Reactor,” *International Journal of World Peace* 10, No. 2 (Jun., 1993): 21-37.

congratulate you for a mission that made us very proud that we manufacture those F-16s. In my opinion, you must've put it right down the smokestack."¹²² When the mainline Protestant National Council of Churches criticized Israel for its action in Iraq, Falwell roundly chastised them, assuring, "these ecclesiastical leaders do not speak for a majority of Christians in America." Falwell then wrote to Begin, "God promises to bless those who blessed the children of Abraham and curse those who cursed Israel. . . I think history supports the fact that He has been true to his word. When you go back to the pharaohs, the Caesars, Adolf Hitler, and the Soviet Union, all those who dared to touch the apple of God's eye – Israel – have been punished by God. America has been blessed because she has blessed Israel."¹²³

The close evangelical-Israeli alliance concerned some Jewish leaders. Robert Zimmerman, president of American Jewish Congress, for example, pointed to a conflict of interest between Religious Right and liberal Jews in U.S. politics. He warned of the potential threats if Jews, who traditionally supported issues like abortion, separation of church and state, and opposition to prayer in public schools, allied with a group that "threatens the freedoms that make Jews feel safe in America."¹²⁴ Yet, Falwell and Begin were not fazed. When a reporter asked them at a White House press conference how they could work together given their theological differences, Bauer recalls that Falwell responded: "one of us believes that Messiah has already come and the other side hasn't, so we've agreed that when the Messiah does come, we will ask him is this your first time here or your second, and whatever the answer is, one of us

¹²² Walter H. Capps, *The New Religious Right: Piety, Patriotism, and Politics* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), 38.

¹²³ "Israel's Begin Explains Attack on Reactor," *Moral Majority Report* (July 20, 1981): 4.

¹²⁴ Phyllis Bennis and Khaled Mansour, "Praise God and Pass the Ammunition!": The Changing Nature of Israel's U.S. Backers," Middle East Report no. 208, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East: Critical Assessments* (Fall 1998): 18.

will have to make a major attitude adjustment. But until then, we will work on the things we agree on.”¹²⁵

The groundswell of politically active evangelical Zionists not only transformed the Republican Party in the 1980s but strengthened U.S.-Israeli relations. As the evangelical population grew,¹²⁶ an increasing number of pro-Israel Christians were elected to public office, and many rose to leadership ranks in Congress, among them Dan Coats, Tom Delay, and Sam Brownback. These politicians became vocal supporters of Israel and helped steer Congress to increase support to Israel throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Tom Delay who later became Deputy Minority Whip, used his position to affirm his support for Israel and made it one of his signature issues. In a 2002 speech, he promised to “use every tool at my disposal to ensure the Republican Conference, and the House of Representatives, continues to preserve and strengthen America’s alliance with the State of Israel.”¹²⁷ Delay’s legacy continues today, with outspoken pro-Israel Christian Senators and Congressmen like Ted Cruz, Tom Cotton, and others leading the pro-Israel caucus in Congress.

Evangelicals were also changing the Republican party on a grassroots level, with the formation of an array of pro-Israel organizations. The largest of these was Christians United for Israel (CUFI), created by Pastor John Hagee. Shocked by the American condemnation of the Osirak reactor bombing, Hagee instituted a “Night to Honor Israel,” in which his church raised \$10,000 for a local chapter of Hadassah, a prominent hospital in Israel.¹²⁸ Hagee would continue

¹²⁵ Private Interview with Gary Bauer, conducted on December 9, 2018.

¹²⁶ From 1960 to 2000, the global growth of the number of reported evangelicals grew three times the world population rate. Bruce Milne, *Know the Truth: A Handbook of Christian Belief*, (IL: Intervarsity Press, 1982), 332.

¹²⁷ “A Night to Honor Israel.” *Ariel Center for Policy Research*. Archived on November 19, 2005. Retrieved April 15, 2006.

¹²⁸ John Hagee believed that Israel had done the world a favor by bombing the reactor. He explained in an interview in the *Weekly Standard* that after the attack “the American media went after Israel hammer and claw. I saw the door of opportunity open. I told my wife as we watched the television with the news anchor berating Israel and Menachem Begin, ‘We are going to have a night for Israel.’” Jennifer Rubin, “Onward, Christian Zionists,” *The*

to hold annual “Nights to Honor Israel,” raising millions of dollars over the following decades, and CUFI reached five million members by 2019.¹²⁹ Through Hagee’s financial backing, CUFI continues to wield considerable power in Washington and is a large base of support for the Republican party. The Christian Coalition, another grassroots Christian organization, also transformed the Republican base. Established in 1988 to replace the Moral Majority, the Christian Coalition established a highly influential political advocacy group and voter mobilization program that galvanized millions of evangelicals to engage in policy. While the Coalition claimed to be nonpartisan, Pat Robertson, one of its founders, made no secret about which party it was intended to benefit: “We want,” he told reporters in 1992, “to see a majority of the Republican Party in the hands of pro-family Christians by 1996.”¹³⁰ The Christian Coalition and CUFI not only have created a strong coalition of lobbyists, but their donations to the GOP and to pro-Israel causes have helped cement the evangelicals as staunch Republicans and supporters of Israel. The Christian Coalition disbanded in the mid-2000s, but the CUFI along with other organizations, such as the National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel, Christian Friends of Israeli Communities, the Christians’ Israel Public Action Committee, and the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, continue to advocate for Israel.¹³¹

The proliferation of Christian Zionist organizations and the surge of pro-Israel Republicans in Congress have also had influence on the attitudes toward Israel of more recent occupants of the White House, in particular the last two Republican presidents, Presidents Bush

Weekly Standard, August 2, 2010, accessed April 14, 2019. <https://www.weeklystandard.com/jennifer-rubin/onward-christian-zionists>.

¹²⁹ “CUFI Surpasses 5 Million Member Mark.” *Christians United for Israel*. December 11, 2018. Accessed February 12, 2019. <https://www.cufi.org/cufi-surpasses-5-million-member-mark/>.

¹³⁰ Francis Fitzgerald, *The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America*, (NY: Simon & Schuster, 2017), 413.

¹³¹ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, (NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 134.

and Trump. George W. Bush (who talked often about his own religious awakening¹³²) reaped the benefits of the strengthening evangelical base in 2004, with 40 percent of his total vote coming from evangelicals. And there is evidence that evangelical support, at times, influenced his Israel policies. For example, in April 2002, when international condemnation broke out following Israeli incursions into the West Bank, Bush appealed to Israeli Prime Minister Sharon to cease the Israeli actions: “to lay the foundations of future peace,” Bush wrote, “I ask Israel to halt incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas, and begin the withdrawal from those cities it has recently occupied.”¹³³ As historian Donald Wagner notes, in response to Bush’s criticism of Sharon, the pro-Israel lobby, in coordination with the Christian Right, mobilized over 100,000 email messages, calls and visits urging Bush to avoid restraining Israel. This tactic worked, Wagner writes, and “the President uttered not another word of criticism or caution, and Sharon continued the offensive.”¹³⁴

Similarly, in 2003, when Bush endorsed the Middle East Quartet Roadmap, which called for an independent Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace, Christian Zionists responded by organizing some 50,000 postcards to be sent to the White House opposing the plan. In response, Bush withdrew from his previous support for the Roadmap.¹³⁵ More recently,

¹³² Laurie Goodstein, “THE 2000 CAMPAIGN: MATTERS OF FAITH; Bush Uses Religion as Personal and Political Guide.” *The New York Times*. October 22, 2000. Accessed February 13, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/10/22/us/2000-campaign-matters-faith-bush-uses-religion-personal-political-guide.html>.

¹³³ The Irish Times. “Bush Calls on Israel to Stop West Bank Incursions.” *The Irish Times*. April 4, 2002. Accessed February 13, 2019. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/bush-calls-on-israel-to-stop-west-bank-incursions-1.418840>.

¹³⁴ Wagner, “Marching to Zion,” 20-24.

¹³⁵ Mark T. Finny, “Christian Zionism, the U.S. and the Middle East: A Sketch and Brief Analysis,” 2016, 29 in Michael J. Sandford ed., *The Bible, Zionism and Palestine: The Bible’s Role in conflict and Liberation in Israel-Palestine* (Dunedin, NZ: Relegere Academic Press, 2016).

Trump's decision to move the embassy to Jerusalem in 2018 was in large part influenced by his desire to appeal to Christian Zionists,¹³⁶ an important percentage of his voters.¹³⁷

Over the last two decades, Christian Zionists have proven to be an important part of the growing Christian Right. Of the 100-130 million estimated evangelicals in the U.S., roughly 58 percent are dispensationalists who strongly support Israel.¹³⁸ These evangelicals have exerted influence on Israeli policy, helping forge a political alliance with the hardline Likud party, and have also played a prominent role in U.S. politics, particularly in restructuring the GOP. Most significantly, they have remained a loyal and instrumental part of the Republican base, supporting Republican and pro-Israeli politicians, even when they have disagreed with some of their other policies. The next chapter will explore how Ronald Reagan, bolstered by evangelical support, continued to strengthen the Republican party's relationship with Israel.

¹³⁶ Elizabeth Dias, "Amid Debate and Violence, Trump Delivers Embassy Victory to Christian Base." *The New York Times*. May 15, 2018. Accessed February 15, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/15/us/politics/jerusalem-embassy-trump-evangelicals.html>.

¹³⁷ 81 percent of white evangelicals voted for Trump in 2016; Jon Huang, Samuel Jacoby, Michael Strickland, and K. Rebecca Lai. "Election 2016: Exit Polls." *The New York Times*. November 9, 2016. Accessed February 10, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/11/08/us/politics/election-exit-polls.html>.

¹³⁸ A recent poll by the Pew Research Center noted that 58% of evangelicals believe in the Battle of Armageddon. Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *Politics of the Apocalypse*, (London: Oneworld Publications, 2006), 167.

Chapter III: Israel as a “Strategic Asset”

“The fall of [the Shah of] Iran has increased Israel’s value as perhaps the only remaining strategic asset in the region on which the United States can truly rely . . . only by full appreciation of the critical role the state of Israel plays in our strategic calculus can we build the foundation for thwarting Moscow’s designs in territories and resources vital to our security and our national wellbeing . . . Israel is not a client but a very reliable friend.” Ronald Reagan, 1979.¹³⁹

Writing in the *Washington Post* in August 1979, during his campaign for the presidency, Ronald Reagan articulated a new approach to the U.S.-Israeli relationship. Unlike his predecessors, whose support for Israel was largely based on moral reasoning, Reagan made clear that in his view, “Israel is not a client but a very reliable friend.”¹⁴⁰ He viewed Israel as a natural ally, due to its military might, its shared democratic values with America, and its strategic location. “Israel,” he declared during his campaign, “has the democratic will, natural cohesion, technological capability, and military fiber to stand forth as America’s trusted ally.”¹⁴¹ Thus, he criticized previous American policy-makers who “downgrade[d] Israel’s geopolitical importance as a stabilizing force, as [a] deterrent to radical hegemony and as [a] military offset to the Soviet Union,”¹⁴² and he called for Americans to recognize the “strategic” value of Israel. This terminology of Israel having strategic importance was utilized throughout Reagan’s candidacy and later, during his presidency, it became the hallmark of his Middle East policy.

Israel’s strategic value was a central theme in Reagan’s 1980 campaign. “Israel is a strategic asset for the U.S.,” Reagan declared to the American Jewish Press Association in 1980, “I believe we must have policies which give concrete expression to that position.”¹⁴³ Throughout his campaign he praised Israel’s military, stating, “Israel’s air force can assist U.S. forces in

¹³⁹ Ronald Reagan, “Recognizing the Israeli Asset,” *Washington Post*, August 15, 1979.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 180.

¹⁴² Reagan, “Recognizing the Israeli Asset,” August 15, 1979; Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 180.

¹⁴³ JTA News Bulletin, June 16, 1980.

protecting the vital Mediterranean.”¹⁴⁴ He repeatedly advocated for U.S. bases in the Middle East to counter the Soviet threat in the region. And he called for increased arms to Israel’s military. These assertions about Israel went beyond mere campaign flourishes; he centered much of his foreign policy objectives on Israel, and outlined his expectations of Israel. In his 1979 article, he delineated three fields of services with Israel that he planned to pursue as president: “exchange of intelligence,” “utilization of the Israeli infrastructure and technological expertise and services,” and “Israeli participation even outside its frontiers in the event of a crisis involving the Soviet Union.”¹⁴⁵

The first two years of Reagan’s presidency, however, were marked by serious tension with Israel due to Reagan’s decision in 1981 to fulfill a commitment made by the Carter Administration to sell AWACS aircraft to Saudi Arabia.¹⁴⁶ The AWACS sale¹⁴⁷ was vehemently opposed by the pro-Israel lobby and resulted in a pitched battle in Congress, which was not resolved until October 1981, when the Senate finally voted 52-48 to support the sale.¹⁴⁸ The AWACS sale was even opposed by many in Reagan’s own administration; Elliott Abrams, who served as his foreign policy advisor, admits he openly opposed it.¹⁴⁹ Reagan justified his decision to proceed with the sale on the basis that “we needed to show that we would stand by our friends, particularly in the aftermath of what [Reagan] saw as the Carter Administration’s ‘decision to

¹⁴⁴ Reagan declared this at the 1980 Republican Party Platform.

¹⁴⁵ Naseer Aruri, “That Special Relationship,” *Reagan and the Middle East*, (Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1983), 7

¹⁴⁶ Michael Klare, “Carter’s Arms Sales Policies: Business as Usual,” *Social Scientist* 7, No. 4 (Nov., 1978): 7

¹⁴⁷ The sale of AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) surveillance planes to Saudi Arabia by the U.S. was a controversial part of what was then the largest foreign arms sale in U.S. history. The sale included five E-3 Sentry AWACS aircraft and eight KE-3 refueling aircraft, with spare parts and support, delivered between June 1986 and September 1987. James Phillips, “The AWACS Sale: Prospects for U.S. Policy,” *The Heritage Foundation*, 153 (Oct., 1981): 1-14.

¹⁴⁸ John Goshko, “Senate Backs Reagan on AWACS sale.” *Washington Post*, October 29, 1981; Charles Mohr, “Senate, 52-48, Supports Reagan on AWACS Jet Sale to Saudis; Heavy Lobbying Tips Key Votes,” *The New York Times*, October 29, 1981.

