

CHAPTER 14

The Limits of Triumphalism in the Middle East

Israel, the Palestinian Question, and Lebanon in the Age of Reagan

SETH ANZISKA

It is increasingly clear that US foreign policy in the Reagan era had a far-reaching impact on the global South, particularly the Middle East and Africa.¹ While scandals such as Iran-Contra highlighted the domestic fallout of covert Cold War action in Washington, US diplomatic and military intervention in the Levant had tragic consequences on several interconnected fronts, fomenting local violence and entrenching conflict. In reexamining flashpoints such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Lebanon against the backdrop of wider transformations, regional specialists can help explain how the Middle East was directly affected by Reagan's foreign policy in the closing years of the Cold War.²

Reagan's approach to Israel, the Palestinian question, and Lebanon was a stark departure from that of Jimmy Carter's administration. After the fitful pursuit of an equitable outcome to Israel's conflict with the Palestinians through the Camp David process and the signing of a bilateral Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in March 1979, Reagan's choices further exacerbated conflict in the region.³ As newly available evidence suggests, the administration's national security strategy intensified an alliance with Israel and marginalized Palestinian nationalists as agents of Soviet influence in the Middle East. The Reagan White House also inaugurated a shift in the US approach to international law with regard to settlement building in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, empowering the government of Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to build

—1
—0
—+1

further settlements in the occupied territories. Most damaging, however, was the green lighting of Israel's June 1982 invasion of Lebanon. The war abetted the military targeting of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and wreaked havoc on a civilian population already consumed by an internal civil war, and it drew US forces into their deadliest confrontation abroad since Vietnam.

In deferring the possibility of US engagement with the PLO leadership and explicitly supporting Israel's actions in the occupied territories and in Lebanon, Reagan signaled the reordering of American regional priorities in the 1980s. But the limits of this approach quickly became apparent, as open clashes with the Israelis over Lebanon and the introduction of a diplomatic plan aimed at resolving the Palestinian question underscored a tacit return to Carter-era principals. At a decisive juncture in the international history of the Middle East, following the Iranian revolution in 1979 and the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980, Reagan's policies in the region aggravated Arab attitudes toward the United States and set the stage for protracted conflict well into the twenty-first century.

When it came to the Middle East, Reagan's abiding affinity was for Israel. His memoirs reflect this. "I've believed in many things in my life, but no conviction I've ever held has been stronger than my belief that the United States must ensure the survival of Israel."⁴ During an early meeting about the Middle East, one participant remembers the candidate talking fondly about *Exodus*, the wildly popular Otto Preminger film based on the novel by Leon Uris that celebrated the miraculous victory of Israel over the Arabs in 1948. Reagan's approach during the campaign was an extension of this worldview.⁵

On September 3, 1980, Reagan addressed a Jewish American group at the B'nai Brith Forum in Washington, DC. "While we have since 1948 clung to the argument of a moral imperative to explain our commitment to Israel," Reagan argued, "no Administration has ever deluded itself that Israel was not of permanent strategic importance to America. Until, that is, the Carter administration, which has violated this covenant with the past."⁶ Reagan's extensive repudiation of Carter encompassed his predecessor's attempt at a comprehensive settlement between Israel and the Arabs and the inclusion of the Soviet Union in these negotiations, as well as US arms sales to Saudi Arabia and Jordan. This criticism was reflected in the pages of the staunchly pro-Israel *Commentary* magazine, an intellectual home for many of Reagan's foreign policy advisors. The magazine characterized Carter's hands-on approach to resolving Israel's conflict with the Arab world as appeasement.⁷

In Reagan's view, Israel was clearly part of an anticommunist struggle that would keep Soviet influence in the Middle East at bay. "Without this bastion of liberal democracy in the heart of the area," Reagan wrote in the *Washington Post* in 1979, "our own position would be weaker."⁸ Such an approach mirrored his actions in Latin America, as Michael Schmidli describes with regard to democracy promotion in Nicaragua.⁹ After taking office, this anticommunist view was emphasized by leading neoconservative advisors. In the view of one scholar who has closely examined US perceptions of the region, officials within the Reagan administration promoted the idea "that Israel was a vital Cold War ally of the United States and that Palestinians were tools of the Soviet Union in its campaign of international terrorism."¹⁰ Under the growing influence of these staunch anticommunists, Reagan's worldview reconstituted the Middle East as a site of contestation between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Secretary of State Alexander Haig, who had been chief of staff in the Nixon White House and Supreme Allied Commander of NATO in Europe, was a chief architect of this new approach. In his memoir, Haig described a radical rethinking of US priorities in the Middle East. To address concerns about the Soviet Union and the "fear of Islamic fundamentalism," Haig instituted a policy of "strategic consensus."¹¹ This policy had the dual aim of fighting communism and bolstering moderate Arab states, while upholding Israel's security.¹² Recoiling at Carter's perceived weakness toward the Soviet Union, especially after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the emerging "Reagan doctrine" incited a late Cold War revival.¹³ Through military interventions and the arming of anticommunist resistance movements in an effort to "roll back" Soviet-supported governments in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, the Reagan White House embarked on what the Cold War scholar Odd Arne Westad has called an "anti-revolutionary offensive in the Third World."¹⁴

In the Middle East, this doctrine collided with events on the ground. Nicholas Veliotis, Reagan's assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, said that there was "a determination to globalize everything in the Middle East" in a remark that underscored the incompatibility of this new approach.¹⁵ "In part," Veliotis explained some years later, "if your analysis of the Middle East always started from the East-West focus, you could obscure the regional roots of the problem."¹⁶ Both the internecine violence of the Lebanese civil war and the outbreak of the first Palestinian Intifada in 1987 undercut the Reagan doctrine and forced a return to Carter-era restraint in executing Middle East policy. This reversal occurred as the administration's sweeping anticommunist rhetoric gave way to growing accommodation with

—1
—0
—+1

the Soviet Union during Reagan's second term in office.¹⁷ But a globalist outlook—which oversimplified regional complexities and positioned Israel as a key asset—characterized the early months of Reagan's first term.

