Review of the Year

UNITED STATES
OTHER COUNTRIES
Civic and Political

Intergroup Relations

In no presidential election in recent U.S. history—not even that of John F. Kennedy in 1960—did religion play as central and decisive a role as it did in 1984. At issue this time, however, was not a candidate’s personal creed. Rather, what emerged as a dominant theme was an increasingly assertive form of Christianity, one that threatened to upset the consensus on church-state separation and that caused Jews considerable uneasiness. For Jews, an additional cause of concern was the candidacy of black minister and civil-rights activist Jesse Jackson for the Democratic presidential nomination. During a stormy campaign, charges and countercharges of antisemitism and racism threatened to bring Jews and blacks into explosive confrontation.

Jesse Jackson

Jewish groups were guarded, initially, in their response to Jackson, who had earlier embraced the Arab cause and had made definite anti-Jewish statements. The concern was to preserve the black-Jewish alliance, which had shown clear signs of strain in recent years. Early in the year, the Jewish Defense League engaged in a number of inflammatory actions against Jackson, for which it was chastised by other Jewish groups. Jackson, recognizing that the wider Jewish community, not just the JDL, viewed him with suspicion, offered to meet with Jews willing to sit down with him. At one such meeting he declared his support for the existence of Israel as a Jewish state, at the same time calling on it to work out differences with its Arab neighbors on the basis of fairness to all sides. Jackson’s difficulties, however, began in earnest when it became public on January 30 that the Arab League had made a previously undisclosed donation of $100,000 to PUSH for Excellence, Inc., the organization he took leave of in order to seek the presidency.

Jackson’s problems were compounded by an episode that occurred in February. A black reporter for the Washington Post, at the end of a lengthy story on Jackson and the Jews, disclosed a private conversation in which Jackson had referred to Jews as “Hymies” and to New York as “Hymietown.” Busy engaged at the time in the
early New Hampshire primary, Jackson at first claimed “no recollection” of having used the words and insisted that the charge was “not accurate.” On February 26, however, he acknowledged that the episode had in fact taken place. “It was not done in the spirit of meanness,” he assured a crowd in a synagogue, admitting, however, that “it was wrong.” While the “Hymie” incident inflamed Jackson’s detractors, it caused his supporters to close ranks. One of them, Louis Farrakhan, head of a Muslim group and a close adviser—a man whom Jackson used to warm up black audiences prior to his platform appearances—declared that Jackson had received death threats and that Jewish groups were whipping up tensions. “If you harm Jesse Jackson,” he warned, “in the name of Allah, that will be the last one you harm.”

Initial reaction to the “Hymie” episode from Jewish organizations was cautious, leading Nathan Perlmutter, head of the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, to note that in the past, anti-Jewish remarks by political leaders had evoked much heavier criticism. Howard Friedman, president of the American Jewish Committee, while urging the candidate to reexamine his statements on Jews, Israel, and the Holocaust, welcomed Jackson’s plea to renew the dialogue between blacks and Jews. “If we have been timid in forcefully repudiating Jackson’s inimical views,” Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, declared, it was “lest we fan the flames of a black-Jewish confrontation on the American scene.” That Jackson’s remarks had, nonetheless, clearly hurt him was shown by an NBC poll early in March. Among whites questioned, 57 percent felt that Jackson’s words raised questions about his character. By a margin of 44 to 37 percent, however, blacks—whose registration during the primaries jumped by nearly two million—disagreed with this assessment.

Reverberations from this incident had barely died down when Jackson was again embroiled in controversy with Jews, this time over remarks by Farrakhan. The Chicago Tribune reported a March 11 radio broadcast in which Farrakhan declared that Hitler was a “great man,” a statement that elicited wide criticism (except from Jackson), including that of the black mayor of Newark, who took the opportunity to condemn the “Hymie” remark as well. Late in June, Farrakhan referred to Judaism in a broadcast as a “gutter religion” and described Israel and its supporters as “engaged in a criminal conspiracy.” These remarks provoked even greater public criticism, including attacks from the NAACP and Urban League, as well as from representatives of church bodies. Attempting to distance himself somewhat from Farrakhan, Jackson labeled Farrakhan’s remarks “reprehensible and morally indefensible.” However, he refused to repudiate him directly.

Throughout the campaign, Jackson alternated between seeking reconciliation with Jews and offending many with his views on Middle East issues. On March 4, for example, he called for renewing the black-Jewish alliance, but coupled this with an appeal for a Palestinian “sovereign nation” alongside Israel. On May 26 he denounced Israel for allegedly selling military hardware to South Africa, which, he charged, was being used “to shoot down and oppress black people.”
As the campaign progressed, Jewish civic and religious bodies became increasingly open in their public criticism of Jackson. At the same time, they continued efforts to preserve the black-Jewish alliance—in the words of the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America—"despite traumas of the moment." Early in May, American Jewish Committee president Howard Friedman warned that Jews were worried about Jackson, seeing him as not sufficiently "anti-antisemitic." On May 31, Anti-Defamation League national director Perlmutter delivered the harshest personal attack yet made by a major Jewish leader, declaring that Jackson's statements "render the self-portrait of an anti-Semite." And on the eve of the Democratic National Convention, in mid-July, following a meeting in Chicago at which Jackson was escorted to the speaker's platform by a national spokesman for Farrakhan, the president of the American Jewish Congress, Theodore Mann, declared that unless Jackson disassociated himself from Farrakhan, the relationship would remain a problem for Democrats, a sentiment echoed by other Jewish groups.

The Democratic Convention

For the Democratic party, which in 1980 had seen the Jewish vote for Ronald Reagan climb to 39 percent, Jackson's candidacy and the public controversy that swirled around him posed a serious problem. On the one hand, since blacks were the single most loyal group in the diverse and often conflicted Democratic coalition, the party sought to bring even larger numbers of blacks to the polls. At the same time, the leadership did not want to alienate other traditional elements of their electoral base, particularly Jews. For the most part, the candidates for the Democratic nomination avoided coming into direct collision with Jackson during the primaries. On June 26, however, the Democratic front-runner, former vice-president Walter Mondale, clearly responding to appeals by Jews and others, declared Farrakhan's remarks to be "venomous, bigoted and obscene," and called on Jackson to repudiate the Muslim leader.

Despite pressure on the Democrats to adopt a resolution denouncing antisemitism, the Jackson forces (perceiving this as an attack on their candidate) prevented the Democratic convention from passing such a resolution. (The Republicans easily passed a similar resolution at their convention a month later.) Jackson supporters also slightly weakened the party's previous opposition to racial quotas in affirmative action programs. Seeking to put greater distance between Jackson and the party, the platform committee overwhelmingly defeated proposals by the Jackson forces favoring the establishment of a Palestinian state and opposing movement of the American embassy to Jerusalem. During the convention, Jackson delivered a graceful and conciliatory speech admitting mistakes he had made during the primaries and noting that Jews and blacks "are bound by shared blood and shared sacrifices." Mondale, who won the nomination, kept his distance from Jackson during the ensuing campaign. For Jews, Jackson receded in importance as other issues came to the fore.
Black-Jewish Relations

The Jackson campaign for the Democratic nomination was not the only source of friction between blacks and Jews. Early in the year, Mayor Edward Koch of New York City, who had been engaged for some time in battles with black leaders, published a best-selling and controversial political memoir, Mayor, in which he reiterated an earlier attack on “poverty pimps” and his belief that blacks are “basically anti-Semitic.” During the election campaign, he said he was dissatisfied with Jackson’s repudiation of Farrakhan and then went on to suggest that the black candidate had received campaign funds from Libya. Koch further angered blacks by defending the use of an examination for police sergeants, despite the high failure rate of black and Hispanic officers on the test, and by refusing to create a city holiday in 1985 to mark Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday. Responding to various actions of the mayor, the black-owned Amsterdam News acknowledged on June 30 that Farrakhan’s remarks were “intemperate and obscure,” but wanted to know “who will repudiate and denounce Edward I. Koch?” In an end-of-the-year editorial on the controversies surrounding Koch, the New York Times declared that the challenge facing black-Jewish relations in New York was how to get through 1985 without making things worse.

Survey research data made public during the year revealed how complex black-Jewish relations had become. On June 1 Louis Harris reported the results of an April survey which found “that on political and social matters, Jews and blacks are far closer than generally believed—on their underlying attitudes, including perceived discrimination against both blacks and Jews.” He noted, too, the prevalence of the feeling that “we either hang together or separately.” However, an equally respected public-opinion expert, William Schneider, reported in the National Journal on May 5 that rising black consciousness was leading to increased resentment of Jews and greater hostility toward Israel. He noted that earlier Harris materials showed younger blacks as more antisemitic and anti-Israel than older blacks. Some of this feeling was being played out on college campuses, such as Temple University in Philadelphia, Wesleyan in Connecticut, and San Diego State in California, as well as at primarily black institutions, where student groups extended invitations to Farrakhan to speak and welcomed him enthusiastically. At the University of Pennsylvania an acrimonious debate between black and Jewish students broke out in the letters-to-the-editor columns of the Daily Pennsylvanian. At issue was the campaign behavior of Jackson and Farrakhan and the nature of the traditional alliance between blacks and Jews. The alliance was depicted by black student leaders as having little importance, past or present, a position reflecting a revisionist view of the alliance’s origins and history that was developing among elements of the black intelligentsia. In an essay in a newly published book, Jews in Black Perspectives, and in an article in the Journal of American History, David Levering Lewis argued at length that the relationship was an apparent rather than a real “soul fellowship” and that it had been only “minimally beneficial to Afro-Americans.”
Controversies and conflicts notwithstanding, there were ample indications that the traditional supportive relationship between the two groups was not entirely dead. In March, 12 black congressmen signed a letter to President Reagan opposing arms sales to Jordan unless that country joined in peace talks with Israel, and in July, the same number cosponsored a bill to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. In turn, Jewish members teamed up with black colleagues to add a series of provisions to the House version of the Export Administration Act which would substantially limit U.S. economic relations with South Africa, because of the latter's apartheid policies. Two of the leading critics of apartheid on Capitol Hill were, in fact, Jewish congressmen, Stephen Solarz of New York and Howard Wolpe of Michigan.

In Berkeley, California, blacks helped to defeat a ballot initiative calling for cuts in U.S. aid to Israel equal to Israeli expenditures for West Bank settlements. The proposition was voted down by a two-to-one margin, with blacks voting heavily on the side of the majority. By year's end both the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League concluded in separate analyses that in spite of the stresses of the election, black-Jewish relations had not unraveled.

Throughout the year efforts continued both to reappraise the black-Jewish relationship and to open up dialogue between the two groups. In December a number of Jews and Jewish organizations joined the growing protest movement against apartheid in South Africa. Leaders of the Anti-Defamation League demonstrated at the United Nations, and on Christmas day some 250–300 Jewish protesters (representing the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Jewish Labor Committee, the New Jewish Agenda, and the American Jewish Committee) relieved Christian colleagues picketing near the South African embassy.

**Arab-Americans**

The election provided an opportunity for Arab-Americans to flex their political muscle, particularly as Jackson actively reached out to them. The candidate named James Zogby, executive director of the Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, to his campaign staff, and addressed Arab groups in several cities during the campaign. Early in November the *New York Times* reported that Arab-Americans had raised some $300,000 for Jackson.

The National Association of Arab Americans continued its sponsorship of radio spot announcements in such cities as Washington, D.C., and New York, in which they charged that American aid to Israel took money away from needed social services.

**Religion in the Campaign**

During the election, the various religious groups were targeted by politicians for special attention. The two leading candidates for the Democratic nomination,
Walter Mondale and Sen. Gary Hart (D., Colo.), vied with each other about the strength of their respective positions on Israel. Each backed an effort under way in Congress to press the government to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The candidates’ attempts to outdo each other became so shamelessly pandering that the American Jewish Committee was led to protest publicly, in March, that Jews cared about a broad range of issues, not only Israel.

It was Republican leadership, however, beginning with President Reagan, that introduced religion, specifically Christian triumphalism, into the campaign. In a speech before a group of religious broadcasters in the spring, the president declared, “God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him would not perish but have everlasting life.” At a prayer breakfast in Dallas a day after the GOP convention, he charged that those who opposed such expressions of religion as voluntary prayer in the public schools were “intolerant of religion.”

These statements aroused strong criticism from Jewish leaders. Following the Dallas address, Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, president of the Synagogue Council of America, declared that “religion is and should be a private commitment,” while American Jewish Committee president Friedman reminded President Reagan that the Founding Fathers had written the separation of church and state into the Constitution. Jewish groups and others were angered, also, by a letter from Sen. Paul Laxalt (R., Nev.), the GOP campaign chairman, to 45,000 Protestant pastors, just before the Republican convention, addressing them as “Dear Christian Leaders” and urging them “to register church members.” Delegates to the convention found copies of the New Testament in their kits (they were later removed), and among the resolutions adopted was one endorsing prayer in the schools. Although Jews welcomed the platform’s explicit attack on antisemitism, eight leading Jewish groups urged Republican leaders “to reject the current divisive assault on the First Amendment’s separation of church and state.”