¹⁴⁹ Private Interview with Elliott Abrams, January 7, 2019.

look on while the Shah of Iran was removed from power.”¹⁵⁰ And he was genuinely perplexed by the sharp reaction of the Jewish community, writing in his diary “it must be plain to them that they’ve never had a better friend in the W.H. than they have now. We are striving to breach stability to the Middle East and reduce the threat of a Soviet move in that direction.”¹⁵¹

Nevertheless, despite this rough beginning, Reagan made it clear that he saw Israel in a new light, as a critical strategic partner of the United States in the battle against Soviet expansionism. Indeed, in June of that year, when Israel launched a successful preemptive strike against Iraq’s nuclear reactor in Osirak, both Vice President George H. W. Bush and Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger argued for a total cutoff of assistance to Israel because Israel’s use of American-made F-16 aircraft for offensive purposes technically violated the terms of the arms agreement; yet Reagan quickly tempered the U.S. response, noting that the U.S. could not be seen as “turning on Israel.”¹⁵² More importantly, even as the political battle over the AWACS sale was unfolding, Reagan’s first Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, had tasked his Policy Planning Staff and Bureau of Political-Military Affairs with writing conceptual papers laying out the logic and options for a strategic partnership with Israel.¹⁵³ As Dennis Ross, a member of the Policy Planning Staff at the time, explained: “Haig was focused on countering the Soviets in the eastern Mediterranean or even in the Persian Gulf, a strategy for which the Israeli military infrastructure could be advantageous.”¹⁵⁴ And on September 17, 1981, Haig declared, “Without a strong Israel, our hope to improve the prospects for peace and security in the region cannot be

¹⁵⁰ Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 184

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 188.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

fulfilled. A secure Saudi Arabia and a strong U.S.-Saudi relationship are central to these same tasks.”¹⁵⁵

Haig’s first achievement in actualizing Reagan’s policy of strategic cooperation with Israel was the creation of a U.S.-Israeli Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 1981, which detailed the “strategic consensus” of the two allies, and sought to monitor the “overriding danger of Soviet inroads” into the region.¹⁵⁶ The MOU was the first document to articulate America’s relationship with Israel on a basis not merely of shared values, but also of shared interests. The MOU expressed an “unshakable commitment of the U.S. to Israel’s security,” and promised to “support increased level of foreign military financing grant assistant to Israel in future years, and to help Israel with the needed security requirements.”¹⁵⁷ The MOU outlined American defense aid to Israel to the tune of \$30 billion over the next decade. As historian Helena Cobban observes, “[w]hen the MOU was finally concluded, at a meeting between Sharon and Weinberger in Washington at the end of November, it spelled out that the planned strategic cooperation was designed against, ‘the threat to peace and security of the region caused by the Soviet Union or Soviet-controlled forces from outside the region introduced into the region.’”¹⁵⁸

Beyond Reagan’s recognition of Israel’s strategic value to the United States, Reagan also had an emotional attachment to the Jewish State, which stemmed from the searing images he had seen in film of American liberation of the concentration camps.¹⁵⁹ In the memoirs he penned after his presidency, he wrote:

¹⁵⁵ “Secretary Haig: U.S. Strategy in the Middle East,” Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, Current Policy No. 312.

¹⁵⁶ Haig said this before the SFRC on March 19, see U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Foreign Assistance for Fiscal Year 1982: Hearings*, 97th Cong., 1st sess., March 19.

¹⁵⁷ “U.S.-Israel Formal Agreements: Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Cooperation.” Suleyman. Accessed November 12, 2018. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/u-s-israel-memorandum-of-understanding-on-strategic-cooperation-november-1981>.

¹⁵⁸ Helena Cobban, “The U.S.-Israeli Relationship in the Reagan Era,” *Conflict Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1989), 9.

¹⁵⁹ Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 181.

I've believed many things in my life, but no conviction I've ever held has been stronger than my belief that the U.S. must ensure the survival of Israel. The Holocaust, I believe, left America with a moral responsibility to ensure that what had happened to the Jews under Hitler never happens again . . . my dedication to the preservation of Israel was as strong when I left the White House as when I arrived there, even though this tiny ally, with whom we share democracy and many other values, was a source of great concern for me while I was president.¹⁶⁰

Reagan's commitment to Israel was both strategic and emotional, something that was not only different from how his predecessors viewed Israel but also entirely new within the Republican Party. During an interview with U.S. journalists on February 2, 1981, only two weeks after his inauguration, he made this clear: "Not only do we have a moral commitment to Israel, [but] being a country sharing our same ideals, our democratic approach to things with a combat-ready and even a combat-experienced military, [Israel] is a force in the Middle East that actually is a benefit to us. If there were not Israel with that force, we'd have to supply that with our own, so this isn't just altruism on our part . . ." ¹⁶¹

Reagan's recognition of Israel as a key strategic asset to the United States was also influenced by the arguments made by a group of intellectuals who, like Reagan himself, had begun their political lives on the Left and moved to the Right¹⁶² in large measure due to what they believed was the American Left's lack of moral clarity regarding the threat of Communism.¹⁶³ The story of the neoconservatives and their support for Israel is an important part of the story of how Republicans became so closely aligned with Israel. This group became

¹⁶⁰ Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 181. Reagan, *An American Life: The Autobiography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 410.

¹⁶¹ Aruri, *Reagan and the Middle East*, "That Special Relationship," 5; *Christian Science Monitor*, February 2, 1981.

¹⁶² Reagan had been a registered Democrat until 1962, when he became a conservative and switched to the Republican Party. In 1964, Reagan's speech, "A Time for Choosing" supported Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign and nationally positioned him as a conservative spokesman and politician.

¹⁶³ Neoconservatives termed this the Left's "moral equivalency." This term was used commonly by anti-Communists as an accusation of formal fallacy for leftist criticisms of the U.S. foreign policy and military conduct. Jeane Kirkpatrick popularized the term in her 1986 article "The Myth of Moral Equivalence," in which she sharply criticized those who she alleged were claiming that there was "no moral difference" between the Soviet Union and democratic states. Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, "The Myth of Moral Equivalence," *Imprimis* 15, no. 1 (Jan., 1986).

increasingly vocal during Carter's presidency, perceiving Carter's foreign policies as weak and dangerous.¹⁶⁴ They created their own think tanks and publications to spread their message that the U.S. should pursue a more aggressive foreign policy. They wanted the U.S. to combat Communism everywhere; even when it meant supporting autocratic regimes that could help them rebuff Soviet influence. And they were strong advocates for building up America's defense capabilities, that were weakened after the post-Vietnam War cutbacks in the Pentagon's budget.¹⁶⁵

The neoconservatives burst onto the national scene in 1976. In that year, President Ford asked CIA director George H. W. Bush to name a group of experts to evaluate CIA data on Soviet military capabilities. The team of experts commissioned for this study came to be known as "Team B." Team B's report confirmed that American intelligence had underestimated the strength of the Soviet military buildup. To these experts, it became immediately evident that détente had been a disastrous blunder in American foreign policy. The report also raised the specter of a strategic "window of vulnerability" that would make U.S. strategic land-based missiles susceptible to a preemptive Soviet first strike.¹⁶⁶ Many analysts feared that even if the Soviets did not exploit this window with a military attack, they might still use this "window" to place diplomatic pressure on the U.S.¹⁶⁷

In response to the Team B report, a prominent group of ex-Democratic foreign policy individuals, including Paul Nitze, Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz and Eugene Rostow, among others, formed the Committee on Present Danger (CPD) as a means of promoting increased

¹⁶⁴ Stephen J Sniegoski, *The Transparent Cabal: The Neoconservative Agenda, War in the Middle East, and the National Interest of Israel*. (Norfolk, VA: I H S Press, 2008), 34; Sean Wilentz, *Age of Reagan*, 153.

¹⁶⁵ Sniegoski, *The Transparent Cabal*, 32-33.

¹⁶⁶ Julien Zeilzer, "Conservatives, and the Politics of National Security," in Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zeilzer, Eds., *Rightward Bound: Making American Conservative in the 1970s*, 268-69.

¹⁶⁷ Pavel Podvig, "The Window of Vulnerability that Wasn't" Soviet Military Buildup in the 1970s -- A Research Note, *International Security* 33, no. 1 (Summer 2008): 118-38.

American defense spending. These individuals referred to themselves as “neoconservatives,” former liberals who believed that their party had become too weak on defense during the Cold War. CPD members argued: “Our country is in a period of danger, and the danger is increasing. Unless decisive steps are taken to alert the nation, and to change its course of its policy, our economic and military capacity will become inadequate to assure peace and security.” They warned that the Soviet Union has amassed “an unparalleled military buildup . . . in part reminiscent of Nazi Germany’s rearmament in the 1930s.”¹⁶⁸

What bound the neoconservatives together at the start was their anti-Communism; that said, many of them were Jewish intellectuals who shared a deep appreciation for Israel. As author Benjamin Ginsberg writes, a “major factor that drew [the neoconservatives] inexorably to the right was their attachment to Israel.”¹⁶⁹ Norman Podhoretz, former editor-in-chief of *Commentary*, the neoconservatives’ flagship magazine, recognized that “continued American support for Israel depended on continued American involvement in international affairs,” and warned, “American withdrawal into isolation represented a direct threat on the security of Israel.”¹⁷⁰

Reagan was introduced to the neoconservatives after reading a 1979 *Commentary* article written by Jeane Kirkpatrick called “Dictatorships and Double Standards.” In it, Kirkpatrick lambasted Carter’s foreign policy, surveying a group of countries that had fallen under the Soviet umbrella during Carter’s presidency. “In each country,” she observed, “the Carter Administration not only failed to prevent the undesired outcome, [but] it [also] actively collaborated in the replacement of moderate autocrats friendly to American interests with less friendly autocrats of

¹⁶⁸ Charles II Tyroller, *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on Present Danger* (Washington D.C.: Pergamon – Brassey’s, 1984).

¹⁶⁹ Benjamin Ginsberg, *The Fatal Embrace: Jews and the State*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 231.

¹⁷⁰ Sniegoski, *The Transparent Cabal*, 27.

extremist persuasion.”¹⁷¹ She concluded that while the U.S. should encourage liberalization and democracy in autocratic countries, it should not do so when the government is facing violent overthrow. Her article made a profound impression on Reagan who subsequently asked her to serve as his first Ambassador to the United Nations.¹⁷² Her other articles also made an impact on other liberals who were feeling isolated within their own party. For instance, in her article “Why We Don’t Become Republicans,” in the Republican journal *Commonsense*, she explained that she still remained in the “party of her parents, uncles, aunts and grandparents,”¹⁷³ but then drew a sharp distinction between herself and new liberals, suggesting that the Left had split on “the evaluation and interpretation of American experience.” While Kirkpatrick and traditional liberals, she wrote, “affirmed the validity of the American dream and the morality of the American society,” the “new liberals described the U.S. as a sick society drunk on technology and materialism.”¹⁷⁴ Her writing foreshadowed the migration of many neoconservatives into the Republican Party (herself among them five years later).

Though Reagan was predisposed to favoring a close relationship with Israel due to his Cold War outlook, his fear that Saudi Arabia might go the way of Iran, and his appreciation of Israel’s military might, the influence of the neoconservatives in his administration not only bolstered those views but also helped Reagan create a vocabulary for his support of Israel. And this in turn caused many pro-Israel voters to begin to look at the Republican Party much more positively. The neoconservatives were so influential that author Sean Wilentz of *Age of Reagan* acknowledges that “Ronald Reagan would not have been elected and would not have been able

¹⁷¹ Jeane Kirkpatrick, “Dictatorships & Double Standards,” *Commentary Magazine*, November, 1979. <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/dictatorships-double-standards/>.

¹⁷² Christopher Bright, “A Policy is Born,” *World Affairs* 153, no. 2 (Fall 1990): 62.

¹⁷³ Kirkpatrick, “Why We Do Not Become Republicans,” *Commonsense* 2, No. 3 (Fall 1979): 28.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

to govern as effectively without some of prominent neoconservatives who joined the Republican side.”¹⁷⁵

After Reagan won the 1980 election in a landslide, he immediately turned his campaign rhetoric into policy. And many of his early personnel choices reflected his warmth toward Israel and his new focus on strategic cooperation. In addition to Kirkpatrick, and Haig (whom *The Jerusalem Post* referred to as “a pro-Israel advocate in the administration”¹⁷⁶), Reagan selected Richard V. Allen, who had previously given a warm endorsement of the hawkish and pro-Israel defense analyst Joseph Churba, as his first National Security Adviser. And as presidential historian David Dalin observes, Reagan also appointed several prominent Jewish neoconservatives— including Elliott Abrams, Eugene Rostow, Max Kampelman, Michael Ledeen, Richard Pipes, and Richard Perle¹⁷⁷ – to positions in his new administration.¹⁷⁸

When it came to Israel, Reagan’s actions matched his rhetoric. He significantly increased both military aid to, and intelligence collaboration with, Israel. In October 1983, at the height of Israel’s very unpopular Lebanon War, the Reagan Administration adopted National Security Decision Directive 111, a policy document that reinstated the U.S.’ commitment to strategic collaboration with Israel.¹⁷⁹ The administration also created a Joint Political Military Group (JPMG) with Israel that would convene twice a year and give “priority to our mutual interests

¹⁷⁵ Wilentz, *Age of Reagan*, 309; Sniegowski, *Fatal Embrace*, 37.

¹⁷⁶ Wolf Blitzer, *Between Washington and Jerusalem* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 61.

¹⁷⁷ David G. Dalin and Alfred J. Kolatch. *The Presidents of the United States and the Jews*, (NY: Jonathan David Pub., 2000), 247.

¹⁷⁸ Indeed, the only very vocal opponent of Israel in Reagan’s first cabinet was Casper Weinberger, who did not believe that Israel was a worthwhile strategic partner. Instead, he argued that America should strengthen its presence in the region by excluding Israel and by providing arms to Saudis. As he explained: “my big point was, constantly that [the U.S.] needed more than one friend in the Middle East. The thing we could do that would help Israel the most was not to give them money and not arms, but to give them friendly neighbors. And the only way you could ever get that way was by demonstrating the fact that we wanted to have strong, friendly relationships with a number of Mideast countries.” Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 182.

