



Politicide & The Revolution
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By Ulysses Storm

For the Americans, we are a dying breed.

Forward

When I was first tasked with a project of this magnitude, one man's name came to mind, Miyamoto Musashi. A martial artist of the Japanese Edo period, he fought over sixty duels in his life and did not loose once. Despite having won dozens of fights, and surviving many battles Musashi said "I have never had a teacher while studying the ways of the various arts and accomplishment, or in anything at all".

Years after winning his battles, at the elderly age of sixty he climbed The Iwato mountain and bowed before the heavens, worshiped kannon, and Buddha to purify himself. Upon his descent, Musashi began his masterpiece The Book of Five Rings which discussed not only the ways in which a warrior should act, but also what warriors should do regarding (then) contemporary issues, so that his way of life could be preserved.

Musashi wanted to preserve the way of the samurai warrior. An icon of Japanese feudalism, the soldiers sword allegiance to their lords' and fought to the death to uphold them. Yet I am not Musashi, and this is not Japan. Instead, I seek to preserve the concept of the American.

It is not the people who live in American that practice intolerance, ignorance, and indifference to others who are Americans. Rather, the American is the man who respects the way of life of the man next to him, because to judge him would be hypocrisy, as nobody without their faults. Just as we choose not to trespass, we forgive those who trespass against us. That is the American I wish to preserve, and to rekindle.

Like Musashi, I have seen change affect our lands for the worse. Just as Japan fell into chaos during it's period of Warring States, America too has entered an age of political turmoil in which is dominated by polar politics. The result has been the establishment of what is almost literally, an age of warring states.

Such as these times are, I have decided to write this book in an attempt to bring to light the concept of internationalization to my generation. Without understanding the type of politics the rest of the world despises, we will surely be lost when we accept the responsibility of America. Just as the generations before mine have triumphed over social issues of their day, the same duties have been placed on the shoulders of my generation. We will unite, or we will suffer. I choose unity.

Politicide and The Revolution

In Howard Zinn's masterpiece *A People's History Of The United States* the final chapter discusses Zinn's hopes and predictions for American politics. In "The coming Revolt of The Guards" chapter Zinn argues that in most political systems the vast wealth of a nation is usually controlled by only a small percent of it's population, the elite. Zinn argues that this sort of political rule has existed for centuries, and still persists today. Extreme examples of such a system could be North Korea, which has run it's government similar to that of Stalin. (NY Times) But Zinn leaves some room for hope by saying politics are a system, only a series of parts and pieces working together to accomplish something. To that end we should remember that like any system, there room for monkey-wrenches to be thrown into it.

Yet the elite have not ruled their masses without a systematic approach, and a group of followers to do their bidding and enforce the status quo. The role of the followers have ranged from priests who burned Joan of Arc, to lobbyists who fight against reform. Their role is timeless, and their aim is preservation of the way things are, they are the old guard. Always members of the educated class, like doctors, priests, and even generals, the old guard serves as a buffer between the elite and the general public. (Zinn)

Many will ask what the old guard does that is so bad, and it is a legitimate question, because priests and doctors and scientists are rarely considered to be looking out for the elite. Yet they are often unfortunately drafted into the old guard of the elite because of what they can do to justify the ways of the elite. Even today, generals still advocate the causes of their higher ups (with exceptions), and lobbyists fight to the death over the claims that cigarettes cause cancer.

When the ruling class, and the old guard are working in harmony, then people can be brought into submission and herded like sheep into accomplishing the goal of the ruling class (or dictator). Yet this system is not without it's faults, and dismantling it begins with the awakening of the old guard.

One of the most unfortunate aspects of the old guard is that it often does not realize what it is doing to the people. Whether through a dogmatic form of education, or a pre-developed notion of intolerance, the old guard often becomes the fist of the elite subconsciously. But, when this part of society realizes that it is protecting status quo that it so often comes in conflict with, it can awaken itself and stand by the people it so often wants to work with. (Zinn)

But this is never the end of turmoil. Consider the Russian, French and Chinese revolutions. Seen by many scholarly institutes as political revolutions founded on the logic of democracy, they all clearly stood for the same principle of eliminating “that” corrupt regime, and replacing it with one that truly cared for its people. While the Tsars were slain, eventually Stalin rose to power; while King Louis was beheaded, after a time the bourgeois came to power, and while Imperial China was brought to its knees, it fell into the hands of Mao Zedong.

I believe that today, the United States has entered an age of the elite. While the population is not yet being strangled, it has been slipping into an age of rule without consensus. While this may be in part, the fault of the current administration, there have been other factors which have paved the way for the discontent in America. But as we all know, discontent is only discontent, and has yet to manifest into legitimate determination to do something about the current situation in America. However, there is a cure for this. It is politicide, and revolution.

To be fair, I am not using the word “politicide” as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), because despite the OED's authority, the version I am using allows me to sum up a simple concept without being so arrogant as to create my own word.

Instead, I cling to the argument made by the noted social scientists Barbra Harff and Ted. R Gurr, who argue that politicide is the killing (or even dissolution) of a group (be it large or small) of people for strictly political reasons. Thus the term is applicable to both the holocaust, because it fits into the larger category of genocide, yet it can also be applied to the subsequent executions of the French Revolution. Because the death of the king and queen were entirely political in nature, they fell victim to the most famous of French politicides.

One should not think of this coming politicide as a destruction of American values, but rather a revival of American values through American traditions. Because in the end, what could be more American than applying Lockian political theory to a political body that does not act in accord with its people? If we don't like the way things are, we should change them.

Then comes revolution. I say “the” revolution because when it is upon us, we will know that it is happening. It will not be a violent revolution, or even on the scale of manpower that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil right marches displayed. Rather, the revolution will be a subtle movement that will breathe hope back into America, and restore America to a global super power with more friends than enemies. The revolution is

not intended to put the “wrong” kind of person or ideology into effect, but rather put a new approach to world affairs so that America will not be seen as what it is now. So as you delve into this paper remind yourself that change is all around from changes in foreign policy, to change in Iraq, to change in the oval office. It is only a matter of time until it affects us.

The Iran-Contra Affair

While the memory of Iran-Contra has faded from the minds of many Americans now, it is a prime example of 20th century “bully politics” that the U.S. has become increasingly criticized for. The story of The Iran-Contra Affair is included in this text to cite what devastation the use of old world diplomacy does for America, but the international community too. Reagan is constantly heralded as one of the greatest presidents of the 20th century, and this is a valid opinion. But Reagan was a man of a different age, and while Iran-Contra did not ruin the U.S., it is a caveat to Americans as we continue on in this world of globalization.

The Iran

The Prelude of War

On September 22nd 1980 the former Iraqi regime, headed by dictator and Ba'athist Saddam Hussein, invaded it's neighbor to the East, Iran. Saddam justified the invasion to the Iraqi congress by stating that Iraq has ownership over the Shatt al-Arab territory. Shatt al-Arab was an important claim in the Middle-East for Saddam because the waterway emptied into the Persian Gulf. Just West of the waterway was also the oil-rich region of Khuzestan, which could increase Iraq's ability to export oil if captured. (Martsching)

Iran itself had recently changed it's government after the overthrow of it's Pro-Western (and pro-U.S.) Shi'ite Monarch Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The Shah was replaced with ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Despite the multiple political branches that were vying for power in the post-revolution Iran, it was the fundamentalist Shi'a groups that would take control of the government.

As the two oil-wealthy countries fought each other with tactics that included the use of chemicals such as VX nerve gas, the rest of the world considered which of the countries would be the most likely victor, knowing full well that whoever controlled the territory of Iraq and Iran would be in control of some of the largest oil fields in the world. Within the first two years Iraq began receiving support in the form of helicopters, rifles, munitions and surface-to-air-missiles (SAMs) from donor countries such as China, The Soviet Union and The U.K.. (Martsching)

Carter's Approach

During the Carter administration (1977-1981) the U.S. faced several choices as the war broke out. While the oil fields of both Iraq and Iran were (and still are) valuable, the war also presented President Carter with an opportunity to gain leverage with the Iranian government. The U.S. had been very unpopular in Iran ever since the overthrow of the Shah, but more importantly Iran had something that the U.S. wanted very badly, hostages.

The Iranian hostage crisis had begun in late 1979 when Iranian students captured 66 U.S. diplomatic personnel and held them hostage with the aims of uncovering the U.S.'s "den of spies" in Iran. (Atlantic) The Carter Administration had originally considered supplying Iran with weapons so that the ayatollah (who had supreme power in Iran) could use his influence to free the American hostages. On the other hand, if Iran refused the deal, then the U.S. would threaten Iran by providing support for its arch-nemesis Iraq.

Logically Carter needed to do something about the crisis. As soon as the hostages were taken they began destroying his credibility as a president, and his chances of being re-elected. After his botched "Operation Eagle Claw" rescue attempt resulted in the deaths of 8 U.S. servicemen, his reelection was almost impossible. (Whitehouse.gov)

Carter tried his hardest to find a solution to the hostage crisis before the 1980 election, however President Carter was ultimately succeeded by Ronald Reagan. Carter's defeat is largely accredited to the hostage crisis, which had been continuing for over a year. Aside from the hostage crisis many Americans felt that Reagan could deal with problems like the hostage crisis in a more headstrong manner. For what it's worth, within the hour of Ronald Reagan taking office Iran formally released the hostages. Reagan taking office marked the beginning of what is sometimes known as the "Reagan Revolution," which is known for America's zeal in stopping the spread of Communism, among other things, worldwide. For better or worse Reagan had been elected, and was not going to be as diplomatic as Carter had been.

Reagan Takes Sides

After the hostages had been returned Reagan could afford to take sides, and support a country whose victory would benefit the U.S. . While Iran had been holding its own in the war against Iraq, much of the world was supporting Saddam Hussein with both money and equipment. To further influence Reagan was the fact that the Iranian ayatollah had been referring to the U.S. as the "Great Satan" of the western world.

The combination of multi-lateral military support for Iraq, Anti-U.S. sentiment from Iran, and the obvious post-crisis hatred that Americans had for Iran gave way to a shift that supported the Saddam controlled Iraq. As former NSC Staff Member Teicher Affidavit testifies in a personal memoir

“President Reagan decided that the United States would do whatever was necessary and legal to prevent Iraq from losing the war with Iran.” (Teicher Affidavit)

As the war raged on until 1989 the U.S. would ultimately contribute more than \$200 Million (USD) worth of support to help fund Iraq (SIPRI).

Other Matters

As important as the Iran-Iraq war was, Soviet aggression during the time period took up much of the U.S.'s resources and resolve. During the Cold War the U.S. invested much of its agencies to contain the spread of communism in an effort to deter Soviet aims in Europe, Asia and Central America. While The Vietnam War, The Korean War, and the Russo-Afghan War were proxy wars on huge scales, other states in the Western Hemisphere were staging grounds for the U.S. to support anti-communist regimes, most notably were the Contras. While the group did not operate on as grand a scale as the Afghan Mujahideen, their actions in Central America had caught the attention of the U.S. . Their fight for power in Central America would become an important U.S. interest later on, as they became a part of the U.S.'s war against socialism.