In his first trip to the Middle East as secretary of state in April 1981, Alexander Haig focused on strengthening US relations with Israel along these Cold War lines. His counterparts in Jerusalem were very encouraged by the new administration in Washington, having openly clashed with Carter's expansive aspirations for a settlement to the Palestinian question throughout the forging of the Camp David Accords.¹⁸ Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin had entered office in 1977 after the surprise overthrow of the dominant Labor Party by the right-wing Likud. Begin was a staunch defender of his country's territorial acquisitions in 1967 and promoted a narrow vision of autonomy for the Arab inhabitants of the newly occupied territories. He did not see Palestinians as a national movement requiring self-determination in the West Bank and Gaza, but rather as a national minority in "Judea and Samaria" whom Israel could treat with greater benevolence under Jewish sovereignty.¹⁹

The Israeli prime minister drew on a Cold War framework to justify his views. During his opening meeting with Haig, Begin stressed Israel's deep opposition to a Palestinian state. "It would be a mortal danger to us," Begin implored. "It would be a Soviet base in the Middle East, after all the Soviets achieved: Mozambique, South Yemen, Ethiopia, invading Afghanistan, etc. . . . Unavoidably the Judea, Samaria and Gaza District and those settlements would be taken over by the PLO and the PLO is a real satellite of the Soviet Union."²⁰ The inclusion of the PLO into the Soviet orbit solidified the link between Palestinian state prevention and shared US-Israeli foreign policy goals in the Cold War. Secretary Haig's official toast that same evening underscored this interdependence. Turning to his Israeli hosts gathered in Jerusalem's King David Hotel, Haig praised the country for playing "an essential role in protecting our mutual strategic concerns against the threats of the Soviet Union and against the threats of its many surrogates."²¹

Growing mutual interest between the US and Israel was encapsulated by Haig's effort to initiate a strategic dialogue beyond military channels. Throughout the summer and fall of 1981 the US secretary of state convened meetings intended to formalize the first strategic alliance between the two countries.²² As part of these talks, Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon outlined an expansive vision of Israel's strategic value to Reagan during Begin's first official meeting with the Americans in Washington. "Israel can do things, Mr. President, that other countries cannot do. We have the stability of a real democracy. . . . We can both act in the Mediterranean theatre and in Africa. We are

capable of embarking upon cooperation immediately. We have American equipment which we can put at your disposal in the shortest time.”²³ One American participant recalls seeing Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger “blanch visibly” at Sharon’s presentation, which outlined Israeli military assistance as far east as Iran and as far north as Turkey. Weinberger, who had pushed harder for engagement with moderate allies in the region, was wary of any sign that the US was turning away from key Arab states, particularly the Gulf countries.²⁴ “Everyone on the American side was shocked by the grandiose scope of the Sharon concept for strategic cooperation,” observed US ambassador to Israel, Samuel Lewis.²⁵

The gap between the expansive Israeli concept of strategic cooperation and the tempered enthusiasm of some US officials was linked to competing interests across the Middle East. One of the primary beneficiaries of US Cold War strategy in the region was now Saudi Arabia, a country that defense officials such as Weinberger hoped would move closer, like Egypt before it, toward the West. This duality bred a great deal of tension. Israeli leaders and American Jewish organizations vocally opposed the sale of F-15 fighter jets and airborne warning and control systems (AWACS) to Riyadh, threatening to undermine an emerging regional constellation of power.²⁶

On November 30, 1981, Israel and the United States signed a memorandum of understanding promoting strategic cooperation to deal with the Soviet threat. Emphasizing the importance of a unified front against communism, it encompassed joint military exercises and preventative threat measures.²⁷ While leading supporters of Israel such as Secretary Haig were pleased to formalize a strategic relationship, conservative critics such as Weinberger worked to strip the memorandum of real content. As Lewis recalls, “Weinberger managed to have it signed in the basement of the Pentagon without any press present, so that it didn’t get any attention. The Israeli press was fully briefed and made a big thing out of it, but there were no photographs of Weinberger signing this document with Sharon—they might have been used in the Arab world to undermine his position.”²⁸

In forging a strategic alliance with Israel, the Reagan administration turned a blind eye to the more troubling aspects of the Begin government’s agenda, such as settlement expansion in the West Bank. It also put aside strident arguments that had erupted over Israel’s highly provocative bombing of Iraq’s Osirik nuclear reactor on June 7, 1981.²⁹ But not long after the signing of the memorandum in December 1981, a major crisis erupted when Begin moved to extend Israeli law to the Golan Heights through implicit annexation, and the agreement was suspended.³⁰ Critics of Israel in the administration were furious, with Weinberger exclaiming, “How long do we have to go on bribing

—1
—0
—+1

Israel? If there is no real cost to the Israelis, we'll never be able to stop any of their actions."³¹ Reagan took decisive action by suspending millions in potential arms sales, infuriating the Israeli prime minister. Begin responded directly to Ambassador Lewis. "Are we a state or vassals of yours? Are we a banana republic?" he exclaimed. "You have no right to penalize Israel. . . . The people of Israel lived without the memorandum of understanding for 3,700 years, and will continue to live without it for another 3,700 years."³² This angry reaction, like the sensitive discussions over the Osirik bombing, revealed hidden tension in the US-Israeli relationship in the early Reagan years.³³

Despite these disagreements, Israel emerged in the early 1980s with a new rationale to entrench its global Cold War standing and solidify its regional position. The strategic alliance helped the Begin government counter Palestinian demands for self-rule by dismissing the PLO as a Soviet proxy and denying Palestinians substantive political standing. Furthermore, the alliance enabled intensified settlement building in the occupied territories, providing a justification for Israel's internal hold over the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Most dramatically, the relationship abetted Israel's invasion of Lebanon, drawing the US into a longstanding civil war and igniting a regional backlash.

Since 1975, the US government had vowed to marginalize the PLO until the organization accepted relevant UN Resolutions 242 and 338 and recognized Israel.³⁴ During the November 1980 US presidential campaign, when asked whether he thought the PLO was a terrorist organization, Reagan answered affirmatively, albeit with an important distinction. "I separate the PLO from the Palestinian refugees. None ever elected the PLO."³⁵ His views were connected to broader conservative antipathy toward the violence of anticolonial movements in the 1960s and 1970s. "We live in a world in which any band of thugs clever enough to get the word 'liberation' into its name can thereupon murder schoolchildren and have its deeds considered glamorous and glorious," Reagan said during the campaign. "Terrorists are not guerrillas, or commandos, or freedom-fighters or anything else. They are terrorists and should be identified as such."³⁶

For all Reagan's symbolic warnings of "appeasement" when he was asked about whether the US should establish diplomatic relations with the organization, the PLO was undergoing a transformation from military resistance to a diplomatic track, one that had largely been achieved by the late 1970s.³⁷ There were important fissures within the constituent factions of the Palestinian national movement, and incidents of armed violence and terror attacks persisted into the 1980s. Although carried out by dissident splinter groups and rejectionist

factions such as the virulently anti-PLO Abu Nidal Organization, officials in the Reagan White House often blurred the distinction.³⁸ Richard Allen, Reagan's national security advisor, dismissed countervailing influences within the PLO. During an interview on the ABC news program *20/20*, he labeled the group a "terrorist organization" until "it provides convincing evidence to the contrary."³⁹ According to Allen, moderate factions within the organization had little bearing on the administration's overall stance. "I've heard descriptions that identified [PLO chairman Yasser] Arafat as a moderate. . . . One man's moderate is another man's terrorist."⁴⁰

