Chapter V

THE DYNAMICS OF INTELLIGENCE, DIPLOMACY AND FOREIGN POLICY
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A more detailed analysis can now be undertaken regarding the precise relationship between intelligence, diplomacy and foreign policy. Utilizing the case studies of Egypt and Israel as outlined in earlier chapters, an attempt will be made to examine and evaluate the causes and effects of the interaction between intelligence and diplomacy. A brief review of the theory relating to each function will be undertaken before studying the dynamics in practice. This theory will provide the framework of analysis on the basis of which, modifications can be made to existing theory. The analysis of the factors influencing the dynamics of intelligence, diplomacy and foreign policy will however remain the core of the study. The pattern of interaction between intelligence and diplomacy is complex and diverse, determined by a variety of factors that differ from nation to nation.

To build up a coherent theory of the impact of intelligence services on diplomacy, it is however, necessary to begin with the simplest definition of diplomacy. The Oxford dictionary defines diplomacy as the conduct of international relations, through negotiations. This layman definition however emphasizes only one aspect of diplomacy. Important negotiations are carried out in a context where war is a possibility and each actor employs a bargaining strategy designed to maximise the gains and minimise the losses. Negotiations begins on the presumption that each actor is aware, at least to a limited extent, of the other actor's
capabilities and intention. In each case, intelligence is an important contributor, among other sources, to the knowledge used during negotiations. Further and prior knowledge of the other side's policy positions, alternative shifts in position, the maximum concessions they may be offered or denied can reduce the element of surprise in negotiations and allow for a more coherent pattern of bargaining. In diplomacy, it is equally important to know whom to convince and how to convince. Foreknowledge of the negotiator's personality, amenability to reason, bargaining style, political attitudes and priorities, can add a distinct advantage and determine the outcome of the negotiations. Much of this information may be openly available, or may require further probing and collation by the intelligence services, especially if the other nation has a closed society.

Negotiations relating to strategic areas such as arms limitation or clandestine arms transfers require special intelligence briefing and intelligence awareness. Firstly there is the possibility that the negotiator may reveal unwittingly the developments in conventional arms or nuclear technology in his own country, to the other side. Secondly the discussions revolve around issues such as arms strength, deployment, location of missile bases, the state of nuclear technology, almost all of

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1 See Appendix II, n. 11. Personal interview with Yehoshafat Harkabi. Jerusalem, 26.4.1982. Professor Harkabi is the Head, Department of International Relations, Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He served as the DMI from 1955 to 1959 and from 1974 to 1979 as Intelligence Adviser to the Cabinet.
these activities undertaken in partial or total secrecy. The intelligence is therefore employed both for purposes of extracting the enemies' secrets as well as ensuring that the terms of any agreement are implemented. Arms limitation negotiations in fact tend to be protracted, partly due to this need to have the latest intelligence data and revise the negotiations on the basis of the new data.

In the negotiations relating to clandestine arms transfers, the need for secrecy and security brings in the intelligence services. As mentioned in earlier chapters, intelligence personnel of Egypt and Israel formed part of the official delegations sent abroad to discuss clandestine arms transfers. The clandestine transfer of arms from France to Israel in October 1956, involved the intelligence services both in the planning and implementation of the arrangement. In Egypt, the official delegation that visited Moscow in November 1966 and February 1973 to discuss arms transfer included the Director of the Mukhabarat.

In both these negotiations the intelligence personnel became direct negotiators rather than advisers since the discussions on strategic co-operation included the areas of intelligence hence liaison and co-operation.

Another school of thought however, believes that the value of intelligence in diplomacy has serious limitations.

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According to Mordechai Gazit, diplomacy is dominated by issues which are open secrets or partly secret. In democratic societies policy positions are known and discussed openly. Further, in negotiations the final outcome or position is never known in advance, it develops during the discussions. Even the best intelligence becomes useless if the other side is not willing to open negotiations. In fact it would be dangerous to rely too much on one source and analysis, such as the intelligence service. Intelligence is of greater value in planning military strategy where every move is shrouded in secrecy.

This theory however begins with the assumption that negotiations are conducted in an ideal situation of almost complete honesty and foreknowledge. This is not the case since the proclaimed intentions, goals and strength of an enemy or ally are not necessarily a reflection of reality. To distract the enemy, is the strategy of aggressive nations and history has numerous examples of the success of disinformation. Secondly, closed societies do not discuss and formulate policy openly. Information to formulate policies with regard to closed societies, must necessarily be drawn from both overt and covert sources. Even in democratic societies, the kind of information that would make intelligence unnecessary, is not always easily obtainable. Fore-

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3 See Appendix II, n. W. Personal interview with Mordechai Gazit. Jerusalem, 14.3.1982. Gazit is a former Israeli career diplomat who served as the Director General of the Foreign Office and later Director General of the Prime Ministers Office, where he was in charge of liaison with intelligence.
knowledge is useful in negotiations, if only to reduce the impact of the element of surprise and avoid the need to constantly reformulate the bargaining strategy. As Gazit himself admits, intelligence has certain utility in filling up gaps, in collating and analyzing of data collected from overt sources.