Faced with mounting criticism, the president went before a B’nai B’rith convention early in September and sought to calm Jewish fears. He wrote, also, to the chairman of the Anti-Defamation League indicating his opposition “to organized formal prayer at prescribed times in public schools.” Jewish concern, however, was not assuaged. At the B’nai B’rith convention, Mondale accused the president of encouraging “an extreme fringe of fundamentalist Christian leaders to impose their faith on the nation.” In September and early October, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council convened eight regional consultations for the purpose of mobilizing the Jewish community to defend the separation principle. In October, the heads of the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform rabbinic bodies issued a joint statement endorsing Mondale and urging their colleagues to support the Democratic presidential ticket.

Although the National Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement in March which carefully refrained from any expression that could be interpreted as support for a particular candidate, a number of leading prelates, including
Archbishop John J. O'Connor of New York and John Cardinal Krol of Philadelphia, made statements during the campaign suggesting that a candidate's stand on abortion should be a key issue. Their statements were understood to be directed against the Mondale-Ferraro ticket, since both the president personally and the Republican platform were on record as opposing abortion, while Mondale and his running mate, liberal Catholic Geraldine Ferraro, supported freedom of choice. So inflammatory was the insertion of the abortion issue into the campaign that on October 13 the administrative board of the National Conference felt constrained to announce that the bishops had no intention of creating a "voting bloc" and denied that the church was involved in single-issue politics.

The Christian Right

The election year provided an opportunity, also, for the Christian Right to seek greater support for its agenda. In the course of the year, this element succeeded not only in gaining control of the 14-million-member Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination, but also persuaded that body to reverse previous positions and take a stand against abortion and for school prayer. Christian activists also developed a massive voter-registration drive in an effort to register "true Christian" voters by November. "Born-again Christians," who had accounted for some two-thirds of the Reagan margin of victory in 1980, according to pollster Louis Harris, were a prime target of the activists.

The major and ultimately most successful goal, however, was the Republican convention and its party platform. Christian Right leaders Jerry Falwell, James Robison, and W.A. Criswell delivered benedictions at various points in the proceedings. They and others in the newly formed American Coalition for Traditional Values (ACTV), which brought together the various factions on the Right, helped steer the party platform in the desired direction on abortion, school prayer, women's rights, pornography, homosexuality, and nuclear freeze, despite some token resistance by key White House staff. The ACTV leaders were joined as primary architects of policy by a group of House Republicans organized in what they called the Conservative Opportunity Society. The adoption of the Republican platform prompted Falwell to declare, "If they had allowed us to write it, we'd have difficulty improving on the content."

Despite the seeming unity, however, there were important divisions between the political and the Christian Right. The latter had refused to go along with an earlier drive led by Richard Viguerie, Howard Phillips, and Paul Weyrich to break away from the Republican party and form a conservative "populist" party modeled on the old Progressive party of Wisconsin senator Robert LaFollette. The ministers' position reflected a desire to be viewed as legitimate religious leaders rather than as secular political operatives. Among the various right-wing groups backing the president, however, none wanted to run the risk of upsetting the reelection strategy, this despite dissatisfaction with the president's men, if not with Reagan himself. The
White House staff, it was believed, had promised more than they had delivered in trying to achieve conservative goals. Impatient right-wing Christians began pressing, therefore, for an even broader campaign on social issues to be launched once the president was reelected.

The Election and Its Aftermath

According to exit polls conducted by the New York Times-CBS News, Washington Post-ABC News, and NBC News, the Reagan-Bush ticket received 32, 31, or 35 percent of the Jewish vote. The conservative National Jewish Coalition, however, asserting that professional polls failed to factor in large concentrations of Jews to the extent required, claimed that 40 percent or more supported Reagan. An extensive analysis by the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York concluded that Reagan won some 38 percent of the Jewish vote in that city. The fact remained that apart from blacks and Hispanics, Jews were the only major grouping to maintain support for the Democratic party ticket, leading Earl Raab to write in a postelection analysis for the American Jewish Congress, “Jews still do not belong to the same social network as the middle and upper class white Protestants who form the Republican Party.” Most analysts found that concern about Christianization and about groups like the Moral Majority weighed more heavily with Jews than fear of Jesse Jackson. To the majority of Jews it seemed clear that the Democratic party still provided a more congenial climate than did the Republican.

The voting patterns of other groups were also noteworthy. “Born-again” white Christians, who first came to public attention when Jimmy Carter ran for president in 1976, this time preferred the Republican candidate by a margin of 81 to 19 percent. According to the New York Times-CBS News poll, the Republican 8.5-million-vote margin among this group was slightly larger than the combined Democratic margin among Jews and blacks. White Catholics—formerly linked with Jews in the old Democratic coalition—divided 58 to 41 percent for President Reagan. Only 8 percent of Catholics polled, however, checked abortion as one of the two key issues of the campaign, while 18 percent of born-again Christians judged it of major importance.

After the election there were indications that leaders of the Christian Right felt jilted by the Jewish vote. “Sometimes I think that fundamentalist Christians are almost always supporting Israel, and our sharpest critics are liberal Democratic Jews,” Dr. Ron Godwin, a vice-president of the Moral Majority, noted after the election. “But our commitment to supporting Israel and the Jewish community is unilateral,” he added. The Christian Right itself found critics in evangelical Protestant circles, among them leading evangelical theologian Carl F.H. Henry and the influential magazine Christianity Today. In an editorial, the latter warned against repeating the mistakes of the twenties, referring to campaigns on behalf of Prohibition and the teaching of evolution, both of which had led to public humiliation.
There was recognition, also, among Republican strategists that the GOP had lost ground when it permitted Christian fundamentalism to figure so prominently. One such strategist argued that "just as the Falwell connection hurt with Jews, it also hindered Republican progress with young people and was not much help with Catholics." Sen. Robert Dole (R., Kan.) drew back from the GOP religious thrust, declaring that Republicans were "near the edge of the fine line in identifying with religious groups." And the U.S. Catholic called the performance of a small circle of bishops on the abortion issue "at best embarrassing and at worst unfair."

In the organization of the new Congress in January 1985, a swing to the middle of the political spectrum developed quickly. In five leadership contests the Republicans picked centrists, including Robert Dole as Senate majority leader and Robert Michel of Illinois as head of the group in the House. Indeed, as the new year got under way, House Republican leaders released a series of recommendations that were silent on school prayer and abortion and far more pragmatic overall than the controversial party platform adopted in Dallas.

The number of Jews in Congress held steady at 30, their proportion being considerably greater than that of Jews in the general population. There were eight Jewish senators, three of them from Minnesota, Nebraska, and Nevada—areas which did not have a significant Jewish presence.

Amid the furor surrounding the intrusion of religion into the election campaign, a few voices attempted a rational analysis of an appropriate role for religion in politics. In The Naked Public Square, Richard John Neuhaus argued for political discourse that welcomes moral and religious debate, instead of prohibiting it, so long as all play by the rules of a democratic society. Echoing the ideas of a Jesuit analyst, the late John Courtney Murray, he warned that when religion is banned from public life, leaving the public square "to the ambitious state and the isolated individual," a form of totalitarianism can result. Charles Krauthammer argued in the New Republic that the battle between sectarianism and secularism wrongly framed the issue. He offered in its place Robert Bellah's concept of a noncoercive and inclusive "civil religion" as an American reality that had inspired Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King.

The election aftermath included discussion of its long-range effects on Jews. Veteran political scientist Seymour Martin Lipset, writing in the Washington Post, and Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, writing in the New York Review of Books, argued that recent predictions of Jews moving politically to the right had been exaggerated. The view that Jews continued their traditional liberal attachment was reinforced by the 1984 National Survey of American Jews, which was issued by the American Jewish Committee after the election. In the survey, self-defined liberals outnumbered conservatives by more than three to two, with "middle of the road" Jews about as numerous as liberals. Nevertheless, in the elections of 1972, 1976, 1980, and 1984 between 32 and 40 percent of Jews had chosen to pull the Republican lever, a substantial increase over the past. This new voting pattern, as well as the growing
prominence of a cadre of neoconservative Jewish thinkers and writers who had received widespread attention, suggested that a longer-term conservative trend was indeed in the making among Jews.

Church and State

Early in the year the Senate took up a constitutional amendment intended to reverse the 22-year-old Supreme Court decision banning officially sponsored prayer in the schools. Although the measure, which had the support of President Reagan, was rejected by the Senate in March, the vote—56 in favor to 44 opposed—was only 11 short of the two-thirds necessary for passage. Some saw the move to push through an amendment calling for vocal prayer as politically motivated, since the president had earlier opposed a silent-prayer alternative which was beaten overwhelmingly.

The issue of silent prayer was very much alive on the state level, since nearly half the legislatures had already enacted measures calling for a moment of silence for public-school prayer or meditation. In April the Supreme Court agreed to rule on the constitutionality of “moment of silence” laws. At the same time, the Court affirmed an Alabama appellate court’s decision that struck down a state law authorizing teachers to lead students in a state-composed prayer.

Following the school-prayer-amendment defeat, advocates of religion in the schools shifted their efforts to proposed “equal access” legislation. This threatened to withdraw federal money from school districts which would not permit high-school student religious groups to meet on school premises for prayer and religious discussion during noninstructional periods, in the manner of language clubs and marching bands. The measure was opposed by the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, and the Anti-Defamation League, as well as by the National Education Association and the United Federation of Teachers. Supporting the measure, however, were such liberal church bodies as the National Council of Churches—which had opposed the school-prayer amendment—as well as several constitutional scholars who argued that at issue was the “free exercise of religion.” The American Civil Liberties Union adopted a neutral posture on the grounds that the law would protect secular free speech as well as religious rights. Initially defeated in the House in May, the bill was approved by the Senate in June (by a margin of 88 to 11 in an amendment to an education bill), passed by the House in July, and signed into law by the president. Whether “equal access” would stand up to constitutional challenge was uncertain, since four federal appeals and state appellate courts in New York and California had barred various types of religious activities by student groups, citing the First Amendment’s prohibition of the “establishment of religion.”

In March the Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision in a Pawtucket, Rhode Island, case that a city may include a Nativity scene as part of an official Christmas display without violating the constitutionally required separation of church and state. The ruling permitted, for the first time, the display of a symbol that is
explicitly and exclusively Christian. While the decision did not automatically sanction all official Christmas displays—the justices based their decision on the fact that the Pawtucket crèche was part of a larger Christmas display of seasonal symbols—it drew sharp attacks from Jewish, Islamic, and some Christian groups. A number of Roman Catholic bishops and fundamentalist Christians, however, praised the decision.

Supporters of strict separation of church and state began to voice increased concern not only over specific legislative moves to bolster religion but also over the Supreme Court's apparent change in emphasis. There appeared to be movement away from the concept of a "wall of separation" that had guided previous High Court decisions and toward a greater spirit of accommodation. Instead of asking how religion and government can best be kept apart, the Court seemed more interested in determining what government can or must do to remove obstacles to voluntary religious observance.

**Quotas and Discrimination**

In June the Supreme Court ruled 6 to 3 in a case involving Memphis fire fighters that a court may not order an employer to protect the jobs of recently hired black employees at the expense of whites who have more seniority. Later in the year, William Bradford Reynolds, chief of the Justice Department's civil rights division, basing himself on the decision, declared that "the era of the racial quota has run its course."

In the fall, the City Council of New York passed, and Mayor Koch signed into law, a bill making it unlawful for private clubs with more than 400 members to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, or sex.

In a judgment labeled by the American Jewish Congress the largest ever handed down in the United States in an anti-Jewish discrimination case, a federal judge awarded two Jewish faculty members at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston $394,514 as compensation for the college's refusal to assign them to Saudi Arabia, based on its agreement with King Faisal Hospital.

**Extremism**

The Anti-Defamation League reported that Ku Klux Klan membership had dropped about 35 percent in the previous two years but warned that frustration growing out of the Klan's decline could lead to individual acts of terrorism. Part of the reason for the decline was a crackdown by federal prosecutors. In May a federal grand jury in Alabama indicted nine Klansmen on civil-rights charges resulting from a bloody melee with black demonstrators five years earlier in Decatur, Alabama. In July convicted murderer Joseph Paul Franklin was found guilty of bombing a synagogue in 1977, after confessing that he blew up "the synagogue of satan."
In June Denver radio talk-show host Alan Berg, an outspoken critic of right-wing extremist groups, was murdered in front of his home. The gun that was used in the killing was recovered by federal agents in October when they raided the Sandpoint, Idaho, home of Gary Yarbrough, a neo-Nazi leader. Yarbrough was taken into custody by Portland, Oregon, police following a shoot-out in November. In December more than 100 FBI agents converged on Whidbey Island, Washington, where they arrested four other neo-Nazis, but another one—the leader of the group, Robert J. Matthews—refused to surrender. His charred body was recovered the next morning from the ruins of their hideout.

Holocaust-Related Issues

The Justice Department's office of special investigations was continuing its hunt for Nazi war criminals who had slipped into the United States after World War II, but with limited success. The deportation of Archbishop Valerian D. Trifa, head of the Rumanian Orthodox Church in America—who was accused of persecuting Jews in his native Rumania during World War II—brought to three the number of people forced to leave the country since the office's opening five years earlier.