The Contras

The “Contras” was a loose term used to describe revolutionaries opposing the FSLN (frente Sadinista de Liberacion Nacional) party that was in control of Nicaragua. After the FSLN took power in 1979 and began employing a Marxist agenda, Ronald Reagan (then still a presidential candidate) embraced their enemies, the Contras. While the Contras were not “repelling” the force of communism they were fighting a socialist group whose aims were conflicting with the Truman Doctrine.

Aside from the unsettling idea of our government helping an insurgency overthrow a government, the early Reagan administration spent millions of dollars funding them. In the first year of Reagan's presidency he issued his (then) top secret NSDD # 17 (National Security Decision Directive) which provided \$19 million dollars for the CIA to channel to the Contras. The funds would be used for training troops, purchasing weapons, and other covert operations. (NSC NSDD)

However, because the CIA was acting without the consent of the Congressional Intelligence Committee, the Republican-controlled congress (The 97th) fired back at this by adding the "Bolan Amendment" to the Defense Appropriations Act of 1983. The amendment forbade the U.S. to further fund the Contras. However Reagan would find another way to fund the contras and fight against Central-American socialism.

Hezbollah Recycles Tactics

While the Iranian-held U.S. hostages had been returned to the U.S., the message was clear to the Middle-East and the rest of the world; taking American prisoners is an effective bargaining tool. As a result, extremist groups around the world recycled the tactic. In 1983 The Lebanese political party (and extremist group) Hezbollah captured 30 hostages of western countries, many of them Americans.

Hezbollah claims that the hostages were taken as a measure against American aggression. After the 1983 U.S. Embassy bombing in Beirut, the U.S. considered Hezbollah to be the attacks, which led Hezbollah to take precautionary measures to defend itself. Whether or not Hezbollah actually did have anything to do with the bombings, they claimed that taking the hostages would act as an insurance policy against a full scale attack from America.

Hezbollah, while considered to be a terrorist organization by the U.S. and many other western countries, has been viewed as a legitimate party in the Arab world and has even won several elections through Democratic means. It has also been (covertly) funded by the Islamic Republic of Iran, although Iran and Hezbollah both deny any ties to each other. While this relationship allows Iran to conduct indirect operations in Palestine, it would later allow Reagan to try gaining Hezbollah's favor by assisting Iran. (Haaretz)

This was a tough situation for the U.S. to cope with. Reagan knew that hostages had ruined Carter's reputation, however at the same time Reagan had also ruined U.S. relations with Iran by selling Iraq supplies such as helicopters. (SIPRI)

Money Talks

Hostages are, of course, a very tricky situation for policymakers to deal with. For a country to submit to a foreign power ruins its reputation; and ultimately shows the rest of the world that hostage situations work, and what works will be employed again. Yet if a government shows no sympathy for the lives of its citizens who have been held captive and are in danger, it tells the population something about its leadership.

After the hostages were taken, President Reagan's National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane proposed the idea that the U.S. could sell weapons to Iran in an attempt to to repair U.S.-Iranian relations. The theory behind the idea was that if the U.S. bartered weapons with Iran, the ayatollah could command Hezbollah to release the hostages.

In some regards this was a very intelligent decision. An arms-for-hostages deal seemed acceptable to the U.S. because any weapons supplied to Iran would only be used against the Iraqi army. Iran would be foolish not to barter for the weapons because while Iran had a well trained Army and Navy, the rest of the world was funding Iraq, and the war was beginning to take it's toll on a country that had few allies. Additionally if the Iranians won the Iran-Iraq war (which Reagan had publicly declared would not be allowed by the U.S.) they might remember the U.S.'s actions when oil went back on sale. (Iran-Contra Commissioned Report)

McFarlane's Vision

Because of the importance President Reagen placed on the Contra effort, in 1983 he placed his (at the time) National Security Advisor (former) Lt. Colonel Robert C. "Bud" McFarlane as the head of the Iran-Contra covert operations. Furthermore in 1984 President Reagan told the Lt. Colonel to keep the Contras funded "In body and soul". Even if the funds couldn't come from congress, there were plenty of U.S. allies with large wallets. (Iran-Contra Commissioned Report)

In an initial attempt to gain funds Mr. McFarlane sent his emissary Howard Teicher to Israel to acquire funds. Israel ultimately decided not to help the U.S. fund the Contras, however McFarlane decided not to tell congress about the meeting, despite being "perfectly legal" he felt Congress did not need to know. (Iran Contra Doc)

Eventually McFarlane did find a supporter who was willing to fund the Contras. In May of 1984 Prince Bandar of Saudi Arabia agreed to help fund the Contras as a gesture of good will to the United States; the prince agreed to pay \$1 million (USD) per month to help fund the Contra movement. Ultimately the Saudi government would end up doubling it's funding the next year to \$2 million (USD) per month. After creating a Swiss Bank account and transferring the sum McFarlane's assistant, Colonel Oliver North (ret.), McFarlane then reported that he had obtained funding for the Contras to President Reagan, Vice President Bush, Secretary of State Schultz and Secretary of Defense Weinberger; however none of them pressed for details regarding the sources. (Iran-Contra Commissioned Report)

Deals and Donors

On the other side of the world, Reagan still had a hostage crisis to deal with, and while selling weapons to Iran would help U.S. influence in the region, Congress would never approve this. Yet members of Reagan's cabinet used a loop-hole in international law to complete the trade. Because the U.S. maintained cordial relations with the state of Israel, it was decided that Israel would sell Iran weapons and then the U.S. would reimburse Israel after the transaction. While the trade was indirect, it was still a sale to Iran.

Eventually roughly 500 BGM 71 TOWs (Anti-Tank missiles) made it through Israel to Iran. To be fair, Israel did require authorization from a high ranking U.S. official to validate the need for the operation. To this request Robert McFarlane also did acquire approval from President Reagan. McFarlane did receive executive approval from Reagan, albeit on a hospital bed in July of 1985 while Reagan was recovering from cancer surgery.

For what it's worth, hostage Reverend Benjamin Weir was released from captivity as a result of the sales. But later that year the U.S. also sold another 500 HAWK (Surface-to-air) missiles through Israel, to no avail. (Iran-Contra Commissioned Report)

New Face, New Strategy

In the later months of 1985, President Reagan was faced with multiple foreign policy conflicts. Reagan needed to continue weapon sales to Iraq, in the event that they conquered Iran, but secretly selling weapons to Iran was an easy way for the U.S. to make money and try to free hostages; and despite what we may or may not know about how important the Contras were, President Reagan was dead set on having his own guerrilla warriors in central America. (Iran-Contra Commissioned Report)

After Robert McFarlane resigned as The President's Assistant National Security Advisor in December of 1985, he was immediately replaced by Vice Admiral John Poindexter (USMC). On the record

“said that he needs to leave government service now for certain responsibilities that he feels to his family.” (Ronald Reagan at the announcement of McFarlane's resignation)

Yet despite his need to be with his family, months later McFarlane was acting as U.S. envoy with parts and weapons shipments to Iran. By stepping out of the spotlight McFarlane left the white house hoping any secrets would leave with him. At the same time a military aide to NSC named Oliver North proposed a new plan that could allow the U.S. to sell weapons, and fund the Contras, with our without Congress' consent.

Modus Operandi

North's plan was devious, illegal on multiple levels, immoral, unethical, and unfortunately brilliant. North proposed that the U.S. begin selling weapons to Iran through the most direct method it could. By finding an arms dealer who was willing to broker the deal both countries could claim they were not involved with a direct trade. This also allowed them to trade faster with much less interference than they would have to deal with when working with another country such as Israel. Additionally because the prices would be set so high, the U.S. would make a substantial profit from the deals. This ensured that Iran still got the weapons they needed, The U.S. would gain some more leverage in the Middle-East, and might be able to free some more hostages.

Furthermore, because the funds would be transferred to a bank account controlled by CIA operatives (Weiner) the funds could be used however The President wanted. This gave Reagan a sort of "allowance" to spend without the approval of congress (who is only responsible for funding what the president wants to do). Because the weapons money easily matched the funding Congress used to provide it also allowed the Reagan administration to continue it's efforts in Central America.

The Exchange

As any government official, military analyst, intelligence agent or historian knows, plans never happen as outlined. Regarding the dates of arms deals, Iran did not begin seeking TOW (Anti-Tank missiles) until the Summer of 1984 (four years after the war broke out). It was by November that McFarlane's aide, Theodore Shackley, approached the Russian arms dealer Manucher Ghorbanifar to discuss trading U.S. manufactured TOW missiles for the Hostages Reiger and Buckley (the only two who had been captured to that date).

Six months later, while no hostages had been traded for, Hezbollah had kidnapped Lawrence Jenco, Jeremy Levine, Terry Anderson and David Jacobsen. To this end McFarlane proposed a trade of 100 TOW missiles for the six hostages in captivity. Despite concerns regarding Reagan's approval of such a trade, the deal was set, and each hostage would be returned for an equivalent of 1,333,333\$ USD in military equipment.. Yet after the 100 missiles had been transferred only Benjamin Weir had been released from Hezbollah's custody.

Despite the setback, in January of 1986 North pressed ahead and planned to sell 3300 TOW missiles along with 50 HAWK missiles for the lives of all of the hostages. The proposed plan, named "Operation Recovery", raised the amount of missiles being sold to 4000 TOWs. While both

countries agreed to the trade, when 500 TOW missiles were sent (indirectly) to Iran via Mr. Ghorbanifar no hostages were released, no missiles were returned to the U.S. .

By this point, the U.S. could not allow itself to be scammed any further. As such, Mr. McDaniel notes that on 20 June 1986 President Reagan told his aides that no more meetings could take place until a hostage was released, and sure enough Lawrence Jenco was released within a month. David Jacobsent would also be released in October as a result of negotiations and another 500 TOW missiles. (G. Bush Clemency Statement)

A Plot Uncovered

Something that nobody would've predicted about the Iran-Contra affair is how it was finally unraveled. Rather than the headlines showing up on the front page of the New York Times, or the Washington Post, the story was first seen in the Lebanese newspaper Al-Shiraa in November of 1986. The articles only covered the weapons for hostage deals that were being made, but this was the catalyst to the uncovering of scandal. Less than a month later, on November 18th 1986 Congress issued a report regarding the scandal which blamed President Reagan above all else, saying that he bore "Ultimate Responsibility".

While Al-Shariaa helped uncover the Iranian involvement, the U.S. ties to the contras was uncovered in October of 1986, by an American. During one of the shipments of arms and munitions to Nicaragua, a supply plane was shot down which resulted in the deaths of the two pilots. However one of the plane's cargo handler's named Eugene Hasenfus wore a parachute on the flight (against protocol) and was able to parachute to the ground. After parachuting to the ground he was captured by forces from the Nicaraguan government. While he was relieved of the initial 25 year sentence in a Nicaraguan prison his testimony, along with documents recovered from the crash, proved that the U.S. was continuing to help the Contras in several forms. (Iran-Contra Commission Report)

Heads Roll

As with any political scandal, Iran-Contra had it's fair share of lackeys charged for legal violations. While it's not uncommon for high-ranking officials to get away with clandestine matters, this scandal serves testament to how much a president's friend can get away with.