¹⁷⁹ Bernard Gwertzman, “U.S. AND ISRAEL SIGN STRATEGIC ACCORD TO COUNTER SOVIET,” Special to *The New York Times*, December 1, 1981.

posed by increased Soviet involvement in the Middle East.”¹⁸⁰ And during Reagan’s second term, the relationship with Israel blossomed even more. In 1985, the U.S. and Israel executed a Free Trade Agreement, which infused more than \$1.5 billion a year into Israel’s economy. In May 1986, Israel became the third country, after Britain and West Germany, to sign on to the SDI research and development team.¹⁸¹ And in July of that year, Israel agreed to the installation of Voice of America transmitters,¹⁸² which would beam American programming into southern parts of the USSR. Finally, in 1987, Congress designated Israel a “major non-NATO ally.” With this status, Israel was now permitted to use what would become nearly \$500 million a year of American assistance to purchase weapons from its own defense industries.¹⁸³ Overall, during Reagan’s time in office, Israel began to receive over \$1.8 billion annually in foreign aid, all in the form of grants.¹⁸⁴

Reagan set himself apart in other ways from prior presidents, and especially from previous Republican leaders, in his approach to Israel. In a major speech to a Jewish organization weeks before his first election, Reagan declared his solidarity with the Soviet Jewry Movement: “The long agony of Jews in the Soviet Union is never far from our minds and hearts. All these suffering people ask is that their families get the chance to work where they choose, in freedom and peace. They will not be forgotten in a Reagan Administration.”¹⁸⁵ Reagan demonstrated this campaign pledge by actively working to free Soviet Jews during his presidency; according to Gary Bauer, whenever Reagan sat down with the Soviet Premier Gorbachev, or other Soviet

¹⁸⁰ Richard Halloran, “U.S.-ISRAELI MILITARY PACT TO START SOON,” January 15, 1984.

¹⁸¹ “U.S.-Israel Strategic Cooperation.” *Policy Focus: Newsletter of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, no. 3 (September 1986): 2; *Washington Post*, May 5, 1986.

¹⁸² Cobban, *The U.S.-Israeli Relationship in the Reagan Era*, 12; “U.S.-Israel Strategic Cooperation.” *Policy Focus*: 2.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, 11-13.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 28.

¹⁸⁵ Dalin, *The Presidents of the United States and the Jews*, 250.

leaders, he would ask about specific Refusenicks¹⁸⁶ being held captive in the Soviet Union in order to send a message that his administration was “really tracking this [issue], that it was important to the president, and if [the Soviets] wanted progress they would have to deal with this issue.”¹⁸⁷ And in 1985, following a severe economic crisis in Israel in which inflation rates soared as high as 445%, Reagan supported a \$1.5 billion emergency assistance package to help Israel stabilize its economy.¹⁸⁸ He also authorized Operation Joshua, a CIA supported mission to airlift 500 Ethiopian Jews from refugee camps in Sudan and bring them to Israel.¹⁸⁹ All of these actions were very different from the conduct of previous Republican (or Democratic) presidents.

This is not to say that there weren't moments of sharp disagreement between Reagan and Israel's leaders during Reagan's presidency. Sixteen days after the first MOU was signed, Reagan got very angry when Prime Minister Menachem Begin acted unilaterally by annexing the Golan Heights in violation of their agreement. Reagan called Begin's action a violation of UN resolution 242 and immediately halted F-16 shipments. In response, Begin exploded and famously declared, “What kind of expression is this – ‘punishing Israel?’ Are we a vassal state of yours? Are we a banana republic? Are we youths of fourteen, who, if we misbehave, we get our wrists slapped?”¹⁹⁰ And after Israel's controversial bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, Reagan briefly halted the delivery of four F-16s, though Israel continued to receive howitzer cannons,

¹⁸⁶ A Refusenick is a person in the former USSR who was refused permission to emigrate; it particularly referred to Jews in the USSR who were forbidden to emigrate to Israel. The term is derived from the “refusal” handed down to a prospective emigrant from the Soviet authorities.

¹⁸⁷ Bauer explains that Reagan would bring up Soviet Jewry to Soviet leaders “not only due to their plight, but as a matter of strategy.” And he suggests that by doing so, Reagan showed that “his support of Israel and the Jews was not confined to America or Israel, but to Jews all over the world, even in the USSR – a country in which it was battling in the Cold War.” Private interview with Gary Bauer, conducted on January 9, 2019.

¹⁸⁸ “U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel: History & Overview.” *Suleyman*, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/history-and-overview-of-u-s-foreign-aid-to-israel.

¹⁸⁹ “AIRLIFT TO ISRAEL IS REPORTED TAKING THOUSANDS OF JEWS FROM ETHIOPIA.” *The New York Times*, December 11, 1984.

¹⁹⁰ Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 190.

surface-to area missiles, and other heavy equipment.¹⁹¹ Despite Reagan's occasional criticism of Israel when he believed it acted wrongfully, Israel's supporters never doubted that he was a genuine friend of Israel. Toward the end of his second term in 1988, the Reagan Administration signed a new MOU with Israel that provided a more formal basis for political, economic and security cooperation.

Some might actually argue that Reagan's friendship toward Israel was so strong that he was willing to support them even when they blundered and engaged in conduct that harmed the Middle East. For example, during Israel's war in Lebanon in 1982, which was sharply criticized in Israel, Reagan unequivocally stood by Israel. In a meeting with Begin on June 21, 1982, he underscored his support for Israel: "On Lebanon, it is clear that we and Israel both seek an end to the violence there and a sovereign, independent Lebanon under the authority of a strong central government. We agree that Israel must not be subjected to violence from the north. The U.S. will continue to seek these goals and the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon."¹⁹² Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon was in Washington a week before the invasion and later reported, "I would say we have not surprised the Americans. There were many meetings on this issue." And he explained to *Jerusalem Television*, "I made it clear to [U.S. officials] – this was one of the major objectives of my mission there – that Israel had reached the end of the road that we would take action since we had no choice . . . In my opinion, this accounts for their relatively restrained reaction."¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Joe Stork, "Israel as Strategic Asset," *Reagan and the Middle East*, 39; "Israel as Strategic Asset," *Wall Street Journal*, July 22, 1981.

¹⁹² Bernard Gwertzman, "REAGAN AND BEGIN APPEAR IN ACCORD ON LEBANON STEPS," *The New York Times*, June 22, 1982; George Gruen, "The United States and Israel: Impact of the Lebanon War," *The American Jewish Year Book*, Vol. 84 (1984): 74.

¹⁹³ Stork, "Israel as Strategic Asset," 38; Ariel Sharon, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, June 17, 1982.

Indeed, Begin and Sharon had laid the political groundwork for Israel's invasion with U.S. officials long before invading. Data released by the Pentagon Defense Security Assistance Agency "show[s] that in the first quarter of 1982, shortly before the war began, Israel took delivery of \$217,695,000 worth of military equipment from the U.S." – nearly ten times the value delivered in the same period of 1980 and 40 percent more than in 1981.¹⁹⁴ The Pentagon also deployed U.S. naval forces in the Mediterranean Sea well in advance of the outbreak of hostilities, presumably to counter potential Soviet intervention. This fleet of more than 50 warships included the largest number of aircraft carriers ever assembled in the Mediterranean.¹⁹⁵

The Reagan Administration also did not publicly issue a single statement deploring or criticizing the invasion.¹⁹⁶ Haig inadvertently referred to Israeli warplanes downed in the first weeks' fighting as losses "we" suffered.¹⁹⁷ And throughout the war, despite heavy criticism, the Administration supported every Israeli military objective.¹⁹⁸ The Administration only called for a ceasefire well after Israeli troops had reached the outskirts of Beirut. And when Begin rejected Reagan's request to withdraw from Lebanon, U.S. officials did not immediately condemn Israel's rejection of UN Security Council resolution 509 or call on Israel to "withdraw its military forces forthwith and unconditionally." In fact, Haig quickly expressed the Administration's support when he said that the resolution is "no longer adequate to the needs of

¹⁹⁴ Claudia Wright, Pacific News Service dispatch, August 19, 1982; *Philadelphia Inquirer* reports 50, June 8, 1982.

¹⁹⁵ Stork, "Israel as Strategic Asset," 39.

¹⁹⁶ Reagan did, however, privately deplore an Israeli artillery attack in Beirut in a private conversation with Begin. Begin admitted in an interview that President Reagan called an Israeli airstrike in Beirut as a "holocaust" during an angry private phone call. But, he later stated in an interview, that the phone call was "one great misunderstanding" and that he regarded President Reagan as a "wonderful friend of Israel." "Begin says Reagan Used Word 'Holocaust,'" *UPI Archives*, August 29, 1982. In his own private diary, Reagan wrote that after he received a call from King Fahd of Saudi Arabia "begging [him] to do something" to stop the artillery attack, he intentionally used the word "holocaust," in his conversation with Begin, as a "symbol of war." He remarks that was not a reflection of him "turning on Israel" but rather an impassioned private appeal to Begin to stop the attack. Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, Douglas Brinkley (ed.), (NY: Harper Collins, 2007), 98.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid; *NYTimes*, "For Reagan, No Such Thing as Other People's Wars," June 13, 1982.

¹⁹⁸ Stork, "Israel as Strategic Asset," 40.

the situation.”¹⁹⁹ According to officials in the administration, “despite Washington’s unhappiness with Israel’s use of overwhelming force, the U.S. shared Israel’s view that there could not and should not be a return to the situation that existed before the invasion.”²⁰⁰

Observers of the American political scene could not help but watch these events unfold without concluding that Ronald Reagan was simply a different kind of Republican. Unlike Eisenhower, who sought to bring the Arab nations, led by Egypt, into the U.S. camp and as a result, put enormous pressure on Israel during the Suez Crisis, or Nixon, whose realpolitik approach to the Cold War caused him to look at the Arab-Israeli conflict primarily as a proxy war between the U.S. and the USSR, Ronald Reagan was perceived as a president who genuinely appreciated Israel’s strategic importance to the United States. For Wehner, Reagan transformed Israel politically by viewing it “in a very heroic way, and on the right side of the moral struggle in the Middle East.”²⁰¹ Abrams contends that what motivated Republicans to support Israel was Reagan’s explication of Israel’s strategic value. Reagan, he explains, positioned Israel as “an ally worth supporting, one on our side, and [one] standing for what we are fighting for. While he fought with Israel at times, in the end, there was always deep appreciation for Israel.”²⁰² These perceptions of Reagan, supported by his conduct in office, and buttressed politically by the voting strength of the Christian conservatives, helped transform the Republican Party into the pro-Israel party that it is today.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid; *Washington Post*, June 15, 1982.

²⁰⁰ Bernard Gwertzman, “The Outlook for Lebanon; News Analysis,” *New York Times*, June 12, 1982.

²⁰¹ Private interview with Peter Wehner, conducted on January 9, 2019.

²⁰² Private interview with Elliott Abrams, conducted on January 7, 2019.

Chapter IV: Democrats and Israel: Increasing “Daylight”

“Israel’s continued control and colonization of Palestinian land have been the primary obstacles to a comprehensive peace agreement in the Holy Land.” – Jimmy Carter, 2006.²⁰³

“Look at the past eight years. During those eight years, there was no space between us and Israel and what did we get from that? When there is no daylight, Israel just sits on the sidelines, and that erodes our credibility with the Arab states.” – Barack Obama, 2009.²⁰⁴

If a defining feature of the American Right over the past quarter-century has been its increasing support for the State of Israel, a defining feature of the American Left over the past decade has been an increasingly critical stance.²⁰⁵ This chapter identifies five historical developments that, over the same period, have shaped the American Left’s changing views toward Israel: (1) the impact of the anti-war movement that emerged in the late 1960s and early 70s; (2) Israel’s policy of building settlements in the territories it occupied after the Six-Day War; (3) Israel’s conduct during its highly unpopular war in Lebanon in the 1980s; (4) President Obama’s efforts to distance himself from the Middle East policies of his predecessor, George W. Bush, and adopt a more critical view of Israel; and (5) the growing influence of the Millennials,²⁰⁶ many of whom are liberal Democrats,²⁰⁷ who have become more vocal in the Democratic Party. Because some of these events are too recent to have a developed body of

²⁰³ Jimmy Carter, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2006), 208.

²⁰⁴ Barack Obama said this in a meeting to Jewish leaders in July 2009, as recorded in Scott Wilson, “OBAMA SEARCHES FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE,” *Washington Post*, July 14, 2012.

²⁰⁵ As of March 2019, roughly 76 percent of Republicans reported that they sympathize more with Israelis than with the Palestinians, whereas only 21 percent of Democrats say the same. And in the last two decades, the share of Republicans sympathizing more with Israel has increased 29 percentage points, from 50 percent to 76 percent, while over the same period, the share of Democrats sympathizing with Israel has decreased 17 percentage points, from 38 percent to 21 percent. “Americans Remain Staunchly in Israel’s Corner,” Pew Research Center, March 6, 2019.

²⁰⁶ Millennials are individuals born between 1981-1996, the first generation to come of age in the new millennium.

²⁰⁷ Liberalism is becoming the dominant affiliation of the younger generation. Since 2014, more Millennial voters have identified themselves as liberals (31 percent) than as conservatives (26 percent), and between 2000-2013, the share of liberals within the Democratic party rose from 29 to 43%. Among liberals, the decline in net sympathy for Israel has changed from +17 in 2013-2016 to +3 in 2017-2019, indicating that nearly as many liberal Democrats now sympathize more with the Palestinians (38%) as with the Israelis (41%). Jonathan Rynhold, “Democrats, Liberals and the Left: Rising Criticism Among Liberal Democrats,” *The Arab Israeli Conflict in American Political Culture*, (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 59-60.

historical analysis, this chapter draws upon interviews with several individuals who played significant roles in U.S.-Israeli relations over the past four decades, both as formal and informal advisors to presidents and as public commentators on the U.S.-Israel relationship. It also is informed by memoirs by former senior government officials in the U.S. government and by the memoirs of the former Israeli Ambassador to the United States under Prime Minister Netanyahu. Their interpretations shed light on two important trends over the past few decades that have led to growing criticism of Israel from the American Left: growing sympathy for the Palestinians and increased hostility toward Israel's right-wing led governments.

In the late 1960s, a new wave of Democrats emerged on the scene who were critical of the United States' Cold War policies and the escalating tension between the United States and the USSR. By 1969, propelled by their disillusionment with the Vietnam War, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), had grown to an organization with more than 100,000 members.²⁰⁸ The organization promoted direct action to oppose "white supremacy" and "imperial war,"²⁰⁹ and labeled America an imperialist nation.