Some Reagan White House officials understood that the PLO was a complex, dynamic organization. Raymond Tanter, a National Security Council (NSC) staffer who focused on the Middle East, cautioned Allen in November that "the President should not brand all of the PLO organizations as terrorists since the PLO includes a number of social and political institutions."⁴¹ He cited the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) *Palestinian Handbook*, which recognized nonterrorist entities such as the PLO Research Center and the Palestine Red Crescent Society. There was also ample evidence of direct low-level contact with moderate members of the PLO. A series of newspaper articles in the summer of 1981 revealed that contacts had been ongoing since Henry Kissinger's time in office, with Reagan's contacts facilitated primarily through the CIA and the American Embassy in Beirut.⁴² The administration also had less formal discussions with PLO members through third-party interlocutors such as John Mroz, the director of Middle East Studies at the International Peace Academy in New York.⁴³

Palestinian factions in Beirut took note of the dominant hostility toward the PLO in Washington, as did the active Arabic press at the time. One leading weekly, *Al-Hadaf* (The Target) was unrelenting in its critique of what it characterized as American neo-imperial aspirations in the Middle East. The newspaper, founded by the Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani, was the mouthpiece of the Marxist leaning Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).⁴⁴ Reagan himself, in the eyes of *Al-Hadaf*, was restoring the use of force as the primary tool of US foreign policy in the region. Along with Haig, the president was portrayed as a radical departure from Carter and his US human rights agenda.⁴⁵ From the perspective of Palestinian activists in the global South, Reagan offered little hope for improving America's standing abroad.⁴⁶ The brunt of *Al-Hadaf's* fury, however, was directed at Israel and Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Under a grotesque cartoon of Begin, face deformed, blood dripping from his hands, and a dagger at the ready, the paper attacked Israeli settlement policy in the West Bank and Begin's undermining of Palestinian national identity.⁴⁷

The Reagan administration's support for Begin's settlement expansion was evident in the changing US position toward the legality of ongoing building projects in the West Bank. Throughout Carter's presidency, US policy on the settlements had been "clear and consistent."⁴⁸ They were considered illegal under international law and detrimental to the peace process, and the administration opposed both new settlements and expansion of those already built.⁴⁹ During the 1980 campaign, Reagan took a different stance. In an interview with *Time* magazine on June 30, 1980, he was asked whether he would "try to persuade Israel to stop settling on the West Bank?" His response underscored a clear difference with Carter. "Frankly, I don't know the answer to that. Under U.N. Resolution 242, the West Bank was supposed to be open to all, and then Jordan and Israel were to work out an agreement for the area." In light of these terms Reagan argued, "I do not see how it is illegal for Israel to move in settlements."⁵⁰

In the week after his inauguration, Reagan expanded on this new position after lawmakers in Jerusalem approved three new West Bank settlements. When asked about the expansion during a press conference, he replied: "I believe the settlements there—I disagreed when the previous administration referred to them as illegal, they're not illegal."⁵¹ In the NSC staff, Middle East adviser Raymond Tanter vigorously defended the administration's new approach. "The settlements *are legal*, but the issue is properly a *political* question, *not a legal* question. . . . There is no law that bars Jews from settling in the West Bank. No one should be excluded from an area simply on account of nationality or religion."⁵² Eugene Rostow, the Sterling Professor of Law at Yale University, was an influential voice in facilitating this legal and semantic shift. Rostow's adamant defense of the settlements entrenched a viewpoint that the territories were never occupied, contradicting Israeli jurists as far back as 1967.⁵³

The consequence of this policy reversal was borne out by the rapid pace of Israeli expansion through the 1980s. Five thousand Jewish settlers lived in the West Bank when Begin entered office in 1977. There were more than 80,000 by the late 1980s. In the interim, commuter towns and bypass roads for settlers bisected the actual ground upon which Palestinian sovereignty could be achieved, as Israel consolidated a durable matrix of control.⁵⁴ In February 1982, Reagan's ambassador to Israel, Sam Lewis, widely circulated an urgent memo detailing recent developments in the West Bank, writing that "settlement activity goes on at an accelerated pace, although in new and potentially more serious directions."⁵⁵

Reagan was personally aware of the aftermath of settlement expansion. On Valentine's Day 1983, the president wrote in his diary: "Had a brief on the West Bank. There can be no question but that Israel has a well thought out plan to

take over the W. B. [West Bank]”⁵⁶ In his memoirs, he would write that settlements were a “continued violation of UN Security Council Resolution 242.”⁵⁷ This was at odds with his stance during the campaign, but did not signify a shift in policy. As late as 1988, upon hearing that Israel was planning new settlements, Reagan was subdued: “We are going to try and talk them out of that.”⁵⁸

In actuality, the Reagan administration took a permissive attitude toward settlement expansion, as the Israelis were acutely aware. In a January 1982 meeting with US officials, Prime Minister Begin recalled the first time he met Carter in the Cabinet Room and the president told him “we consider your settlements to be illegal and an obstacle to peace.” He had seen Carter more than ten times, and at each meeting, Carter repeated this message, and Begin disagreed. “I answered: legal and not an obstacle to peace. He didn’t tire; I didn’t tire.” For Begin, who had long championed the expansion of the Jewish presence beyond the 1967 borders, settlements were not an obstacle to peace with the Palestinians. “On the contrary,” he added, “they are a great contribution to peaceful relationships between the Jews and the Arabs in Judea and Samaria and the Gaza District.” Without them, PLO fighters would come down from the mountains to the plains of Israel and carry out attacks on Jews. “If there are no settlements there, they can just come down.”⁵⁹ “Mr. Ronald Reagan, put an end to that debate,” Begin reminisced. “He said, the settlements are not illegal. A double negative gives a positive result. In other words, they are legal or legitimate.”⁶⁰

Against the backdrop of Reagan’s approach to Israel, the Palestinian national movement, and the occupied territories, Lebanon emerged as the region’s Cold War battlefield.⁶¹ The PLO had relocated to Lebanon after the outbreak of the Jordanian civil war in 1970, shifting the center of nationalist politics to the Palestinian refugee camps inside the country.⁶² Israeli leaders were increasingly anxious about the power of Palestinian nationalism and the growing links between Palestinians inside the occupied territories and in the Arab diaspora. By targeting the PLO in Lebanon and forcing its withdrawal, strategic thinkers in Israel believed that Palestinian national aspirations for a homeland could be quashed and a pliant Maronite Christian ally established to the north.⁶³ An ideological alignment between Menachem Begin’s Likud government and the Reagan administration helped foment the invasion, which sowed regional upheaval and drew the United States into the largest quagmire since the Vietnam War.