Starting at the top of the chain was President Reagan's Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, who was indicted of five felony charges in 1992. A New York Times article from June of 1992 reads

“The indictment, returned by a Federal grand jury today, charged Mr. Weinberger with committing perjury and concealing more than 1,700 pages of notes from a personal diary recording his discussions with other officials about arms sales to Iran. Mr. Weinberger was accused of lying to investigators for Lawrence E. Walsh, the independent prosecutor investigating the Iran-contra affair, about his diaries and with falsely testifying to Congress in 1987 that he was unaware that Saudi Arabia had provided millions of dollars in contributions to the Nicaraguan contras.” (The New York Times, 17 June 1992)

Yet despite the history that followed him, he was pardoned by President George H.W. Bush in the waning hours of his presidency in 1992 claiming that

“I am pardoning him not just out of compassion or to spare a 75-year-old patriot the torment of lengthy and costly legal proceedings, but to make it possible for him to receive the honor he deserves for his extraordinary service to our country.” George H.W. Bush 24 December 1992 (G. Bush Clemency Statement)

National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane chose a different approach to stepping out of the spotlight when he attempted to kill himself by overdosing on Valium in 1987. However in March of 1988 he plead guilty to four misdemeanor accounts of withholding information from Congress. While it is debated that McFarlane was coaxed into going to court to make a scapegoat out of North (Washington Monthly), he was given a \$20,000 fine and 200 hours of community service which, again, was pardoned by President George H.W. Bush stating that

“The common denominator of the motivation – whether their actions were right or wrong – was patriotism.” George H.W. Bush 24 December 1992 (G. Bush Clemency Statement)

Deputy National Security Advisor John Poindexter was also found guilty of five felony counts including lying to congress. However his sentences were later nullified because he had technically pleaded to Congress before, and had immunity status (DWI). In irony, he was given congressional immunity for testifying, even though he committed perjury when doing so.

For What it's Worth

For what it's worth, the fates of the 16 U.S. hostages who were captured should be noted. In the initial capturing of flight TWA The first hostage to be released was Frank Reiger in 1984. The year after in 1985 the releases of (Reverend) Benjamin F. Weir, and Jeremy Levin, but saw the death of hostage William Buckley (presumably of pneumonia) . Two

more hostages, David P. Jackson and Lawrence M. Jenco. The last escapee of the 1980s would be reporter Charles Glass who managed to escape his captors after being held hostage for a month in 1987.

After another three years Robert Polhill and Frank Reed were both released in 1990. Finally in 1991 Terry A. Anderson, Joseph Cicippio, Alan Steen, Jesse J. Turner, Thomas Sutherland, and Edward A. Tracey were released, along with the unfortunate discovery of the corpse of William Higgins in Beirut.

Analysis

While in contemporary America Ronald Reagan is considered by many to be the champion of capitalism who defeated the spread of communism and helped tear down the Berlin wall, Iran-Contra should (if nothing else) stand as a reminder to America that even the most popular presidents were not invincible to the effects of globalization. Granted, there is no "perfect" solution to a foreign policy in this age of internationalization, and any decision has its repercussions, but what the Reagan administration did in this situation is an example of bully diplomacy that has contributed to many problems that are plaguing the U.S. in the middle east to this day.

Taking into account the U.S.'s support for Iraq during its war with Iran, Reagan did not have a choice but to support Iraq. While the U.S. may regret selling weapons to an ally it would later overthrow, along with the infamous photograph of Saddam Hussein shaking Donald Rumsfeld's hand; The U.S. had little choice but to support Iraq. Along with the U.S.S.R, China, the U.K., and France, nobody wanted to help Iran.

On the first controversial matter of Iran-Contra is the matter of the first hostage crisis that Reagan essentially didn't need to deal with. While the U.S. is fortunate that the insurgents capitulated under fear of President Reagan, this incident may have given Reagan too much credibility to use more forceful and coercive types of foreign policy.

The second hostage crisis, does seem to be a more disgraceful act of flawed logic in terms of who the U.S. supported, and why. One of the most well known facts about the hostage takers is that they were very strong supporters of the new Iranian government, some even say acting on the behest of the ayatollah. This fact is proven true because of the actions of the U.S. at the time. It is exactly because of this connection that the U.S. agreed to sell weapons to Iran. Yet if Hezbollah follows the will of Iran, and Hezbollah operates against the U.S. by taking hostages, then logically Iran has ordered them to do so. While Reagan was correct in

assuming that helping Iran would allow the U.S. to better its influence in the area, this also shows that Iran had forced the U.S. to negotiate with them out of fear and necessity.

Simply the act of trading weapons with Iran should be viewed as an act of U.S. irresponsibility. While nobody seemed to mind the Iraqis and the Iranians killing each other, the U.S. supplying arms, money, or munitions to Iran in any way was a direct violation of the U.S. law. On a global scale, the U.S. was also (although not intentionally) working against the efforts of its allies such as France, Britain and Germany.

The final irony behind the sales to both countries is the actual products being sold. While the U.S. was selling hundreds of helicopters to the Iraqi army, the U.S. also sold upwards of 500 surface-to-air missiles to Iran. This leads to the simple question of why on earth would the U.S. sell weapons to destroy its own weapons. The absurdity of this deal should suggest the immorality of those involved in the scandal.

Regarding the aspect of the Contras in Central America, Reagan needed to fight communism. Yet the extent to which Reagan used the CIA to fight a covert war in Central America can hardly be viewed as responsible. Aside from the fact that the CIA mined Nicaraguan ports in order to fight the government's economy, which is forbidden by international law and considered an act of war; the CIA also went to such extremes as publishing its well known "Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare" which is most notable for encouraging the "freedom fighters" to assassinate judges, police officers, government officials in particular. The CIA also dropped copies of The Freedom Fighters Manual all over Nicaragua, which told people how to cause civil unrest through subtle acts such as wasting electricity, not working, and more extreme measures such as how to make a molotov cocktail incendiary device. (Weiner)

However the worst aspect of Iran contra, aside from the law and human rights violations, may be its endgame accomplishments. In terms of the Iran-Iraq war, rather than Iran taking control of the Persian Gulf as many had predicted, Iraq has become the Vietnam of the 21st century and now requires a significant U.S. military presence to keep the peace. As Iran continues to strengthen its resolve to acquire nuclear technologies (NY Times), the U.S. has done little to improve its relations with Iran; and has done much to destroy its credibility across The Middle-East.

Nicaragua has not become the country that the U.S. had wanted it to become either. The FSLN is still a major political party in Nicaragua, and

The International Court of Justice also later found The U.S. guilty of unlawful use of force for helping the contras. However in regards to the ruling in the case of Nicaragua v. The United States, The U.S. has still not complied with the court's rulings.

While Reagan, North and McFarlane may have had the best intentions for their country, we can see that Iran-Contra affair has certainly U.S. relations in both the Middle-East and Latin America. This combination of secrecy of operations, and choosing to support two different countries only to further U.S. goals is poison to any democracy in the 21st century. It's all well and good to further American ideals and goals, but as Iran-Contra has shown us, in this changing world nothing comes for free. Just as America wants to further it's goals, other countries that the U.S. wants to work with are doing the same. The U.S. can either look at this as a burden, or as means for us to become stronger.

Guantanamo Bay

From the earliest of governments, prisoners of all natures have been subjected to some of the most awful treatment one can imagine. Rome sent prisoners to be gladiators, the inquisition sent heretics to be burned at the stake, and the U.S.S.R. sent dissenters to the dreadful Gulag camps. While such measures were taken by the government for various reasons such as entertainment and consolidating power, the world has come a long way in regards to it's treatment of political prisoners. In terms of prisoner's treatment, the international community has come together and established the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which has abolished many of the cruel and barbarous methods used by empires of the eighteenth, nineteenth and even twentieth centuries.

In contemporary America we consider things like whipping, drowning and beating to be cruel, but also archaic methods that are unfitting of a legitimate legal system. However, under the radar of common American knowledge, the U.S. has been reportedly approving jails that not only allow guards to extract information through any means necessary, but also been detaining prisoners in regardless of legal rights denied to anybody being tried under U.S. legal jurisdiction.

It is in a small island in Cuba (of all places) that the U.S. has created a prison that houses perceived criminals of the U.S. . While some of them may, in fact, be enemies of the state, we should take due care to note who we imprison, what they are subject to. The eyes of the world now rest upon how we treat our prisoners, and when the U.S. claims that it stands for freedom and democracy this prison will not assist our claim.

Founding Lawyers

We should begin analyzing the history and ideas behind Guantanamo Bay with its location in Cuba. It is strange to think that the U.S. has set up one of its more well known military installations in a country that it does not have stellar diplomatic relations with. However, Guantanamo Bay's naval base is anything but a friendly agreement between the two countries. As such, the establishment of the base has caused tensions between the U.S. and Cuba for over a century.

In the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, The United States became the protectorate of what would later become Cuba. It was not until after four years of occupying Cuba, that the U.S. considered giving the island of Cuba independence. However, this independence did not come free, and the Cubans were arguably never "given" freedom by the U.S. . Because the U.S. was interesting in expanding its influence abroad. After much quarreling, U.S. politicians decided that they were generous enough to grant Cuba its independence, however they would be required to submit to U.S. political interests before the needs of their own democracy. This decision to coerce Cuba into submission came in the form of an appropriations bill which was later named "The Platt Amendment." While the actual document regarding Cuban independence was actually a U.S. finance bill regarding military spending, it laid down provisions for Cuba to accept or reject. By accepting the terms laid down by the U.S., Cuba could become a self-determined democracy that could hold its own elections and establish its own constitution, or it could reject the terms and remain subject to U.S. rule. Seeing the obvious advantages offered by the U.S.'s Platt Amendment, Cuba incorporated its terms into its constitution when it first established sovereignty. However these terms allowed the U.S. many political liberties such as the right to intervene in Cuban elections as well as the right to intervene militarily in Cuba if the U.S. felt obligated. This agreement would later pave the way for the U.S. to take a very significant legal advantage over Cuba, and establish a naval base there. (Zayas)

Way Back Then...

While it may be hard to believe, over a century ago the United States leased 45 square miles of land and water at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for various naval strategic reasons. While Cuba should consider itself lucky that it did not become subject to harsher legal interventions, the U.S. was able to set up a naval base that has come under criticism from groups such as Human Rights Watch, BBC and The New York Times.

However, it is not fair to discuss the controversial aspects of Guantanamo Bay without examining its legal legitimacy in the scope of international law. Once the U.S. granted Cuba the legal rights mentioned before, it used its continued legal jurisdiction over Cuba to lease the territory of Guantanamo Bay to the U.S. Navy. The U.S. did this because during that time period it had ships in the Gulf of Mexico constantly, and thus provided the U.S. with a significant nautical advantage. Naval ships of this time period were, of course, fueled with coal, and in an attempt to gain naval superiority over both parts of the Atlantic Ocean, and the Gulf of Mexico, the United States decided to lease the Cuban Bay named Guantanamo Bay to meet such a need.