At the same time, the tiny embattled State of Israel, then only 20 years old, began to transform itself into a serious regional military power. During six days in June 1967, Israel overwhelmed the armies of Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq, as well as combatants from the PLO and Lebanon. When the dust settled, Israel had not only vanquished its numerous enemies, but had also captured and occupied the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank of the Jordan River (including all of Jerusalem), and the Golan Heights. Looking back at how this period of American history affected the perception of Israel among some Democrats, Peter Wehner asserts

²⁰⁸ Todd Gitlin. "What Was the Protest Group Students for A Democratic Society? Five Questions Answered" *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 4, 2017.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

that this generation of 1960s activists “came to believe that America was a dominant and oppressive power that needed to be criticized and countered,” and this changed their opinion of Israel.²¹⁰ According to Wehner, two factors contributed to the shift: first, because Israel had become America’s most loyal ally in the Middle East, when the activists turned against America, they also turned against Israel.²¹¹ Second, he argues, there was a paradigmatic shift: with Israel’s success in the Six-Day War, “Israel became strong. It turned from David, underfunded and the underdog, to Goliath, the dominant power. There was antipathy from the Left because it was convinced it needed to root for the underdog.”²¹² Elliott Abrams, who in 1967 still identified as a Democrat and would later work for Senators Henry Jackson and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, looked back on this time and put it more bluntly: “Israel is clearly on the American side. Israel is popular with Americans and Americans are popular with Israel. That alone helps explain a lot of Left’s unhappiness with Israel, because the Left dislikes the U.S.”²¹³

Following Vietnam, these new politically-conscious Democrats, who came to be known as the ‘New Left,’²¹⁴ began to view Israel as a colonialist state, and postcolonialism,²¹⁵ the theory that the world is divided into victims and aggressors, became a common view within this community. When President Carter came into office, he drew on these postcolonialist ideas,²¹⁶

²¹⁰ Private Interview with Peter Wehner, January 28, 2019.

²¹¹ Wehner explains: “as antipathy toward America grew in the New Left, there would be hostility toward the closest allies of America and Israel was one of the closest allies” Private Interview with Peter Wehner, January 28, 2019.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Private interview with Elliott Abrams, conducted on January 7, 2019.

²¹⁴ Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (NY: Bantam Books, 1987), 4-6.

²¹⁵ Postcolonialism was inspired by the work of Edward Said and Noam Chomsky, and has become a strong current in academia. For postcolonialists, America must minimize its “imperialist” intervention abroad and concentrate instead on reducing poverty at home. Postcolonialism grew out of the Non-Aligned-Movement and the intellectual milieu of the New Left in the 1960s. It uses a quasi-Marxist analysis that transfers the old class division of European society into a new race-based class division between “colonizers” and “the colonized.” Rynhold, Jonathan. “Democrats, Liberals and the Left: Rising Criticism of Israel,” *The Arab-Israeli Conflict in American Political Culture*, 68-69.

²¹⁶ Ibid, 69.

becoming the first American president to voice support for the Palestinian cause.²¹⁷ As President, he helped legitimize the PLO as a political entity and authorized his Ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young, to meet with Yasir Arafat. In part due to the respect that the Carter Administration gave Arafat, the self-described terrorist²¹⁸ began to be perceived as a sympathetic freedom fighter.²¹⁹ After Carter left office, he became even more critical of Israel, stating unequivocally in 2009: “Israel’s continued control and colonization of Palestinian land have been the primary obstacles to a comprehensive peace agreement in the Holy Land.”²²⁰

If the Six-Day War had turned Israel into a victor nation that disenchanting some within the Left, it was the combination of Israel’s policy of building settlements in the Occupied Territories and its conduct during the Lebanon War in 1982 that brought about heightened criticism of Israel from a broad swath of Americans and Israelis, but especially those on the left side of the political spectrum. Shortly after the Six-Day War, Israel committed itself to a policy of creating “facts on the ground,”²²¹ new Israeli settlements in areas that prior to the 1967 War had been Jordanian, Syrian, or Egyptian land. The strategy behind the settlement policy was

²¹⁷ Stanley Karnow. “CARTER’S LONE,” *The New York Times*, January 15, 1978.

²¹⁸ Since his ascension into politics, Yasser Arafat has made several comments that stated his determination to not make peace with Israel and resort to terror. On March 29, 1970, he said: “We don’t want peace, we want victory. Peace for us means Israel’s destruction and nothing else.” *Washington Post*, March 29, 1970. In the late 1950s, he co-founded Fatah, the “Movement for the National Liberation of Palestine,” which attacked Israeli targets, villages, civilian infrastructure and engaged in acts of terrorism. Until his death in 2004, Arafat did not hide his intentions for terror; in a speech to Arab diplomats in 1996, for example, he declared: “we plan to eliminate the State of Israel and to establish a Palestinian state. We will make life unbearable for Jews by psychological warfare and population explosion.” Quoted in *Jerusalem Post*, February 23, 1996.

²¹⁹ Articles throughout the 1980s, following Carter’s presidency, spoke of the newfound “moderation” of “Freedom Fighter” Yasser Arafat. For example, Marvin Hier and Abraham Cooper, “Israel Won’t Be the Sacrificial Lamb” *Los Angeles Times*, December 15, 1988. And in 1994, as a culmination of this sentiment, Arafat was the co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

²²⁰ Jimmy Carter. *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006): 208-209.

²²¹ “Facts on the ground” is a diplomatic term that means in reality as opposed to the abstract. This term was popularized in the 1970s in discussions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to refer to Israeli settlements built in the occupied West Bank.

based on the old trope that “possession is nine tenths of the law.”²²² Though the building of settlements is now associated with the right-wing governments that have led Israel through most of the last 40 years, the policy was established under Labor Prime Minister Levi Eshkol shortly after the Six-Day War, in order to buttress Israel’s claim to these territories.²²³ Notably, whether the White House has been occupied by a Republican or Democrat, a common denominator of U.S.-Israel relations since the Six-Day War has been criticism of Israel’s settlements.

Indeed, one of the harshest critics of Israel’s settlement policies was Republican President George H. W. Bush, who made his views clear in a June 1990 speech: “The United States policy on settlements in the occupied territories is unchanged and is clear: we oppose new settlements in territories beyond the 1967 lines . . . Our objective is to get the parties to the peace table.”²²⁴ The following year, Bush sought to secure an end to the Arab economic boycott of Israel at the Madrid Peace Conference by insisting that Israel agree to a settlement freeze. When Israel persisted in new settlement construction, Bush retaliated by withholding \$10 billion in loan guarantees that Israel was seeking in order to resettle Soviet Jews,²²⁵ thus marking the first time

²²² Under this assumption, after land is taken, it is presented as “fact accompli” (fact accomplished), making it harder to turn back the clock. Earl Thrope, *The Other Truth About the Middle East Conflict*, (Morrisville, NC: Lulu Press, 2006), 137.

²²³ Yossi Goldstein writes that Eshkol considered the territories captured in the 1967 War as a bargaining chip for signing a full peace accord and a means of creating “facts on the ground.” He demonstrates this by the fact that eight days after the Israeli cabinet ratified the ‘Secret Resolution’ proposed by Eshkol, whereby Israel would participate in negotiations offering the return of most of the captured territories in return for full peace, it passed yet another proposal for the annexation of East Jerusalem and its broader region. In Eshkol’s mind, Goldstein writes, “there was no contradiction between the two decisions. He would repeat time and again, ‘our hand is stretched forth in peace to whoever wants it,’ and maintained that nothing prevented East Jerusalem from being part of the negotiations between Israel and the Arab states.” And, in his mind, the legitimacy for his approach of creating ‘facts on the ground’ was also based on his skepticism that the Arab leaders and Palestinians would accept Israel’s existence, demonstrated by the August 26, 1967 resolutions of the Khartoum Summit, which affirmed the ‘Three Nos’ – no peace, no recognition and no negotiations with Israel. Nonetheless, Goldstein maintains that until Eshkol’s very last day, he did not abandon his belief that any steps taken in the territories were reversible and should be used for negotiating. Yossi Goldstein, “Israel’s Prime Ministers and the Arabs: Levi Eshkol, Golda Meir, and Yitzhak Rabin,” *Israel affairs* 17, no. 2, (2011): 181.

²²⁴ George Bush, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush*, 1990, Book 1, 759.

²²⁵ "American Presidents and Israeli Settlements." Arab American Institute. July 6, 2009. Accessed March 24, 2019. <http://www.aaiusa.org/american-presidents-and-israeli-settlements1>.

that an American president had tied military or economic aid to Israel with limiting settlement construction. Only when Labor leader Yitzhak Rabin became prime minister in August, 1992, did Bush relent and conclude the \$10 billion loan guarantees with Israel.²²⁶

Israel's settlement policies were also challenged by Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush, both of whom were very strong supporters of Israel. Clinton maintained that settlement building and road construction in the Occupied Territories were in violation of the "Oslo process" which prohibited the parties from undertaking "unilateral activities" that would predetermine the outcome of final negotiation.²²⁷ Following the publication in 2001 of Nadia Abu El Haj's *Facts on the Ground*,²²⁸ which documented Israel's uptick in settlement building (which continues today),²²⁹ Israel's settlement policies became a rallying cry for anti-Israel activists around the world. Even George W. Bush, who later took positions that enabled Israel to continue to build new settlements,²³⁰ called for an end to settlement expansion in his 2002 "Road

²²⁶ Yet still, Bush did not soften his conditions; with Rabin, he enacted a dollar-for-dollar reduction from the loan guarantees for the estimated cost of what the Israelis were expending on settlements. Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 254.

²²⁷ As Clinton said in 1996: "the settlement issue under the Oslo Accords is a matter of determination between the parties as we move to the end of the negotiations. And we have encouraged everyone not to do anything which would weaken the chances of peace" William Clinton, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton*, 1996, 1226. Similarly, in 2001, he remarked: "The settlement enterprise and building bypass roads in the heart of what they already know will one day be a part of a Palestinian state is inconsistent with the Oslo commitment that both sides negotiate a compromise." Remarks of President Clinton at the Israel Policy Forum Gala Dinner, New York, January 7, 2001.

²²⁸ Controversy on Israel's settlement policies revived after the publication of Nadia Abu El-Haj's *Facts on the Ground*, which argued that the Israeli State had invented a mythological story of Israelite and Jewish historical presence in the land of Israel and imbued that story with a false aura of factuality to substantiate their territorial claims. In her view, archaeology is a "colonial science" whose main goal has been to intellectually "erase the history of Palestinians from the land." Nadia Abu El Haj, *Facts on the Ground*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 23.

²²⁹ According to the last census, there are reportedly 500,000 Israelis living in areas captured by Israel during the Six-Day War. Josef Federman, "Israeli settler leader says settlements grew rapidly in 2017," *Washington Post*, February 19, 2018.

²³⁰ For example, although the 2001 Mitchell Plan called for an end to violence and an end to settlement expansion as the first steps in restoring the peace process, Bush appeared to side with Israel's interpretation of the plan, insisting that until all violence stopped, Israel was not obligated to fulfill what was required of it, thus enabling Israel to continue building settlements. Bush also appeared to accede to Israel's effort to distinguish between "legal" settlements and "illegal" outposts. He insisted that the latter be removed, and did not pay as much attention to the former. "American Presidents and Israeli Settlements." Arab American Institute. July 6, 2009. Accessed March 24, 2019.

Map,” which called on the Israeli Government to dismantle all settlement outposts erected since March 2001 and to freeze all settlement activity.²³¹ Importantly, and certainly reflecting the new direction that Republicans were taking in their approach toward Israel, Bush later sent a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in April 2004 stating, “in light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that these settlements will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949.”²³² Today, Israel’s settlement-building has surely become a Rorschach test for how many Americans view Israel.

American public opinion about Israel was also impacted significantly by Israel’s conduct in the 1982 Lebanon War. The War, which was led by Likud leader Menachem Begin and right-wing general Ariel Sharon, brought sharp condemnation from Americans and, for the first time, many Israelis too. The Lebanon War was the first Middle Eastern conflict to be televised live, which contributed to public debate about Israel’s objectives and tactics. Condemnation of Israel exploded after the massacres at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in September 1982, in which hundreds²³³ of Palestinians and Lebanese Shiites were killed by Israeli-backed Christian Phalangists in Lebanon. And as later inquiries would demonstrate, even those conducted in Israel,²³⁴ Israel’s leaders bore significant responsibility for allowing the massacres to proceed.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Letter from President Bush to Prime Minister Sharon, Office of the Press Secretary, April 14, 2004.

²³³ The exact mortality rate is not explicitly known; estimates range from 460 according to the Lebanese police, and 700-800 calculated by Israeli intelligence. “First Lebanon War: Massacres at Sabra & Shatila,” *Jewish Virtual Library*. Accessed April 1, 2019.

²³⁴ The Kahan commission, formally known as the Commission of Inquiry into the Events at the Refugee Camps in Beirut, was established by the Israeli government and chaired by President of the Supreme Court Yitzhak Kahan, to investigate the Sabra and Shatila massacre in September 1982. Following a four-month investigation, the Commission concluded that the massacre was carried out by a Phalangist unit, acting on its own, but that their entry was known to Israel; thus, the Commission concluded that the Phalangists bore the “direct responsibility” and while Israel was not directly responsible, Israel carried an “indirect responsibility” for the massacre since the IDF controlled the area. Further, it found PM Begin responsible for not exercising greater awareness of the matter of introducing Phalangists into the camps. It found Defense Minister Ariel Sharon responsible for “ignoring the danger of bloodshed and revenge” and “not taking appropriate measures to prevent bloodshed.” Sharon’s negligence in protecting the civilian population of Beirut, it reported, amounted to a “non-fulfillment of a duty with which the Defense Minister was charged,” and recommended that Sharon be removed from his post. The Commission also

The war was so unpopular that a Gallup poll taken the day after the massacres revealed a sharp decline in American sympathy for Israel. Only 32 percent of Americans polled said they were more sympathetic toward Israel than the Arab nations (as opposed to 49 percent for Israel eleven months earlier), and 28 percent claimed to be more sympathetic to the Arab nations (as compared to the earlier 10 percent).²³⁵ Following the massacres, several prominent Democrats voiced their strong disapproval of Israel's conduct. George Ball, who had served as undersecretary of state in the Johnson administration, told the Senate foreign relations committee that Israel's invasion of Lebanon "was not a defensive action; it was an attempt to crush the only legitimate and recognized Palestinian opposition, so that Israel could proceed unchallenged to absorb the occupied areas."²³⁶ He urged the U.S. to "recast its relations with Israel."²³⁷ Journalist John Chancellor likewise referred to Israel as a "warrior state using far more force than is necessary," and contended that "Israel [had planned for] an invasion," suggesting that the assassination of Israeli General Argov (which had been the catalyst for the war) was "only a pretext" for Israel to attack Lebanon.²³⁸ Following the attacks and the negative coverage it received, many in the American Left began to regard the Lebanon incursion as "Israel's Vietnam."²³⁹

came to similar conclusions with respect to Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Rafael Eitan and Director of Military Intelligence, Major General Yehoshua Saguy. Doc. 104, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Events at the Refugee Camps in Beirut," 8 February 1983," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Documents 8, 1982-1984, <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/mfadocuments/yearbook6/pages/104%20report%20of%20the%20commission%20of%20inquiry%20into%20the%20e.aspx>.