The functions of a diplomat are primarily four-fold. Firstly he represents his own country and its policies, seeking to impress upon the host government the validity of these policies. Secondly he is responsible for carrying out negotiations with the host government, or laying the groundwork for such negotiations in the case of summit meetings. Thirdly, he is responsible for the welfare and related formalities, of nationals from his own country, residing in the host nation. Lastly, but of equal importance, he is responsible for keeping his government informed about the latest political, military, economic and social developments in the host nation. As mentioned in the introduction, the elementary linkage between diplomacy and intelligence is provided in the function of information gathering.

The distinction between the information gathering function of diplomacy and intelligence relates to the nature of information sought and the methods employed to obtain the information. The diplomat is legally permitted and expected to gather information from open sources such as the press or from routine social contact with the elite on political, economic and social developments. The possession of such information is legal and it is transmitted to his own country with the intention that adequate foreknowledge and suitable modifications can be
provision for in foreign policy. Intelligence however seeks strategic information on political and military developments through illegal technical methods or human agents. The possession of such information by foreign nationals or unauthorized persons, would normally be a breach of the official secrets act, in the host nation. Neither diplomacy nor intelligence however deals exclusively with its own sources. The information sent by the diplomat to the Foreign Office is also forwarded to the intelligence service where it is once again collated and analyzed and counterchecked with covert sources. The reports sent back by the intelligence are utilized in the planning and modification of diplomatic strategy. The process is therefore cyclic and characterized by a consumer-producer relationship which operates in both directions. A combination of information gathered from both sources is essential for the efficient functioning of both instruments. In most cases however, the diplomat is the end-consumer of intelligence and is entrusted with the task of altering the situation as presented by the intelligence service.

A study of the routine functioning of diplomacy reveals that the relationship between intelligence and diplomacy is not limited to a consumer-producer relationship, but is more varied and intricate. Since 1450 A.D. when the first permanent diplomatic mission was established, embassies and consulates have

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4 See Appendix II, n. 10. See also n. 12. Personal interview with Yaacov Vertzberger. Jerusalem, 28.3.1982. Vertzberger is a Professor in the Department of International Relations, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
become an excellent base for espionage and clandestine operations. The system of immunities and privileges offered to diplomatic personnel, by the host nation, provides the necessary security for intelligence personnel operating under diplomatic or legal "cover". The fact that diplomats have greater access to the decision making elite in the host nation, only contributed towards strengthening the practice of espionage through diplomats. In this context, it is necessary to indicate that both Egypt and Israel have not been exceptions in the practice of diplomatic espionage or using embassies as a base for clandestine operations. Between 1966 and 1966, Egyptian diplomats mostly military attaches and in one case the entire diplomatic staff including ambassador, were expelled from four Arab nations and five African nations. The charges related less to espionage than to the undiplomatic activity of interfering in the internal political developments of the host nation. There have been fewer recorded instances of the expulsion of Israeli diplomats, but again, mostly on charges of involving themselves in clandestine operations emanating from the embassy.

It is interesting to note that for different reasons, the diplomats of both nations were more involved in clandestine

5 See Appendix III, which traces the historical development of the intelligence function in diplomacy.

operations than espionage. Egypt did not require strategic information on the Arab states since they posed no threat to Egyptian survival. The enemy was Israel. In the Arab states, Egypt provided the inspiration and support for opposition political groups. The common history, culture and language and links between political groups reduced the need for espionage. Israel did require strategic political and military information on its enemies, but here it had not diplomatic relations and hence no embassy base to operate from. Further, the Israeli intelligence apparently relied on illegal penetration, which is more difficult to discover than diplomatic espionage. According to Yaacov Caroz, on account of the immunities and privileges such as freedom from civil law or privilege of the "diplomatic bag", a false sense of comfort and security is created in the cover agent. But such personnel can be identified easily and unwittingly reveal the entire network. Illegal penetration is "deeper" and works effectively over a longer time-span and is more difficult to uncover. In fact, intelligence can survive without diplomatic cover, which is at times more dangerous. The difficulties in diplomatic espionage arise from the fact that diplomats are constantly surveilled and become a target of the enemy intelligence. If diplomats have easy access to the elite

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7 See Appendix II, n. 13. Personal interview with Yaacov Caroz. Tel Aviv, 4.4.1982. Caroz is a former intelligence officer who served as Deputy Director of the Mossad, until 1965.
of the host nation, it is largely due to the fact that they constitute the elite of their own nation and are in possession of useful political and military information on their own country. The game of information-gathering is played by both sides.