Israel’s decision to militarily target the PLO grew alongside the launch of Palestinian autonomy talks in the spring of 1979. In Defense Minister Ariel Sharon’s view, the failings of the Camp David Accords justified a display of

—1
—0
—+1

force that would somehow defeat Palestinians in their Lebanese stronghold. There remains disagreement about both what precipitated the invasion and the American role in triggering the war. While there had been PLO attacks on Israel's northern border towns, they ceased after the July 1981 ceasefire brokered by Reagan's special envoy to Lebanon, Ambassador Philipp Habib. Israel would cite attacks outside of Lebanon, including the assassination of an Israeli diplomat in Paris and cross-border raids from Jordan, as further evidence of the need to strike the PLO.

Sharon revealed his military plans during a meeting with Ambassador Habib in December 1981 at the Israeli Foreign Ministry. Habib's assistant, Morris Draper, would recall the substance of this meeting ten years later. "In graphic detail he [Sharon] described to Haig and people like Larry Eagleburger that we were going to see American-made munitions being dropped from American-made aircraft over Lebanon, and civilians were going to be killed, there was going to be a hell of a big uproar, and the United States—which didn't look very good in the Middle East anyway at the time, for being so inactive—was going to take a full charge of blame."⁶⁴ US ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis corroborated Draper's recollections, adding that "Habib and everybody else was thunder-struck by Sharon's plan, although I think our Embassy staff were not quite as surprised, except for the fact that Sharon was being so open about his views."⁶⁵ Habib reportedly asked Sharon what Israel would do with the thousands of Palestinians in the country, and Sharon allegedly replied, "We'll hand them over to the Lebanese. In any case, we expect to be in Lebanon only for a few days. The Lebanese Christians will take care of them."⁶⁶

Sharon's presentation, as one US policymaker later explained, was intended "to prepare the Reagan administration for a large Israeli operation in Lebanon."⁶⁷ It did not take much convincing. A few days before the invasion, Sharon came to Washington and explained in detail to Haig what he was planning. The notebooks of Charles Hill, a top State Department aide, clearly indicate his boss issued a "green light" for Israel's actions. Haig told Sharon that an invasion required "*a recognizable provocation*," akin to the Falklands intervention. "Hope you'll be sensitive to the need for provocation to be understood internationally," Haig said. Sharon replied that he was "aware of your concern about size. Our intent is *not a large operation. Try to be as small and efficient as possible*." "Like a lobotomy." Haig replied approvingly.⁶⁸

An assassination attempt several days later against Israel's ambassador to Great Britain, Shlomo Argov, provided the necessary spark. Even though the Abu Nidal Organization rather than the PLO had carried out the attack,

-1—
0—
+1—

Israel launched "Operation Peace for Galilee" on June 6, 1982. The Begin government's stated war aim was to ensure the immediate cessation of cross-border violence.⁶⁹ But the invasion extended well beyond the forty-kilometer line Sharon had initially suggested would be the military theater of operation, and Israeli troops headed toward Beirut to link up with Maronite forces. Promising the Americans that they had no intention of staying in Lebanon and occupying the country, the Israelis simply asserted that they would not tolerate a return to the status quo of PLO shelling in the Galilee region.⁷⁰

American officials debated the extent to which the administration should endorse Israel's "lobotomy" in Lebanon. Secretary Haig and US ambassador to the UN Jeane Kirkpatrick felt that Israel should be left to destroy the PLO, which they saw as a proxy of the Soviet Union. The more cautious trio of Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, White House Chief of Staff James Baker, and National Security Advisor William Clark favored holding Israel to a more limited operation.⁷¹ On June 8, Prime Minister Begin and Ambassador Habib met to discuss Israeli war aims. Habib was deeply concerned with Israel's mounting bombing campaign in Beirut. Along with Ambassador Sam Lewis, he argued that the PLO was not responsible for the assassination attempt against Argov and that the Israelis were exceeding the forty-kilometer threshold. Reagan's senior advisers were cognizant that their close alignment with Israel posed problems for US Middle East policy more broadly. There was a growing fear in Washington that the Arab world would view American silence as a sign of complicity or even a signal that the United States had helped to initiate the violence.⁷²

The Israeli Prime Minister knew that US support was subject to internal debate, and the disagreements intensified on the eve of Begin's pre-planned visit to Washington in June 1982.⁷³ His first meeting with Reagan about Lebanon was a tense forty-five minutes with just the two leaders and their notetakers present. The meeting opened with Reagan's assertion that the invasion had exceeded its stated goals of responding to PLO attacks with the incursion toward the Lebanese seaside capital of Beirut. The United States, Reagan said, could not offer unconditional support to a "military operation which was not clearly justified in the eyes of the international community." Even in light of the terrible attack on the Israeli ambassador in London, he argued, "Israel has lost ground to a great extent among our people," who had recoiled at "the death and destruction that the IDF [Israeli Defense Forces] brought to so many innocent people over the past two weeks."⁷⁴

Given his overarching anti-Soviet agenda, Reagan believed that the United States could manage its long-standing friendship with Israel without alienating

—1
—0
—+1

wealthy anticommunist Arab states. But Israeli overreach in Lebanon disabused him and his administration of this notion. As Reagan told Begin, “US influence in the Arab world, our ability to achieve our strategic objectives, has been seriously damaged by Israel’s actions.”⁷⁵ Begin, in turn, deployed the same Cold War logic that he had invoked to justify Israel’s battle against the PLO. Detailing stockpiles of Soviet weaponry, he told Reagan that the south of Lebanon had become “the principal center of Soviet activities in the Middle East . . . a true international terrorist base.” When Reagan pushed him to account for the civilian casualties, Begin denounced a media “biased against Israel.” The meeting ended abruptly, sending a clear signal that the two countries’ interests were diverging and that the Reagan administration would not remain silent in the face of Israeli aggression.⁷⁶