In November, in response to public protests, the California Library Association revoked a decision to open its statewide convention to a display of materials and an address by a "revisionist" historian who claimed that the Holocaust either never occurred or was highly exaggerated. After first supporting the invitation on the basis of free-speech rights, the ACLU backed off, explaining that the real issue was a contractual agreement, not freedom of expression.

In September the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted for the fifth time since 1950 to recommend ratification of the 35-year-old genocide treaty already ratified by most major nations. Although earlier in the month President Reagan had announced his support and urged the Senate to act, it had failed to do so by the end of the year.

Murray Friedman
The United States, Israel, and the Middle East

For the Middle East, 1984 was primarily a year of anticipation and transition. Since a presidential election was being held in the United States, the prevailing feeling was that no major new American peace effort would be launched until after the November elections. Some observers in the Arab world hoped—and some in Israel feared—that if President Ronald Reagan won a second term, he would press forward more vigorously to implement his Middle East peace initiative of September 1982, which had been shelved after it aroused strong opposition from the Begin government in Israel as well as from radical Arab and Palestinian groups. Meanwhile, continuing Israeli and American preoccupation with the deteriorating situation in Lebanon was a prime reason for keeping the Reagan initiative on the back burner.

Lebanese Situation Deteriorates

The year opened to growing domestic criticism of American involvement in the peacekeeping operation in Beirut. It was clear that the original mission of the U.S. Marines—to help keep the peace while President Amin Gemayel pulled together the warring Lebanese factions in order to forge a stable central government—was not going to be achieved. With a presidential campaign approaching, President Reagan’s political advisers worried that continuing military embroilment in Lebanon would benefit the Democratic opposition.

The key player in the Lebanese drama, President Hafez al-Assad of Syria, was doing everything possible to undermine the American position and bring about an early American withdrawal from the area. Increasingly tense American-Syrian relations had escalated from mutual recriminations to the point of direct armed confrontation on December 4, 1983, when the Syrians shot down two U.S. Navy jets, killing one flier and capturing the second, Lt. Robert O. Goodman, a bombardier-navigator. Explaining the flight over Syria, President Reagan said that the United States did not seek an escalation of conflict with Syria but had acted in self-defense against positions that had been shelling American forces.

A call by Syrian foreign minister Abdel Halim Khaddam for action against American “aggression” was followed by an announcement that Damascus would not release Goodman until the “war” had ended and U.S. troops had pulled out of Lebanon. U.S. warships shelled Syrian-controlled positions on December 13, following renewed attacks on American reconnaissance planes, and American officials announced the adoption of an “instant retaliation” policy. It was becoming clear that although President Reagan had declared Goodman’s release to be a high priority, Syrian demands for an end to American overflights were viewed as too high a price to pay for the flier’s release. U.S. special envoy Donald H. Rumsfeld, who
conferred with Syrian officials in December on the broader Lebanese situation, was specifically enjoined by the White House from discussing the Goodman case, so as to avoid any hint of U.S. willingness to make political concessions to obtain the airman’s release.

**Jesse Jackson’s “Pilgrimage” to Damascus**

At this point President Assad found a willing partner in Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, the black minister and announced candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, who was an outspoken critic of U.S. involvement in Lebanon. When Jackson announced that he would seek President Reagan’s approval to make a personal appeal to Assad in behalf of Lieutenant Goodman, who also happened to be black, Jackson was shunned by the White House. Reagan aides subsequently claimed that this was not a political move to block Jackson but was intended to make clear to the Syrians that the U.S. government would not make any concessions to obtain Goodman’s release. Nevertheless, Jackson departed on December 29 on a self-proclaimed “pilgrimage” to Damascus. At a meeting with President Assad on January 2, 1984, Jackson informed the Syrian leader of a growing consensus in the United States for the withdrawal of the U.S. Marines from Lebanon and suggested that Goodman’s release could speed that process.

The following day Assad released the American prisoner to Jackson. Since he did not wish a continuing confrontation that could lead to broader conflict with the United States, Assad, by responding to Jackson’s “humanitarian” appeal, could remove the irritant represented by Goodman without appearing to yield to pressure from the United States. For their part, American officials emphasized that the Reagan administration had not given in to Syrian demands. To underscore this point, the day following Goodman’s release U.S. F-14 reconnaissance planes resumed their flights over Syrian positions, this time with no hostile reaction from the Syrians.

President Reagan promptly sought to gain both political and diplomatic advantage from the successful Jackson mission, telephoning congratulations to the Democratic presidential aspirant and to Goodman, and inviting both of them to a welcome-home ceremony at the White House. While presidential spokesman Larry Speakes had said that the administration viewed Goodman’s release as a “humanitarian,” not a diplomatic, gesture, Reagan sent a letter expressing “appreciation” to President Assad, in which he said, “This is an opportune moment to put all the issues on the table,” and invited Syria to work with the United States to try to resolve the Lebanese problem. Reagan quickly dispatched presidential envoy Rumsfeld back to Syria, and the diplomat held what was described as a “fruitful” three-hour meeting with Assad on January 13.

**Mounting Congressional Pressure for U.S. Withdrawal**

As members of Congress returned to Washington at the start of the new year, they gave voice to a rising chorus of discontent—joined in by leaders of both parties—
over the lack of success of President Reagan's policy in Lebanon. For example, after a meeting of Democrats on January 3, Rep. Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., the Speaker of the House, urged the president to make a new push for a diplomatic solution in Lebanon. He warned that "these initiatives must meet with some success quickly" because the present vulnerable position of the marines "is absolutely unacceptable," and "patience in Congress with Administration policies in Lebanon is wearing very thin." The Democratic criticism was echoed by Sen. Charles H. Percy, Illinois Republican and chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, who told a press briefing on the same day that public support for the marine mission had "dropped considerably" in recent months, and that it would be "highly desirable" to replace American forces with other foreign troops.

It was noteworthy that many of those who were voicing impatience had the previous fall supported a congressional resolution authorizing the president to keep American troops in Beirut for 18 months—through the spring of 1985. On January 5, Washington sources revealed that the Lebanese government had asked for some American marines to be shifted to the region south of Beirut, to help the Lebanese army extend its authority, a request that was unlikely to be approved in view of the changing congressional mood. On the same day, in Damascus, Foreign Minister Khaddam told visiting senator John Tower (R., Tex.) that the withdrawal of U.S. and Israeli troops would help bring peace to the Lebanese and permit the Syrians to withdraw their forces.

The Reagan administration was deeply disturbed by congressional criticism. In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on January 11, Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth W. Dam pointed to the congressional resolution authorizing the marine mission as proof that the president and Congress, "working together, could formulate and maintain a coherent and consistent long-term policy." He warned that "if our determination is now seen as flagging, . . . if the Congress were to curtail the period of its authorization for our Marines, then Syria would be encouraged to believe that it can win the game by digging in. Syria might conclude that we are finished in Lebanon and on the way out." Pointing to "the Iranian threat and to the concerns in the region about state terrorism," Secretary Dam added that administration representatives visiting the Middle East had been told by "the leaders of Israel and our most important moderate Arab friends that an American failure of nerve in Lebanon would be a disaster for all the forces of moderation in the region."

Democratic Candidates Press for Marine Withdrawal

With domestic pressure continuing to mount for an early withdrawal of the marines, U.S. policy in Lebanon was emerging as a major election-year issue. The Democratic contenders all voiced their opposition to remaining in Lebanon. Former vice-president Walter Mondale, in a statement issued on December 31, 1983, declared that although he had earlier supported American participation in the international peacekeeping effort, he had now become convinced that "it is time to
withdraw the U.S. Marines from Lebanon." He accused Reagan of "not taking charge" and said that the administration's Lebanon policy had proven a failure. The United States, he said, should press the Lebanese government to work harder for national reconciliation. He also urged that the Lebanese army and UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) take charge of security in Beirut and that other neutral countries provide peacekeeping forces. The United States, he continued, while maintaining naval power off the shores of Lebanon, should "increase the diplomatic pressure on Syria to withdraw; and firm up our political and strategic relationship with Israel." Accusing the Reagan administration of repeatedly "backing away" from strategic cooperation with Israel, he added that as president, "I would make it meaningful and permanent."

The other Democratic contenders expressed similar criticisms of the administration's Lebanon policy in interviews with the *New York Times*. Sen. Alan Cranston (D., Calif.) said that he would not have put the marines into Beirut without consulting Congress beforehand, adding that "the wisest course is to extricate ourselves as quickly as we can for the safety of the men as we withdraw them." Sen. John Glenn (D., Ohio) pointed out that his Marine Corps training had taught him the importance of defining a mission precisely and then assigning adequate equipment and forces to accomplish it. The administration, he said, had failed to do that in Lebanon, and, he added, "the worst danger of all is to see this confrontation escalating just between the United States and Syria."

Sen. Ernest F. Hollings (D., S.C.), who had opposed the marine deployment to Beirut from the start, said the troops lacked a credible "mission, there is no peace to keep, [and] we cannot forcefeed the Lebanese Government with 1,600 marines." Sen. Gary Hart (D., Colo.), pointing out that the United States lacked either the military or the strategic capability to pacify and reconstruct Lebanon, urged the United States to concentrate on playing a diplomatic role. UN forces should replace the marines, he added, who "should have been gotten out a year ago." Asked about the Syrian role and whether the United States should negotiate with the Syrians and consider their interests, Hart responded: "They see Lebanon as a client-state of theirs" and exert "a dominant influence" there. As for the United States, he went on, "we may or may not [sic] be able to accept that. But they do have legitimate concerns about their security and their own borders and those concerns ought to be heard and ought to be satisfied. We ought to be dealing much more openly with them and urging the Gemayel government to do the same."

Former governor Reubin Askew of Florida and former senator George McGovern of South Dakota were among those who expressed doubts about the effectiveness of the marine mission and called for its termination. McGovern had harsh words to say about broader U.S. policy as well. In his view, the United States should have been more critical both of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and of Israel's "aggressive settlement policy on the West Bank." Instead of easing the terms of aid to Israel, he asserted, the United States should have imposed "tougher requirements on Israel as a means of making clear to them that we're very serious about the necessity of
concessions on the West Bank." He also said that the Reagan administration had been "insensitive" to Syria's legitimate aspirations by "hailing this new strategic arrangement with Israel at precisely the moment when we probably should have been somewhat more reluctant to go into that kind of arrangement."

The candidate who was most critical of the Reagan administration's policy of support for Israel was Jesse Jackson, who directly attributed the problems faced by the American marines in Lebanon, and the threat to American interests in the Middle East more generally, to the American identification with Israeli policies. "When the President, in a negotiation with Mr. Shamir, did not link that negotiation with a commitment [by Israel to change its policy] on Golan Heights, West Bank occupation, expanded settlements, and the offensive use of American weapons in the invasion and occupation of Lebanon," Jackson stated, the president "made America a party to the occupation and to the invasion." Because America had in effect "helped to finance that invasion and occupation," this "robbed America of any innocence or any moral authority. It took away from America the role of a neutral peacekeeping force and therefore made our boys the object of the hostility, more so than against the other nations that were there." Jackson went on to stress that "we have an obligation to support Israel's right to exist for [sic] security, not to support her right to occupy and expand." He concluded that the United States should take the initiative to be the first "to get out of Lebanon and to prevail upon Israel to go back with a guarantee of keeping Israel's borders and boundaries secure and then use our diplomatic leverage to get Syria to go back to Syria."

Reagan Rebukes Critics of Lebanon Policy

In an interview with the Wall Street Journal on February 2, President Reagan asserted that withdrawal of U.S. troops from Lebanon at this point would "mean the end of Lebanon," the end of overall Middle East peace prospects, and a "pretty disastrous result" for American foreign policy around the world. In a specific criticism of House Speaker O'Neill, who was planning the following week to push for a vote on a nonbinding Democratic-sponsored resolution calling for immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces, Reagan declared: "He may be ready to surrender, but I'm not." The president insisted that "great progress" had been made in strengthening the Lebanese central government and asserted that America's European partners in the peacekeeping force "feel as strongly as we do" about staying in Lebanon. "Syria is bent on territorial conquest," Reagan said, and only the presence of the multinational force had prevented it from seizing even more. Questioned as to what had been done to carry out his pledge to retaliate against the terrorists who had attacked the marine compound in Beirut in October 1983, killing 241 American servicemen, Reagan hinted that U.S.-Israeli strategic cooperation was effective in fighting against terrorism. He indicated that the United States had been planning to act against pro-Iranian terrorists based in Baalbek, whom the United States
accused of the Beirut attack. But “someone else . . . took that target out before we could get to it,” he added with a smile.

While President Reagan was talking tough in public about sticking it out in Lebanon and giving optimistic estimates on the viability of the Lebanese central government, the situation on the ground was rapidly deteriorating. On February 4 Prime Minister Shafiq al-Wazzan submitted his resignation to President Gemayel, and the following day the entire cabinet resigned. Secretary of State George Shultz blamed “direct threats” by Syria on the Muslims in the cabinet for the resignations. At the same time, in renewed heavy fighting, Druze and Shi'ite militiamen took over control of most of West Beirut. On February 6 President Reagan ordered air and naval attacks against antigovernment forces around Beirut, an act described by administration officials as a warning to Syria and its Lebanese allies.