The basic reaction of all governments on discovering diplomatic espionage, within its territories, is the same. Whether the instigator responsible is an ally or enemy, the reaction is to expel the concerned diplomat under short-notice or seek his recall by his government. In declaring a diplomat "persona non grata" however, there can be variations, by giving publicity to the matter in the press, or dealing with it on an official confidential basis. The most important variable in the reaction, is the question of whether an ally or an enemy is responsible.

Even the closest allies keep secrets from each other, such as in the area of nuclear technology, and it is taken for granted that the allies would seek such information legally or illegally. Here no attempt is made to embarrass the other government, the issue is played down and the overall framework of diplomatic relations between the two governments is kept intact. The examples of the Liberty Affair and recent revelations that the Mossad collected information in the United States did temporarily strain diplomatic relations but the official policies and relations were not affected. Where similarities in the political and value system or religion,

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8 See Appendix II, n. 12, n. 13. See also n. 8. Personal interview with Amin Huweidi. Cairo, 7.2.1982. Huweidi served as the Director of the Mukhabarat from 1967-1970 and briefly as Minister of State for War in 1970.
culture and language exist, governments tend to overlook such activity. Where neutral or enemy governments are responsible, several other variables are discernible. The present state of relations and future expectations, the seriousness of the impact of such activity on the domestic polity or society and propaganda value, can determine whether the victim wants to make an "issue" of the incident. The reaction to covert operations is always quicker and stronger than in the case of routine espionage. Neutral nations, such as Switzerland, in particular tend to react more strongly towards espionage, undertaken by any government on their territories. The 'Mirage Affair' which involved an Israeli diplomat in Switzerland was termed as "the worst case of espionage" since the Second World War.

The linkages between diplomacy and intelligence at the field or embassy level are more intricate than is normally acknowledged or visible. The problems in this linkage can extend to the question of jurisdiction over clandestine operations and the area of interpersonal relations. There are no recorded indications of interpersonal difficulties in the case of either Egypt or Israel. It is however widely accepted among students of diplomacy, that career diplomats resent the intrusion of non-career diplomats in the field of practical diplomacy. Regarding jurisdiction over covert action, much however depends on the personality of the ambassador. Most ambassadors prefer to be kept ignorant of clandestine activity and thereby disclaim responsibility. Certain ambassadors however prefer to be aware of, or control all embassy activity, which can create difficulties
between intelligence personnel and the diplomats. Career diplomats who perceive intelligence potential in their sources are expected to transfer these sources to the "cover" diplomats.

In Egypt, there is at least one instance, of an intelligence officer being appointed as ambassador. Amin Huweidi relates that during the sixties he was appointed ambassador to an Arab state. The local press of the host nation however undertook a campaign against him, claiming that the Mukhabarat was preparing to create turmoil in the state. The intention was evidently to embarrass the Nasser government and the style of its diplomacy. A study of the espionage and clandestine operations undertaken by Egypt and Israel often reveal a high degree of co-operation and support offered by career-diplomats at the embassy level.

Anwar el-Sadat however, undertook serious efforts in mid 1972, to improve the image of Egyptian diplomacy abroad. Reacting to constant charges that Egyptian diplomats interfered in the domestic affairs of Arab nations, the Foreign Ministry issued instructions to its diplomatic representatives to refrain from clandestine political activity. Reports appeared later that some Egyptian embassy employees in Arab nations had been transferred because of such activity.

Career diplomats may often be seriously affected by the

9 Personal interview with Amin Huweidi, Cairo, 7.2.1982.
10 See Al-Jadid (Beirut), 23 June 1972, p.1, 28 July 1972, p. 3.
consequences of intelligence activity. As Alfred Vagts points out diplomats by nature tend to avoid complications which can strain interstate relations, but they have to be involved in negotiating the release of spies of their own nationality, held abroad. Often unnecessary travel and residence restrictions are placed to ensure that they have limited opportunity to indulge in espionage. In earlier periods of history, diplomats were restrained from returning home, so that the latest information did not reach quickly, but in modern times diplomatic relations may be broken off to ensure that no espionage can be continued from an embassy base.

Crypto-diplomacy implies the use of clandestine channels of communication for purposes of transmitting messages. This could involve the use of friendly intermediaries such as journalists or businessmen, having contact with both nations involved. A more widely established practice however is crypto-diplomacy through intelligence services, which can be of two kinds. Firstly, friendly nations maintain intelligence liaison. Officially accredited intelligence representatives are maintained in each other's capital. If this form of liaison is not possible, the respective intelligence services may maintain informal but officially approved links or contacts in either of the countries or in a third nation.