US-Israeli tensions increased markedly throughout the summer months.⁷⁷ The Israelis lost a close ally after Alexander Haig was forced to resign for overextending his reach and was replaced by a more restrained secretary of state, George Shultz.⁷⁸ As Ambassador Lewis explained, “The sympathy of the administration, which up to early July, had been strongly pro-Israel, increasingly shifted towards the Palestinians.”⁷⁹ Reagan himself was intensely disturbed by the barrage of TV images coming from Beirut as the Israeli army shelled the Lebanese capital. As he wrote in his diary one evening in late July, “Calls and cables back and forth with Lebanon. U.N. [Security Council] with us supporting voted 15 to 0 for a ceasefire and U.N. observers on the scene. Israel will scream about the latter but so be it. The slaughter must stop.”⁸⁰

On August 12, an intense day-long bombing of West Beirut by the Israelis inflicted over 500 casualties in what would be the last day of the summer siege on the Lebanese capital.⁸¹ Reagan’s diary reveals the depth of his anger and a growing rift between two stalwart Cold War allies. “I was angry—I told [Begin] it had to stop or our entire future relationship was endangered. I used the word holocaust deliberately & said the symbol of his war was becoming a picture of a 7 month old baby with its arms blown off. . . . Twenty mins. later he called to tell me he’d ordered an end to the barrage and pled for our continued friendship.”⁸² Ambassador Habib eventually negotiated a ceasefire, and PLO leader Yasser Arafat agreed to the withdrawal of his men from Lebanon.⁸³ On August 25, 800 US Marines began to arrive in Beirut, equipped for a noncombat role of assisting the Lebanese Armed Forces alongside French and Italian military personnel in the withdrawal. In side letters to Arafat during the arduous negotiations, Habib guaranteed the protection of Palestinian civilians remaining behind after the armed PLO guerilla fighters were evacuated.⁸⁴ But

these promises were blatantly ignored—with calamitous results—in the weeks that followed.

Soon after the Marine deployment, Reagan announced a formal peace plan on September 1, 1982, from his “Western White House” in Santa Barbara, California. This was Reagan’s first and only major speech on the Arab-Israeli conflict during his eight years in office. Building on Jimmy Carter’s Camp David framework, he acknowledged that movement on implementing the Camp David Accords had been slow even as Israel had completed its withdrawal from the Sinai. Noting that the “opportunities for peace in the Middle East do not begin and end in Lebanon,” Reagan recognized that “we must also move to resolve the root causes of conflict between Arabs and Israelis.” In his view, the central question was “how to reconcile Israel’s legitimate security concerns with the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.”⁸⁵ Shultz had already underscored the importance of a “solution to the Palestinian problem” in a meeting with Defense Minister Ariel Sharon several days before the plan was announced.⁸⁶ Events in Lebanon had forced a reckoning with the very questions that Reagan had sidestepped when entering office.

The September 14 assassination of Lebanese President Bashir Gemayel, a Maronite ally of Israel and close confidant of Ariel Sharon, upended Reagan’s initiative and shattered Begin’s grand plans for the emergence of a Lebanese state remade under a strong Christian leader. The Israeli army broke the ceasefire and entered West Beirut, an act that Shultz deemed “provocative” and “counterproductive.”⁸⁷ Israeli ambassador to the US Moshe Arens insisted that the Israelis did not want to deceive the Americans and that these were merely precautionary measures, as Israel “did not have ambitions in Beirut, not in the West, not in the east, and not in Lebanon at all.” Shultz responded tersely: “Your activity in West Beirut will engender a situation where Israel is controlling an Arab capital.” There would be “psychological” consequences.⁸⁸ Weinberger had already ordered the US Marines back to their ships, with the PLO evacuation now complete. As a result of the ensuing vacuum, Lebanese Christian militias who sought revenge for Gemayel’s assassination were free to terrorize Palestinian civilians who had remained behind.

Between the evening of September 16 and the afternoon of September 18, Phalange militia fighters launched a cold-blooded attack on defenseless Palestinian civilians in the Israeli-controlled Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, killing at least 800 people, mostly women, children and elderly men.⁸⁹ Newly uncovered evidence in the Israel State Archives reveals that the US government was unwittingly complicit in this three-day massacre.⁹⁰ The Reagan

—1
—0
—+1

administration's role was a moral stain and a strategic disaster, undercutting US influence in the region and precipitating further military involvement in the Lebanese civil war.⁹¹ Weinberger's critics blamed him for enabling the violence by withdrawing the Marines, and even Ambassador Habib later admitted that the US had failed to keep its word to protect those Palestinians left behind.⁹²

On October 23, 1983, an enormous explosion ripped through the US Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 241 American servicemen—the single deadliest attack against the US Marine Corps since World War II.⁹³ Minutes later, a second suicide bomber hit the French military barracks in the “Drakkar” building, killing fifty-eight paratroopers in France's single worst military loss since the Algerian War. These attacks led to open warfare with Syrian-backed forces and, soon after, the rapid withdrawal of the Marines and Multinational Forces to their ships, accelerating the end of US and European involvement in Lebanon. Despite Reagan's pledge to retaliate against the perpetrators and not to withdraw until the mission was complete, US troops departed within months.⁹⁴ In the words of US Ambassador Sam Lewis, the United States left the country “with our tail between our legs.”⁹⁵ The Lebanese civil war would facilitate Syria's regional ascendancy and incubate other important regional transformations, in particular the growing influence of Iran and Hezbollah, the emergent Shia paramilitary group.⁹⁶

In the wake of the 1982 war, the Israeli government remained determined to preempt Palestinian self-determination. American officials did not force the issue, having shifted gears away from the Reagan plan toward secret peace talks with Jordan's King Hussein and local “quality-of-life” initiatives in the occupied territories in twin bids to circumvent the PLO. This line of approach would last until nearly the end of Reagan's second term in office. The outbreak of the first Intifada in December 1987 shattered illusions that Palestinian national movement could thus be sidestepped. After twenty years of Israeli military control, inhabitants of the occupied territories erupted in demonstrations and widespread civil disobedience that captured global attention.

The Intifada exposed the Reagan administration's policy vacuum in the Arab-Israeli conflict. After five years of inaction, Shultz formulated a new approach to the Palestinian issue, the first serious peace proposal since Reagan's September 1982 plan. Yet King Hussein, whose support was crucial for its success, relinquished Jordan's legal and administrative ties to the West Bank in July 1988, forcing the United States and Israel to deal solely with the PLO, a prospect which had been unthinkable years earlier. In the final days of the Reagan administration, the United States reluctantly agreed to begin an official dialogue with the PLO.⁹⁷ Like Reagan's reversal when it came to dealing with

the Soviet Union, this shift was a striking turn for an administration so adamantly opposed to engagement since its first months in office.