**U.S. Forces Withdraw from Beirut**

That it was an empty warning became evident the following day, February 7, when President Reagan made the announcement that President Assad had been waiting for. Although euphemistically termed a “request” by the president to the secretary of defense “to present me with a plan for the redeployment of the Marines from Beirut to their ships offshore,” the American withdrawal from Beirut was accomplished before the end of the month. The swiftness with which a decision was made to carry out what was widely regarded as a fundamental reversal of policy evoked a storm of questions and criticism. On February 12, in an ABC-TV interview, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Lawrence S. Eagleburger refused to respond when asked whether the president had not already decided to pull U.S. forces out of Lebanon when he made his scathing attack on “Tip” O’Neill and other Democratic critics, or when he had reiterated in a radio program that he was “not going to cut and run” in Lebanon. Eagleburger insisted, as had Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, earlier on the same program, that transferring the American forces to warships off the shore of Lebanon still constituted a “presence in Lebanon.” He expressed the hope that the Syrians would come to recognize that “Syria’s longer-term interests require some sort of accommodation.”

The British, Italian, and French were in no mood to try by themselves to fill the vacuum left by the Americans. Vice-President Bush said on February 15 that the United States was “very interested” in a French proposal to have a UN peacekeeping force dispatched to replace American and European troops. However, when the French formally introduced the proposal in the UN Security Council on February 29, it was vetoed by the Soviet Union. The French, British, and Italian forces were withdrawn from Lebanon soon after.

**Syria Replaces U.S. as Key Influence in Lebanon**

With his Western protectors gone, President Gemayel had to rely increasingly on the Syrians for political survival. The Syrians—who were generally believed to have
been behind the assassination of Gemayel's brother Bashir, shortly after his election as president in September 1982—were now content to have Amin Gemayel continue as nominal president, so long as he did not attempt to challenge Syrian hegemony. In March Lebanon announced its abrogation of the May 17, 1983, accord with Israel that had been arduously negotiated by Secretary Shultz. On April 26 Gemayel appointed to the premiership Rashid Karami, a Sunni Muslim leader who was known as a close supporter of Syria and whose appointment symbolized the extent to which Damascus had replaced Washington as the major influence on the policies of the faltering Lebanese government. However, given the failure of the Lebanese national reconciliation talks held in Geneva in March, Syria's entry into the faction-ridden morass of Lebanese politics had all the makings of a Pyrrhic victory. While Assad could prevent the Lebanese government from pursuing foreign policies that Damascus opposed, it was something else to put the Lebanese humpty-dumpty back together again.

**Lebanon Fades as American Campaign Issue**

Although the Democratic hopefuls continued on occasion to point to Lebanon when they wished to indicate the Reagan administration's foreign-policy shortcomings, once American servicemen were no longer at risk, the issue quickly faded from American television coverage and public consciousness. Remarkably, unlike the controversial Vietnam war, which played a major role in Lyndon Johnson's decision not to seek a second term, or the Iranian hostage crisis, which contributed to Jimmy Carter's image of weakness and eventual reelection defeat, the Lebanon debacle caused Ronald Reagan no significant loss in personal standing as a leader with the American public.

Although administration officials continued throughout the year to assert that the United States was committed, in Secretary Shultz's words, to "the emergence of a more stable and sovereign Lebanon," there was no invoking of the domino theory, i.e., that if Lebanon were to fall, all American interests in the Middle East would suffer. On the contrary, the official tone became more restrained, and the issue was defined, not as a focus for competition between the superpowers, but essentially as an internal Lebanese dispute. The new U.S. approach to Lebanon was expressed by Assistant Secretary of State Richard W. Murphy in testimony before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on July 25: "We will be supportive of every effort which advances the goals of restoring unity and national reconciliation and the withdrawal of foreign forces. In the final analysis, however," he emphasized, the Lebanese "themselves must take the primary responsibility in dealing with their own problems."

The Reagan administration, having failed to get the Syrians to behave by use of the stick, now tried the carrot. In contrast to earlier administration statements, which characterized Syria as a major cause of the Lebanese problem, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs Murphy, who had gained experience in dealing
with President Assad while serving as U.S. ambassador in Damascus, now told the House members that "we believe that Syria has been one of the helpful players" in recent positive-looking developments. He stressed that "Lebanon needs peaceful, cooperative relations with both Syria and Israel," and added that the United States would "continue to encourage Lebanon to deal directly with Israel" on the issue of Israeli withdrawal and security arrangements along the border.

Some committee members were taken aback by Murphy's favorable comments about Syria. Republican representative Ed Zschau of California asked how Syria could be described as "a helpful player" after it had so long been depicted as "the trroublemaker in the region." Murphy responded that "times change," adding that after the Syrians had succeeded in their objective of "blowing up" the Lebanon-Syria agreement of May 17, 1983, the Syrians "showed themselves ready to move in the direction of helping to restore stability in Lebanon." The Syrians had apparently reached a policy decision that "a stable Lebanon and a stable Beirut" were necessary for greater stability in the region.

U.S. Vetoes Lebanese UN Resolution Critical of Israel

Lebanese acceptance of Syrian direction did not make life easier for the United States. On August 29 the Security Council met at the request of Lebanon on a complaint that Israel had tightened security provisions for travelers entering Israeli-held territory. Rashid Fakhoury, Lebanon's chief delegate at the United Nations, appealed to the council to put into effect previous resolutions calling for Israeli withdrawal. He also appealed, specifically, for Israel to immediately "lift its siege" of southern Lebanon, where, he charged, the civilian population was living in a "continual state of terror" because of the "excesses of Israeli occupation." Israel's chief delegate, Ambassador Yehuda Z. Blum, said that the new security provisions were necessary to stop the infiltration of terrorists and weapons. He insisted that "there was not the slightest justification" for calling the council into session, adding that it reflected the combined effect of Syrian pressure and domestic rivalries within Lebanon, where fighting had once again flared up in the north and central regions.

On September 6 the United States vetoed a Security Council resolution calling on Israel to "immediately lift all restrictions and obstacles" recently imposed on Lebanese civilians traveling through Israeli-occupied southern Lebanon. U.S. delegate Warren Clark explained that the United States had opposed the resolution because it was "unbalanced" and took "a selective, myopic look at only one part of the problem."
Bombing of U.S. Embassy Revives Domestic Debate

The UN vote prompted a renewed threat, on September 8, by a caller identifying himself with the Islamic Jihad, "to destroy a vital American interest in the Middle East" in retaliation for the veto. True to the warning, on September 20 an explosives-filled van blew up in front of the U.S. embassy annex in East Beirut, killing 23 persons. This tragic incident once again made the Reagan administration a target of media criticism. On ABC-TV on September 30, Secretary of State Shultz was grilled by reporters eager to determine who was going to accept responsibility. Shultz responded that "the responsibility is with people who, through the use of terrorism," are trying to undermine "our quest for peace and stability in the Middle East and other parts of the world." He called the American ambassador in Beirut, Reginald Bartholomew, "a hero" who was nearly killed three times and who together with his staff was doing everything possible to improve security "in a risky environment." Shultz's apparent denial of administration culpability led one reporter to remind him that, following the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis, Ronald Reagan had not hesitated to criticize President Carter's role in the tragedy. The real issue, Shultz's questioner demanded, was "why, after the first Embassy bombing by truck [in April 1983] and the second bombing of our Marines by a truck [in October 1983], there weren't adequate security devices to keep a third Embassy from being bombed by a truck?" Shultz responded that an investigation was being conducted, but insisted that American embassies are "on the front lines" and that the latest incident was only a symptom of a much broader problem. "The problem," he emphasized, "is getting hold of this issue of terrorism, and we are working on it. Don't mistake that." (Secretary Shultz did in fact take the lead in the Reagan administration in pressing for more vigorous and concerted action against international terrorism. See below.)

The strain placed on U.S.-Lebanon relations by the latest bombing was evident during a visit to Washington by Premier Rashid Karami some two weeks after the tragic incident. After rejecting the U.S. suggestion that he engage in direct negotiations with Israel, Karami asked the United States to take part in arranging an Israeli withdrawal. At a meeting with Karami on October 2, Secretary of State Shultz turned down the Lebanese appeal, saying that "much more flexibility" and "quite a change in mood" on all sides would be required before the United States would consider such an effort. Shultz reportedly raised the issue of terrorist attacks against American installations in a "direct and forceful" fashion and stressed that "terrorism will not change U.S. policies and should not change the policies of other governments."

Reagan Administration Pursues Antiterrorist Campaign

On October 19 President Reagan signed into law the 1984 Act to Combat International Terrorism. The new law authorized payment of rewards for information
concerning terrorist acts and authorized the spending of $356 million on what Reagan described as “urgently needed security enhancements for U.S. missions abroad.” After thanking Congress for responding “swiftly” to his request, the president said the new law was an important step in the administration’s “multiyear effort,” in cooperation with our allies, to counter “the insidious threat terrorism poses to those who cherish freedom and democracy.” Citing statistics to the effect that “since the first of September, there have been 41 separate terrorist attacks by no fewer than 14 terrorist groups against the citizens and property of 21 nations,” Reagan concluded by asserting that “this nation bears global responsibilities that demand that we maintain a worldwide presence and not succumb in [sic] these cowardly attempts at intimidation.”

By acting forcefully to enhance embassy security, the president did much to defuse the terrorism problem of its potential as a Democratic campaign issue. Moreover, whatever advantage Walter Mondale may have had on this issue was effectively neutralized by the Republican strategy of referring to him as part of “the Carter-Mondale administration,” thereby saddling him with the negative image of Carter’s impotence in the Iranian hostage crisis.

**Shultz Calls for Tougher Antiterrorism Strategy**

On October 25 Secretary of State Shultz delivered a major address on “Terrorism and the Modern World” at the Park Avenue Synagogue, a leading Conservative congregation in New York. Calling on the democratic nations of the world to recognize that terrorism was directed “against our most basic values and often our fundamental strategic interests,” Secretary Shultz went on to examine various aspects of his subject in depth. He began by tracing documented links among terrorist groups and the key role played by the Soviet Union in supporting these groups. He then went on to discuss the need to combat moral confusion as to what constituted terrorism. Firmly rejecting the “insidious claim that one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter,” he quoted the “powerful rebuttal to this kind of moral relativism” given by the late senator Henry Jackson: “Freedom fighters or revolutionaries don’t blow up buses containing non-combatants; terrorist murderers do. Freedom fighters don’t set out to capture and slaughter school children; terrorist murderers do. Freedom fighters don’t assassinate innocent businessmen, or hijack and hold hostage innocent men, women and children; terrorist murderers do.”

Referring to the Beirut bombing, Shultz again firmly rejected the counsel of those who would have the United States change its policy of support for Israel. He noted that “one of the great tragedies of the Middle East... is that the many moderates on the Arab side—who are ready to live in peace with Israel—are threatened by the radicals and their terrorist henchmen and are thus stymied in their own efforts for peace.”

Shultz went on to praise Israel for helping to “raise international awareness of the global scope of the terrorist threat” and also for its practical contributions,
which included winning battles against terrorism "in actions across its borders, in other continents, and in the land of Israel itself." Noting that much of Israel's success in fighting terrorism was due to "broad public support for Israel's antiterrorist policies," Shultz concluded, "the rest of us would do well to follow Israel's example." He criticized the usual American response after each terrorist incident of "self-condemnation and dismay, accompanied by calls for a change in our policies or our principles, or calls for withdrawal and retreat." Such responses, he warned, only encourage terrorists to "commit more acts of barbarism" in the hope that American resolve will weaken.

The heart of Shultz's address was the delineation of a strategy for moving beyond passive defense to active measures of "prevention, preemption, and retaliation." According to Shultz, the key elements in a successful strategy for combating terrorism would include (1) strengthening our intelligence capabilities, "particularly our human intelligence," (2) a capability to use force, and (3) a public willingness to use military force. He emphasized repeatedly that the public must understand before the fact the risks involved in combating terrorism with overt power, including "potential loss of life of some of our fighting men and the loss of life of some innocent people." In Shultz's view, fighting in the "gray areas" of international terrorism called for swift action, even in the absence of "the kind of evidence that can stand up in an American court of law." He warned, "We cannot allow ourselves to become the Hamlet of nations, worrying endlessly over whether and how to respond." He then appealed for greater international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, noting that at their summit meeting in London in June the leaders of the industrial democracies had agreed to redouble their efforts. It was time for them to band together to fight terrorism, as they had successfully done in an earlier era to eradicate piracy, he concluded.

Split in Reagan Administration on Antiterrorism Tactics

When Vice-President Bush was asked by a broadcaster in Cincinnati the following morning for comment on Shultz's statement about potential civilian loss of life, he responded, "I don't agree with that." Bush stressed the need to "pinpoint the source of attack," adding, "We are not going to go out and bomb innocent civilians." Bush may have been seeking to follow the line taken by President Reagan, who had said—in the televised foreign-policy debate with Walter Mondale the previous Sunday (October 21)—"In dealing with terrorists, yes, we want to retaliate, but only if we can put our finger on the people responsible and not endanger the lives of innocent civilians."