12 See Appendix II, n. 8.
Crypto-diplomacy has a very important role to play in interstate relations. Between friendly nations there are certain aspects of strategic co-operation that require the discreet services of intelligence. Intelligence co-operation or liaison may involve the exchange of strategic information gathered by one state, but of vital interest to another nation. Liaison can spread to the areas of joint operations, secret training of military or intelligence personnel, clandestine transfer of arms or equipment, apart from the mutual sharing of information. The normal channel of communication between the political leadership of two nations, is the Foreign Office and diplomatic structure. On certain occasions however, the leadership may decide to bypass the Foreign Ministry channels. The fact that the content of sensitive diplomatic messages sent through the Foreign Office would become widely known to too many bureaucrats and possibly the press, provides the necessary motivation. Messages communicated through intelligence channels are more secure, quicker and have limited circulation.

In the case of both Egypt and Israel, situations had arisen when the governments found it necessary to use intelligence channels, bypassing the Foreign Office. In the case of Egypt during the early seventies, negotiations with the Americans were carried out through two separate channels, the diplomatic structure and the intelligence. By mid 1973, Anwar el-Sadat had

13 See Appendix II, n. 9.
become disgusted with the poor mediation efforts of the American State Department. Henry Kissinger, the National Security Adviser to President Richard Nixon, felt greater need to maintain secrecy about his negotiating positions; a demand the State Department was unable to fulfil. Intelligence channels thus became important in Egypt–United States communications and in fact, were extensively used during the 1972 war. However as Mohamed Heikal points out, the use of two separate channels of communication during negotiations, can be confusing and misleading especially if the messages are not reconciliable. The need for a clandestine channel arises only because nations may not be willing to publicly make concessions, apply pressure or change the official policy position. Diplomatic channels, especially in democratic countries, may not provide the necessary flexibility and leeway, in sensitive negotiations. In the case of Israel also, diplomatic channels were bypassed during Prime Minister Golda Meir's tenure and clandestine channels were used to ensure secrecy, security and quick delivery of messages.

Crypto-diplomacy acquires special significance in a situation where no diplomatic channels exist or such channels have been paralysed. In a situation characterized by conflict, the belligerents need to keep open at least one channel of com-

14 Ibid.
16 See Appendix II, n. 9.
munication to send out "peace feelers" or negotiate conflict-moderation. A total paralysis of all channels of communication can only result in the escalation of conflict. Israel offers an interesting example, since it is unable to maintain diplomatic relations with most African and Asian nations. Following the 1973 war, twenty-two African nations broke off diplomatic relations with Israel, as they were under tremendous political pressure from the Arab states to isolate Israel. Many of these nations however were interested in continuing trade and technical or military co-operation with Israel. Clandestine business and intelligence links or contacts thus became the most important channels of communication. As outlined elsewhere, the intelligence services of Egypt and Israel had established contacts in Vienna and Morocco, during the late sixties. It was the intelligence services which laid the groundwork during July 1977 in Morocco for the clandestine meeting of the official representatives from Egypt and Israel. These meetings eventually led to Sadat's peace mission and visit to Jerusalem in November 1977.

Diplomacy is not restricted however, to negotiations. Diplomacy is the primary instrument through which a state imple-

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17 See Appendix II, nos. 11, 12, 13. See also n. 14. Confirmed also in Personal interview with Shlomo Gazit, Beersheba, 6.4.82. Gazit, current the President of Ben Gurion University, served as Director of Military Intelligence from 1974 to 1979.


19 See Appendix II, nos. 11-14.
ments its foreign policy. The dimensions of modern diplomacy have come to include areas such as cultural diplomacy, propaganda, transfer of arms or technology and foreign economic aid. Many of these aspects such as propaganda or economic aid were earlier considered as distinct and separate instruments, but their close linkage with the process of diplomacy has considerably blurred these distinctions. To students of diplomacy, however, the process of diplomacy begins with foreign policy decision-making. To broaden the scope of this study therefore, it is necessary to begin with a review of the theory of foreign policy decision-making and then proceed to the implementation of foreign policy, using Egypt and Israel as the case studies.

Theoretically, the task of foreign policy decision-making is restricted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the concerned political leadership. The head of the state and the Foreign Minister provide the necessary policy direction, guidance and co-ordination while the diplomatic missions abroad provide the basic data on which, decisions are to be taken. In reality, the process is neither simple nor restricted to the political leadership and Foreign Ministry. There are a wide range of variables and forces operating on the process and effecting the outcome of the process. The inputs range from the press and public opinion to intelligence while the variables determining the nature of the foreign policy cover such areas as threat perceptions of the elite, personality of the decision-makers and nature of political system. Of special concern to this study however, is the impact or role of intelligence in foreign policy
decision-making and implementation. It is important to remember that intelligence is only one of the important inputs in the decision-making process and only one of the instruments available to a state in the implementation of its policies.