The signing of a memorandum of understanding between Israel and the United States during Reagan's first year as president may have marked the formal onset of an alliance, but relations with the Palestinians and Lebanon complicate the dominant narrative of abiding friendship between stalwart allies in the 1980s. By enabling a new strategic rationale to bilateral ties, the Reagan administration empowered Israel to shut down political horizons in the occupied territories and intervene in the broader region. At the same time, open clashes with Israel, as well as the gradual recognition that Palestinian nationalism was not going to be defeated militarily, yielded a return to the comprehensive peace principals that Carter had sought on the road to Camp David.

When it came to Israel's conflict with the Palestinians, Reagan's marked shift from Carter's approach linked American foreign policy with the most reactionary elements of Israel's Likud party. The administration's revival of a global Cold War in the Middle East cast Palestinian nationalists as proxies of the Soviet Union, while a permissive legal turn emboldened advocates for settlement building in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The administration's early and unchecked impulse for military intervention by proxy across the global South fueled the green light offered by Alexander Haig to Ariel Sharon ahead of Israel's June 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

In reassessing Reagan's approach and legacy, historians must account for the actions of local actors in the region alongside developments in Washington. There was a host of dynamics at play in US relations with Israel, the Palestinians, and Lebanon, and the reinscription of a Cold War context was interwoven with domestic pressures, the ascent of the Likud, and the internal struggles of Palestinian nationalists and the Lebanese themselves. Although it is clear that Palestinian nationalists were seeking to move into the diplomatic arena, the bellicose rhetoric of the White House alienated moderate elements of the PLO, and the 1982 war fractured the Palestinian national movement while raining tragedy upon civilians in Lebanon. Rather than a triumphal story of the United States defeating communism in the periphery, events in the Levant highlight US agency in the intensification of regional violence in the 1980s. Against this backdrop, Reagan's time in office should be viewed as a period that contributed significantly to the erosion of a just and equitable outcome to Israel's conflict with the Palestinians, along with more corrosive developments—an "adders' nest of problems" in Reagan's revealing words—elsewhere in the wider Middle East.⁹⁸

—1
—0
—+1

Notes

1. On US-Middle East relations in the late twentieth century, see Osamah Khalil, *America's Dream Palace: Middle East Expertise and the Rise of the National Security State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004); Andrew Bacevich, *America's War for the Greater Middle East: A Military History* (New York: Random House, 2016); Rashid Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009); Salim Yaqub, *Imperfect Strangers: Americans, Arabs and US-Middle East Relations in the 1970s* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016); James R. Stocker, *Spheres of Intervention: US Foreign Policy and the Collapse of Lebanon, 1967–1976* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016); Patrick Tyler, *A World of Trouble: The White House and the Middle East—From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009); Mattia Toaldo, *The Origins of the US War on Terror: Lebanon, Libya and American Intervention in the Middle East* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003); Lloyd C. Gardner, *The Long Road to Baghdad: A History of US Foreign Policy from the 1970s to the Present* (New York: The New Press, 2008); Nicholas Laham, *Crossing the Rubicon: Ronald Reagan and US Policy in the Middle East* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

2. Although Odd Arne Westad has forced a necessary reckoning with Western military intervention in the global South, his work has avoided the Arab-Israeli arena. Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 4, 398. For an outline of how to approach the region in the post-1945 era, see Paul Thomas Chamberlin, “Rethinking the Middle East and North Africa in the Cold War,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 2 (2011): 317–319.

3. On the adverse consequences of the Camp David process, see Seth Anziska, *Preventing Palestine: A Political History from Camp David to Oslo* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018). Material in this chapter is drawn from that work.

4. Ronald Reagan, *An American Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 410.

5. Rita Hauser, interview by author, 4 Apr. 2008. On the American embrace of Uris's novel, see M. M. Silver, *Our Exodus: Leon Uris and the Americanization of Israel's Founding Story* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2010).

6. Reagan, Address to the B'nai B'rith Forum, 3 Sept. 1980, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library (RRPL), Geoffrey Kemp Files (GKF), box 90494, folder “Israel Settlements 1981.”

7. See, among others, Norman Podhoretz, “The Future Danger,” *Commentary*, Apr. 1981; Menahem Milson, “How to Make Peace with the Palestinians,” *Commentary*, May 1981; Robert C. Tucker, “The Middle East: Carterism without Carter?” *Commentary*, Sept. 1981.

8. Ronald Reagan, “Recognizing the Israeli Asset,” *Washington Post*, 15 Aug. 1979.

9. See William Michael Schmidli's chapter in this volume.

10. Kathleen Christison, *Perceptions of Palestine: Their Influence on US Middle East Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 198.

11. Alexander Haig, *Caveat: Realism, Reagan and Foreign Policy* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), 170.

12. William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2005), 248–249. For detailed attention to Haig’s views on strategic consensus, see Juliana S. Peck, *The Reagan Administration and the Palestinian Question: The First Thousand Days* (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1984), chap. 2; Helena Cobban, “The US-Israeli Relationship in the Reagan Era,” *Conflict Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1989): 5–32. For the Israeli view of Haig, see “Alexander Haig v’Hamizrach Ha”Tichon,” 27 Jan. 1981, Israel State Archives (ISA), MFA-8467/4.

13. On the Reagan doctrine, see Chester Pach, “The Reagan Doctrine: Principle, Pragmatism and Policy,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2006): 75–88.

14. See Odd Arne Westad, “Reagan’s Anti-Revolutionary Offensive in the Third World” in Olav Njølstad, ed., *The Last Decade of the Cold War: From Conflict Escalation to Conflict Transformation* (London: Routledge, 2004), 241–262.

15. Nicolas Veliotos Interview, *Frontline Diplomacy*, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, (LOC).

16. Veliotos Interview.

17. See Beth A. Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal: Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997); James Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan: A History of the End of the Cold War* (New York: Viking, 2009).

18. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs North America division conducted extensive analysis of Reagan’s views and noted this favorable departure from Carter. See ISA, MFA/8467/1, 4, 5, 15 and MFA/8652/ 2, 3, 4.

19. Seth Anziska, “Autonomy as State Prevention: The Palestinian Question after Camp David, 1979–1982” *Humanity* 8, no. 2 (2017), 287–310.

20. Meeting between Begin, Haig, and delegations, 5 Apr. 1981, ISA, MFA-7083/12.

21. Toasts by Shamir and Haig after Dinner Hosted by Shamir, 5 Apr. 1981, SA, A-4341/1.

22. For full records of these top-secret meetings between Robert McFarlane and Israeli officials, see ISA, A-7384/6.

23. Meeting between Reagan and Begin, 9 Sept. 1981, ISA, A/7384/9.

24. Quandt, *Peace Process*, 247. Weinberger had been vice president of the Bechtel Corporation and was a strong advocate for rebuilding American military strength. On his approach to the use of force, see Gail E. S. Yoshitani, *Reagan on War: A Reappraisal of the Weinberger Doctrine, 1980–1984* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2011).