When the U.S. did lease the territory to build a naval base in 1903, it wrote a contract between the U.S. and Cuba recalling the transaction. The first article of the agreement regarding the purchase of the land explicitly states that

“The grant of the foregoing Article shall include the right to use and occupy the waters adjacent to said areas of land and water, and to improve and deepen the entrances thereto and the anchorages therein, and generally to do any and all things necessary to fit the premises for use as coaling or naval stations only, and for no other purpose.” (Yale Avalon)

However, The United States no longer fuels its ships with coal. Also, Guantanamo Bay no longer fuels any ships that require coal (because it is such an outdated method of transportation). Yet, the base still continues to exist, and has been used only sparsely throughout its lifetime. (Murphy)

Set In Stone

Of course, just because there is a treaty between the two governments, that does not make the treaty fair. In the case of Guantanamo Bay's leasing, in 1934 during a revision of the U.S. rent price of Guantanamo, an article was added saying that

“Until the two Contracting Parties agree to the modification or abrogation of the stipulations of the Agreement in regard to the lease to the United States of America of lands in Cuba for coaling and naval stations ... the stipulations of that Agreement with regard to the naval station of Guantanamo shall continue in effect.” (Yale Avalon)

The mentioned article not only reaffirms the U.S.'s lease of the Guantanamo Bay territory, but it also ensures that the U.S. cannot cancel its agreement with Cuba unless both countries agree to do so. Similarly, Cuba may not remove the U.S. presence without the consent of the U.S.. As time as shown, this agreement has not been the best of Cuban

interests because the U.S. has never considered handing over Guantanamo Bay's territory to Cuba, however Cuba has been trying for a half a century to remove the naval base from its sovereign territory. Thus, Guantanamo will remain on Cuban soil until the U.S. decides to cancel the treaty with Cuba. (Yale Avalon) (Zayas)

Of course, what changed Cuba's mind to remove the base was a change in political structure. In late 1959 the pro-communist President Osvaldo Torrado entered office, and Cuba informed the U.S. that it wanted to cancel its Guantanamo Bay agreement. Cuba also stopped cashing rent checks made out to its government in an attempt to cancel the treaty, but the U.S. has refused to cancel the treaty, citing its importance to U.S. national security as validation for their desire to continue operating.

While the U.S. exerts claims that its control over the area is supported by the document signed by Cuba in the world of international law this is simply not true. As stated earlier, Cuba was put under pressure to agree to the terms laid out in the Platt Amendment. Because U.S. troops were still occupying Cuba during the negotiations, the U.S. could allow them to remain in Cuba unless its demands were met. This created a "quid pro quo" situation, which gave the U.S. the leverage to force Cuba into accepting the provisions of the amendment. Yet under The Vienna Convention on The Law of Treaties (ratified in 1980) the U.S. leasing of the territory is invalid as article 52 states that

"A treaty is void if its conclusion has been procured by the threat or use of force in violation of the principles of international law embodied in the Charter of the United Nations" (Vienna Conventions)

Additionally, it should be noted that this charter applies retroactively to treaties already made. Hence, the U.S. has no legal right to the control it currently exercises over Guantanamo Bay.

Prisoner of What Status

However, despite international law, Guantanamo has done nothing but expand its capabilities since the early twentieth century, and in the post 9-11 world it too has done its part in the war on terror, even if it is a displeasing task. Within a of September 11th the U.S. launched a full scale invasion force to Afghanistan in an attempt to not only track down Al-Qaeda members such as Osama Bin Laden and Ayman Al-Zawhiri , but also to defeat the reported Al-Qaeda ally, The Taliban. (Wright)

Despite unfortunate losses such as the Northern Alliance Commander Ahmed Shah Massoud, the U.S. was able to capture dozens of Taliban strongholds throughout Afghanistan, taking many prisoners in the

process. However, because of a lack of effective prisons in Afghanistan (due to the Taliban presence) the U.S. began transferring those captured to Guantanamo Bay's detention center, while remaining unsure of what would follow their incarceration there. (Washington Post) (Wright)

The idea of transporting alleged terrorists to Guantanamo bay is certainly an appealing idea to many Americans. By sending these prisoners to Guantanamo they would not only be at the mercy of U.S. forces, but would also be miles away from the U.S. if they ever managed to escape. Yet, as effective as this prison system may be, keeping people captive in Guantanamo is not entirely legal. (Zayas)

Who Gets What

In regards to Guantanamo Bay's legal jurisdiction, U.S. legal jurisdiction is very murky. The 1903 document with allows the U.S. to operate out of Guantanamo Bay does state that Guantanamo Bay is Cuban territory, however Cuban law does not apply to the territory. Instead, the U.S. is in control of complete jurisdiction over the Naval Base and, ergo, any and all people situated in the Guantanamo Bay naval base (and detention center) are thus subject to U.S. law. Thus anybody situated in Guantanamo Bay Naval Base (including prisoners) may benefit from any treaties signed or recognized by the U.S. . This is an important fact to note because are then granted the right to Habeas Corpus.

In Latin habeas corpus is defined as "Thou shalt have the body." In the legal sense it is the extremely important legal right to any U.S. citizen because it ensures that if somebody cannot be accused of a specific crime (such as murder, or espionage) they must be released. This right is also extended to anybody being held on U.S. soil, such as alleged Al-Qaeda and Taliban detainees who are incarcerated in Guantanamo Bay's detention center. However, as Ken Roth of The Human Rights Watch has said, " [the detainees] They're not being brought before any independent judges, they're not being charged and convicted for any crime." (BBC 11 June 2006)

Even if we forget U.S. law (for all intents and purposes) applying to these detainees, there are always The Geneva Conventions to consider. Because while some of these prisoners do not belong to an army, they are certainly soldiers of their cause.

Regardless of their methods, Al-Qaeda members must be legally given prisoner-of-war status. Though Al-Qaeda is not a state-sponsored military branch (such as the U.S. Marine Corps, or the U.S. Air-Force) it is legally categorized as a militia as per the Geneva Conventions. However, the for armed forces such as irregular groups, militias, or volunteer

corps, the group members must abide by these rules in order to receive prisoner of war status. Excerpted below is article 4 of The Geneva Conventions in regards to what constitutes a fighter as a legitimate "soldier." In order to receive prisoner of war status if captured, one must abide by the following rules when fighting an enemy force.

(a) that being commanded by a person responsible for his subordinates;

(i) (b) that of having a fixed distinctive sign recognizable at a distance

(ii) (c) that of carrying arms openly;

1. (d) that of conducting their operations in accordance with the laws and customs of war.

While Al-Qaeda's adherence to such rules is very questionable, the Geneva Conventions do also state that

The present Convention shall apply to the persons referred to in Article 4 (listed above) from the time they fall into the power of the enemy and until their final release and repatriation.

Should any doubt arise as to whether persons, having committed a belligerent act and having fallen into the hands of the enemy, belong to any of the categories enumerated in Article 4, such persons shall enjoy the protection of the present Convention until such time as their status has been determined by a competent tribunal.

An emphasis is placed on the bold text because no Guantanamo detainees have been judged by a tribunal regarding their status. Thus their captors are obligated to ensure they are granted all rights extended to them by The Geneva Conventions as soldiers. as such

"No physical or mental torture, nor any other form of coercion, may be inflicted on prisoners of war to secure from them information of any kind whatever. Prisoners of war who refuse to answer may not be threatened, insulted, or exposed to unpleasant or disadvantageous treatment of any kind" (The Geneva Conventions)

Waterboarding is NOT A Sport

However, as Guantanamo has become more and more of a prison complex, it has come under scrutiny for its methods and treatment of prisoners. From dozens of sources including the Human Rights Watch Organization, The Red Cross, U.S.A. Today, Amnesty International, The New York Times and even more conservative papers such as The Times have all published documents claiming that detainees at Guantanamo Bay are exposed numerous types of torture. Many detainees have reported being refused a time for prayer, beatings, being tied up in humiliating positions for as long as twenty-four hours(BBC), and sexual

humiliation similar to the brand witnessed in the Abu Ghraib. (Truthout.org)

As a means of fighting the techniques used against them, many prisoners have tried to rebel through techniques such as hunger strikes. By refusing to eat any food given to them the prisoners were defying their captors, and some of them were sent to their mother countries (which incidentally have given these men fair trials) because of this (Arabicnews). However, the U.S. has also been quoted saying that certain prisoners were tied down and force fed food through tubes when they continued their hunger strikes for longer periods of time than the U.S. felt healthy. (BBC 27 Oct 2005)

As a last resort, some detainees have even made the ultimate sacrifice when they can no longer endure the treatment, and have killed themselves. The U.S. has reported that there had been over a dozen suicide attempts before 2006, however in June of that year a triple-suicide was reported as three detainees hanged themselves in one night (after weeks of being force fed) (BBC 11 June 2007).

Guantanamo Bay has become so notorious for the aforementioned reasons, but also due to it's unique reports of waterboarding detainees. Waterboarding is a form of information extraction whereby a prisoner is held on his or her backside with their arms and legs restrained. His or her upper body is in a slightly reclined position, or their head hangs over a ledge whereby they must suspend the weight of their head with their neck muscles. A piece of plastic wrap, such as saran, or a piece of cellophane is then placed tightly over the face of the subject creating a gagging effect. Once the thin cover has been draped over the subject, water is poured in large quantities over the face of the subject (from a hose, or bucket). As reported by victims, and even the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), waterboarding simulates the experience of drowning without the actual danger of filling up a subject's lungs full of water. (ABC News 15 November 2005)

Despite claims that waterboarding is a form of torture, the U.S. has made several statements claiming that it does not torture people. One famous example is an interview with Vice President Dick Cheney wherein he stated that "We don't torture. That's not what we're involved in." Yet Cheney may be telling a guided truth on this when we consider the U.S.'s definition of torture. However the Oxford English Dictionary defines torture as "Severe or excruciating pain or suffering (bodily or mentally), used as a means of punishment or persuasion." Thus any information that is derived through bodily harm is to be considered

torture. Even high ranking U.S. military personnel such as intelligence officer Col. Steven Kliman has been quoted as saying

"[M]any Americans, understandably angry and seeking some manner of revenge after the vicious attacks of 9/11, have fallen prey to the proposition that excessive physical, psychological, and emotional pressures are necessary to compel terrorists or insurgents to answer an interrogator's questions. Further, this form of interrogation is too often viewed as an inevitable and appropriate means of punishment the detainees deserve for their malicious acts. Such beliefs are equally untrue... [C]oercion is decidedly ineffective. Coercive interrogation methods are wholly counterproductive in winning the hearts and minds of detainees and, I might add, the populations from which they emerge. Instead, coercive methods are almost certain to create what is perhaps the most callous form of degradation one human can inflict upon another: humiliation. Humiliation is an inevitable product of any form of torture".(Amnesty International U.S.A.)

Geneva What?!