By definition, intelligence must have an impact on the decision-making process. Intelligence provides the information which has been collected from both overt and covert sources, collated, researched and analysed. Information is the absolute requisite for the decision-maker who intends to take the most rational and correct decision. Given the complexity of the decision-making process however, it is indeed difficult to trace the impact of intelligence in a particular decision, unless it is acknowledged by the decision-maker. The end product or the decision appears to be unrevealingly neutral, or a combination of several forces. Yet, to the discerning scholar, there are several indices in the structure and functioning of a political system, which directly or indirectly indicate and reveal the impact and role of intelligence in decision-making.

In both Egypt and Israel, the intelligence services have been a source of elite recruitment. In Egypt, as early as 1952, the leading members of the successful Free Officers Revolution showed a distinct inclination and preference to join the intelligence and security organisations, as a career. Many of these officers later moved on to become cabinet members, ambassadors, party organisers and acted as close confidant and advisers to President Nasser. During the Nasser period in fact,
the key people in the pyramid of power had been at some time or other, closely connected with the administration of the security and intelligence services. According to Yaacov Caroz, the movement of intelligence personnel continued during the Sadat period since a former Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs were selected from an intelligence background. In Israel also, to a lesser extent, intelligence personnel moved into the decision-making process. One Director of Intelligence was briefly appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs while two others became members of the Knesset and its Committee on Foreign Affairs. The mobility of intelligence personnel into higher decision-making circles, in itself does not imply a greater role for intelligence. What is to be kept in mind, is that intelligence personnel have a tendency to carry their "clandestine mentality" into the decision-making process and thereby increase the "intelligence awareness", a factor which might otherwise have been overlooked or considered unimportant.

The legitimacy of the role given to intelligence services in decision-making, is reflected in the fact, that the Directors of Intelligence are members of important national committees deal-

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20 See Appendix II, no. 5. Personal interview with Dr Ali el-din Hillal. Cairo. 31.1.82. Dr Hillal is a senior Research Associate at the Centre for Strategic Studies, Al-Ahram, and one of the leading political analysts in Egypt.

21 See Appendix II, no. 13.
ing with defence and foreign policy issues. Even if the participation in these committee meetings does not extend to discussion or voting rights but a mere presentation of data; the manner in which the data is presented, can influence the final decision. Implied nuances, omission or addition of data and the strength or weakness of "colateral" data to support an argument, can alter the perceptions of the decision-maker. In military planning and strategy, military intelligence has a direct and crucial bearing, since most of the issues dealt with, relate to information collected from clandestine sources. Even the implementation of military policy requires the greatest secrecy possible.

As recounted in an earlier chapter, some of the most important committees during the Nasser period were staffed with intelligence personnel. The interim committee which handled both internal and external affairs during the President's absence, included the Director of the Mukhabarat; a pattern that was repeated in the first crucial meeting immediately after the death of Nasser in September 1970. Mohamed Heikal in fact points out that at the latter meeting the Director of Intelligence participated in discussions and supported the group refusing to reconsider the Roger's proposals. Amin Huweidi, the concerned Director of Intelligence, admits that during the three years he served President Nasser, he reported directly to the President and maintained

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22 See Appendix II, no. 9.

23 Heikal, n. 15, pp. 73-74, pp. 122-25.
a close advisory relationship with him. President Sadat apparently did not trust his Director of Intelligence in 1971, Ahmed Kamel, as they met only once to discuss relations with Syria. What is more important however is the fact that the Director of Intelligence was a member of the National Defence Council, which is a large political body which deliberates on internal and external issues affecting the security of Egypt. Initially, the Director was a member of the Executive Committee of the NDC, but in 1974, the participation of the Director in the crucial Ministerial Committee of the NDC was arranged.

There are two instances during the Nasser period which reveal a more direct influence of the intelligence services. The first was Nasser's suspicions regarding the al-Fatah group of Palestinians and his refusal to have any contact with them until 1966. Heikal indicates that this was due to the Egyptian intelligence reports which identified the al-Fatah as a terrorist group, closely associated with the fanatical Muslim Brotherhood which had troubled Nasser for many years. In May 1967, Nasser became convinced of the Israeli threat, to Syria, following Egyptian intelligence reports that Israel had concentrated

24 Appendix II, n. 8.


26 This was in accordance with Decree No. 248 issued by the Prime Minister. See Al Waraka Al-Masriya (Cairo), 26 October 1974.

troops on Syria's northern frontier. This information was verified by further Russian intelligence investigations and Nasser decided to move Egyptian troops into the Sinai and strengthen military co-operation and co-ordination with Syria, which resulted in the Six Day War of 1967.