25. Samuel Lewis Interview, *Frontline Diplomacy*, LOC. See also David Crist, *The Twilight War: The Secret History of America’s Thirty-Year Conflict with Iran* (New York: Penguin, 2012), 57.

26. Reagan insisted to Begin that Saudi Arabia could be “brought around” to the US orbit. See Meeting between Reagan and Begin, 9 Sept. 1981, ISA, A-7384/9.

27. For the full text of the Memorandum, see Walter Laqueur and Barry M. Rubin, *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 238–239.

28. Samuel Lewis Interview.

29. Israeli archives now reveal that the Osirik attack elicited furious American opposition, even from neoconservatives such as UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick. See ISA, A/7384/4, 6.

30. For the administration's angry reaction, see RRPL, GKF, box 2, folder: "Golan Heights 1982."

31. Quoted in Haig, *Caveat*, 328.

32. Haig, *Caveat*, 329.

33. This strain is evident in a personal letter from Reagan to Begin after the suspension of the memorandum of understanding in the wake of the Golan Heights Law. See Reagan to Begin, 8 Jan. 1982, ISA, A-4342/1.

34. Despite the ban on direct diplomatic communication with the PLO put in place by the Ford administration in 1975, the CIA maintained regular contact with members of the organization. See Kai Bird, *The Good Spy: The Life and Death of Robert Ames* (New York: Crown, 2014); Osamah Khalil, "The Radical Crescent: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organisation, and the Lebanese Civil War, 1973–1978," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 27, no. 3 (2016): 496–522; James R. Stocker, "A Historical Inevitability? Kissinger and US Contacts with the Palestinians (1973–1976)," *International History Review* 39, no. 2 (2017), 316–337.

35. "Msibat Itonaim-Reagan," 6 Nov. 1980, ISA, MFA-8652/3.

36. Reagan, Address to the B'nai B'rith Forum, 3 Sept. 1980, RRPL, GKF, box 90494, folder "Israel Settlements 1981."

37. See Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement 1949–1993* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Helga Baumgarten, "The Three Faces/Phases of Palestinian Nationalism, 1948–2005," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 34, no. 4 (2005): 25–48. On the consequences of nonengagement with the PLO, see Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive*, 256.

38. The Abu Nidal Organization was formed after a 1974 split in the PLO and was supported by Baathist Iraq in a highly visible and destructive terror campaign against Israel and Western targets, as well as PLO members who pursued negotiations. See Patrick Seale, *Abu Nidal: The Secret Life of the World's Most Notorious Arab Terrorist* (New York: Random House, 1992).

39. Allen Interview, 20/20: *The ABC News Magazine*, 2 Apr. 1981, RRPL, GKF, box 90220, folder "PLO 1981."

40. Allen Interview.

41. Tanter to Allen, "The PLO and the President's Press Conference," 9 Nov. 1981, RRPL, GKF, box 90220, folder "PLO 1981."

42. "US, PLO: 7 Years of Secret Contacts," *Los Angeles Times*, 5 July 1981; "US, PLO Reportedly Have Custom of Secret Dealings," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6 July 1981.

43. This is clear from letters provided directly to Geoffrey Kemp, senior director for Near East and South Asian Affairs at the National Security Council in the White House. See Sartawi to Mroz, 27 May 1981, RRPL, GKF, box 90220, folder "PLO 1981." For more on this secret channel, see Christison, *Perceptions of Palestine*, 205.

44. Kanafani was born in Acre and forced into exile in 1948. He was later recruited by Dr. George Habash into the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM), a left-wing pan-Arab organization whose membership evolved into the PFLP and served as a strong counterweight to the dominant Fatah party. Kanafani was assassinated in 1972 along with his niece in a Beirut car bombing by the Israeli Mossad. See Ronen Bergman,

Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel's Targeted Assassinations (New York: Random House, 2018), 656n144; and Rashid Khalidi, *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917–2017* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2020).

45. "Il-Rais Reagan yusalam risala muhima fi beit il-abyad," *Al-Hadaf* 12, no. 522 (24 Jan. 1981), Beirut Institute for Palestine Studies (IPS).

46. "Idarat Reagan tu'hadad)," *Al-Hadaf* 12, no. 525 (14 Feb. 1981), IPS.

47. "Hukumat Begin tas'ad min il-nisha't il-istitani," *Al-Hadaf* 12, no. 524 (7 Feb. 1981), IPS.

48. Peck, *The Reagan Administration and the Palestinian Question*, 11.

49. This position was based on Article 49 of the Fourth Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which states clearly that "the Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territories it occupies"; see International Committee of the Red Cross, *The Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 1949), 172.

50. "An Interview with Reagan," *Time*, 30 June 1980.

51. "Excerpts from President Reagan's Answers in Interview with Five Reporters," *New York Times*, 3 Feb. 1981.

52. Tanter to Allen and Feith, "Thoughts on Legality of Israel's West Bank Settlements," 3 Aug. 1981, RRPL, White House Office of Records Management (WHORM) case file 037386, folder CO074. Emphasis in original.

53. Eugene V. Rostow, "'Palestinian Self-Determination': Possible Futures for the Unallocated Territories of the Palestine Mandate," *International Journal of Yale Law School* 5, no. 2 (1979), 147–172. An abbreviated version of this argument appeared as "Israel's Settlement Right Is 'Unassailable,'" *New York Times*, 19 Sept. 1982. For the origins of Israeli legal thinking that justified expansion, see "Hitnachlyuyot: P'sak Hadin Hamaleh," ISA, MFA-9336/10.

54. A contemporaneous study of the expansion can be found in Peter Demant, "Israeli Settlement Policy Today," *Middle East Report* 116 (1983): 3–29.

55. Lewis to Shultz et al., 2 Feb. 1982, RRPL, GKF, box 90494, folder "Israel Settlements, 1982."

56. Douglas Brinkley, ed., *The Reagan Diaries* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 130.

57. Reagan, *An American Life*, 441.

58. Brinkley, *The Reagan Diaries*, 577.

59. Brinkley, *The Reagan Diaries*, 577.

60. Meeting between Burg and Haig, 28 Jan. 1982, ISA, MFA-6898/8.

61. On the history of violent battlefields during the Cold War, see Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Cold War's Killing Fields: Rethinking the Long Peace* (New York: HarperCollins, 2018).