After the Shultz speech, Reagan declined to comment on the apparent differences between his secretary of state and vice-president. He did say of Shultz's remarks that "I don't think it was a statement of policy." Secretary Shultz, he explained, was only listing the factors that had to be considered, and "you couldn't rule out the possibility of innocent people being killed." Within 30 minutes of Reagan's remarks,
however, White House spokesman Larry Speakes called reporters to issue a clarification: “Shultz’s speech was administration policy from top to bottom.” All Shultz was saying, according to Speakes, was that “in isolated cases, innocent civilians may be killed in a retaliatory strike. I emphasize may be, not will be.” Further clarification was provided by an unnamed White House official who told reporters that the Shultz speech did not reflect any new policy decision.

Washington insiders reported that Shultz’s candid public remarks in New York reflected his growing frustration over the reluctance of others in the administration, including Secretary of Defense Weinberger and the covert branch of the Central Intelligence Agency, to endorse specific military action against terrorists unless specific conditions were met: there was proof of the identity of the guilty parties; there was assurance of easy success; and civilian casualties could be avoided. The Shultz speech had been reviewed and endorsed by Robert C. McFarlane, the White House national security adviser, like Shultz a former Marine Corps officer. Both men had been arguing for some time for a firmer use of military power against terrorists in Lebanon and also for more direct U.S. strategic cooperation with Israel than had been considered advisable by the Pentagon. Shultz’s address, therefore, was part of the continuing broader dispute within the administration as to the wisdom of committing American military force in Lebanon and the Middle East more generally.

**Bush’s Remarks Trouble Israel’s Friends**

Despite efforts by the White House staff to smooth over the differences within the administration, it was well known that Bush’s views of Middle East issues were generally closer to those of the Pentagon and the CIA than to those of the secretary of state.

Bush was also known as being more critical of Israeli involvement in Lebanon than others in the administration. In a luncheon meeting with reporters at the National Press Club in Washington in July, Bush had intimated that the United States had greater concern for human life than did Israel. The United States, he emphasized, would like to be “as surgical as possible” and was “reluctant to take an action that might prove our ability to retaliate, but in the process might wipe out many innocent people.” When his remarks aroused criticism among supporters of Israel, Bush’s press secretary, Martin Fitzwater, issued a clarification. The vice-president, he said, “didn’t mean to comment on the validity of Israel’s policy of retaliation, which is in different areas and different circumstances.”

Bush aroused consternation once again within the American Jewish community and in Israel with remarks made during a campaign debate with Democratic vice-presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro on October 12. In discussing the administration’s failure to stop terrorist attacks in the Middle East, Bush observed: “And the answer then really lies in the Middle East and . . . is a solution to the Palestine question, the follow-on to Camp David under the umbrella of the Reagan September
1982 initiative." Although he conceded that such a step would only "reduce terror, it won't eliminate it," he appeared to be supporting the Arabists' view that Israel was responsible for the terrorist response of the Palestinians, and that satisfying Palestinian demands would remove the major cause of international terrorism. Some observers also noted that the man who was "only a heartbeat away" from the presidency had referred to "the Palestine question" and not the "Arab-Israel dispute," the former a term used after 1948 primarily by Arabs who did not wish to acknowledge the reality of Israel.

Realizing the potential harm caused the Reagan election campaign by some of his controversial remarks, Bush met with senior White House and State Department officials and inserted a last-minute section on terrorism into a previously scheduled speech to the Zionist Organization of America. Speaking on October 27, he declared: "Let me assure you of one thing, the United States under this administration will never—never—let terrorism or fear of terrorism determine its foreign policy."

To rectify the impression left by his remarks during the debate with Mrs. Ferraro, Bush emphasized: "Terrorism is not only or even predominantly a Palestinian phenomenon. It is truly international. Many local groups have broad and, often, common international connections, and couldn't operate as they do without those connections." It was high time, Bush concluded, "that we recognize this and join with our allies in a truly international drive against this insidious international terrorism."

**U.S. Proceeds Cautiously on Middle East Peace**

As a result of its sobering experience in Lebanon, the administration seemed to lose its appetite for bold new moves in the Middle East; the administration also showed little inclination to pressure Israel to accept an imposed peace plan. On the contrary, as Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Richard Murphy reiterated in his testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on January 26, 1984: "Our strategy toward the peace process is to encourage all parties to assist in creating the conditions necessary for Jordan to enter talks with Israel." The United States, he said, hoped that Yasir Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization's executive committee, "will now understand that the only way to tangible gains for the Palestinians is through direct negotiations between Jordan and Israel and that violent struggle is doomed as a way to achieve Palestinian goals."

The lack of progress in the on-again, off-again talks between King Hussein of Jordan and Arafat contributed to the sentiment in Washington that the Arab-Israeli dispute might well benefit from a period of benign neglect on the part of the United States. The prevailing view, expressed informally by Reagan administration officials, was that "the ball is now in the Arab court." In other words, the United States would await more concrete signs from the states of the region of their readiness to advance the peace process before Washington would once again commit its own power and prestige.
Egypt Reenters Arab Mainstream

Not that the United States had given up on the search for a more comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace. Indeed, Washington sought to encourage any potentially hopeful signs. One such development was Egypt's return to the mainstream of the Arab and Islamic worlds. The first official Saudi visitor to Cairo in seven years arrived at the beginning of January, and later that month the Islamic Conference Organization (ICO), at its meeting in Casablanca, formally invited Egypt to resume its membership. Radical members failed in their attempt to set as a condition Egypt's renunciation of the 1979 peace treaty with Israel; Egypt emphasized that in joining the ICO it would continue to honor its prior diplomatic commitments. The rapprochement between King Hussein of Jordan and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, including the restoration of full diplomatic relations between Amman and Cairo, in September, and exchanges of visits to each other's capital, marked further progress in Egypt's efforts to overcome the ostracism that had been imposed by the Arab League following Egypt's signing of the peace treaty with Israel.

Joint discussions held by Mubarak and Hussein with President Reagan at the White House on February 14, in Reagan's words, "reaffirmed that Egypt and Jordan will remain leaders in efforts to bring peace and security to the Middle East." Recent events in the area "make it even more urgent to keep the broader peace process moving," President Reagan declared, adding that "the tragic events in Lebanon show that the occupation of territory by outside forces does not lead to peace but rather to continued turmoil." He therefore wished to "reaffirm my commitment and that of our government to the principles I set forth in September of 1982, and in particular to the principle that the Arab-Israeli conflict must be resolved through negotiations involving an exchange of territory for peace."

Mubarak Champions Palestinian Cause

President Mubarak was even more pointed in his remarks, stating that "coexistence and the mutual recognition between the Palestinians and the Israelis" had to be based on recognition of justice and rights, including, "first and foremost, the right of the Palestinian people's self-determination. . . ." Turning to President Reagan, President Mubarak continued, "The Palestinian people are entitled to your support and understanding. There is no substitute for a direct dialogue with them through their chosen representative, the PLO." Such a dialogue, he contended, "would immensely serve the cause of peace to which we are both committed." Alluding to divisions within the organization and to Syria's backing of the more radical anti-Arafat elements, Mubarak went on to assert that "Arafat is a responsible leader who has demonstrated tremendous courage under the most difficult circumstances." Consequently, the Egyptian leader asserted, "a dialogue with him would reassure the Palestinian people and rekindle their hope for a better future."

Mubarak surely did not expect the United States—especially during an election year—to reverse its long-standing policy of not recognizing or negotiating with the
PLO until that organization recognized Israel and accepted UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. In all likelihood, the Egyptian leader was trying to buttress the position of those State Department officials who contended that the United States might informally explore the PLO's readiness to modify its anti-Israel position, without formally violating the terms of the American commitment made to Israel by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in 1975 and reaffirmed by all subsequent U.S. administrations. Moreover, the Reagan administration had reacted favorably, despite the criticism of American Jews, to Mubarak's meeting with Arafat in Cairo the previous December. It seemed clear, too, that Mubarak was seeking to reassert Egypt's role as the primary champion of the Palestinian cause, especially now that Syria's cynical manipulation of the Palestinians for its own purposes had been revealed in the fighting in Tripoli at the end of 1983. (In that northern port city, Syrian troops had openly aided Lebanese forces besieging Arafat's men.) The final and possibly most important reason for Mubarak's statement was his realization that no real progress could be achieved unless Jordan was directly involved. Since King Hussein still felt the need of some authoritative Palestinian support, Egypt encouraged dialogue both between Jordan and the PLO and the PLO and the United States.

Egypt played a crucial role in the behind-the-scenes diplomatic maneuvering that led to the Palestine National Council's meeting in Amman in November 1984 and that culminated in an agreement between Hussein and Arafat in February 1985. While many differences between the PLO and the Hashemite kingdom remained to be ironed out, the assumption of an active role in the peace process by King Hussein in 1984 represented a significant change. For a long time Jordan had hesitated to take any peace initiative on its own, arguing that the Arab League decision at Rabat in 1974, which declared the PLO to be "the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people," had effectively deprived Jordan of a negotiating role. However, the PLO's debacle in Lebanon, the widening splits within the organization, and the disarray within the Arab League—most notably Syria's support for non-Arab Iran in the continuing war against Iraq—all contributed to eroding the importance of the league and its decisions.

**Iraq Reduces Radical Rhetoric and Resumes Ties with U.S.**

King Hussein knew that he could move closer to Egypt without arousing opposition from neighboring Iraq, because one consequence of the debilitating Iran-Iraq war had been to cool Baghdad's ardor to serve as leader of the anti-Israel campaign. The regime of Saddam Hussein could no longer afford to denounce pro-Western Arab states such as Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, whose military, financial, and logistical help it eagerly sought. Iraq's newly acquired pragmatism was also reflected in a lessening of its anti-American rhetoric and the resumption, in November, of diplomatic relations with the United States, relations which Iraq had broken in June 1967 because of alleged American support for Israel during the Six Day War. In fact, during his visit to Washington in November, Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz told
questioners that Iraq would no longer oppose efforts by Israel’s Arab neighbors and the Palestinians to make peace with her. He singled out the leaders of Iran, Libya, and Syria as the only ones in the region who still harbored unrealistic ambitions directed against their neighbors and who did not share in what he characterized as the general shift to a more realistic stand on foreign-policy questions in general and the Arab-Israeli dispute in particular.

**Decline in Strength of Arab Anti-Israel Pressure**

Another factor in King Hussein’s decision to assert a more active and direct role in West Bank affairs was a growing realization that time was no longer on his side. In the early years following the 1967 war, Hussein had assumed that the weight of Arab oil influence would lead the United States to pressure Israel to relinquish the occupied territories—territories lost by Jordan after Hussein ignored Israel’s warning to stay out of the war. While the power of Arab petrodollars had increased after the 1973 war, subsequent developments made reliance on outside pressure less and less feasible. Chief among these were the removal of Egypt from the conflict, after the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979; deteriorating relations between Syria and Jordan; Iraq’s preoccupation with Iran; and the more recent global oil glut that reduced OPEC’s power. Yet another factor that helped to convince the king that unless he took active measures to reverse the process the West Bank might soon be irrevocably lost was the stepped-up Israeli settlement program that followed the Likud’s assumption of power in 1977, coupled with the Reagan administration’s assertion that the settlements were not “illegal” under international law—as the Carter administration had claimed they were.

**Impact of Israeli Elections on Peace Prospects**

The prospect of a clear-cut Labor victory in the July parliamentary elections in Israel was awaited with scarcely concealed eagerness in Washington as well as Amman. For one thing, Shimon Peres had given qualified support to the Reagan initiative when it was first presented. For another, the Labor party’s traditional position of seeking compromise with Jordan over the disposition of the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) seemed to offer greater chance of eventual agreement than did the Likud’s refusal to see any part of these territories ever revert to foreign sovereignty. This did not mean that it would be easy to reach agreement, however. Even the Labor party position—which envisioned permanent Israeli control over West Bank areas considered vital to Israel’s security and maintenance of Israeli sovereignty over an undivided Jerusalem—was significantly different from Hussein’s vision of peace, which called for Israeli withdrawal to the pre-June 1967 armistice lines, with only minor modifications.

In the event, the Israeli election results proved indecisive. Almost two months of intensive bargaining and compromise between the nearly evenly balanced Labor (44
Knesset seats) and Likud (41 seats) blocs preceded the formation, on September 13, of an unprecedented form of national unity government. (See "Israel" article in this volume for details.) The agreement was that for the first half of the government's four-year term, Labor's Peres would serve as prime minister and the Likud's Yitzhak Shamir would be foreign minister as well as alternative prime minister. At the end of two years their roles would be reversed. Yitzhak Rabin, the former Labor prime minister, was to be minister of defense; Yitzhak Modai, energy minister under the previous Likud government, would become minister of finance.