A more direct and crucial role in decision-making can be perceived in the case of Israeli intelligence. The official document declaring war on Egypt and Syria in May 1967, acknowledges intelligence as one of the important inputs in the final decision to undertake a pre-emptive strike. On two different occasions, the Directors of Intelligence were sent abroad to assess possible foreign support and reactions to Israel's policies. Abba Eban, the former Foreign Minister admits that intelligence reports substantially altered his perceptions before the 1967 war. Similarly the former Prime Minister Golda Meir admits that most Cabinet meetings, during the 1973 crisis period before war broke out, started with the review and discussion of intelligence reports. She further claims that these reports were responsible for the government's complacency, and unpreparedness for the war that eventually broke out. The expanded Cabinet meetings during Israel's periods of crisis, have included the Directors of Mossad


and Aman. During normal times, the Directors of Intelligence are given direct access to the Prime Minister. Yehoshafat Harkabi, a former DMI, points out that it is a normal practice in Israel for the Prime Minister to invite the Directors of Intelligence to Cabinet meetings when important policy decisions are being made. It is at the second stage when the effect of a particular policy on other nations is reviewed that intelligence is most useful, but is rarely used in practice. The revision of policy requires intelligence information in many cases.

It is necessary at this stage, to point out that certain difficulties can arise in decision-making, in a situation where the military intelligence, foreign political intelligence and counter-intelligence agencies compete with each other. As Ali el-din Hillal points out, in Egypt, intelligence implied two distinct organisations and sources. On most occasions, the Mukhabarat and the Military Intelligence competed with each other and produced widely differing estimates and analysis, as in the case of evaluating Israel's capability and intentions before the 1967 war. In the case of Israel, the Mossad remained an information gathering agency in spite of the fact that the Director was the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee and had direct access to the Prime Minister. Analysis and

31 See Appendix II, n. 11.
32 Appendix II, n. 5.
estimates was restricted to the Aman. Until 1963, the relations 
between Mossad and Aman had been characterized by competition 
and personal rivalries. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities 
in 1973, the Mossad believed that Egypt and Syria were plan-
ning to attack Israel, but the Director could not convince the 
political leadership or military intelligence, since analysis 
and estimates were the responsibility of the Aman. Following 
the recommendations of the Shimon Agranat Commission however 
in 1974, an Intelligence Adviser to the Prime Minister was 
appointed and the process of analysis and estimates, streng-
thened in the Mossad and the Foreign Office. This was to en-
sure that monopoly of analysis and estimates did not have an 
adverse effect on decision-making. The case of Egypt reveals 
the dangers of competition in estimates and that of Israel, 
reveals the dangers of monopoly in estimates.

The three most crucial determinants of the role of 
intelligence in decision-making however are the nature of the 
political system, the personality of the decision-maker and the 
nature of environment in which a state operates. A state which 
is autocratic in nature and does not have the support of the 

33 See Stewart Steven, *The Spymasters of Israel* 
(New York: Ballantine Espionage/Intelligence Library, 

34 See Roy Godson, ed., *Intelligence Requirements for 
the 1980's: Analysis and Estimates vol. II: Consortium 
for the Study of Intelligence* (New York: National 
people will tend to rely on the intelligence service as a repressive instrument. If a system is democratic the intelligence service is more controlled and cautious in both its internal and external activity. A legitimate government having the support of the people will try to ensure that the intelligence service does not go beyond its legitimate duties. Egypt is an example of a centralized and autocratic system during the Nasser period. The atmosphere of repression, intrigue and factional infighting enabled the Egyptian intelligence to become a power lobby in itself and provided the scope for interference in internal affairs of the state. Though the army was Nasser's primary power base, it was still necessary to utilize the intelligence, increase its powers and functions so as to check counter-revolutionary plots. Nasser had too many enemies even within Egypt. In the case of Israel however, the Government in power, has had a greater measure of control of intelligence activity. A few Directors of Intelligence were removed, in fact, for crossing the boundary of legitimate duty.

The personality of the Chief Executive or political leader, is an equally important factor in the eventual relationship between intelligence and decision-making. A strong-willed popular political leader is more likely to make his own decisions, while a leader who is inexperienced and unsure of his or her policies is more likely to rely on intelligence to guide policy formulation. In the case of Egypt, both Presidents Nasser and Sadat were leaders of firm opinions and ideas. In the ultimate analysis Nasser made his own decisions, especially
on sensitive and emotional issues such as relations with the Arab World. Even in the case of Israel most of the leaders such as Ben Gurion and Golda Meir decided foreign policy issues, but they were more open to the influence of intelligence, due to the peculiar environment in which Israel operates.