However the view on Capital Hill regarding terror detainees has not been the same as what has been mentioned earlier. When questioned about Guantanamo Bay detainees (former) Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stated that "As I understand it, technically unlawful combatants [those who do not adhere to article 4] do not have any rights under the Geneva Conventions." However this argument is invalid, because even if mentioned members of Al-Qaeda had not been complying with the Geneva Convention stated articles, they are given such privileges of habeas corpus, and rights set out by the UNHRC, until they are proven guilty of the crime.

Even worse, the U.S. employs scholars who are well versed enough in the Geneva conventions to know right from wrong, and choose to say the wrong things. As there are plenty of people in Washington who believe that they can simply assume that one is guilty before a trial. As shown in 2002 White House Press Secretary Fleisher stated

"The national security team has always said that these detainees should not be treated as prisoners of war because they don't conform to the requirements of article 4 [regarding military uniforms]... the Geneva Convention says that if there is any doubt, then a competent tribunal should be convened to review these things. We don't think there is any doubt, in this situation."

Thus the U.S. has put itself at a legal risk in regards to how it treats it's prisoners, even those who are alleged terrorists.

Analysis

In the wake of 9/11, the existence of Guantanamo can certainly be seen as a logical measure to fight enemies of America. However, just because it can seem like an appropriate measure to counter terrorist activities, this does not justify the things that the U.S. has done there. Because while Americans may have the best intentions of routing out terrorists before they can strike, human nature tends to turn crackdowns into witch hunts.

As more and more bad news emits from Guantanamo, the U.S. needs to remind itself that the rest of the world is watching, and few of them are pleased by what they hear about Guantanamo. In this age of internationalization, the U.S. is now faced with a fundamental choice regarding what we do in Guantanamo. Will we run to the ends of the Earth hunting down alleged terrorists, only to make ten more because of the way we act, or will we curb our newly acquired need to feel safe by incarcerating people? Furthermore, can the U.S. continue to do nothing as its authority in the world continues to dwindle?

If we reflect on Guantanamo's history we can see that behind every aspect of the base's existence lies a choice that the U.S. has made which furthers only U.S. interests, as opposed to the considerations of other countries that America often wonders why they aren't friends with.

While many other countries committed far worse atrocities during the age of imperialism and colonialism, The U.S. was not without its misdoings of the 19th century. The idea of a fueling station in the South Atlantic was an obvious desire for the U.S., but the manner through which they achieved it was by no means moral. I would argue that the U.S.'s agreement about Guantanamo is worse than other horror stories such as the "trail of tears" because of the moral juxtaposition between 19th century America and 16th century England. To think that a country that fought its colonial mother England for democratic freedom not only did not allow Cuba sovereignty is hypocrisy beyond measure. Yet when the truth is examined, the U.S. actually created a quid pro quo bargain for Cuba. It could not receive its independence unless it agreed to be an extension of U.S. rule. While this may have been appropriate during the time, in the 21st century I feel the U.S. should realize the repercussions of unilateral actions like this.

Furthermore, rather than right the wrongs of the past and choose to recognize Guantanamo as a relic of the Imperialist era, the naval base continues to function more than a century later. Despite Cuba taking every diplomatic step possible to regain sovereignty (which it legally has) over

Guantanamo, such as not using the money given in the agreements for almost sixty years, petitioning the U.S. for the return of the territory as a gesture of good will, and even approaching The United Nations regarding the legality of U.S. occupation, the U.S. has decided not to respect Cuba's wishes. When we remind ourselves that Cuba became a member of the Soviet-bloc during the 1960s, shouldn't we also consider that Cuba could've become a good friend of the U.S. if only we had chosen to work with old rivals rather than against them?

This point needs to be raised because this is a wrong that can still be righted. Despite the current Castro regime in Cuba being unfriendly with the U.S., the removal of Guantanamo Bay could not only improve U.S.-Cuban relations, but also improve U.S. image around the world. (Zayas)

Yet once we recognize Guantanamo's real purpose, how can we not be disgusted with the government? Naval bases are one thing, but should Americans support illegal detentions and the moral implications that accompany them?

The Geneva Conventions, The UNHRC, and most countries have recognized The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That being said, there are no excuses regarding how information can, and cannot be obtained. If Adolf Eichmann were put on trial today he would be given food, water, a lawyer, sleep and reasonable accommodations while being prosecuted for his role in formulating Nazi-Germany's "Final Solution". In the past, the international community has been very keen on obeying these rules. As both Slobodan Milosovic, Saddam Hussein and many other heinous criminals have all been given fair trials, and fair accommodations, regardless of the alleged crimes.

Yet, because these detainees were captured by U.S. forces, and were (or are) being held in U.S. custody, in a base wherein the U.S. exercises total jurisdiction they are also given all rights and courtesies given to people in the U.S. (legal or not). Just as a police officer will read an illegal drug smuggler their rights, and the smuggler will have the right to challenge their case in a court of law, so must a terrorist suspect. This is the way the law works. Anything less is inductive reasoning, which has been the cause of such atrocities such as the heresy charges issued by the Spanish Inquisition, Salem witch trials, the post-war red-scare, and even pre-WWI anti-semitism.

Even worse is the fact that the information extracted cannot be trusted, but is still being used. Consider if you were tortured for weeks on end until you gave up sensitive information. While soldiers may (and often

are) trained to resist such techniques, they may not be aware of the information their captors seek. Yet the only way to escape further pain is by giving out false information.

I end this segment with a closing thought regarding both law and terrorism. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a terrorist as a “(person) who attempts to further his or her view by a system of coercive intimidation.” I fear that if the U.S. continues to use torture to gain information it wants to hear, does not allow people the most basic of human rights, and chooses not recognize the respects of foreign countries that Americans will become no better than the enemy we want to defeat. I remember as a child hearing an aphorism that “hate breeds hate”, and while September 11th was one of the foulest things a human could commit, I can assure you that for every suspected terrorist we detain, we create ten more to avenge him. Guantanamo bay is not making us safer, it's making martyrs of our enemies.

United States Support For Israel

As one of the first countries to recognize Israel as a state, The U.S. has constantly made the defense of Israel one of it's biggest concerns, regardless of the repercussions it has caused Americans. But should Israeli problems be U.S. problems? Has Israel affected U.S. policy too much? And do Americans realize the repercussions of being Israel's biggest ally? To understand the U.S.'s relationship with Israel on a broader spectrum, it is important to review the creation of Israel.

The Conception

The birth of Israel is deeply rooted in the ideology of Zionism, which spread across much of the Western world during the late 19th and early 20th century. First coined in the waning years of the 1890s , the Zionism is the belief that Jewish people (both ethnic and religious) should band together and establish a Jewish home.

Because of the religious and historical importance of Jerusalem, it was a logical choice for the Jews to want to establish their nation state in that area. However, when the World Zionist Organization (WZO) established itself the land they wanted belonged to the Ottoman Empire.

At this time, the Ottoman Empire was being ruled by it's final Sultan (dictator) Abdülhamid II who is most commonly known for the genocide he committed against the Armenian people. Yet, Abdülhamid II had one problem, he was being forced to Westernize by other Empires. As such he was often under more pressure from the French and Germans than he was from his own people.

Seeing this, the Jews then decided to petition the German Emperor Wilhelm II to assist their cause. If Wilhelm II could ask the Ottoman Sultanate for the land the Jews required, it could have given the Jews their own state. However, the Jewish lobbying to gain his support failed, and thus the Jews had no leverage to use in asking Abdülhamid II for a land grant. The plan failed miserably, but the Zionists were not prepared to give up.

Opinions Clash

Despite the havoc that World War One caused all across Europe, the WZO remained intact after the armistice. However, the Ottoman Empire was not so lucky. After its defeat, the victorious Western powers decided that the Ottoman Empire was not fit to rule itself and decided to partition it. By partitioning it, the Western nations would break it up into pieces (like a puzzle) and each govern the nation as they saw fit.

When it came time to distribute the region of Palestine, it was Britain who accepted the mandate and thus became the governing power over the future Jewish homeland. While Britain was only responsible for the economic and military stability in the region, their governance of the mandate allowed political power to rub off onto the area as well.

During this time British Prime Minister Arthur Balfour issued a document, known as the Balfour Declaration, which became one of the most important texts in Zionist history. While the Balfour declaration was only a letter, it laid out a provisional idea for a Jewish state in Palestine. Within months, this document caught the attention of both the WZO and Zionists everywhere, and a driving factor behind Jewish migration to Palestine. (Isseroff)

It should also be noted that during this time period Woodrow Wilson became sympathetic to the Zionist cause. Because of the lobbying of Jewish friends on the supreme court Justice Louis Brandeis and Rabbi Stephen Wise, Wilson decided to support the Balfour declaration.

While the British government was in control of its mandate, this ownership had infuriated much of the Middle-East. The Ottoman Empire had just been dissolved, and on top of that the victorious British Empire had not only partitioned their country, but was allowing Jews to migrate into territory surrounding one of the holiest cities in Islam. Because Palestine is sacred land to both Jews, Christians and Muslims, the influence of both the English, and the Jews was not appreciated.

After World War Two, and the atrocities of the holocaust, the WZO gained nothing but attention and support. This also resulted in a large

influx of Jewish migrants to Palestine, thus resulting in both a more Jewish Palestine, and more Arab-Muslim resentment. (Isseroff)

The Arbiter

Yet, while the British and the WZO survived the war, their relations began to fracture. Things like Italian air-raids which decimated the Jewish population, along with assassinations by the Lehi Zionist group, slowly began to wear away British resolve to police the area. By the end of WWII the British were not trying to get rid of their mandate, but it had certainly caused it's share of problems. It was not until The United Nations was created that a semi-viable plan was formulated to deal with the situation.

Often considered the successor to the League of Nations, The U.N. took over international affairs where the league left off. The U.N. involved itself in the matter by creating the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine. Named UNSCOP because the state of Israel did not yet exist, the unit was formed in 1947 after Britain handed over it's Palestine mandate to the U.N. . In an attempt to please all parties involved, the U.N. issued it's General Assembly resolution 181, which sanctioned a Jewish state in Palestine. At the same time it also created a "special international regime" that was designed to police the holy city of Jerusalem, so that neither Muslims nor Jews would have exclusive rights to the city. (Yale Avalon)

This resolution was celebrated by Jews and Zionists around the world. Because Jews now had a legal home. However, The Arab Union, and the rest of the Middle-East was enraged at the idea of a Jewish state. Listed below are the U.N. General Assembly votes against resolution 181.

Notable Votes Against U.N. Resolution 181

Afghanistan

Egypt

Iran

Iraq

Lebanon

Saudi Arabia

Yemen

Turkey

Syria

Pakistan

Despite universal disapproval of the plan from the Middle-East, The United States went ahead and voted yes on the resolution. A first of many forms of support for Israel.

A State is Born

Technically the U.N. resolution did not “make” Israel. However the Jewish peoples of the area quickly consolidated, and on 14 May 1948, Israel was born. I should point out that this was one day before British forces remaining from the mandate occupation withdrew from the area.

Israel's legitimacy would later be challenged by much of the Arab world. Later that month all the countries that voted “no” on resolution 181 laid out the Declaration on The Invasion of Palestine which stated that.