The basic policy guidelines of the national unity government affirmed agreement on the necessity to "expedite the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from Lebanon in a short time." On the broader Arab-Israeli conflict, the coalition agreement tried to finesse the partners' differing approaches. It declared the government's willingness to "continue the peace process in keeping with the framework for peace in the Middle East that was agreed upon at Camp David, and to resume negotiations to give full autonomy to the Arab residents in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza." At the same time, Labor managed to get approval for a formulation stating that the new government would "call on Jordan to enter into peace negotiations," without specifically insisting that the negotiations be based on the Camp David accords, in recognition of the fact that Jordan still regarded the Camp David framework as inadequate. On the controversial issue of settlements, a cabinet majority would be required for approval of new ones, in effect giving Labor a veto over settlements it regarded as contrary to Labor's Allon plan, which opposed settlements with no security function in densely populated Arab areas. Both major parties agreed "not [to] negotiate with the PLO," and not to apply "sovereignty, Israeli or other . . . to Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza District." "In the event of a disagreement over the territorial issue," the parties stipulated, new elections would be held. This meant that the national unity government could neither annex the territories, as advocated by Likud and some of its ultranationalist allies on the right, nor cede any West Bank territory to Jordan, as advocated by Labor and some of its supporters on the left.

Peres Makes Peace Overture to Hussein

While some Middle East observers concluded that this formula meant stalemate, Prime Minister Peres interpreted his mandate as permitting him to pursue negotiations actively. It was only once an agreement had been concluded with Jordan that he would have to bring it to the people for approval. Analysts of the Israeli political scene pointed out that such a development would not only help to fulfill Israel's deep desire for peace but would also enhance Peres's personal standing. Moreover, if an accord was reached before the end of his two-year tenure, the required new elections would provide Peres with a legitimate reason not to turn the premiership over to Shamir. Accordingly, Peres used his first speech to the new Knesset, on September 16, to call upon Jordan to enter direct negotiations with Israel. Peres declared: "From this podium, and at this special moment, I call on King Hussein to come
to the negotiating table in order to attain a genuine peace." He made it clear that he was not demanding any prior commitment by Jordan to the Camp David accords or any other specific formula when he went on to state, "We are prepared to discuss with Jordan every proposal from its side on the assumption that it will be open to proposals coming from our side."

Alluding to the undisguised hostility that both Israel and Jordan faced from radical regimes and anti-Western Islamic fundamentalist elements, Peres noted that the two countries shared some basic interests. "Jordan has many enemies and Israel also has many enemies, and the enmity between the two of us can be settled by the courageous path of permanent dialogue. . . . Let the Jordan be the river that irrigates the farmers' fields, not a rift of endless quarrels and threats."

Although not widely known, perhaps, there was already a considerable amount of tacit cooperation between Jordan and Israel. This included measures to prevent the infiltration of PLO terrorists, to enable West Bank students to take Jordanian matriculation exams for admission to Jordanian and other Arab universities, and to keep open the bridges across the Jordan for the transit of people and goods to and from the West Bank. The threats to such cooperation were also real, however. Following Hussein's resumption of diplomatic relations with Egypt in September, the Syrians warned the king that he risked assassination for this action and for contemplating peace negotiations with Israel. The government-run Syrian radio quoted Vice-President Zohair Masharka as telling a rally in Damascus on October 1: "Jordanian leaders should expect their fate will not be different from that of the late Anwar Sadat," the Egyptian president who was killed by Muslim extremists in Cairo in 1981.

**Hussein Rejects Israeli Peace Bid**

Hussein's response to Peres was unusually tough and negative. In a speech opening the fall session of the Jordanian parliament, on October 1, the king rejected Prime Minister Peres's call for negotiations as "nothing more than an exercise in subterfuge and deception" designed to buy time for Israel to carry out its "expansionist" aims. If Israel really wanted peace, he said, it could show its good faith by affirming support of the UN resolutions, which Hussein interpreted as requiring total Israeli withdrawal. The Arabs wanted peace, he asserted, but would "never concede one speck of dust on the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, or the Golan Heights."

The specific reference to the Golan Heights, which Israel had captured from Syria in 1967, was presumably designed to reassure Damascus that Hussein was not about to follow Egypt's example and conclude a separate peace with Israel. So was Hussein's expression of support for solving the Arab-Israeli dispute through an international peace conference that would include participation of the Soviet Union and the PLO, as well as Syria and Lebanon, instead of through bilateral talks with Jordan, as proposed by Israel. The recurrent Soviet proposal for reconvening the international conference that had been cosponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union in Geneva in 1973 had most recently been reiterated in a statement
by Tass, the official Soviet news agency, on July 29, which said that the Soviet government was concerned "over the remaining explosive situation in the Middle East." As expected, both the Reagan administration in Washington and the Israeli government in Jerusalem reiterated their opposition to the proposal from Moscow, the chief arms supplier and political backer of Syria and other anti-American states. A senior Israeli official also cited Moscow's breaking-off of diplomatic relations with Israel as an obstacle, noting that "a country that has no relations with a side in the conflict has lost its main role in a peace process."

**Hussein Accuses U.S. of Encouraging Israeli "Intransigence"**

In the same speech to parliament, Hussein gave vent to his anger at the United States for its "procrastination and hesitancy" in supporting Arab peace efforts and for pursuing policies in the Middle East that "provided Israel with further cause for intransigence." Hussein, who was planning a trip to Moscow, also threatened that Jordan would no longer rely primarily on U.S. arms "in light of the negative American stand with regard to the legitimate provision of Jordan with defensive weapons." Hussein was still piqued over the decision of the Reagan administration the previous March to cancel its planned sale of 1,613 Stinger surface-to-air missiles to Jordan and 1,200 to Saudi Arabia, after the proposed sales encountered strong congressional opposition. Sens. Bob Kasten (R., Wis.) and Bob Packwood (R., Ore.) had collected 55 signatures on a senatorial letter of opposition to the president, while Rep. Lawrence J. Smith (D., Fla.) mounted a similar campaign in the House. Hussein himself had contributed to the defeat by making harshly critical comments about American Middle East policy to the *New York Times* (March 14) and on CBS-TV's "Face the Nation" (March 18). In his interview with Judith Miller of the *Times*, the king had ruled out participation in American-sponsored peace talks with Israel, charging that American credibility in the region had suffered and that "the United States is not free to move except within the limits of what AIPAC [the American Israel Public Affairs Committee], the Zionists, and the State of Israel determine for it."

**Reagan Defends Arms for Jordan in UJA Speech**

There was an ironic element in the king's timing on this matter, for the previous day, March 13, President Reagan had gone out of his way to make a case for the Jordanian arms sale in a speech before the Young Leadership Conference of the United Jewish Appeal. In the section of his speech explaining that the U.S. objective was to "go on promoting peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors," the president noted that "Syria is trying to lead a radical effort to dominate the region through terrorism and intimidation aimed, in particular, at America's friends." He pointed out that "one such friend we continue to urge to negotiate with Israel is King Hussein of Jordan." And precisely because Jordan was crucial to the peace process, he continued, "Jordan, like Israel, is confronted by Syria and faces military
threats and terrorist attacks.” Therefore, President Reagan concluded, “since the security of Jordan is crucial to the security of the entire region, it is in America’s strategic interest, and I believe it is in Israel’s strategic interest, for us to help meet Jordan’s legitimate needs for defense against the growing power of Syria and Iran.” (The reference to Iran was an allusion to the recently revealed administration plan to provide $220 million in equipment for a mobile Jordanian strike force intended to help its Arab friends along the Persian Gulf resist Khomeini-inspired insurrections.) President Reagan asserted that “such assistance to Jordan does not threaten Israel, but enhances the prospects for Mideast peace by reducing the dangers of the radical threat.”

Reagan’s call for military aid to Jordan was met with silence and scattered hisses by the ardently pro-Israel Jewish audience. The UJA group had earlier warmly applauded the president when he protested the persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union, pledged that the United States would provide more aid in the form of grants to Israel—“to ensure that Israel will maintain its qualitative military edge”—and denounced the “so-called anti-Zionism” of the Iranian and Libyan representatives at the United Nations as “just another mask for vicious anti-Semitism.” President Reagan received a standing ovation from the audience after he bluntly warned: “If Israel is ever forced to walk out of the UN, the United States and Israel will walk out together.” He was again applauded when he reaffirmed the “long-standing American commitment” that the United States “will neither recognize nor negotiate with the PLO” so long as it “refuses to recognize Israel’s right to exist and accept Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.”

American political observers generally regarded it as a sign of political courage on the part of the president to choose the Jewish leadership group as the forum in which to present the case for arms to Jordan. In meetings with Prime Minister Shamir in November 1983, Reagan had argued that improving ties with Jordan was consistent with the expanded strategic cooperation between the United States and Israel. “Having said it privately to Shamir, the president thought it was important to do it publicly at a time these matters are before Congress,” said White House deputy press secretary Robert Sims. Thus Reagan’s speech to the UJA was a calculated part of the administration’s campaign to persuade American Jews and other supporters of Israel that Jordan and Israel faced a common enemy in Syria.

In the Middle East, however, the president’s speech was interpreted quite differently. King Hussein and some other Arabs regarded it as demeaning and offensive that the president of the world’s leading superpower should plead for Jewish support, thereby appearing to give the supporters of Israel veto power over U.S. Middle East policy.

Reagan Reiterates Middle East Peace Plan

Choosing to regard Hussein’s critical remarks to the U.S. media in March as only a temporary irritant, President Reagan continued to propound the main lines of his
Middle East policy, while at the same time strengthening strategic cooperation with Israel. Speaking before the international convention of B'nai B'rith in Washington on September 6, Reagan said that America's Middle East peace efforts "still stand on the foundation of the Camp David accords" and the "fair and balanced positions" he had outlined in the September 1, 1982, Reagan initiative. His plan, he recalled, included "firm opposition" to an independent West Bank-Gaza Palestinian Arab state, and incorporated the key issues that the negotiating parties would have to resolve. Since his audience knew that the Israeli government at the time did not accept the Reagan plan, the president indicated that the United States would go along with whatever Israel and Jordan agreed to in negotiations. In any case, the president once again pledged that "we will never attempt to impose a solution on Israel."

Israel Responds with Conflicting Voices

When the president formally reiterated U.S. support for the Reagan initiative in his speech to the UN General Assembly in October, Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who was representing Israel at the UN session in New York, quickly announced that the national unity government "rejected" the Reagan plan. This set off the first serious foreign-policy squabble within the ideologically divided government. Prime Minister Peres, who was about to embark on his first official visit to President Reagan, was eager to start off on the right foot, unencumbered by his predecessor's baggage. Back in Jerusalem, cabinet secretary Yossi Beilin, a close confidant of the prime minister, tried to soften the negative impact of Shamir's remark. Since the Reagan plan had not yet been on the cabinet's agenda, Beilin explained, the government could not be expected to have taken a position on a question it had not yet discussed. Following heated transatlantic phone calls between Shamir and Peres, a compromise formula was agreed upon, one that represented at least a temporary victory for Shamir. It stated that, having not yet undertaken its own examination of the Reagan plan, the new government remained bound by its predecessor's rejection of it. Moreover, to assure that Peres did not go off on his own to make far-reaching concessions, Shamir insisted that he accompany Peres to the forthcoming meetings in Washington.

Although Reagan's landslide reelection victory on November 6 meant the continuation of the Reagan plan as official U.S. policy, differences over the plan caused no overt friction between the United States and Israel for the remainder of 1984. The new Reagan administration focused its attention on domestic economic matters and on preparing the groundwork for new arms negotiations with the Soviet Union. In Israel, the new government was still preoccupied with working out an arrangement for withdrawal of its forces from Lebanon that would not jeopardize Israel's security and with trying to devise emergency measures to cope with the country's steadily worsening economic crisis. On the Arab side there were as yet no buyers for the Reagan plan.
Palestine National Council Meets in Amman

After months of delay and in the face of Syrian threats, Arafat finally accepted Hussein's invitation to convene the Palestine National Council (PNC), the PLO's "parliament in exile," in Amman, Jordan, on November 22. After only narrowly achieving a quorum—because of the boycott by anti-Arafat elements in the PLO—the PNC voted to oust its speaker, Khalid Fahoum, who had tried to block the session. Fahoum declared that any resolutions adopted in Amman would be "illegal" and "will not be carried out by most groups of the Palestinian resistance." Arafat faced opposition from two sources: the Syrian-backed "National Alliance," including Abu Musa's rebels from Fatah, as-Saiqa, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command, and the Popular Struggle Front; and from the more Marxist "Democratic Alliance," consisting of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Palestine Liberation Front. Nevertheless, neutral sources estimated that Arafat still retained the support of most of his original backers in al-Fatah, by far the largest PLO component, as well as the sympathy of the overwhelming majority of the Palestinians on the West Bank.