It is accepted by most students of Egyptian polity, that Nasser used to play off most of his confidants and advisers or colleagues against each other, to check their influence, control or formation of cliques and factions. Undoubtedly, the army was the first base of Nasser's power but by 1954, he had created alternative bases through the intelligence services and secret "Vanguard Movement" in the ASU. Thus the Mukhabarat was pitted against the army and the secret vanguard directed by the office of the President, against the ASU. It is in pitting the various personalities and institutions against each other that Nasser might have made a great mistake. The Mukhabarat improved in personnel, power and efficiency to the extent that it became one of the "centres of power" and came to wield greater influence over the decision-making process.

This, according to some Egyptians was due to Nasser's personality itself. Hussein Dhul Fiqar Sabri, Director General of the Foreign Affairs Ministry under Nasser, and brother of Ali Sabri says: "Abdel Nasser was secretive by nature and temperament, therefore, he governed by secret means and institutions." After his fantastic success over the Suez in 1956, he increased his dependence on covert political arrangements, using its multifarious apparatuses, but never himself
directly. This was the reason why he came to rely more heavily on "trustees". Ahmed Hussein suggests that the Mukhabarat which worked under Nasser’s approval, continuously suggested conspiracies to gain favour and influence with the President.

Some of the information that emerged in the Sham Badran (Minister of War) and Salah Nasr (Director of Intelligence) trials in 1968, especially on the role of intelligence in decision-making, can be discounted as part of the search for a political scapegoat for the defeat in the July 1967 war. What is more difficult to judge is the extent to which the Amer faction in the Army and Intelligence were able or willing to act independently or to put pressure on him, or how far they were Nasser’s chosen instruments of power, whose mistakes or shortcomings in military matters or whose increasing economic and social privileges, he condoned in order to ensure their loyalty. Certainly, despite his popular support and political efforts, Nasser continued to rely, in a crisis on the last resort: the state security services which were the army police and intelligence, through the loyal free officers, who controlled the key posts of the administration.

There are three possibilities, but Nasser cannot escape the responsibility for the state of the armed forces or the operations of the intelligence services. Either he knew what was going on and willed it, or he turned a blind eye to it since it was not

35 Hussein Dul Fiqar Sabri, in Rose Al-Youssef (Cairo), no. 2459, 18 July 1975. See also Ahmed Hussein, Kayfa ‘araftu Abdel Naguir was ‘ishtu ayyama k hukniih, (Beirut, 1973), pp. 81-82.
effective enough to prevent it, or he did not know, what he should have known. The military intelligence services were active outside Egypt, promoting and supporting Arab revolutionary movements. But from 1962 onwards there were episodes in the Yemen Civil War, the nationalist rebellion in Aden and Saudi Arabia, in which it seemed that the Egyptian intelligence services were taking initiative on their own and sometimes that Nasser was being compelled to adapt his policy to the pressures of the Amer faction.

The best index of the influence, power and impact of intelligence agencies on policy, are the speeches of President Nasser himself. In response to the growing political and economic problems, Nasser undertook a major reshuffle in the government in March 1968. On this occasion Nasser claimed that the power of the intelligence service had declined and that he considered its fall as "one of the most important negative aspects, which we dispensed with in our bid to purge public life in Egypt." In the famous 30 March speech to the nation, he spoke in broader terms. "We have been able to liquidate the "centres of power" which appeared after the revolution. It was natural and human that such centres should appear in the various stages of our struggle.... Matters after the setback went beyond what was acceptable. The "centres of power" opposed the rectification opera-

36 See reports of the 'Shams Badran and Salah Nasr trials, in the newspapers al-Nahar and al-Arwar (Beirut), 1968. See also Stephens, n. 1, pp. 331, 361-2.
tion lest their influence should be lost and their hidden acts exposed. The liquidation of these centres became a duty. This was not easy because of the positions occupied by the "centres of power" and the delicate circumstances through which the homeland was passing."

Nasser's expectations regarding the power and the influence of the intelligence services was belied, as later events proved. The Mukhabarat in 1968 acquired greater influence as the new leadership, with its roots and clientage in intelligence, closed ranks and formed a clique among themselves. In the words of Mohammed Hassanein Heikal, editor of al-Ahram and a close confidant of President Nasser (who later became Minister of Information and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs briefly in 1970):

"after the 1967 defeat, the positive achievements of Nasser's regime came to an end, because all resources were geared to the coming war, while repression became more obvious. When Nasser died, the exeucants of repression took it on themselves to be ideologues of the new regime as well; underestimating the strength of legality in Egypt."