“The only solution of the Palestine problem is the establishment of a unitary Palestinian State... ”

While this statement (and the rest of the document) are menacingly different than the U.N. resolution's decision, the declaration claimed it would not violate resolution 181. However this Anti-Israel alliance began attacking before long.

The conflict that broke out between the Arabs and Israel (now known as the 1948 Arab-Israeli War) resulted in the 1949 armistice agreements. Included in the separate agreement that Israel made with the aforementioned Arab countries was that Jordan claimed the West Bank as well as East Jerusalem, and Egypt the Gaza Strip. Despite its bloody nose, the young democracy was not without its friends. (Yale Avalon)

They Go Way Back

As intricate as Israeli history is, it is the effects on the United States that we are here to examine. The earliest of Israeli-American relations date back to Israel's independence in 1948. While the Arab world voted no on U.N. resolution 181, the resolution was successful because two-thirds of the General Assembly voted in favor. Strikingly prevalent to the resolution is the U.S. voting “yes” on the resolution.

Countries Voting in Favor of Resolution 181**

Australia

Belgium

Bolivia

Brazil

Canada

Costa Rica

Czechoslovakia

Denmark

Dominican Rep.

Ecuador

France

Guatemala
Haiti
Iceland
Luxembourg
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nicaragua
Norway
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Sweden
South Africa
U.S.A.
U.S.S.R. *
Uruguay
Venezuela

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• * Includes all states under U.S.S.R with General Assembly voting privilege (Byelorussian S.S.R & Ukranian S.S.R.)

** As per Yale Avalon Project records of U.N. General Assembly Resolution 181

Then President Harry Truman was a well known Zionist, and as such was a strong supporter of a Jewish state. Writing to Senator Joseph Ball regarding resolution 181 and Arab aggression against the old British mandate, Truman said

"The question of Palestine as a Jewish homeland goes back to the solemn promise that had been made to them [the Jews] by the British in the Balfour Declaration of 1917 - a promise which had stirred the hopes and the dreams of these oppressed people. This promise, I felt, should be kept, just as all promises made by responsible, civilized governments should be kept."

However, even in the late 1940s American anti-semitism was still prevalent, and not many Americans believed in Israel as much as Truman did. In fact President Truman's highest ranking uniformed general, George Marshall, was vehemently opposed to the soon-to-be Israel.

Marshall was an experienced man when it came to international affairs, and he knew that recognizing Israel would cause U.S. relations

with important Middle-Eastern, among other places, countries to crumble. Marshall knew that the Israel was regarded as weak by the Arab world, and that America would expose itself by recognizing and embracing Israel. Such recognition, he argued, could undermine American efforts elsewhere in the Middle-East. One obvious repercussion was that the Arab world would be more hesitant to provide U.S. oil shipments . If the Arab Union was not friends with the U.S., it meant the Arab world would be more likely to deal with the American enemy of the day, the U.S.S.R.

While the Arab world was not competing to earn the favor of either the U.S or the U.S.S.R., it was certainly coordinated against Israel. Logically any country that was counterproductive to their aims would not be considered their friend. Thus if the U.S. were to support Israel, the Arab Union would become more susceptible to Soviet influence. (Mearsheimer)

Of course the decision came down to Truman, and after conversations with his former business partner Eddie Jacobson, Truman met with pro-Zionists advisors David Niles and Clark Clifford. Their intent was to persuade Truman to recognize Israel as a state as soon as humanly possible. Theoretically, even before Israel did.

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Despite much controversy in both the White House and Congress, both Marshall and Clifford did get some degree of satisfaction from the lobbying. Clifford's victory was that The United States did support the resolution, and affirmed Israel as a successor state to the British Palestinian Mandate only eleven minutes after Israel declared itself a state. However Marshall's had a hollow victory, as his caveat of the Arab world was well founded however, as the 1948 war broke out shortly after.

Golan

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and launched an invasion into the Golan Heights, East of Israel's border line. Within two days of the assault, the area of the Golan Heights was under The Israeli-Defense Forces' (IDF) control. During the Israeli invasion of the 1200 square kilometers, numbers ranging from 80,000 to 100,000 Druze Arabs fled into Syria.

Coincidentally, a day after Israel fortified Golan it signed a ceasefire with the countries that were attacking it. While no technical peace treaty was signed, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) did pass it's Resolution 242, which served the same purpose. However UNSC resolution 242 was controversial because it affirmed The Golan Heights as Israeli "occupied" territory.

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As Israel continued to develop as a Democracy, it continued to fight it's share of wars. Of the most important to the U.S. was the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Started by Syrian and Egyptian forces on the Jewish holiday Yom Kippur, this did pose an immediate challenge to not only Israel's sovereignty, but it's existence. The United States took note of Israel's problem and acted, quickly. Doing what any good Westernized Democracy would do, The U.S. then decided to drop millions of dollars of military equipment to assist Israel via air-lift.

This should, and should not, come as a surprise. Israel's prime minister Golda Meir had issued a personal request for assistance from friends of Israel. Within 3 days of her appeal Secretary of State Henry Kissinger replied at a press conference that "it is obvious that the U S. has a traditional friendship with Israel, which it will maintain in this crisis." (Israel MFA). While the U.S. may have been looking out for it's ally, it is the American citizen who paid the price to intervene. In addition to the millions of tax-dollars that funded the weapons given to Israel, America had stirred up a hornet's nest by angering one of the most important names in the world of energy, OPEC.

The Organization of Petrol Exporting Countries, or OPEC, is composed of many of the same states that have gone to war with Israel in the past. As such, after the The Yom Kippur War broke out OPEC made it very clear to the international community that it would stop supplying oil to any country that assisted Israel. While before the war, oil hovered around 3.60\$USD per barrel, after the OPEC embargo oil prices shot up 330% to roughly 12 dollars a barrel. On the level of buying gasoline, this caused a change in price from 38.5 cents per gallon to 55.1 cents over the course of only a few months. (Britannica)

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It would be an understatement to say that the Arab world was displeased with Israel's existence, and in the world of international politics one of the most overt ways of showing disrespect to a country is to not acknowledge it's sovereignty. As portrayed in the map below, many Middle-Eastern countries do not recognize Israel as a legitimate state.

(Israel's Diplomatic Status)

Surprisingly, Israel's former enemy Egypt now maintains good relations with Israel, however this accomplishment was not without it's price. The peace between Egypt was a result of the 1978 peace conferences held between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, and U.S. President Jimmy Carter. The meetings between the three heads' of state later became known as "The Camp David Accords", and established terms of negotiation between the long time rivals. Only six months later, both Egypt and Israel signed the Israeli-Egypt Peace Treaty which established a peace that has lasted since it's conception in 1978. (Wright)

This peace conference was huge for two reasons. While The U.S. and many other countries had recognized Israel as a state, after the conference Egypt finally agreed to recognize Israel as a legitimate state. As the first state in the Middle-East to do so Egypt was praised in Israel, America and many other non Arab states. Yet Egypt is a primarily Muslim nation, and the peace conferences between it and Israel were not unanimously supported. The Egyptian extremist group "Al-Jihad" (A.K.A. "The Egyptian Islamic Jihad") began conspiring against Sadat before his peace talks, after shortly after the peace treaty the extremist group's planned

coup came to fruition. In 1981, during a parade in Cairo, Sadat was assassinated by dozens of members of Islamic Jihad, and while he had done many unpopular things during his presidency, his death is often cited as being a result of his negotiations with Israel.

It should also be noted that of the dozens of Islamic Jihad members who were put on trial, their head spokesmen Ayman Al-Zawahiri would later become Osama Bin-Laden's top lieutenant of Al-Qaeda. (Wright)

The Lion's Roar

Many lobbyists would like Americans to believe that Israeli support is innocuous, however many Americans are unaware that their support for the "Zionist agenda" has sparked one of the more horrific catalysts in American history.

Born in Saudi Arabia in the late 1950s, Osama Bin Laden grew up in a world of political turmoil in which he saw the rest of the world lash out against the young state of Israel and, in an attempt at retaliation, began his campaign of terror against the United States. In his 1998 fatwa (an Islamic religious decree) Bin Laden states that America is a nation of sinners for several reasons. Yet his most embellished reasons he states is

Despite the great devastation inflicted on the Iraqi people by the crusader-Zionist alliance... if the Americans' aims behind these wars are religious and economic, the aim is also to serve the Jews' petty state (of Israel) and divert attention from its occupation of Jerusalem and murder of Muslims there. The best proof of this is their eagerness to destroy Iraq, the strongest bordering Arab state, and their endeavor to fragment all the states of the region such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Sudan into paper statelets and through their disunion and weakness to guarantee Israel's survival and the continuation of the brutal crusade occupation of the (Arabian) peninsula [Saudi Arabia]. - Osama Bin Laden, "Jihad against Jews and Crusaders" Fatwa, 1998 (Fas.org) (Wright)

While Bin Laden was a relatively obscure figure to both the CIA and the FBI before September 11th, and unknown to the average American, about a week later president Bush stated in an address to a Joint Congressional Session that Osama Bin Laden had attacked the United States because

"They hate our freedoms – our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other" - Pres. George W. Bush, 20 September 2001

George Bush would later use this reason to justify an invasion force being sent to Iraq to topple Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime in 2003. (Wright)

What Your Green-back does for Israel

At the end of the day, Israel is still a world power. Both a stable democracy and an ally of the U.S., with a population of 6.5 million and a GDP of 170.3 Billion (USD), Israel is one of the most financially successful countries. Yet Israel has not reached such financial successes by itself. In fact, if it were not for U.S. support, Israel would hardly be the economic superpower it is today.

Since the birth of Israel, The U.S. has been a stalwart financial supporter of the state, as the U.S. is (or has been) of other countries in the past. However Israel has been the largest recipient of U.S. aid since the end of World War II, and fifty years of economic data is here to prove it.

A recent Congressional Research Service (CRS) document dug into economic factors regarding U.S. Israeli relations and stated that

“Israel is not Economically self-sufficient, and relies on foreign assistance and borrowing to maintain it's economy. Since 1985 The United States has provided 3 billion USD in grants annually to Israel. Since 1976, Israel has been the largest annual recipient of U.S. Foreign assistants, and is the largest cumulative recipient since World War II.”