²³⁵ *Newsweek*/Gallup Poll; source: *Newsweek*, October 4, 1982. Geraldine Rosenfield. "U.S. Public Opinion Polls and the Lebanon War," *The American Jewish Year Book* 84 (1984): 105-116.

²³⁶ George Gruen. "The United States and Israel: Impact of the Lebanon War," *The American Jewish Year Book* 84 (1984): 76.

²³⁷ George Ball. "RECAST TIES TO ISRAEL," *The New York Times*, July 28, 1982.

²³⁸ John Chancellor, reported by NBC in April 1982; Paul Jalbert, "'News Speak' about the Lebanon War," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 14, no. 1 (Autumn, 1984): 17.

²³⁹ "ISRAEL'S VIETNAM IS CALLED LEBANON," *Chicago Tribune*, December 2, 1998.

Notably, the war was also condemned by many Israelis. Home-grown protests grew as casualties mounted and as allegations surfaced that then-Defense Minister Ariel Sharon misled the government over his war aims.²⁴⁰ Following Sabra and Shatila, the largest protest rally ever held in Israel took place in Tel Aviv on September 25, 1982, organized by the Peace Now movement.²⁴¹ Israeli organizers called for Sharon and Begin's removal, and Peace Now leader Tzali Reshef criticized Israeli leadership, asserting, "you carried out a war without a national consensus. You turned us all into accomplices in this massacre. Resign. Go home. Go."²⁴² The fact that so many Israelis were protesting against their own government confirmed further for many American liberals that the Palestinians were the victims in the conflict and that Israel had become an oppressor.

By the time Barack Obama was elected president in 2008, Israel had been led by right-wing governments for the prior eight years. The settlement policies pursued by those governments had led to increased sympathy for the Palestinian cause and heightened criticism of Israel by the American Left who believed that Bush and Sharon had been the prime obstacles to peace.²⁴³ Obama was determined to show the world that he had a different approach to Israel than his predecessor²⁴⁴ and that Israel should not receive any special treatment. Looking back at

²⁴⁰ *Haaretz* military correspondent Zeev Shiff made international headlines when he called the massacre a "War Crime in Beirut." In this piece, he exposed IDF intelligence, suggesting that the Israeli government knew of the Phalangists' plans. Zeev Shiff, "War Crime in Beirut," *Haaretz*, September 20, 1982.

²⁴¹ While Peace Now advocates claimed that 400,000 people participated in the rally, and the rally became thereafter known as the "400,000 rally," other estimates put the figure much lower, maybe reaching 100,000 Israelis. Yet given Israel's population of four million at the time, the protest movement constituted a significant sum of the population. William Farrell, "ISRAELIS, AT HUGE RALLY IN TEL AVIV, DEMAND BEGIN AND SHARON RESIGN," *The New York Times*, September 26, 1982.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ Although it was under Sharon that Israel withdrew from Gaza, many in the American Left and press saw Sharon as the primary obstacle to peace. See: Avi Shlaim, "Israel and Palestine: The Real Obstacle to Peace is Sharon, Not Arafat," *NYTimes*, September 24, 2003; Chris McGreal, "The Real Obstacle to Peace is Not Terror but Sabotage by Sharon-Backed Army," *The Guardian*, June 19, 2003, etc.

²⁴⁴ Dennis Ross calls this Obama's "anything but Bush" policy. Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 342. Another W.H. aide, David Rothkopf, told Michael Oren, "the previous administration was perceived as too pro-Israel. Obama's policy will be ABB [Anything But Bush]." Oren, *Ally*, (NY: Random House, 2015), 49.

these years, Alan Dershowitz, who publicly supported Obama in both of his elections,²⁴⁵ claims that Obama “legitimated being anti-Israel.”²⁴⁶

Whether or not Dershowitz’s claim is overstated, Obama’s presidency was a turning point for the Democratic party’s relationship with Israel. Rejecting Bush’s dichotomous “us” and “them” definition that Obama believed fueled his predecessor’s “Global War on Terror,”²⁴⁷ Obama immediately sought to pursue engagement with the Muslim and Arab worlds, regarding them as natural allies. Shortly after taking office, Obama delivered a speech in the Turkish parliament in April 2009, in which he declared, “America’s relationship with the Muslim community, the Muslim world, cannot and will not be based on terrorism. We seek broader engagement based on mutual interest and respect.”²⁴⁸ Obama’s departure from Bush’s policies, and his embrace of Muslim states (some of whom that denied Israel’s existence), marked a sharp departure from the historic “special relationship” Israel had enjoyed during the Bush, Clinton and Reagan years.

Obama also appealed directly to the Palestinians, in a way no president had since Carter, believing that forging a peace between Israel and the Palestinians was the key to ameliorating instability in the Arab world.²⁴⁹ According Michael Oren, who served as ambassador to Israel

²⁴⁵ Dershowitz remarked, “Obama was a student and a friend. He sent me birthday emails, invited me to White House State dinners, and asked me for advice on a regular occasion.” He explained that after Obama invited him to the Oval Office before his election for a meeting about Iran and told him “he would never allow Iran to acquire nuclear weapons and that he would always have Israel’s back” Dershowitz “openly campaigned for him and when he broke his promises, [he] came out against [Obama].” He remarks that he “turned publicly against him” after he “engineered that UN security council resolution.” Private interview with Alan Dershowitz, conducted on February 24, 2019.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ilai Saltzman, “Not So ‘Special Relationship’? US-Israel Relations During Barack Obama’s Presidency,” *Israel Studies* 22, no. 1, Special Section: Foreign Relations (Spring 2017): 52.

²⁴⁸ President Obama, Remarks to the Turkish Parliament, *White House*, 6 April 2009, accessed February 25, 2019.

²⁴⁹ This adheres to Obama’s “linkage” theory, which holds that resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the key to resolving, or at least greatly ameliorating, all other major sources of instability and anti-Americanism in the Middle East. From this perspective, Israel is often perceived as a strategic liability. Rynhold, *The Arab-Israel Conflict in American Political Culture*, 67.

during Obama's presidency, "[f]rom the moment he entered office, Mr. Obama promoted an agenda of championing the Palestinian cause."²⁵⁰ Even before he was elected, Obama announced during his campaign interview on *Meet the Press* in 2008: "If we can solve the Israeli-Palestinian process, then it will make it easier for Arab states and the Gulf states to support us when it comes to Iraq and Afghanistan."²⁵¹ For Obama, a necessary precondition to peace was that Israel would have to make significant territorial concessions. This was a clear break from the policies of George W. Bush, who also promoted a two-state solution, but believed that the key to Palestinian statehood was primarily Palestinian reforms, such as the establishment of a reliable rule of law in the territories they controlled and the promotion of free markets.²⁵²

One of the most conspicuous ways in which Obama demonstrated that he would pursue a new Middle East policy was, according to Dennis Ross, the way he planned the first trip of his presidency to the Middle East. Ross, who was then serving on Obama's National Security Council staff as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for the Central Region,²⁵³ writes that when Obama planned his trip to the region in June, 2009, he decided to bypass Israel. He then delivered an address in Cairo in which he set forth his vision for the region.²⁵⁴ In what served as his first major Middle East address, Obama told his audience: "the United States does

²⁵⁰ Michael Oren. "How Obama Abandoned Israel," *Wall Street Journal*, June 16, 2015.

²⁵¹ *Meet the Press*, July 27, 2008, accessed February 25, 2019.

<http://www.nbcnews.com/id/25872804/#.VhwxWP1Viko>.

²⁵² In his Rose Garden Speech, President George W. Bush announced: "A Palestinian State will not be created by terror – it will be through reform . . . True reform will require entirely new political and economic institutions, based on democracy, market economics and action against terrorism." George W. Bush, Rose Garden Speech on Israel-Palestine Two-State Solution, June 24, 2002.

²⁵³ The Central Region referred to the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and South Asia.

²⁵⁴ Ross records in his book that while he suggested Cairo as the location of Obama's speech to the Muslim world, he strongly recommended that if Obama made this speech in Egypt, he had to go to Israel on the same trip, "otherwise he would convince the Israeli public that our outreach to Muslims came at Israel's expense." After Obama's speech, Ross describes how he questioned members of Obama's staff, asking why the President had not visited Israel, and they replied that they had persuaded him against doing so, "arguing that it would look too traditional: he would be doing what every other president felt obliged to do. Obama was different, and the Muslims needed to see he was different. If he was going to reach out to the Muslims – and do so in Cairo," they argued, "he would devalue the efforts and 'mix the message' if he went to Israel as well." Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 346.

not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace.”²⁵⁵ Historian Ilai Salzman contends that while this statement reflects a traditional U.S. position, it implied that Israel was *the* sole obstacle for peace, and that its settlement building was illegitimate and illegal,²⁵⁶ thereby contradicting the understandings reached between President Bush and Prime Minister Sharon regarding West Bank Settlements.²⁵⁷ Moreover, while Obama asserted in his speech that America’s support of Israel was “unbreakable,” he did not acknowledge the Jewish people’s ties to the land nor did he mention Zionism,²⁵⁸ even though he spoke about the Palestinians’ claim to the land. In fact, after

²⁵⁵ White House, “Remarks by the President on a New Beginning,” accessed February 25, 2019. http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-Cairo-University-6-04-09.

²⁵⁶ The legality of Israeli settlements is a contentious and disputed topic. Most of the debate centers on the interpretation of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. Resolution 242, which was sponsored by Britain shortly after the Six-Day War, and calls for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in the recent conflict. But there is lack of clarity as to what the drafters intended because of differences in wording between the English and the French versions of the text. The English version speaks to Israel’s withdrawal “from territories...,” while the French version speaks to Israel’s withdrawal “from *the* territories” (*des* territories...). Critics of Israel argue that the addition of the word “the” in the French version implies that Israel is required to withdraw from *all* the occupied territories. Resolution 338, which was passed shortly after the Yom Kippur War in 1973 reiterates the importance of Resolution 242, and calls upon the sides to begin negotiations with the aim of achieving a just and durable peace.

A second area of dispute concerns the Fourth Geneva Convention to the settlements. There are actually two issues relevant here. The first is whether the Convention is even applicable here, because Article 2 extends the Convention to “all cases of declared war or of any other armed conflict which may arise between two or more of the High Contracting Parties” and “all cases of partial or total occupation of the territory of a High Contracting Party.” Critics of Israel maintain that this proves the Convention’s applicability to Israel’s settlement policy, but Israel’s supporters argue that the Convention does not apply because the territories on the West Bank of the Jordan captured by Israel in 1967 had had not previously been recognized as part of any sovereign state and therefore could not be considered “the territory of a High Contracting Party.” The second issue relates to Article 49, which states both that “individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive,” and that “The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.” This is really a factual dispute, with Israel’s critics arguing that Israel’s settlements have displaced the indigenous Arab populations, while Israel’s supporters claim that no one has been forcibly transferred in or out of these settlements, and that the settlers themselves are all volunteers.

²⁵⁷ Salzman, “Not So ‘Special Relationship’? US-Israel Relations During Barack Obama’s Presidency,” 53.

²⁵⁸ According to Oren, Obama instead linked the legitimacy of the Israel to the Jews’ “tragic history” in the Holocaust, which he asserts, “denied three thousand years of unbroken Jewish connection to Israel’s land [and] overlooked the fact that Jews had always lived in the country and that millions of Israelis hailed not from Europe but from Africa and the Middle East.” Oren, *Ally*, 66.

remarking that “for centuries, black people in America suffered the lash of the whip as slaves and the humiliation of segregation,” Obama segued directly to the plight of the Palestinians.²⁵⁹

Oren notes that the Cairo Speech was representative of Obama’s foreign policy strategy, and his willingness to distance U.S. policy from Israel’s interests. “By highlighting its contributions to Israel’s defense,” he explains, “the administration could justify pressuring Israeli leaders on peace. This dual approach eased the anxieties of the president’s pro-Israel supporters while placing [the U.S.’] enemies on notice that, diplomatic differences notwithstanding, the allies remained militarily bound.”²⁶⁰ In this fashion, Oren records, Obama was able to confidently and accurately boast that security ties between the U.S. and Israel have never been closer. But, as Elliott Abrams observes, “What [Obama] failed to understand I think is that the degree of military and intelligence cooperation is hidden. Political support on other hand is visible. So, when you criticize the U.S. publicly or vote against Israel in UN that is visible, and that undermines Israel’s position in the world. And Obama did that. He thought well this can’t really hurt Israel as long as I keep up cooperation, but he was wrong. I think it did hurt Israel a lot.”²⁶¹ Peter Beinart, a prominent supporter of Israel and journalist who has been one of the leading voices within the Jewish community to criticize the policies of the Netanyahu government, disagrees with Oren’s and Abrams’ assessments; he points to the fact that “[Obama] never threatened aid at all or even suggested it,” and claims that Obama, instead, “pursued a conventional pro-Israel stance.”²⁶²

Obama’s criticism of Israel and his contempt for the way Bush had dealt with Israel, was not always hidden, nor reserved to his formal speeches. In an informal meeting with senior

²⁵⁹ Oren, *Ally*, 98.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 88.

²⁶¹ Private Interview with Elliott Abrams, January 7, 2019.

²⁶² Private Interview with Peter Beinart, April 10, 2019.

Jewish American leaders in 2009, Obama remarked: “Look at the past eight years. During those eight years, there was no space between us and Israel and what did we get from that? When there is no daylight, Israel just sits on the sidelines, and that erodes our credibility with the Arab states.”²⁶³ And Obama repeatedly complained about the Prime Minister Benjamin [Bibi] Netanyahu. Ben Rhodes, an aide for Obama, records in his memoir that Obama admitted “dealing with Bibi is like dealing with the Republicans.”²⁶⁴ When French president Nicolas Sarkozy remarked to Obama, “I cannot bear Netanyahu. He’s a liar,” Obama’s microphone caught him replying, “you’re fed up with him but I have to deal with him more often than you.”²⁶⁵

Nor was Obama’s frustration with Israel noticeable only in his rhetoric; it also manifested itself in some of his policies. Perhaps the most telling example was his de facto support, via an abstention, for United Nations Security Council Resolution 2234 in 2016, which declared that Israel’s settlements on Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, constitute a “flagrant violation” of international law and have “no legal validity.”²⁶⁶ While this was not the first time the U.S. allowed the Security Council to issue a sharp anti-Israel resolution,²⁶⁷ it was the first time since the waning months of the Carter Administration that the U.S. had permitted

²⁶³ Quote from July 13, 2009, quoted in Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 347. Notably, in these remarks, Obama ignored the fact that it was during the administrations of George W. Bush and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon that Israel withdrew entirely from Gaza.