The PNC meeting was remarkable in several respects. It highlighted the reconciliation between Arafat and King Hussein, who had forcefully expelled the PLO in September 1970 after that organization tried to overthrow him. Moreover, the proceedings of the PNC were televised throughout the Arab world and were viewed with fascination by many Arabs in the West Bank as well as in Israel. In his address to the opening session of the PNC, King Hussein bluntly called upon the PLO to abandon the fruitless path of armed struggle and to join him instead in seeking a negotiated solution on the basis of Security Council Resolution 242. The king also repeated his call for an international conference under UN sponsorship, which, he said, should include all the parties to the Middle East conflict—including the PLO "on an equal footing"—as well as the permanent members of the Security Council. (The PNC did not respond directly to Hussein's appeal, but it was endorsed by President Mubarak of Egypt at the conclusion of a visit to Cairo by Hussein on December 3.)

The fact that the meeting was held at all was considered a victory for Arafat. After dramatically tendering his resignation, Arafat accepted reelection as chairman of the PLO. Also significant was the election of two former West Bank mayors to the PLO's executive committee, giving practical expression to Hussein's efforts to bring about a PLO-West Bank reconciliation under his aegis. The significance of this event was not lost upon the Syrians, who intensified their campaign of encouraging the assassination of Jordanian officials both at home and abroad. When Fahd Kawasmeh of Hebron, one of the two West Bankers elected to the PLO executive committee, was shot to death in Amman on December 29, Arafat blamed Syria for the assassination.
Middle East Issues in U.S. Presidential Campaign

Attention in the early months of the U.S. presidential campaign, before the conventions, focused on the controversial candidacy of black minister and civil-rights activist Jesse Jackson for the Democratic nomination. While other Democratic presidential aspirants sought to outdo one another in uncritical expressions of support for Israel, Jackson increasingly became an embarrassment to the Democrats among Jewish voters. During the campaign there was widespread reproduction of a photo of Jackson being embraced by PLO leader Yasir Arafat during a visit by Jackson to the Middle East in 1979. At the start of the 1984 campaign, Jackson reiterated his view that "the Palestinian question remains at the heart of the Middle East agony," and that "the no-talk policy toward the PLO has . . . deprived the American President of the ability to reduce Israel's enemies." Citing America's dual interests—"protecting Israel's right to exist in security within internationally recognized boundaries" and achieving "Palestinian justice, or self-determination, or a homeland for the Palestinian people"—he called on the United States to use "its strength to get the PLO and others to recognize Israel . . . and Israeli leaders to move toward a mutual recognition policy. . . ."

Most Jewish voters regarded Jackson's pro-Palestinian policies as harmful to Israel. Opponents also dug up a July 1980 speech to the "American Federation of Ramallah, Palestine" in which the Reverend Jackson had declared: "Zionism is rooted in race, it's a political philosophy. Judaism is religion and faith; it's a religion. We have the real obligation to separate Zionism from Judaism. . . . Zionism is a kind of poisonous weed that is choking Judaism." Fears concerning Jackson's true sentiments regarding Israel and Jews were heightened by pejorative epithets that he applied to New York Jews during the 1984 campaign and by his failure to reject the support of Louis Farrakhan, leader of a Black Muslim splinter group, who repeatedly made blatant antisemitic and anti-Israel comments. It was not until the end of June that Jackson explicitly criticized these views, without, however, denouncing Farrakhan personally.

Although Walter Mondale made it clear he did not share Jackson's approach to the PLO and other Israel-related issues, his seeming hesitation to denounce Jackson—so as not to alienate potential black voters—as well as the failure of the Democratic party convention to adopt an explicit condemnation of antisemitism, raised questions among some Jewish voters about Mondale's own capacity—once he won the nomination—to lead the Democratic party.

Democrats Adopt Pro-Israel Platform Plank

The efforts of Jesse Jackson's delegates on the Democratic platform committee to have their candidate's Middle East views incorporated in the platform were beaten back by the united action of the supporters of Mondale and Sen. Gary Hart.
The platform adopted by the party's convention in San Francisco at the end of June was specific in its support for Israel and opposition to "any consideration of negotiations with the PLO, unless the PLO abandons terrorism, recognizes the state of Israel, and adheres to UN Resolutions 242 and 338." Asserting that "Israel is strategically important to the United States, and we must enter into meaningful strategic cooperation," the Democrats also opposed the Reagan administration's "sales of highly advanced weaponry to avowed enemies of Israel, such as AWACS aircraft and Stinger missiles to Saudi Arabia." While helping to meet "the legitimate defensive needs of states aligned with our nation," the platform plank continued, "we must ensure Israel's military edge over any combination of Middle East confrontation states."

With regard to the search for a broader Arab-Israeli peace, the Democratic party condemned "this Administration's failure to maintain a high-level Special Negotiator for the Middle East," and urged speedy resumption of the Camp David peace process. After applauding the example of Israel and Egypt in taking "bold steps for peace," the Democrats asked the government to "press for negotiations among Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab nations." The explicit mention of Saudi Arabia, which has no common border with Israel, and the omission of Syria, which does, struck observers as curious. The choice may have reflected awareness that anti-American Syria was unlikely to respond favorably to American overtures. At the same time, the wording seemed to imply that the Saudis' desire for direct control over the AWACS planes scheduled to be transferred to them the following year could be used to win their support for American peace efforts. (Information provided by American-manned AWACS planes had already enabled Saudi pilots to repel an attack by Iranian jets before they could reach Saudi oil installations. The shooting down of one—and according to some reports two—Iranian planes managed to deter the Iranians from again intruding into Saudi airspace.)

The platform reemphasized the "fundamental principle that the prerequisite for a lasting peace in the Middle East remains an Israel with secure and defensible borders, strong beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the basis for peace is the unequivocal recognition of Israel's right to exist by all other states, and that there should be a resolution of the Palestinian issue."

Republicans Support Expanded U.S.-Israel Ties

The Middle East platform plank adopted by the Republican party at its convention in Dallas in mid-August differed little in substance from that of the Democrats, though it naturally sought to defend the record of the Reagan administration and to portray it as successful. The platform contended that President Reagan's Middle East policy "has been flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances, yet consistent and credible so that all nations recognize our determination to protect our vital interests." It argued that "the President's skillful crisis management throughout the Iran-Iraq War has kept that conflict from damaging our vital
interests” and that his peace efforts “have won strong bipartisan support and international applause.” Regarding Lebanon, which had earlier in the year consumed so much of the Reagan administration’s efforts, the platform simply noted that “Lebanon is still in turmoil, despite our best efforts to foster stability in that unhappy country.” The Republicans warned that “with the Syrian leadership increasingly subject to Soviet influence, and the Palestine Liberation Organization and its homicidal subsidiaries taking up residence in Syria, the peace of the entire region is again at stake.” The Republicans also reaffirmed their opposition to recognizing or negotiating with the PLO “so long as that organization continues to promote terrorism, rejects Israel’s right to exist and refuses to accept U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338.”

In the Republican view, partnership with Israel was the core of America’s strategy of countering Soviet expansion in the Middle East. According to the platform, “Israel’s strength, coupled with United States assistance, is the main obstacle to Soviet domination of the region. The sovereignty, security, and integrity of the state of Israel is a moral imperative. We pledge to maintain Israel’s qualitative military edge over its adversaries.” In an implicit rejoinder to Mondale’s call for greater strategic cooperation with Israel, the Republican platform continued, “Under President Reagan, we have moved beyond mere words to extensive political, military and diplomatic cooperation. U.S.-Israeli strategic planning groups are coordinating our joint defense efforts, and we are directly supporting projects to augment Israel’s defense industrial base. We support the legislation pending for an Israeli-U.S. free trade area.”

Declaring that “our determination to participate actively in the peace process begun at Camp David” had won support for the Reagan administration “from moderate Arab states,” the platform pledged “continued support to Egypt and other moderate regimes against Soviet and Libyan subversion” and called on them to assist American efforts for settlement of the region’s “destructive disputes.” (It had come as something of a shock to the Reagan administration when a few days earlier King Hassan of Morocco, one of the leading pro-Western Arab moderates, suddenly announced a union with the radical, Soviet-armed, anti-American Libya of Colonel Qaddafi. It later emerged that Hassan had managed to obtain a commitment from Qaddafi to stop aiding the Polisario rebels who were fighting Morocco for control of the Western Sahara. What Qaddafi obtained in return was not clear, although some suggested it was simply a measure of respectability. Qaddafi had earlier in the year been accused by President Mubarak of Egypt of laying mines in the Gulf of Suez, as well as of interfering in the Sudan, Chad, and other neighboring countries.)

**Democrats Make Issue of U.S. Embassy in Israel**

The one Israel-related issue on which there was a clear difference between the Reagan administration and the Democratic opposition was the location of the U.S. embassy in Israel. This was seized upon by the media and assumed exaggerated importance in the campaign. The American embassy had remained in Tel Aviv since
1948, despite the fact that Israel began moving its governmental headquarters to Jerusalem in 1949 and established its capital there. Both Democratic and Republican platforms agreed that “Jerusalem should remain forever undivided with free access to the holy places for people of all faiths.” On the question of the city’s status as Israel’s capital, or on the location of the American embassy, the Republicans were silent. The Democrats, however, went on to assert in their platform: “As stated in the 1976 and 1980 platforms, the Democratic Party recognizes and supports the established status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. As a symbol of this stand, the U.S. Embassy should be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.”

What the platform did not say was that, during his four years as president, Jimmy Carter—the Democratic candidate elected on the 1976 platform—did nothing to move the embassy. On the contrary, in his official letters to President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin accompanying the September 1978 Camp David accords, Carter reaffirmed the American position on Jerusalem that had been enunciated by American diplomats at the United Nations following the 1967 war. In effect this stated that the United States would not accept unilateral actions by Israel as defining the status of Jerusalem, which would ultimately have to be determined in peace negotiations. In contrast to Carter, who had questioned the wisdom of the platform plank even before his election, Mondale said that, if elected, one of his first actions would be to move the American embassy to Jerusalem. During the primary campaign in New York, Senator Hart, who initially had been noncommittal on the matter, also made a strong public statement backing the move, in an appearance before the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

The leader in the campaign to move the embassy was Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D., N.Y.). On October 31, 1983, Moynihan had introduced a bill (S.2031) in the Senate stipulating that “notwithstanding any other Act, the United States Embassy in Israel and the residence of the American Ambassador in Israel shall hereafter be located in the city of Jerusalem.” In a statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 23, 1984, Moynihan criticized the “unprecedented and bewildering practice” by the United States government, in official publications, of designating Tel Aviv as the location of the U.S. embassy in the country of Israel, while treating Jerusalem as if it were a separate country, with its own consular “post” reporting to Washington. He also criticized the United States for its failure to veto a UN Security Council resolution of August 20, 1980, that called on all member nations to withdraw their embassies from Jerusalem, which was designated as among “Arab territories occupied by Israel.” Moynihan said that these American actions had undermined international law and given “succor and encouragement to avowed enemies of the State of Israel.”

Moynihan went on to suggest that President Reagan privately shared his view, and that it was only “State Department policy” that inhibited him from moving the embassy. If Congress mandated such action, Moynihan continued, the president would be enabled to act “without fear of his action being misunderstood in other capitals.” Moynihan said he would “dismiss with a measure of contempt” the
proposition that standing with Israel in this matter would cause grave damage to America's relations with other states in the region. Only the previous August, he noted, the government of Kuwait had refused to receive an experienced career officer as our ambassador there on the grounds that he had once been the American consul general “in what our State Department Telephone Directory describes as the ‘country’ of Jerusalem. What do we gain, then,” Moynihan asked, “for having kept our embassy out of Jerusalem?” (To compound the irony, the diplomat in question, Brandon Grove, had, during his service in Jerusalem, drawn fire from right-wing Israeli and American Jewish groups for maintaining close personal contacts with nationalistic Palestinians on the West Bank.)

Moynihan stressed that Israel was the only country whose own choice of capital the United States failed to accept. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, he noted, which had until recently declined to have embassies located in its capital of Riyadh, had now reversed its position and requested that embassies be located there. Consequently, Moynihan pointed out, “the United States government, in the normal way that applies to every country in the world save one, is now proceeding to build an embassy in that capital.”

By early March, the Moynihan bill had attracted 34 cosponsors; a parallel bill in the House, introduced by Tom Lantos (D., Calif.) and Benjamin A. Gilman (R., N.Y.), had 180 cosponsors. At a press conference in Washington on February 22 announcing the measure, Lantos stressed that this was not simply “a symbolic gesture” but that “we will make a full-court press” to have the legislation quickly approved by Congress so as to “present the President with this legislation for his signature well before the November elections.” Although the five congressmen participating in the press conference stressed the bipartisan support for the measure, Rep. Robert Mrazek (D., N.Y.) noted that this was the “one year” when the president could be expected to sign it. Should the president veto the legislation, however, Lantos and the others warned that they would tie the embassy move to an appropriations bill.

**Shultz Presents Administration Opposition to Jerusalem Law**

Sen. Charles H. Percy (R., III.), chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, had asked the executive branch for a coordinated statement of its position in advance of hearings on the Moynihan bill, which began on February 23. Secretary of State Shultz responded in a letter of February 13. The administration opposed the proposed legislation, he explained, as part of the “consistent” U.S. position that “the final status of Jerusalem must be resolved among the parties concerned, in the context of a comprehensive, just, and lasting Middle East settlement.” Pending such a negotiated settlement, “our Embassy and the Ambassador’s residence remain in Tel Aviv, a recognized part of the state of Israel.” The change called for in the Senate bill would be “extremely harmful at a critical juncture” in the peace process, he added, noting that there was “a renewed opportunity” to resume and broaden the
negotiations called for by the president's September 1982 initiative. "A precipitous transfer" of U.S. diplomatic facilities to Jerusalem, Shultz warned, would seriously undercut the ability of the United States to play "a facilitative role in promoting a negotiated settlement."