Yet this number is only an average, and many people, including representative Lee Hamilton (D-IN) have been quoted saying that Israel is a country who's actual amount received is higher than the receipt claims. This is because of the manner in which this money is transferred also Israel. Typically a country is given it's estimated yearly aid, and it is paid quarterly. One installment is made during Winter, Spring, Fall and the Summer. However, Israel is able to take a lump sum at the beginning of the year. While this may seem petty, the numbers add up. Now, when Israel collects on their interest all at once they've earned a significantly higher number than they should have, and thus we arrive with the 4.6 billion USD quoted by R. Hamilton. To simply this, noted political scientist John Mearsheimer states the that this form of payment “... is akin to receiving your entire annual salary on January 1st, and thus being able to earn interest on the unspent portion until you used it.” (Mearsheimer)

Yet this money can go even further, because Israel is not required to monitor how they spend it. Once Israel has received it's funds at the end of the year, it reinvests it's unspent portions in profitable industries, and because of how they invest this money they continue to earn even more. Once the 4.6 billion figure has been received, Israel invests funds it has not yet spent in the U.S. treasury bills. This causes Israel to earn some shockingly high numbers. In fact the U.S. Embassy in Israel has cited this number at 660 billion USD from interest alone. To this end, an

appropriate analogy would be that this is similar to receiving your entire year's salary, plus a (roughly) 50% interest rate, and then reinvesting your yearly earnings in a very high yield bank. Such a high yield that, by the time you withdraw your funds, you've made an additional 15% of your salary. (Mearsheimer)

The breakdown of the financial assistance also shows how much the U.S. spends on funding the military, such as Israeli Defense Force (IDF), as well as the Israeli Air Force (IAF). About 66% of given U.S. aid goes to Israel's military budget. Billions more are also given to Israeli housing developments (albeit not in the West Bank, see below). The document also claims that Israel receives another 1 billion dollars through philanthropy organizations and earns another 1 billion through proceeds of Israel bonds. Totalling close to 7.5 billion USD annually. (Mearsheimer)

As previously mentioned, Israel's housing developments in the West Bank have come under international criticism time and time again. Yet the U.S. has made one fortunate decision and asserted it's stance that it cannot allow it's money given to Israel to be appropriated into their work in the West Bank. However many Israeli politicians, including Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy, have stated that Israel could feasibly use the funds in the Western part of Jerusalem (which is bound by the same laws that the West Bank is).

Rushing to the defense of Israel's military has also cost the U.S. more than one might expect. As of 2005 The U.S. has spent over a half-billion in developing the "Arrow Anti-Missile Missile" (missile-to-missile defense system), 1.3 billion developing the failed lavi aircraft project, 200 million in the on going Merkava tank project, 130\$ million in the anti-missile laser project. (Congressional Report Service)

... But Why?

It's a very valid question, considering that any policy maker on capital hill knows about the amount of money the U.S. gives Israel. Why do we continue to give them so much money? The reason is that the concept of Zionism has never truly died down. It would seem that while the Jewish home has been established, Zionism can still exist to the extent that it's believers can try to improve or expand the Jewish home. To this end, the most prevalent of Zionist groups in America established itself as a lobbyist group based in Washington D.C. named The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

But just how powerful is AIPAC? In the late 90s Fortune magazine asked several congressman to list some of the most powerful lobbies in America, and AIPAC placed second only to the National Rifle

Association (NRA), and other enormously powerful lobbies such as those who defend big tobacco companies. (Mearsheimer)

Of course the goal of the lobby is more designed to spread unconditional "pro-Israeli" feelings. Such as when Israel was selling weapons to China in 2000, and the U.S. wanted to reduce aid being given to Israel. Immediately the lobby began to use it's influence in newspapers, news agencies and on capital hill to prevent the U.S. from cutting aid off.

But the lobby does not stop there. Even a president who was as popular as Reagan was still not immune to the political effects of the lobby. As was the case in 1982 when the U.S. wanted to sell AWACS surveillance airplanes to Saudi Arabia. As a reaction to such a "betrayal" as the lobby saw it, AIPAC began lobbying against Reagan and effectively bullied him into calling off the sale (which would've provided the U.S. with precious oil the U.S.S.R. would not have gotten to).

Analysis

Consider the Berlin conference. European countries get together to divide Africa up, establish the borders they see fit, and assume that things will simply work themselves out. Yet in reality this caused tensions between colonies in Africa that still have not subsided. I raise this historical example, because Israel's existence is based in the same scenario. As the Ottoman Empire was torn asunder, pressure from Zionist groups on Western governments ultimately started a chain reaction that led to the creation of Israel. After some of the most important events of the twentieth century unfolded, the world came together once again, and the U.N. carved out a place for Israel without regards to the rest of the Middle-East.

I can't comment on the will of the international community, as it is not my place. Because of the generation I've been born into, I cannot understand the post holocaust sentiment for the Jewish people. However, fifty years later the world is a very different place.

The relationship between the U.S. and Israel is one that has perhaps never existed in the history of politics. It's no surprise that Israel is a valuable strategic interest for the U.S., as Israel provides easy access to both the Middle-East, North Africa, and even Southern Europe. However, it is quite impossible to understand who is truly in control of the relationship. While the U.S. funds enormous portions of Israeli spendings, we may not have a choice to do so. AIPAC has become such a strong political force in Washington that any politic that does not wish to be labeled anti-semitic knows to just appease AIPAC. To me, this is a

political injustice that America should not stand for, and the American people should not allow to happen.

But American options are limited. The afterglow of the the (relative) successes at Camp David have long since faded, and the recent Annapolis conference has done very little to mend relations. Yet America still has to opportunity to change it's policy regarding Israel. America still has the ability to tell Israel what it is, and is not, willing to support. What America needs to do now is to muster the courage to stand up to AIPAC criticism, cut back on donations to Israel so that they are on par with other countries.

United States Support For Israel

As one of the first countries to recognize Israel as a state, The U.S. has constantly made the defense of Israel one of it's biggest concerns, regardless of the repercussions it has caused Americans. But should Israeli problems be U.S. problems? Has Israel affected U.S. policy too much? And do Americans realize the repercussions of being Israel's biggest ally? To understand the U.S.'s relationship with Israel on a broader spectrum, it is important to review the creation of Israel.

The Conception

The birth of Israel is deeply rooted in the ideology of Zionism, which spread across much of the Western world during the late 19th and early 20th century. First coined in the waning years of the 1890s , the Zionism is the belief that Jewish people (both ethnic and religious) should band together and establish a Jewish home.

Because of the religious and historical importance of Jerusalem, it was a logical choice for the Jews to want to establish their nation state in that area. However, when the World Zionist Organization (WZO) established itself the land they wanted belonged to the Ottoman Empire.

At this time, the Ottoman Empire was being ruled by it's final Sultan (dictator) Abdülhamid II who is most commonly known for the genocide he committed against the Armenian people. Yet, Abdülhamid II had one problem, he was being forced to Westernize by other Empires. As such he was often under more pressure from the French and Germans than he was from his own people.

Seeing this, the Jews then decided to petition the German Emperor Wilhelm II to assist their cause. If Wilhelm II could ask the Ottoman Sultanate for the land the Jews required, it could have given the Jews their own state. However, the Jewish lobbying to gain his support failed, and thus the Jews had no leverage to use in asking Abdülhamid II for a

land grant. The plan failed miserably, but the Zionists were not prepared to give up.

Opinions Clash

Despite the havoc that World War One caused all across Europe, the WZO remained intact after the armistice. However, the Ottoman Empire was not so lucky. After its defeat, the victorious Western powers decided that the Ottoman Empire was not fit to rule itself and decided to partition it. By partitioning it, the Western nations would break it up into pieces (like a puzzle) and each govern the nation as they saw fit.

When it came time to distribute the region of Palestine, it was Britain who accepted the mandate and thus became the governing power over the future Jewish homeland. While Britain was only responsible for the economic and military stability in the region, their governance of the mandate allowed political power to rub off onto the area as well.

During this time British Prime Minister Arthur Balfour issued a document, known as the Balfour Declaration, which became one of the most important texts in Zionist history. While the Balfour declaration was only a letter, it laid out a provisional idea for a Jewish state in Palestine. Within months, this document caught the attention of both the WZO and Zionists everywhere, and a driving factor behind Jewish migration to Palestine. (Isseroff)

It should also be noted that during this time period Woodrow Wilson became sympathetic to the Zionist cause. Because of the lobbying of Jewish friends on the supreme court Justice Louis Brandeis and Rabbi Stephen Wise, Wilson decided to support the Balfour declaration.

While the British government was in control of its mandate, this ownership had infuriated much of the Middle-East. The Ottoman Empire had just been dissolved, and on top of that the victorious British Empire had not only partitioned their country, but was allowing Jews to migrate into territory surrounding one of the holiest cities in Islam. Because Palestine is sacred land to both Jews, Christians and Muslims, the influence of both the English, and the Jews was not appreciated.

After World War Two, and the atrocities of the holocaust, the WZO gained nothing but attention and support. This also resulted in a large influx of Jewish migrants to Palestine, thus resulting in both a more Jewish Palestine, and more Arab-Muslim resentment. (Isseroff)

The Arbiter

Yet, while the British and the WZO survived the war, their relations began to fracture. Things like Italian air-raids which decimated the Jewish population, along with assassinations by the Lehi Zionist group,

slowly began to wear away British resolve to police the area. By the end of WWII the British were not trying to get rid of their mandate, but it had certainly caused it's share of problems. It was not until The United Nations was created that a semi-viable plan was formulated to deal with the situation.

Often considered the successor to the League of Nations, The U.N. took over international affairs where the league left off. The U.N. involved itself in the matter by creating the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine. Named UNSCOP because the state of Israel did not yet exist, the unit was formed in 1947 after Britain handed over it's Palestine mandate to the U.N. . In an attempt to please all parties involved, the U.N. issued it's General Assembly resolution 181, which sanctioned a Jewish state in Palestine. At the same time it also created a "special international regime" that was designed to police the holy city of Jerusalem, so that neither Muslims nor Jews would have exclusive rights to the city. (Yale Avalon)

This resolution was celebrated by Jews and Zionists around the world. Because Jews now had a legal home. However, The Arab Union, and the rest of the Middle-East was enraged at the idea of a Jewish state. Listed below are the U.N. General Assembly votes against resolution 181.

Notable Votes Against U.N. Resolution 181

Afghanistan

Egypt

Iran

Iraq

Lebanon

Saudi Arabia

Yemen

Turkey

Syria

Pakistan

Despite universal disapproval of the plan from the Middle-East, The United States went ahead and voted yes on the resolution. A first of many forms of support for Israel.

A State is Born

Technically the U.N. resolution did not "make" Israel. However the Jewish peoples of the area quickly consolidated, and on 14 May 1948, Israel was born. I should point out that this was one day before British forces remaining from the mandate occupation withdrew from the area.

Israel's legitimacy would later be challenged by much of the Arab world. Later that month all the countries that voted "no" on resolution 181 laid out the Declaration on The Invasion of Palestine which stated that.

"The only solution of the Palestine problem is the establishment of a unitary Palestinian State... "

While this statement (and the rest of the document) are menacingly different than the U.N. resolution's decision, the declaration claimed it would not violate resolution 181. However this Anti-Israel alliance began attacking before long.

The conflict that broke out between the Arabs and Israel (now know as the 1948 Arab-Israeli War) resulted in the 1949 armistice agreements. Included in the separate agreement that Israel made with the aforementioned Arab countries was that it Jordan claimed the West Bank as well as East Jerusalem, and Egypt the Gaza Strip. Despite it's bloodied nose, the young democracy was not without it's friends. (Yale Avalon)

They Go Way Back

As intricate as Israeli history is, it is the effects on the United States that we are here to examine. The earliest of Israeli-American relations date back to Israel's independence in 1948. While the Arab world voted no on U.N. resolution 181, the resolution was successful because two-thirds of the General Assembly voted in favor. Strikingly prevalent to the resolution is the U.S. voting "yes" on the resolution.