²⁶⁴ Ben Rhodes, *The World as It Is: A Memoir of the Obama White House*, (New York: Random House, 2018), 146.

²⁶⁵ CNN Wire Staff, “Sarkozy, Obama bemoan Netanyahu over open mic, *CNN*, November 8, 2011.

²⁶⁶ United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2334 (2016), Adopted by the Security Council at its 7853rd meeting, on December 23, 2016. Pages: 1-2.

²⁶⁷ In 1987, the Reagan administration abstained and allowed the passage of UNSCR 605, 14 to 0, which reaffirmed the application of the Geneva Convention and included “Jerusalem” in the “Palestinian and Arab territories, occupied by Israel since 1967.” George W. Bush also voted in favor of UNSCR 1525, which called for a full settlement freeze. And during Carter’s presidency, the Security Council addressed settlements directly twice. In 1979, it passed Resolution 446 declaring that settlements lack “legal validity” (S.C. Res. 446, para 1, March 22, 1979), and the next year, it reaffirmed its judgment in Resolution 465. Natan Sachs, “What’s New and What’s Not in the U.N. Resolution on Israeli Settlements,” *Brookings*, December 26, 2016; “UN Security Council Resolution 2334, UN Security Council Asserts Illegality,” *Harvard Law Review*, June 10, 2017.

the Security Council to issue such a strong condemnation of Israel, and one that called the settlements illegal.²⁶⁸ After Carter, subsequent U.S. Presidents had all opposed such a measure, and as recently as 2011, the Obama Administration had vetoed a similar resolution on the grounds that it would “encourage the parties to stay out of negotiations.”²⁶⁹ Dershowitz calls Obama’s decision to approve this resolution a month before he left office “lofty, vengeful and petty,”²⁷⁰ and an example of his “decept[ion].”²⁷¹ Beinart disagrees and argues that Obama’s 2016 abstention was not an attack on Israel, but rather reflected his unwavering understanding of the settlements as illegal; he posits that only reason Obama had vetoed the 2011 resolution was due to “pure politics:” “the Obama people were afraid of losing ‘pro-Israel’ Democratic donors [before his reelection],” and therefore, “[in 2011] he was [merely] unable to freely express his earlier views.”²⁷²

Perhaps what is most notable about Obama’s dealings with Israel, and in particular, with Prime Minister Netanyahu, is that it made it politically acceptable within the Democratic Party to be openly hostile to Israel. The fight over Israel’s language in the 2016 Democratic Party Platform underscored this rising sentiment within the progressive wing and their growing political divide from the moderates of the party. At that convention, Bernie Sanders (a 2016 candidate and 2020 presidential hopeful) forcefully spoke out against Israel for what he called “disproportionate responses” to Palestinian actions, and openly criticized Israel’s settlement

²⁶⁸ Subsequent presidents since Carter had referred to these settlements as “unhelpful” or “obstacles to peace” but refrained from questioning their legality. Oren, *Ally*, 112.

²⁶⁹ Susan Rice, S.C. Res. 446, note 6. She wrote in the 2011 security resolution: “while we agree with our fellow Council members about the folly and illegitimacy of continued Israeli settlement activity, we think it unwise of this council to attempt to resolve the core issues that divide Israelis and Palestinians.”

²⁷⁰ Private interview with Alan Dershowitz, February 24, 2019.

²⁷¹ He sees him as deceptive, claiming “[Obama] would pretend to be pro-Israel in order to get reelected, but afterwards he turned against Israel in a large way.” *Ibid.*

²⁷² Private interview with Peter Beinart, April 10, 2019.

growth for “undermin[ing] the peace process and ultimately, Israeli security as well.”²⁷³ Sanders and his backers sought to exclude references to Jerusalem as belonging wholly to Israel, and advocated for language that labeled Israeli settlements in the West Bank as “an occupation,” a notion adamantly opposed by Hillary Clinton’s moderate supporters who warned it would undercut the peace process. At the end of the convention, the 2016 Democratic platform reflected Clinton’s more tempered two-state solution party line, and she received the Democratic bid; the convention, however, demonstrated and foreshadowed rising progressive antagonism towards Israel’s government.

It can be argued, then, that President Obama’s presidency led to the fourth development that is relevant to the Left’s growing dissatisfaction with Israel: the influence of a younger generation of elected Democrats, who are increasingly liberal, and much more critical of Israel than the party leadership.²⁷⁴ Beinart contends, however, that this trend “was not [due to] anything Obama did,” but rather, “the trajectory that was happening on the ground among grassroots Democrats.”²⁷⁵ When Obama was elected president, he galvanized many young voters, as well as minorities, such as blacks, Hispanics, and Muslims, who tend to be less supportive of Israel than

²⁷³ Tal Kopan and Elise Labott, “Hillary Clinton’s views on Israel win out in DNC platform, for now,” *CNN Politics*, June 26, 2016.

²⁷⁴ Millennials are more likely to be neutral or critical of Israel, and were among Obama’s strongest supporters. When asked whether protecting Israel should be an important goal of American foreign policy in 2001, about a third of Americans aged 18-50 agreed with this statement, compared to 50 percent aged 50 and over. Rynhold, “Democrats, Liberals, and the Left,” 59-60. And when asked about their sympathies in the conflict, 40% of millennial liberal Democrats said they favored the Palestinians compared with 33% who favored Israel. By contrast, among Americans in general, 54% sympathized more with Israel and just 19% with the Palestinians. Pew Research Center, “Public Uncertain, Divided Over America’s Place in the World,” May 5, 2016, <http://www.people-press.org/2016/05/05/5-views-of-israel-and-palestinians>.

²⁷⁵ Private interview with Peter Beinart, conducted on April 10, 2019.

older Democrats²⁷⁶ and who, according to Beinart, “identify more with Palestinians.”²⁷⁷ These voters have changed the composition of the Democratic party and their influence can be seen in the halls of Congress, where newly elected Members of Congress have no hesitation about being vocally anti-Israel. They can also be seen on college campuses, where the movement to boycott Israel and divest from Israeli companies has gained traction.

Congress is the clearest example of how the Democratic party is changing. Gary Bauer points to the 2012 Democratic convention as the first time he noticed a discernible change in the Democratic party. During the voice-vote for the 2012 Democratic platform, the committee, he recalls, “very intentionally removed all references to God that had traditionally been in various parts of the platform, and they also removed reference to Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.” While those planks of the platform did not pass, largely due to President Obama’s efforts,²⁷⁸ during the voice-vote, he recalls, it sounded like it passed by a small margin. “To me,” Bauer remembers, “it sounded like the delegates who did not want God or Jerusalem in the platform were the majority.” And when this language was rejected from the platform, he explains, “there was a whole wave of booing that arose by delegates. I think this was a sign of what is happening in the left-wing of the Democratic party, where the passion is, and where all these new delegates are coming from.”²⁷⁹ Bauer also pointed to some of the newest members of Congress as

²⁷⁶ More than half of the Democratic base is comprised of blacks (70% of blacks identified as Democrats in 2016), Muslims (66% identified as Democrats in 2016) and Hispanics. Among all the major ethno-religious groups in the U.S., sympathy for Israel was lowest among Catholic Hispanics. Hispanics have surpassed African-Americans as the largest minority group in the U.S.; in 2019, they comprised about 15 percent of the total U.S. population and this figure is projected to double by 2050. Consequently, the growth of Hispanics might further lower the level of pro-Israel support among Democrats. Rynhold, “Democrats, Liberals, and the Left,” 85; Besheer Mohamad, Pew Research Center, November 6, 2018; “Black Party Affiliation.” BlackDemographics.com. Accessed March 09, 2019.

²⁷⁷ Private interview with Peter Beinart, conducted on April 10, 2019.

²⁷⁸ The language recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel was reinstated after pressure from Obama. Mark Landler, “Pushed by Obama, Democrats Alter Platform Over Jerusalem,” *New York Times*, September 5, 2012.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

exemplifying the new face of the Democratic party. “This past year we’ve seen two Muslim-American women²⁸⁰ elected on the Democratic ticket and they are both sharply critical of Israel.²⁸¹ And yet, they have been welcomed into Washington as if they are the wave of the future.”²⁸² As immigration patterns continue, he explains “more and more folks come from Islamic countries and seem to be naturally attracted to Democratic party, which will continue the trend we are seeing of overall Democratic voters looking a lot less pro-Israel than the Republican party is.”²⁸³

Rising criticism of Israel is also seen on college campuses. Until the mid-1980s, polls showed that educated Americans sympathized more with Israel;²⁸⁴ today, that is no longer the case.²⁸⁵ A 2011 survey by the Israel Project, a non-partisan pro-Israel American education organization, revealed that a quarter of American college students considered Israel to be an “apartheid state,” and an additional 50 percent said they were unsure.²⁸⁶ This shift is likely influenced in part by the strength of the Boycott Divest Sanctions (BDS) movement. BDS was established in 2001, and in 2009 it began endorsing academic and cultural boycotts of Israel.

²⁸⁰ He is referring here to Congresswoman Ilhan Omar and Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, both of whom have faced backlash from their party and in the news for their anti-Israel comments that have bordered on anti-Semitism.

²⁸¹ Both Omar and Tlaib have recently made controversial vocal statements and tweets that have contained anti-Semitic tropes. For example, Rep. Omar’s tweet “Israel has hypnotized the world, may Allah awaken the people to help them see the evil doings of Israel” from 2012 resurfaced in 2019. More recently, she suggested that American support for Israel is “all about the Benjamin’s” in a 2019 tweet, indicating that all American-Israeli lobbying is concerned with money and funded by AIPAC. And Congressman Talib was rebuked for her 2019 tweet: “I cannot imagine our country not having the right to economic boycott,” which seemed to portray American supporters of Israel as maintaining “dual-loyalties.” Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi criticized their comments, and the Democratic party in response issued a resolution which condemned anti-Semitism, as well as Islamophobia, and all other forms of bigotry, yet, Pelosi maintained that Rep. Omar “did not understand the full weight of the words she used.” There have been heated debates on whether this measure was sufficient and if Rep. Omar should be removed from her seat on the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives. Zack Beauchamp, “The Ilhan Omar anti-Semitism controversy explained,” *Vox*, March 6, 2019. Sarah Ferris, “House Dems will take floor action to confront Omar’s latest Israel comments,” *Politico*, March 4, 2019.

²⁸² Private Interview with Gary Bauer, January 9, 2019.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ Eytan Gilboa, *American Public Opinion Toward Israel*, 282-284.

²⁸⁵ Oppenheim, “The Segmentation Study of the American Market, Fourth Quarter, 2010.”

²⁸⁶ Public Opinion Strategies Survey of U.S. College Students, October 28- November 8, 2011, conducted by The Israel Project and the American-Israeli Cooperation Enterprise.

Many college campuses, such as Columbia University among others, have annual “Apartheid Weeks,” in which opponents of Israel connote Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians with South African apartheid of the 1990s. Regardless of whether BDS actually passes on college campuses, or if these boycotts have any tangible effect on Israel’s economy, the movement’s popularity has invariably influenced many students’ opinions who previously did not have much knowledge about Israel.

Today, sympathy for the Palestinian cause has become at least as central a value among Democrats as support of Israel – as evidenced by the insertion of the line “a demilitarized Palestinian state that give[s] the Palestinians people a right of dignity and self-determination” into the 2016 Democratic Party Platform.²⁸⁷ This sentiment was further perpetuated by President Obama, who, both in his rhetoric and policies, appealed to Palestinians. At the same time, criticism of Israel’s right-wing Likud governments encouraged more vocal condemnation of Israel’s government among Democrats. These trends have enabled the Democratic party to rebuke some of Israel’s policies while maintaining overall support for the State of Israel with respect to foreign aid, military and intelligence cooperation.

Yet, the line between criticism of Israel’s government and criticism of the State of Israel has become blurred, and there are some within the Democratic Party who believe that the vitriolic attacks on Israel from the Left are not just criticism of the right-wing Netanyahu government. Dershowitz, for example, argues that if “someone like (the left-wing former Prime Minister) Shimon Peres were elected, the young people today who are anti-Israel would still be

²⁸⁷ "Party Platform." Democrats. July 8-9 2016, accessed March 25, 2019. <https://democrats.org/about/party-platform/>. This is noteworthy because the Republican platform contains no reference to the establishment of a Palestinian state, and only affirms that the U.S. “seeks to assist in the establishment of comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, to be negotiated among those living in the regions.” Armin Rosen, “How the Republican and Democratic Platforms Differ on Israel,” *Tablet Magazine*, July 14, 2016.

anti-Israel. Today it doesn't matter who the Prime Minister is. I don't think a change in government is going to make a substantial difference for young radicals."²⁸⁸ Beinart agrees that a change from a Netanyahu government would likely not change the sentiment. He argues that the current sentiment is "not only [about Netanyahu]. It's also the policy." And until Israel changes its policies, claims Beinart, especially those regarding the settlements, criticism of Israel will persist among the Left, regardless of which Israeli party is in power.

It remains to be seen to what extent the traditional support for Israel by the Democratic Party continues in the years to come. Much will depend on the party's political leadership as well as the conduct of Israel's leaders. But one thing is certain: the attitudes about Israel shared by a growing number of Democrats today are in stark contrast with those of a generation or two ago, and indicate a burgeoning partisan gap between Republicans and Democrats over Israel.

²⁸⁸ Private Interview with Dershowitz, February 24, 2019.

Conclusion

“Like no other foreign policy topic, Israel has become a culture war issue for Americans. How you feel about Israel has become a proxy for what you want for the United States.” – Peter Beinart, 2019.²⁸⁹

Attitudes toward Israel among Americans undeniably have shifted over the past forty years, and the bipartisanship that defined the United States’ relationship with Israel during its first three decades as a state has waned. Beginning in the late 1970s and accelerating dramatically in the past decade, the Right has embraced Israel more tightly while the Left has grown increasingly critical of Israel, though the U.S.-Israel relationship at a strategic level continues to remain very strong. As I have argued, the two key factors that led the Right to embrace Israel have been the growing influence of evangelicals in the Republican Party and the perception of Israel, beginning during Reagan’s presidency, as the United States’ key strategic partner in the Middle East. The primary sources of the Left’s mounting criticism of Israel have been the growing sympathy for the plight of the Palestinians combined with increased animosity toward Israel’s right-wing policies, in particular, its settlement building in the territories it captured in 1967.