62. Palestinians refer to the events of 1970 as "Black September." For Israel's role, see Ziv Rubinovitz, "Blue and White 'Black September': Israel's Role in the Jordan Crisis of 1970," *International History Review* 32, no. 4 (2010): 687–706. On the history of the PLO inside Lebanon and the lead up to 1982, see David Hirst, *Beware of Small States: Lebanon, Battleground of the Middle East* (New York: Nation Books, 2010); Rosemary Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies* (London: Zed, 1994); Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian*

Liberation Organisation: People, Power, and Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); and Yezid Sayigh, "The Palestinians," in *The Cold War and the Middle East*, ed. Yezid Sayigh and Avi Shlaim (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

63. On Israel's motivations in Lebanon, see Kirsten E. Schulze, "Perceptions and Misperceptions: Influences on Israeli Intelligence Estimates during the 1982 Lebanon War," *Journal of Conflict Studies* 16, no. 1, (1996), 134–152; Avner Yaniv and Robert J. Liber, "Personal Whim or Strategic Imperative?: The Israeli Invasion of Lebanon," *International Security* 8, no. 2 (1983), 117–142.

64. Morris Draper, "Marines in Lebanon—A Ten Year Retrospective: Lessons Learned," Quantico, VA, 1992 (courtesy of Jon Randal).

65. Samuel Lewis Interview.

66. Samuel Lewis Interview.

67. Samuel Lewis Interview.

68. Below this, Hill wrote: "A GREEN LIGHT FROM HAIG ON LIMITED OPERATION" (Hill notes, 25 May 1982, Hoover Institution Archives, Charles Hill Papers, box 76, folder 17). Emphasis in original. While recent scholarship still upholds Haig's denial of having given Sharon permission, the minutes of the meeting prove otherwise; see Crist, *The Twilight War*, 109. For an earlier study on the green light, without access to Hill's notebooks, see Ze'ev Schiff, "The Green Light," *Foreign Policy* 50 (Spring 1983), 73–85.

69. See Eyal Zisser, "The 1982 'Peace for Galilee' War: Looking Back in Anger—Between an Option of a War and a War of No Option," in *A Never-Ending Conflict: A Guide to Israeli Military History*, ed. Mordechai Bar-On (Westport: Praeger, 2004). Begin admitted that 1982 was a war of "option" and it would cure "trauma of 1973" (cited in Zisser, 194–195).

70. Meeting between Begin and Habib, 7 June 1982, ISA, MFA-7080/3.

71. Detailed accounts of the administration's policy debate over Lebanon can be found in Quandt, "Reagan's Lebanon Policy."

72. George J. Church, "The Shakeup at State," *Time*, 5 July 1982.

73. See Ministerial Committee meeting, 13 June 1982, ISA, MFA-7080/4.

74. Meeting between Reagan and Begin, 21 June 1982, RRPL, Near East and South Asian Affairs Directorate–National Security Council, box 91987/3.

75. Meeting between Reagan and Begin, 21 June 1982.

76. For a detailed account see "Summary of the President's Plenary Meeting" and "Summary of the Working Luncheon," 21 June 1982, both in RRPL, Near East and South Asian Affairs Directorate–National Security Council, box 91987/3.

77. See, for example, the letter exchange between Reagan and Begin on July 8, 1982, in ISA, A-4178/4.

78. On Haig's resignation and conduct in Lebanon, see Stanley Hoffmann, "The Vicar's Revenge," *New York Review of Books*, 31 May 1984.

79. Samuel Lewis Interview.

80. Brinkley, *The Reagan Diaries*, 95.

81. For details on the siege and a periodization of the fighting, see Rashid Khalidi, *Under Siege: P.L.O. Decisionmaking during the 1982 War*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

82. Brinkley, *The Reagan Diaries*, 98.

83. For a study of Arafat and his decision-making during the war, see Rashid Khalidi, "The PLO's Yasser Arafat," in *Leadership and Negotiation in the Middle East*, ed. Barbara Kellerman and Jeffrey Z. Rubin (New York: Praeger, 1988).

84. See "Preface to the 2014 Reissue" in Khalidi, *Under Siege*.

85. "Address to the Nation on United States Policy for Peace in the Middle East," 1 Sept. 1982, <https://www.reaganfoundation.org/media/128673/nation.pdf>.

86. Meeting between Sharon and Shultz, 27 Aug. 1982, ISA, A-4342/10.

87. Washington to Jerusalem, 15 Sept. 1982, ISA, A/4317/3.

88. Washington to Jerusalem, 15 Sept. 1982, ISA, A/4317/3.

89. See Seth Anziska, "Sabra and Shatila: New Revelations," *NYR Daily*, 17 Sept. 2018, <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2018/09/17/sabra-and-shatila-new-revelations/>.

90. On the new evidence, see Seth Anziska, "A Preventable Massacre," *New York Times*, 17 Sept. 2012; Meeting between Shamir, Sharon, and Draper, 17 Sept. 1982, ISA, A-4317/3. For the authoritative account on the massacre and victims, see Bayan Nuwayhid al-Hout, *Sabra and Shatila: September 1982* (London: Pluto Press, 2004).

91. On the US reaction to the revelations of the massacre, see Meeting between Arens and Shultz, 18 Sept. 1982, ISA, MFA-6875/11; Conversation between Shultz and Arens, 20 Sept. 1982, ISA, A-4317/3.

92. See John Boykin, *Cursed Is the Peacemaker: The American Diplomat versus the Israeli General, Beirut 1982* (Belmont: Applegate Press, 2002), 266–273.

93. Quandt, *Peace Process*, 258. For an insider's perspective on the end of American involvement in Lebanon, see George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Scribner, 1993), 220–234. For an account of the Marine mission in Lebanon and the barracks bombing, see Eric M. Hammel, *The Root: The Marines in Beirut, August 1982–February 1984* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985).

94. On Reagan's pledge to retaliate and remain, see "Transcript of President Reagan's News Conference on the Attack in Beirut," *New York Times*, 25 Oct. 1983. On Reagan's about-face, see Micah Zenko, "Reagan's Cut and Run," *Foreign Policy*, 7 Feb. 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/02/07/when-reagan-cut-and-run/>; Crist, *The Twilight War*.

95. Telephone interview with Ambassador Samuel Lewis, 6 Sept. 2012.

96. See Crist, *The Twilight War*; Augustus R. Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, updated ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

97. Quandt, *Peace Process*, 277–285, recounts the evolution of the dialogue in some detail. See also Mohamed Rabie, *US-PLO Dialogue: Secret Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995).

98. Reagan, *An American Life*, 407.