Countries Voting in Favor of Resolution 181**

Australia

Belgium

Bolivia

Brazil

Canada

Costa Rica

Czechoslovakia

Denmark

Dominican Rep.

Ecuador

France

Guatemala

Haiti

Iceland

Luxembourg

Netherlands

New Zealand
Nicaragua
Norway
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Sweden
South Africa
U.S.A.
U.S.S.R. *
Uruguay
Venezuela

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• * Includes all states under U.S.S.R with General Assembly voting privilege (Byelorussian S.S.R & Ukranian S.S.R.)

** As per Yale Avalon Project records of U.N. General Assembly Resolution 181

Then President Harry Truman was a well known Zionist, and as such was a strong supporter of a Jewish state. Writing to Senator Joseph Ball regarding resolution 181 and Arab aggression against the old British mandate, Truman said

"The question of Palestine as a Jewish homeland goes back to the solemn promise that had been made to them [the Jews] by the British in the Balfour Declaration of 1917 - a promise which had stirred the hopes and the dreams of these oppressed people. This promise, I felt, should be kept, just as all promises made by responsible, civilized governments should be kept."

However, even in the late 1940s American anti-semitism was still prevalent, and not many Americans believed in Israel as much as Truman did. In fact President Truman's highest ranking uniformed general, George Marshall, was vehemently opposed to the soon-to-be Israel.

Marshall was an experienced man when it came to international affairs, and he knew that recognizing Israel would cause U.S. relations with important Middle-Eastern, among other places, countries to crumble. Marshall knew that the Israel was regarded as weak by the Arab world, and that America would expose itself by recognizing and embracing Israel. Such recognition, he argued, could undermine American efforts elsewhere in the Middle-East. One obvious repercussion was

that the Arab world would be more hesitant to provide U.S. oil shipments . If the Arab Union was not friends with the U.S., it meant the Arab world would be more likely to deal with the American enemy of the day, the U.S.S.R.

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The Lion's Roar

Many lobbyists would like Americans to believe that Israeli support is innocuous, however many Americans are unaware that their support for the "Zionist agenda" has sparked one of the more horrific catalysts in American history.

Born in Saudi Arabia in the late 1950s, Osama Bin Laden grew up in a world of political turmoil in which he saw the rest of the world lash out against the young state of Israel and, in an attempt at retaliation, began his campaign of terror against the United States. In his 1998 fatwa (an Islamic religious decree) Bin Laden states that America is a nation of sinners for several reasons. Yet his most embellished reasons he states is

Despite the great devastation inflicted on the Iraqi people by the crusader-Zionist alliance... if the Americans' aims behind these wars are religious and economic, the aim is also to serve the Jews' petty state (of Israel) and divert attention from its occupation of Jerusalem and murder of Muslims there. The best proof of this is their eagerness to destroy Iraq, the strongest bordering Arab state, and their endeavor to fragment all the states of the region such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Sudan into paper statelets and through their disunion and weakness to guarantee Israel's survival and the continuation of the brutal crusade occupation of the (Arabian) peninsula [Saudi Arabia]. - Osama Bin Laden, "Jihad against Jews and Crusaders" Fatwa, 1998 (Fas.org) (Wright)

While Bin Laden was a relatively obscure figure to both the CIA and the FBI before September 11th, and unknown to the average American, about a week later president Bush stated in an address to a Joint Congressional Session that Osama Bin Laden had attacked the United States because

"They hate our freedoms – our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other" - Pres. George W. Bush, 20 September 2001

George Bush would later use this reason to justify an invasion force being sent to Iraq to topple Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime in 2003. (Wright)

What Your Green-back does for Israel

At the end of the day, Israel is still a world power. Both a stable democracy and an ally of the U.S., with a population of 6.5 million and a GDP of 170.3 Billion (USD), Israel is one of the most financially successful

countries. Yet Israel has not reached such financial successes by itself. In fact, if it were not for U.S. support, Israel would hardly be the economic superpower it is today.

Since the birth of Israel, The U.S. has been a stalwart financial supporter of the state, as the U.S. is (or has been) of other countries in the past. However Israel has been the largest recipient of U.S. aid since the end of World War II, and fifty years of economic data is here to prove it.

A recent Congressional Research Service (CRS) document dug into economic factors regarding U.S. Israeli relations and stated that

“Israel is not Economically self-sufficient, and relies on foreign assistance and borrowing to maintain it's economy. Since 1985 The United States has provided 3 billion USD in grants annually to Israel. Since 1976, Israel has been the largest annual recipient of U.S. Foreign assistants, and is the largest cumulative recipient since World War II.”

Yet this number is only an average, and many people, including representative Lee Hamilton (D-IN) have been quoted saying that Israel is a country who's actual amount received is higher than the receipt claims. This is because of the manner in which this money is transferred also Israel. Typically a country is given it's estimated yearly aid, and it is paid quarterly. One installment is made during Winter, Spring, Fall and the Summer. However, Israel is able to take a lump sum at the beginning of the year. While this may seem petty, the numbers add up. Now, when Israel collects on their interest all at once they've earned a significantly higher number than they should have, and thus we arrive with the 4.6 billion USD quoted by R. Hamilton. To simply this, noted political scientist John Mearsheimer states the that this form of payment “... is akin to receiving your entire annual salary on January 1st, and thus being able to earn interest on the unspent portion until you used it.” (Mearsheimer)

Yet this money can go even further, because Israel is not required to monitor how they spend it. Once Israel has received it's funds at the end of the year, it reinvests it's unspent portions in profitable industries, and because of how they invest this money they continue to earn even more. Once the 4.6 billion figure has been received, Israel invests funds it has not yet spent in the U.S. treasury bills. This causes Israel to earn some shockingly high numbers. In fact the U.S. Embassy in Israel has cited this number at 660 billion USD from interest alone. To this end, an appropriate analogy would be that this is similar to receiving your entire year's salary, plus a (roughly) 50% interest rate, and then reinvesting your yearly earnings in a very high yield bank. Such a high yield that, by the

time you withdraw your funds, you've made an additional 15% of your salary. (Mearsheimer)

The breakdown of the financial assistance also shows how much the U.S. spends on funding the military, such as Israeli Defense Force (IDF), as well as the Israeli Air Force (IAF). About 66% of given U.S. aid goes to Israel's military budget. Billions more are also given to Israeli housing developments (albeit not in the West Bank, see below). The document also claims that Israel receives another 1 billion dollars through philanthropy organizations and earns another 1 billion through proceeds of Israel bonds. Totaling close to 7.5 billion USD annually. (Mearsheimer)

As previously mentioned, Israel's housing developments in the West Bank have come under international criticism time and time again. Yet the U.S. has made one fortunate decision and asserted its stance that it cannot allow its money given to Israel to be appropriated into their work in the West Bank. However many Israeli politicians, including Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy, have stated that Israel could feasibly use the funds in the Western part of Jerusalem (which is bound by the same laws that the West Bank is).

Rushing to the defense of Israel's military has also cost the U.S. more than one might expect. As of 2005 The U.S. has spent over a half-billion in developing the "Arrow Anti-Missile Missile" (missile-to-missile defense system), 1.3 billion developing the failed Lavi aircraft project, 200 million in the on going Merkava tank project, 130\$ million in the anti-missile laser project. (Congressional Report Service)

... But Why?

It's a very valid question, considering that any policy maker on Capitol Hill knows about the amount of money the U.S. gives Israel. Why do we continue to give them so much money? The reason is that the concept of Zionism has never truly died down. It would seem that while the Jewish home has been established, Zionism can still exist to the extent that its believers can try to improve or expand the Jewish home. To this end, the most prevalent of Zionist groups in America established itself as a lobbyist group based in Washington D.C. named The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

But just how powerful is AIPAC? In the late 90s Fortune magazine asked several congressmen to list some of the most powerful lobbies in America, and AIPAC placed second only to the National Rifle Association (NRA), and other enormously powerful lobbies such as those who defend big tobacco companies. (Mearsheimer)

Of course the goal of the lobby is more designed to spread unconditional "pro-Israeli" feelings. Such as when Israel was selling weapons to China in 2000, and the U.S. wanted to reduce aid being given to Israel. Immediately the lobby began to use it's influence in newspapers, news agencies and on capital hill to prevent the U.S. from cutting aid off.

But the lobby does not stop there. Even a president who was as popular as Reagan was still not immune to the political effects of the lobby. As was the case in 1982 when the U.S. wanted to sell AWACS surveillance airplanes to Saudi Arabia. As a reaction to such a "betrayal" as the lobby saw it, AIPAC began lobbying against Reagan and effectively bullied him into calling off the sale (which would've provided the U.S. with precious oil the U.S.S.R. would not have gotten to).

Analysis

Consider the Berlin conference. European countries get together to divide Africa up, establish the borders they see fit, and assume that things will simply work themselves out. Yet in reality this caused tensions between colonies in Africa that still have not subsided. I raise this historical example, because Israel's existence is based in the same scenario. As the Ottoman Empire was torn asunder, pressure from Zionist groups on Western governments ultimately started a chain reaction that led to the creation of Israel. After some of the most important events of the twentieth century unfolded, the world came together once again, and the U.N. carved out a place for Israel without regards to the rest of the Middle-East.

I can't comment on the will of the international community, as it is not my place. Because of the generation I've been born into, I cannot understand the post holocaust sentiment for the Jewish people. However, fifty years later the world is a very different place.

The relationship between the U.S. and Israel is one that has perhaps never existed in the history of politics. It's no surprise that Israel is a valuable strategic interest for the U.S., as Israel provides easy access to both the Middle-East, North Africa, and even Southern Europe. However, it is quite impossible to understand who is truly in control of the relationship. While the U.S. funds enormous portions of Israeli spendings, we may not have a choice to do so. AIPAC has become such a strong political force in Washington that any politic that does not wish to be labeled anti-semitic knows to just appease AIPAC. To me, this is a political injustice that America should not stand for, and the American people should not allow to happen.

But American options are limited. The afterglow of the the (relative) successes at Camp David have long since faded, and the recent Annapolis conference has done very little to mend relations. Yet America still has to opportunity to change it's policy regarding Israel. America still has the ability to tell Israel what it is, and is not, willing to support. What America needs to do now is to muster the courage to stand up to AIPAC criticism, cut back on donations to Israel so that they are on par with other countries.

Final Note

Musashi, like I, also claimed that he never had a teacher of such things. While I have had no professors in the school of revolution, I am not without my thanks to those around me. To that end, I extend my most sincere gratitude to Alexandra for her endless hours of debate, Carrie Clark for eternal insight and encouragement, Michelle Delgiorno for teaching me tenacity and discipline, Jack MacArthur for never being afraid to tell me what I need to hear, Irene Tully for teaching me how much fun it is to never stop questioning, Sean Yunker for being himself, John Havlicek for promising to help me conquer the world, Courtney Ross for giving me the time to do this, George and Sue Hurley for reminding me what real Americans are, and the rest of my family for their insight. Americans are all around you, some just need awakening.

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