Beyond these factors, however, I believe that the growing polarization regarding Israel is also rooted in the particularistic nature of the State of Israel and its unabashed nationalism. And in this respect, the growing partisan divide about Israel is emblematic of how ideologically divided the United States has become. A study in 2014 by the Pew Research Center revealed that voters from both major political parties are becoming increasingly polarized along ideological lines, with Republicans becoming more conservative and Democrats more liberal.²⁹⁰ Israel taps

²⁸⁹ Peter Beinart in a lecture at Boston University, April 11, 2019.

²⁹⁰ According to the study, while partisanship and ideology didn’t line up neatly, among politically engaged voters (those who almost always vote), the sorting of liberals and conservatives into the two parties showed that 99 percent of politically engaged Republicans are more conservative than the median Democrat, while 98 percent of engaged Democrats are more liberal than the median Republican. That’s up 88 and 84 percent, respectively, from 2004. “Political Polarization in the American Public,” Pew Research Center, June 12, 2014.

into the diverging ideologies of these groups. As I discussed in my fourth chapter, the ‘New Left’ emerged in the 1960s with the founding of SDS, an organization led by students who were members of the League for Industrial Democracy, a Socialist student organization. SDS was openly critical of United States foreign policy and criticized America’s “imperial” conduct in the Vietnam War.²⁹¹ As the Vietnam War became increasingly unpopular, these activists not only condemned American nationalism, but some also argued that nation-state systems were inherently suspect; they maintained that national identities were unimportant relative to cross-national and self-organized global entities (such as the United Nations).²⁹² In espousing a universalistic ideology that discredited nationalism, the New Left sowed the seeds for the growing criticism of Israel we see today, because Israel was founded upon, and continues to embrace, a distinctly particularistic and national objective – Zionism.²⁹³

These universal values not only influenced President Obama’s decision to “distance” his administration from Israel, at least rhetorically, but have also led contemporary liberals, like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a freshman Democratic congresswoman, to decry Israel’s “special status.” She recently summarized her views about Israel when she wrote in an email to her donors: “in this administration and all others, there should be no *special relationship* or status.”²⁹⁴

²⁹¹ Jack Weinberg and Jack Gerson, “SDS and the Movement: Where Do We Go From Here?,” *Independent Socialist*, September 1969.

²⁹² Evelyn Gordon, “How a Changing American Liberalism Is Pulling American Jews Away From Israel,” *Mosaic*, May 18, 2017.

²⁹³ The first lines of Israel’s Declaration of Independence clearly articulate Israel’s nationalist and particularistic mission: “The land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance . . . after being forcibly exiled from their land, the people remained faithful to it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and the restoration in it for their political freedom. . . . In the year 5657, Theodore Herzl, the first Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country.” The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, May 14, 1948.

²⁹⁴ Michael F. Haverluck, “AOC Calls to ‘End U.S.-Israeli Relationship’ in Fundraising Email,” *One News Now*, March 9, 2019. Emphasis added.

Conservatives and Republicans, in contrast, have become more nationalist in the last three decades. Melani McAlister, Professor of American Studies and International Affairs at George Washington University, posits that since the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis and the Islamic terrorist attacks in the decades that followed, conservatives have viewed Islamic nations with suspicion; she argues that the nightly coverage of the hostage crisis in 1979, which highlighted the vulnerability of the United States, cemented the link between terrorism and Islam in the American imagination.²⁹⁵ And this perception was certainly reinforced by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.²⁹⁶ According to Peter Beinart, the ensuing War on Terror “created a stronger link between Israel and the American Right, and cemented the idea that [they] were fighting the same enemy.”²⁹⁷ For example, when presidential candidate John McCain was asked why America should have a military option for dealing with Iran when the threat was mainly targeted at Israel, he responded: “I think these terrorist organizations that they sponsor, Hamas and others, are also bent, at least long-term, on the destruction of the USA.”²⁹⁸

Most recently, America’s ideological polarization has been further exacerbated by the presidential campaign and subsequent election of Donald Trump, who continues to tap into nationalistic fears and prejudices. During his presidency, Islamophobia has increased among Trump’s voters; when polled about the president’s proposed Muslim immigration ban, 80

²⁹⁵ Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 198-234.

²⁹⁶ In its 2016 report “15 Years After 9/11, A Sharp Partisan Divide on Ability of Terrorists to Strike U.S.” Pew pollsters record that 58% of Republicans view the ability of terrorists to attack as greater than at the time of 9/11, up 18 percentage points since November 2013. Meanwhile, only 31% of Democrats say the same. “15 Years After 9/11, A Sharp Partisan Divide on Ability of Terrorists to Strike U.S.,” *Pew Research Center*, September 7, 2016. And views about the link between Islam and violence has grown in recent years; in 2002 when asked about this link, 11 points separated Republicans and Democrats. By December 2016, the partisan gap had grown to 44 points: 70% of Republicans say Islam is more likely than other religions to encourage violence, compared with 36% of Democrats. “How the U.S. general public views Muslims and Islam,” *Pew Research Center*, July 26, 2017.

²⁹⁷ Private Interview with Peter Beinart, April 10, 2019. Beinart adds that this sentiment has been further perpetuated by Netanyahu, “who often compares the Palestinian groups he is fighting against to Hamas, ISIS, or Al-Qaeda.”

²⁹⁸ Jeffrey Goldberg, “McCain on Israel, Iran and the Holocaust,” *Atlantic*, May 30, 2008; Rynhold, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict in American Political Culture*, 43.

percent of Americans who voted for Trump stated they supported the ban.²⁹⁹ Beinart observes that Trump has introduced into U.S. politics an “ethnic nationalism” with a “white Christian element.” This nationalism, he argues, runs counter to “civic nationalism,” the “kind of nationalism that liberals feel more comfortable with, which does not privilege one ethnic group for another.”³⁰⁰ This Trumpian nationalism, according to Beinart, has also influenced the President’s policies on Israel, because Trump is more willing to defer to Israel in negotiations, which “has created a strong sense on the Left that the principles that Netanyahu represents are the same as [Trump’s].”³⁰¹

In my view, the growing gap on Israel is thus not only partisan, but also deeply ideological. Israel is at the crossroads of American debate precisely because it has become a prism through which Americans with differing political ideologies not only identify themselves but also understand their vision for America. While America’s overall diplomatic commitment to Israel may not have changed much in the last few decades, and the level of financial and military aid to Israel is at its all-time high,³⁰² the political resonance toward Israel in the United States, as well as the composition of the political parties, is clearly changing. This thesis, and the story of the evolving American perceptions of Israel, thus reflects how American attitudes have changed

²⁹⁹ A YouGov survey reports that when Trump first proposed his “Muslim ban” in December 2015, 80% of voters who said they planned to vote for a GOP candidate wanted to institute his ban. “Nearly one-fifth of Americans would deny their country’s Muslims the right to vote,” *The Economist*, June 14, 2018. Accessed April 4, 2019. <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2018/06/14/nearly-one-fifth-of-americans-would-deny-their-countrys-muslims-the-right-to-vote>. Further, among white evangelicals (Trump’s strongest base), two-thirds of Republicans (68%) admitted Islam is not part of mainstream American society, and 65% declared there is a natural conflict between Islam and democracy. “How the U.S. general public views Muslims and Islam,” *Pew Research Center*, July 26, 2017.

³⁰⁰ Private interview with Peter Beinart, April 10, 2019.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² The 2020 fiscal plan sent by the White House to Congress includes an annual \$3.3 billion in assistance to Israel. In 2016, the largest aid deal was struck for Israel under a new MOU, providing \$38 billion in aid from 2018-2028. Marcy Oster, “White House Budget Plan Contains \$3.3 Billion in Military Aid For Israel,” *The Jerusalem Post*, March 13, 2019; U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel, *Congressional Research Service*, April 10, 2018. https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20180410_RL33222_45cc775a4a3ecd6ea838ca6339e79ff0eb08d22b.pdf.

in the last 60 years. Based on these trends, Israel will surely remain a point of contention in American politics, both in the upcoming 2020 Presidential race, and in the years to come.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

I. Personal Interviews:

Recorded Phone Interview with Elliott Abrams, conducted on January 7, 2019, 2:30 p.m.

Recorded Phone Interview with Gary Bauer, conducted on January 9, 2019, 1:00 p.m.

Recorded Phone Interview with Peter Wehner, conducted on January 28, 2019, 12:00 p.m.

Recorded Phone Interview with Alan Dershowitz, conducted on February 24, 2019, 2:00 p.m.

Recorded Phone Interview with Lee Zeldin, conducted on March 5, 2019, 3:00 p.m.

Recorded Phone Interview with Peter Beinart, conducted on April 10, 2019, 2:00 p.m.

(These interviews were all recorded and transcribed by the author.)

II. Printed Matter:

Acheson, Dean. *Present at the Creation My Years in the State Department*. New York, NY: New American Library, 1970.

Ball, George. "Recast Ties to Israel," *The New York Times*, July 28, 1982.
<https://www.nytimes.com/1982/07/28/opinion/recast-ties-to-israel.html>

Besheer, Mohamad, "Republicans Account for a Small but Steady Share of U.S. Muslims" *Pew Research Center*, November 6, 2018. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/11/06/republicans-account-for-a-small-but-steady-share-of-u-s-muslims/>

"Black Party Affiliation." *BlackDemographics.com*. Accessed March 09, 2019.
<https://blackdemographics.com/culture/black-politics/>.

Bush, George H. W. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush*, Book 1, 1990.

Bush, George W. Rose Garden Speech on Israel-Palestine Two-State Solution, June 24, 2002.
<https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020624-3.html>

Carter, Jimmy. *Keeping Faith Memoirs of a President*. Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1982.

———. *Why Not the Best?* Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1975.

- Clifford, Clark M., and Richard C. Holbrooke. *Counsel to the President: A Memoir*. New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1992.
- Clinton, William. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton*, 1996.
- CNN Wire Staff, "Sarkozy, Obama bemoan Netanyahu over open mic," *CNN*, November 8, 2011. <https://edition.cnn.com/2011/11/08/world/europe/france-sarkozy-netanyahu/index.html>
- Document 104, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Events at the Refugee Camps in Beirut," 8 February 1983," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Documents 8, 1982-1984.
- Eisenhower, Dwight D. *The White House Years: Waging Peace*. Garden City, New York, NY: Doubleday, 1963.
- Falwell, Jerry. *Listen, America!* Toronto: Bantam Books, 1981.
- Farrell, William. "Israelis, at Huge Rally in Tel Aviv, Demand Begin and Sharon Resign," *The New York Times*, September 26, 1982. <https://www.nytimes.com/1982/09/26/world/israelis-at-huge-rally-in-tel-aviv-demand-begin-and-sharon-resign.html>
- Ford, Gerald R. *A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald R. Ford*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1979.
- Goldberg, Jeffrey. "McCain on Israel, Iran and the Holocaust," *Atlantic*, May 30, 2008. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2008/05/mccain-on-israel-iran-and-the-holocaust/8346/>
- Gruen, George. "The United States and Israel: Impact of the Lebanon War," *The American Jewish Year Book* 84 (1984): 73-103.
- Jalbert, Paul. "'News Speak' about the Lebanon War," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 14, No. 1 (Autumn, 1984): 16-35.
- Karnow, Stanley. "CARTER'S LONE," *The New York Times*, January 15, 1978. <https://www.nytimes.com/1978/01/15/archives/carters-long-mideast-ordeal-candidate-carter-and-the-promised-land.html>.
- Kirkpatrick, Jeane. "Dictatorships and Double Standards," *Commentary Magazine*, November 1979. <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/dictatorships-double-standards/>.
- Kissinger, Henry. *White House Years*. New York: Simon & Schuster Trade Paperbacks, 1979.
- Kristol, Irving. *Reflections of a Neoconservative: Looking Back, Looking Ahead*. New York, NY: Basic Books Publishers, 1983.

Landler, Mark and Isabel Kershner, "Israeli Settlement Growth Must Stop, Clinton Says," *New York Times*, May 27, 2009.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/28/world/middleeast/28mideast.html>.

Lindsey, Hal, and Carole C. Carlson. *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970.

Meet the Press, July 27, 2008, accessed February 25, 2019.
http://www.nbcnews.com/id/25872804/ns/meet_the_press/t/meet-press-transcript-july/#.XJwMkC2ZPdc.

Mohr, Charles. "Senate, 52-48, Supports Reagan on AWACS Jet Sale to Saudis; Heavy Lobbying Tips Key Votes," *The New York Times*, October 29, 1981.
<https://www.nytimes.com/1981/10/29/world/senate-52-48-supports-reagan-awacs-jet-sale-saudis-heavy-lobbying-tips-key-votes.html>.

Oren, Michael. "How Obama Abandoned Israel," *Wall Street Journal*, June 16, 2015.
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-obama-abandoned-israel-1434409772>.

"Party Platform." Democrats. July 8-9 2016, accessed March 25, 2019.
<https://democrats.org/about/party-platform/>.

Pew Research Center, "Public Uncertain, Divided Over America's Place in the World," May 5, 2016. <http://www.people-press.org/2016/05/05/5-views-of-israel-and-palestinians>.

———. "Political Polarization in the American Public," June 12, 2014.
<https://www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/>

———. "15 Years After 9/11, A Sharp Partisan Divide on Ability of Terrorists to Strike U.S.," September 7, 2016. <https://www.people-press.org/2016/09/07/15-years-after-911-a-sharp-partisan-divide-on-ability-of-terrorists-to-strike-u-s/>.

———. "How the U.S. general public views Muslims and Islam," *Pew Research Center*, July 26, 2017. <https://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/how-the-u-s-general-public-views-muslims-and-islam/>

Public Opinion Strategies Survey of U.S. College Students, October 28- November 8, 2011, conducted for the Israel Project and the American-Israeli Cooperation Enterprise.

Rabin, Yitzhak. *Rabin Memoirs*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976.

Reagan, Ronald. *An American Life*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1990.

———. "Recognizing the Israeli Asset," *Washington Post*, August 15, 1979.