Secretary Shultz also criticized the Moynihan bill because it raised "serious constitutional questions of a separation of powers nature." In the administration's view, he said, "the President's exclusive constitutional power" to conduct foreign relations was "beyond the proper scope of legislative action." Congressman Lantos rejected this argument, saying that Congress had the right to be included in the "formulation of policy." Moreover, he said, Congress had frequently taken action relating to consulates, as for example, preventing a previous administration from closing some.

State Department officials in the Middle East also echoed Secretary Shultz's warning that, in the current environment, "a move of our embassy would certainly fan Islamic extremism, possibly inciting a wave of violence against our citizens, diplomats, and installations." When Nicholas A. Veliotes, the ambassador to Egypt, visited Washington for consultations, he told some senators he hoped they would give him advance notice before they voted to move the embassy so that he and his staff could be evacuated from Cairo first. Told by a reporter of the State Department's concern about violence, Senator Moynihan responded, "If the United States can be deterred from taking a normal, legal, everyday act by the threat of mob violence, what kind of country have we become?"

American Jewish Organizations Support Jerusalem Bill

Kenneth Bialkin, chairman of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and current chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, testified in support of the bill and also accused the U.S. government of giving in to fear of Arab reaction. "It is time to end several generations of U.S. surrender to intimidation and threats from our so-called friends in Arab lands," he said. Also testifying on behalf of the bill were spokespersons for the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem and the Moral Majority. Joining the administration in opposing the pending legislation were representatives of the Episcopal and Orthodox churches, the U.S. Catholic Conference, and David Sadd, executive director of the National Association of Arab Americans. At the hearing on February 23, Senator Percy noted that this was the first time the Congress had ever formally considered the issue. In a briefing for the Jewish media, Thomas Dine, executive director of AIPAC, said that this fact constituted a "precedent" and that no matter what happened to the current bill, the issue would continue to be raised.

Embassy Issue Poses Dilemma for Israel

Even though the Reagan administration and the supporters of the Jerusalem bill seemed to be heading for a showdown, there was in fact a strong desire to avoid a
full-scale confrontation. Israeli officials were caught in a dilemma. While they were naturally committed to the idea that united Jerusalem was the eternal capital of Israel, and they welcomed international acceptance of this fact, they did not wish to embarrass the Reagan administration. Apart from the fact that they were working to forge increasingly close economic, strategic, and military ties with Washington, they did not wish to appear to be interfering in American domestic politics, especially in a presidential election year. American Jewish supporters of Israel faced a similar dilemma. They did not wish to undercut Senator Moynihan's positive initiative, but they also did not wish to contribute to a potential backlash in anti-Israel feeling by the administration. Consequently, while both sides publicly proclaimed that they were sticking to their respective positions, behind-the-scenes efforts were under way to work out a face-saving compromise. An administration offer in March to drop the sale of Stinger missiles to Jordan and Saudi Arabia in exchange for abandonment of the Jerusalem bill was turned down by supporters of the Moynihan bill. (When the trade-off was rejected, the administration dropped the sale anyway, following Hussein's critical remarks.)

In an appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press" on April 1, Secretary Shultz was asked whether President Reagan would, as he had hinted, veto the Jerusalem legislation. While refusing to predict what Reagan would do, Shultz stressed that he knew both from the president's public statements and from private conversations with him that "the President is very much opposed" and "will not move that embassy" even if Congress passed the legislation. However, he added, "my impression is that people in the Congress are more and more having second thoughts about this and looking around for some ways in which they might defuse this issue."

President Reagan himself remained adamant on the issue. When asked by reporters during his flight home from China on May 1 whether the administration was considering a compromise, he replied, "No, I feel very strongly that this is not something we should do. . . . Jerusalem has to be part of the negotiations if we're going to have peace talks."

Meanwhile, the legislation was gaining supporters in both houses of Congress. Following the Senate hearings, additional joint hearings were held by the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East and the Subcommittee on International Operations. In testimony on May 1, Howard Friedman, president of the American Jewish Committee, pointed out that the American position was not consistent with general American practice. He cited as an example the fact that "our embassy in East Germany is located in East Berlin, though that city is not recognized by the U.S. as the capital." Responding to Shultz's argument that the embassy could not be moved until the status of Jerusalem had been finally settled, Friedman contended that situating the embassy in Jerusalem would not preclude negotiations called for under the Camp David accords.

Turning to the expressed fear of hostile Arab reaction, the American Jewish Committee leader suggested that the Arabs' bark was worse than their bite: "When the American-Israeli strategic cooperation agreement was announced, Arab states voiced their opposition but took no retaliatory action against the United States." In
contrast to “that substantive agreement,” he noted, moving the embassy to Jerusa-
lem “would be a symbolic act.” But, he concluded, it would be an important step,
since it would provide another “unmistakable sign that the United States is commit-
ted to having firm, unambiguous relations with Israel.”

On June 21 Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Michael H. Armacost
reiterated the administration’s reasons for opposing the embassy move. In reviewing
the historical record, he noted that as early as 1949, when Israel began relocating
some government ministries to Jerusalem, the United States had said that it could
not accept this unilateral move. Again in 1960 “we informed Jordan of our opposi-
tion to its making the eastern part of the city Jordan’s second capital.” He stressed
that “we would not have achieved the Camp David Accords—which led to Israel’s
first peace treaty with an Arab state—if the United States had adopted the position
of either Israel or Egypt on the subject of Jerusalem.” He said he realized “the
frustrations” many feel because of the administration’s position, but urged them to
look at the long term. He was convinced that “in the long term it is peace for Israel
that will bring with it a solution to the problem of the status of Jerusalem.”

Congress Backs Away from Confrontation

Meanwhile, the House sponsors of the Jerusalem bill had expressed a readiness
to defer a vote on the issue until the following year—if Reagan were to indicate that
he would not oppose it after the election. The president refused. Despite administra-
tion opposition, on October 2 the two House subcommittees approved nonbinding
resolutions declaring it to be “the sense of the Congress” that the embassy be moved
“at the earliest possible date.” With Congress scheduled to adjourn in a few days,
however, there was little prospect of the resolutions being voted upon by the full
House, and in the Senate the measure had not even been put to a vote. Supporters
of the bill claimed a moral victory, nevertheless, since their position had not been
defeated, and vowed to bring up the issue again in the future. The president’s
political advisers were grateful that by avoiding the need for a presidential veto, the
unresolved issue would not cost them dearly with Jewish voters, and the State
Department was relieved that it had been spared another complicating factor in U.S.
relations with the Arab and Islamic worlds.

One political figure who did suffer fallout from the episode was Senate Foreign
Relations Committee chairman Percy, an opponent of the Jerusalem bill. Percy told
a Chicago radio audience on October 5 that his Democratic opponent, Rep. Paul
Simon (D., Ill.), “brings the house down when he debates against me in a temple”
and calls for moving the American embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. “Jewish people
are the most intelligent people I’ve ever known,” Percy said. “But they are also
extraordinarily emotional, and on that particular issue they are wrong, wrong,
wrong!” Jewish votes in Illinois and financial support for Simon from pro-Israel
political-action committees around the country helped Simon to defeat Percy in the
November senatorial race.
Mondale Warns of Reagan “Surprises” for Israel

Walter Mondale, the Democratic nominee, tried to play upon Jewish fears of what a second-term Reagan administration would do. In a speech to some 200 Jewish supporters in Washington on September 17, Mondale said that on the issue of the Middle East, “Mr. Reagan has been essentially absent,” and that others less sympathetic to Israel, including Defense Secretary Weinberger, “have taken charge.” Mondale warned that a Reagan reelection might bring “December surprises” for Israel, such as more arms sales to Saudi Arabia and other Arab states, increased pressure on Israel to accept a reactivated Reagan plan, and possible resumption of secret talks with the PLO. He charged that the administration had already conducted “400 hours of so-called unofficial talks with Yasir Arafat and the PLO.”

Mondale said that instead of the Reagan plan, which “made concessions to the Arabs at Israel’s expense before talks even started,” he would “give the new Israeli government time to develop its own policies toward the Arabs.” At the same time, he would strengthen strategic cooperation and end “the fiction that Jerusalem is not the capital of that good country” by moving the U.S. embassy to that city. Emphasizing his firm commitment to America’s “special relationship” with Israel, he concluded that “I would rather lose with your support than win without it.”

Mondale was to get his wish. Although Reagan won reelection by a national landslide, Jews were among the few groups (blacks and persons earning less than $10,000 per annum were the others) that gave a majority of their votes to the Democratic contender. While the Republicans continued to make inroads in the traditionally Democratic Jewish vote—obtaining roughly one out of every three Jewish votes—some political analysts had predicted a better showing among Jews, especially in light of the Democrats’ mishandling of the Jackson-Farrakhan issue. In the end, though, other factors apparently carried more weight than did mistrust of Jesse Jackson. Concern over U.S. policy toward Israel was undoubtedly one, though to what extent it is hard to determine. Probably most significant was growing Jewish discomfort with Ronald Reagan’s closeness to Christian right-wing conservatives, whose views on church-state separation and on America as “a Christian nation” he evidently shared. (See “Intergroup Relations” article in this volume.)

Reagan Administration Strengthens Ties with Israel

While Mondale may have succeeded in arousing fears among some Jewish voters about a second Reagan administration, the president took every opportunity to let his record on the Middle East make its own case. In a speech to the B’nai B’rith International convention in September, Reagan asserted that “our administration has strengthened the American-Israeli alliance in three crucial ways.” He listed these areas: upgraded and formalized strategic cooperation, including cooperation in military research and development, procurement, and logistics; the marked increase in economic assistance to Israel from 1981 to 1984, including the changeover
from loans to grants; and the initiation of negotiations for an unprecedented Free Trade Area (FTA) between the two countries. In actuality, these actions enjoyed bipartisan support—for example, the legislation to authorize the president to negotiate and conclude the FTA was passed in the House by a vote of 416 to 6 and in the Senate by a vote of 96 to 0—but Reagan could take credit for initiating them.

The president could also point to his successful rounds of meetings with Foreign Minister Shamir and Prime Minister Peres. At a joint press conference with Peres in the White House rose garden on October 9, Reagan said that he was "impressed by the bold and wide-ranging steps" the new Israeli national unity government was undertaking to revitalize the economy and announced plans to establish a joint economic development group of officials and private experts from both countries to help Israel overcome its severe economic problems. Reagan concluded that the recent discussions with Shamir and Peres "reconfirm the close friendship, the mutual respect, and the shared values that bind our countries. Our ties remain unbreakable, [they] continue to grow." In his response, Prime Minister Peres declared that "I found in the White House a true friend of Israel" and expressed his gratitude to the president for the fact that "the relations between the United States and Israel have reached a new level of harmony and understanding."

Probably the most significant development in the relationship was the president's success in overcoming traditional hesitations in the Defense Department and in the Near East bureau of the State Department to close and public U.S.-Israeli cooperation in the military area. Robert McFarlane, the president's national security adviser, told the national convention of Hadassah—in San Francisco on August 28—that because the Reagan administration was convinced that "Israel and the U.S. are allies in the defense of freedom in the Middle East and throughout the world," it had accomplished "long-lasting structural changes" to strengthen the U.S.-Israeli relationship. Among these, McFarlane said, were strategic cooperation; expanded and more sophisticated levels of diplomatic cooperation; procurement of Israeli high-technology equipment for the American military; and U.S. assistance for Israel in building its new Lavi fighter and SAAR patrol boat.

After Secretary of Defense Weinberger visited Israel in mid-October for two days of discussions that were described by both sides as "extremely warm and friendly," he announced that the Reagan administration would give Israel access to the advanced American technology needed to produce its ultramodern Lavi fighter. (Weinberger had reportedly opposed U.S. aid earlier, because the Lavi would compete with the American-made Northrop F-20.) The secretary of defense also said that a joint U.S.-Israeli working team would study Israel's requests to acquire three American diesel submarines as well as offers by Israel to sell 120-millimeter mortars to the U.S. Army. (It was subsequently revealed that the submarines would be jointly produced and that the U.S. Navy had decided to purchase Israeli-manufactured Kfir fighters to simulate Soviet MIGs in training exercises for American pilots.)
On December 11 the Defense Department announced the start of joint antisubmarine exercises in the eastern Mediterranean by ships and aircraft of the U.S. and Israeli navies. Pentagon officials said that except for a medical evacuation drill the previous summer, this was the first time the two countries had practiced military maneuvers since the president had agreed to increase military cooperation with Israel.

To friends of Israel, all these developments were hopeful signs that whatever storm clouds might lie ahead on the Middle East diplomatic horizon, the American-Israeli strategic relationship would continue to gain strength during the second Reagan era.

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