- , and Douglas Brinkley (ed.) *The Reagan Diaries*. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2009.
- Remarks of President Clinton at the Israel Policy Forum Gala Dinner, New York, January 7, 2001. <https://clintonwhitehouse6.archives.gov/2001/01/2001-01-07-remarks-by-the-president-at-the-israel-forum-gala-dinner.html>.
- Rhodes, Ben. *The World as It Is: A Memoir of the Obama White House*, New York, NY: Random House, 2018.
- Rice, Susan E. U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, U.S. Mission to the United Nations, Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on the Resolution on the Situation in the Middle East, Including the Question of Palestine, in the Security Council Chamber (Feb. 18, 2011), <https://2009-2017-usun.state.gov/remarks/4978> [<https://perma.cc/3FZ3-B5JG>].
- Rosenfield, Geraldine. "U.S. Public Opinion Polls and the Lebanon War," *The American Jewish Year Book* 84 (1984): 105-116.
- Saad, Lydia. "Americans Remain Staunchly in Israel's Corner," *Gallup*, March 13, 2018. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/229199/americans-remain-staunchly-israel-corner.aspx>.
- Shiff, Zeev. "War Crime in Beirut," *Haaretz*, September 20, 1982.
- . "Reactions to the Massacre," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 12, No. 2 (Winter 1983): 175-179.
- Stork, Joe. "Israel as Strategic Asset," *Middle East Research and Information Project*, (May 1982): 3–13.
- Truman, Harry S. *Memoirs: Years of Trial and Hope*. New York: Smithmark Publishers, 1955.
- Tyroller, C. II ed. *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on Present Danger* Washington D.C.: Pergamon – Brassey's, 1984.
- United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2334 (2016), Adopted by the Security Council at its 7853rd meeting, on December 23, 2016.
- U.S. Code, Title 22, Foreign Relations and Intercourse. Chapter 61. Anti-Terrorism – PLO > Section 5201. Findings; determinations. *Legal Information Institute, Cornell Law School*. Published December 22, 1987, retrieved April 10, 2019. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/22/5201>.
- "U.S.-Israel Strategic Cooperation." *Policy Focus: Newsletter of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, no. 3 (September 1986): 2.

White House, "Remarks by the President on a New Beginning," accessed February 25, 2019. http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-Cairo-University-6-04-09.

Wilson, Scott. "OBAMA SEARCHES FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE," *Washington Post*, July 14, 2012. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/obama-searches-for-middle-east-peace/2012/07/14/gJQAQQiKIW_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.8ae4a7a9ae2b.

"Zionists Proclaim New State of Israel; Truman Recognizes It and Hopes for Peace." *The New York Times*. May 14, 1948. Accessed February 12, 2019. <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0514.html>

Secondary Sources

Abu El Haj, Nadia. *Facts on the Ground*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

"American Presidents and Israeli Settlements." Arab American Institute. July 6, 2009. Accessed March 24, 2019. <http://www.aaiusa.org/american-presidents-and-israeli-settlements1>.

Aruri, Naseer H., Fouad Moughrabi, and Joe Stork. *Reagan and the Middle East*. Belmont, MA: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1983.

Bard, Mitchell G. "U.S.-Israel Strategic Cooperation." Suleyman. Accessed February 12, 2019. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-1968-sale-of-phantom-jets-to-israel>.

Beauchamp, Zack. "The Ilhan Omar anti-Semitism controversy explained," *Vox*, March 6, 2019. <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/3/6/18251639/ilhan-omar-israel-anti-semitism-jews>.

"Begin says Reagan Used Word 'Holocaust,'" *UPI Archives*, August 29, 1982. <https://www.upi.com/Archives/1982/08/29/Begin-says-Reagan-used-word-holocaust/3133399441600/>.

Beinart, Peter. *The Good Fight: Why Liberals--and Only Liberals--Can Win the War on Terror and Make America Great Again*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2008.

Ben Barka, Mokhtar. "The New Christian Right's relations with Israel and with the American Jews: The Mid-1970s Onward." *E-rea*, 2012. <https://journals.openedition.org/erea/2753>.

Bennis, Phillis and Khaled Mansour, "Praise God and Pass the Ammunition!": The Changing Nature of Israel's U.S. Backers," Middle East Report No. 208, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East: Critical Assessments* (Fall 1998): 16-18, 43.

Blitzer, Wolf. *Between Washington and Jerusalem*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

- Boudreau, Donald G. "The Bombing of the Osirak Reactor," *International Journal of World Peace* 10, No. 2 (Jun., 1993): 21-37.
- Byman, Daniel. "The Rise of the PLO and the Birth of International Terrorism (1956-1970s)," in *A High Price: The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*, Oxford Scholarship Online, 2015.
- Capps, Walter H. *The New Religious Right: Piety, Patriotism, and Politics*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1994.
- Carenen, Caitlin. *The Fervent Embrace: Liberal Protestants, Evangelicals, and Israel*. New York: New York University Press, 2012.
- Carter, Jimmy. *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, New York: Simon and Shuster, 2006.
- Chanes, Jerome. "For Israel, A Foreign Policy Camelot." *Jewish Week*. November 12, 2013. Accessed February 12, 2019. <http://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/for-israel-a-foreign-policy-camelot/>.
- Cobban, Helena. "The U.S.-Israeli Relationship in the Reagan Era." *Conflict Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 5-32.
- Dalin, David G., and Alfred J. Kolatch. *The Presidents of the United States & the Jews*. Middle Village, NY: Jonathan David Publishers, 2000.
- Erakat, Noura. "BDS in the USA, 2001-2010," *Middle East Report*, No. 255, WEAPONS OF THE STRONG (Summer, 2010): 34-39.
- Federman, Josef. "Israeli settler leader says settlements grew rapidly in 2017," *Washington Post*, February 19, 2018. www.washingtonpost.com/amphtml/world/the_americas/israeli-settler-leader-says-settlements-grew-rapidly-in-2017/2018/02/19/50e7a9ea-15de-11e8-930c-45838ad0d77a_story.html.
- Ferris, Sarah. "House Dems will take floor action to confront Omar's latest Israel comments," *Politico*, March 4, 2019. <https://www.politico.com/story/2019/03/04/omar-israel-house-democrats-1201881>.
- Fitzgerald, Francis. "The Evangelical Surprise," *The New York Review of Books*, April 26, 2007. <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2007/04/26/the-evangelical-surprise/>.
- Freedman, Robert Owen. *Israel and the United States Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2012.
- Ganin, Zvi. *An Uneasy Relationship: American Jewish Leadership and Israel, 1948-1957*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005.

- Gilboa, Eytan. *American Public Opinion toward Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1987.
- Ginsberg, Benjamin. *The Fatal Embrace: Jews and the State*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- Gitlin, Todd. *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*. New York: Bantam Books, 1987.
- . “What Was the Protest Group Students for A Democratic Society? Five Questions Answered” *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 4, 2017. <https://theconversation.com/what-was-the-protest-group-students-for-a-democratic-society-five-questions-answered-76849>.
- Goldberg, Jeffrey. “McCain on Israel, Iran and the Holocaust,” *Atlantic*, May 30, 2008. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2008/05/mccain-on-israel-iran-and-the-holocaust/8346/>
- Goldstein, Yossi. “Israel’s Prime Ministers and the Arabs: Levi Eshkol, Golda Meir, and Yitzhak Rabin,” *Israel affairs* 17, no. 2, (Mar., 2011): 177-193
- Gordon, Evelyn. “How a Changing American Liberalism Is Pulling American Jews Away From Israel,” *Mosaic*, May 18, 2017. <https://mosaicmagazine.com/response/israel-zionism/2017/05/how-a-changing-american-liberalism-is-pulling-american-jews-away-from-israel/>
- Hagee, John. *Jerusalem Countdown: A Warning to the World*. Lake Mary, FL: Frontline, 2006.
- Harding, Susan. *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Isaacson, Walter, and Evan Thomas. *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made: Acheson, Bohlen, Harriman, Kennan, Lovett, McCloy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988.
- Klare, Michael. “Carter’s Arms Sales Policies: Business as Usual,” *Social Scientist* 7, no. 4 (Nov., 1978): 3-13
- Little, Douglas. “The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and Israel, 1957-68,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25, No. 4 (Nov., 1993): 563-585.
- Maisel, L. Sandy and Iran Forman, Eds. *Jews in American Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001.
- Mansour, Camille. *Beyond Alliance: Israel and U.S. Foreign Policy*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- McAlister, Melani, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media and U.S. Interests in the Middle East*,

- 1945-2000, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001.
- McGreal, Chris. "The real obstacle to peace is not terror but sabotage by Sharon-backed army," *The Guardian*, June 19, 2003. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/jun/20/israel>.
- Miller, Steven P. "The Evangelical Presidency: Reagan's Dangerous Love Affair with the Christian Right." *Salon*. May 16, 2014. Accessed February 12, 2019. https://www.salon.com/2014/05/18/the_evangelical_presidency_reagans_dangerous_love_affair_with_the_christian_right/.
- "Nearly one-fifth of Americans would deny their country's Muslims the right to vote," *The Economist*, June 14, 2018. Accessed April 4, 2019. <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2018/06/14/nearly-one-fifth-of-americans-would-deny-their-countrys-muslims-the-right-to-vote>.
- Neff, Donald. "Nixon's Middle East Policy: From Balance to Bias," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 12, No. ½, (Winter/Spring 1990): 121-152.
- Neufeld, Michael J., and Michael Berenbaum. *The Bombing of Auschwitz: Should the Allies Have Attempted It?* Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2003.
- Oren, Michael B. *Ally: My Journey Across the American-Israeli Divide*. New York, NY: Random House, 2016.
- . *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011.
- . *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 2017.
- Phillips, James. "The AWACS Sale: Prospects for U.S. Policy," *The Heritage Foundation*, 153 (Oct., 1981): 1-14.
- Podvig, Pavel. "The Window of Vulnerability that Wasn't" Soviet Military Buildup in the 1970s -- A Research Note, *International Security* 33, No. 1. (Summer 2008): 118-138.
- Preston, Andrew. *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.
- Quandt, William B. *Decade of Decisions: American Policy toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict: 1967-1976*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977.
- Robert, Frederic. "Legacy and Impact of the American New Left: National and International Influence," *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* 6, No. 3 (June 2016): 15-24.
- Rodman, David. "Phantom Fracas: The 1968 American Sale of F-4 Aircraft to Israel." *Middle*

- Eastern Studies* 40, no. 6 (Nov., 2004): 130-144.
- Ross, Dennis. *Doomed to Succeed: The U.S.-Israel Relationship from Truman to Obama*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016.
- Rosen, Armin. "How the Republican and Democratic Platforms Differ on Israel," *Tablet Magazine*, July 14, 2016. <https://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/208036/how-the-republican-and-democratic-platforms-differ-on-israel>
- Rubin, Jennifer. "Onward, Christian Zionists," *The Weekly Standard*, August 2, 2010. <https://www.weeklystandard.com/jennifer-rubin/onward-christian-zionists>.
- Ryhndol, Jonathan. *The Arab Israeli Conflict in American Political Culture*, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Sachs, Nathan. "What's New and What's Not in the U.N. Resolution on Israeli Settlements," *Brookings*, December 26, 2016. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2016/12/26/whats-new-and-whats-not-in-the-u-n-resolution-on-israeli-settlements/>.
- Saltzman, Ilai. "Not So 'Special Relationship'? U.S.-Israel Relations During Barack Obama's Presidency," *Israel Studies* 22, No. 1, Special Section: Foreign Relations (Spring 2017): 50-75.
- Sandford, Michael J. ed., *The Bible, Zionism and Palestine: The Bible's Role in Conflict and Liberation in Israel-Palestine*. Dunedin, NZ: Relegere Academic Press, 2016
- Schulman, Bruce J., and Julian E. Zelizer eds., *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008.
- Seymour, Hersh. *Price of Power Kissinger in the Nixon White House*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1984.
- Shlaim, Avi. "Israel and Palestine: The Real Obstacle to Peace is Sharon, Not Arafat," *New York Times*, September 24, 2003. <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/24/opinion/IHT-israel-and-palestine-the-real-obstacle-to-peace-is-sharon-not.html>.
- Sniegowski, Stephen J. *The Transparent Cabal: The Neoconservative Agenda, War in the Middle East, and the National Interest of Israel*. Norfolk, VA: I H S Press, 2008.
- Sutton, Matthew A. *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017.
- Tal Kopan and Elise Labott, "Hillary Clinton's views on Israel win out in DNC platform, for now," *CNN Politics*, June 26, 2016. <https://www.cnn.com/2016/06/24/politics/hillary-clinton-israel-dnc-platform/index.html>.

- Thrope, Earl. *The Other Truth About the Middle East Conflict*, Morrisville, NC: Lulu Press, 2006.
- Tobin, Jonathan S. "The Deepening Divide Between Red and Blue Jewish America." *Jewish Week*. November 13, 2018. Accessed February 12, 2019. <https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/the-deepening-divide-between-red-and-blue-jewish-america>.
- Troy, Gil. "The Jewish Vote: Political Power and Identity in U.S. Elections." *Ruderman Family Foundation*. September 11, 2016. Accessed February 12, 2019. https://rudermanfoundation.org/white_papers/the-jewish-vote-political-power-and-identity-in-us-elections/.
- "UN Security Council Resolution 2334, UN Security Council Asserts Illegality," *Harvard Law Review*, June 10, 2017. <https://harvardlawreview.org/2017/06/u-n-security-council-resolution-2334/>.
- Vance, Laura. "The Fifties Spiritual Marketplace: American Religion in a Decade of Conflict: The Fifties Spiritual Marketplace: American Religion in a Decade of Conflict." *Nova Religion*, no. 2 (1999): 308-10. doi:10.1525/nr.1999.2.2.308.2.
- Viguerie, Richard A. *The New Right: Were Ready to Lead*. Falls Church, VA: Viguerie, 1981.
- Wald, Kenneth D. *Religion and Politics in the United States*. New York, NY: St Martins, 1987.
- Weber, Timothy. "Dispensational Premillennialism: The Dispensationalist Era," *Christianity Today* 61: A History of the Second Coming, 1999.
- Weinberg, Jack and Jack Gerson, "SDS and the Movement: Where Do We Go From Here?," *Independent Socialist*, September 1969. <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1/is-sds-split.pdf>
- White, Joseph R. "Target Auschwitz: Historical and Hypothetical German Responses to Allied Attack." *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 16, no. 1 (2002) doi:10.1093/hgs/16.1.54.
- Wilcox, Clyde, and Carin Robinson. *Onward Christian Soldiers? The Religious Right in American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2011.
- Wilentz, Sean. *Age of Reagan: A History, 1974-2008*, New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2008.