The Ali Sabri, Sami Sharaf and Sharawy Gomaa faction was bound together by family links and their mutual


38. Mohammed Hassanein Heikal, The Road to Ramadan (London: Collins, 1975), p. 136. See also the reports of Heikal, acknowledged as the unofficial spokesman of Nasser in al-Ahram (Cairo), 13-15, 17 October 1968, and the campaign to curb the activities of the Mukhabarat. See also the (footnote contd.)
antipathy towards Anwar el-Sadat. Each of the three had extensive clientage networks within the structure over which they had formal authority.

The nature of environment in which a state functions is probably the most important determinant in the role of intelligence. The threat perceptions of the political elite are created primarily by the external environment. No doubt, the psychology of the leader, stability of the system and historical experience effect the views of political elites, but the environment, at any given point of time can change, alter and modify threat perceptions. The case of Israel provides the best example since the threat it faces from the Arab world is genuine and proved in four costly wars. Intelligence therefore becomes an offensive and defensive weapon. The need to continually keep guard, to be militarily prepared and one step ahead of the enemy, requires the greatest efforts on the part of intelligence and full governmental support for its role.

Even in the case of Egypt, during the early years of the Revolution, Nasser continually felt threatened by the Arab monarchies, CIA plots and extremist activity within Egypt.

(Previous footnote contd.)


39 For further details and views of various scholars on this subject, see Appendix II, n. 1, 4, 12 and 14.
The interaction between intelligence services and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however requires a more detailed study. As mentioned earlier, the relationship is characterized by both co-operation and conflict. The consumer-producer relationship provides the area of co-operation and ultimately the Foreign Ministry or diplomat is the end-consumer of intelligence. However the competition in the arena of influence over decision-making in foreign policy and jurisdiction over covert action, provide the area of friction and conflict. It is the task of the political leadership to co-ordinate these two instruments, but very often the leadership may fail in this duty, and adversely affect the overall implementation of foreign policy.

In the examples of both Egypt and Israel, it is interesting to note that for different reasons, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been relegated into the background, both in decision making and implementation, on many occasions. In the case of Egypt, Nasser formulated the basic principles of foreign policy and allowed the intelligence services into implementation in certain areas as he did not trust the diplomats. In the case of Israel, the threat perceptions have led to a greater reliance on intelligence, while its military preoccupation has relegated the Foreign Affairs Ministry and even reduced the role of the instrument of diplomacy.

Before proceeding further it is necessary to briefly deal with Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt. The Foreign

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40 See Appendix II, n. 12. Personal interview with Yaacov Vertzberger.
Ministry under Nasser was primarily involved in diplomatic transactions and the day-to-day implementation of decisions reached by the President. This is not to suggest that a Foreign Minister of Mahmoud Fawzi's stature failed to exert influence on Nasser. On the contrary, the President valued the opinions of his Foreign Minister considerably and always took heed of his advice, especially on matters relating to United Nations and extra-regional affairs. In inter-Arab affairs, however, the Ministry was relegated to a secondary role. For example, during his years of office, Hussein Dhul Fiqar Sabri, the Deputy Foreign Minister visited only one Arab capital, Damascus. One important point which contributed to the structural weakness of the Ministry was Nasser's preference for gathering information about the Arab world, from sources outside the Ministry. This in itself undermined the fundamental rationale for the existence of the Ministry, namely, its function as an organ of study and research for disseminating and analyzing incoming information. Nasser however preferred to gather information on the Arab world from the international press, particularly the Lebanese newspapers and he relied on advice from a loosely knitted "task force" consisting primarily of some original Free Officers. Thus Sadat was apparently in charge of the Arabian peninsula and Kamal Rifaat in charge of Syria and the Lebanon. Moreover, Field Marshal Amer frequently interfered in the appointment not only of military attaches but also of ambassadors, overriding in the process, the frequent objections
of the Foreign Minister.

The major structural weakness of the Foreign Ministry therefore, relates to the multiplicity of organs and institutions that dealt with matters relating to the external environment - matters that should have been the sole responsibility of the Foreign Ministry. These organs competed with the Ministry in executing its functions and as a result the Ministry's power, prestige and influence were severely restricted.

It is necessary here to deal with the Foreign Ministry of Israel. Ben Guiron did not conceal his disdain for the ritual and formal aspects of diplomacy. Nor did he have great respect for the officials of the Foreign Ministry, with a few exceptions. Their expertise was used to the minimum necessary for his knowledge about an important policy issue. As many remarked, Ben Guiron rarely sought advice. To the extent that he did so, it came from a "kitchen cabinet" on defence policy. This comprised a few cabinet colleagues, varying over time, Mapai's defence specialists, a few senior civil servants from the defence ministry, Tzahal's Chief of Staff, the Director of Intelligence, the Head of the Shin Beth and few other officers.


According to Amos Perlmutter:

Among those around Ben Guron were Shaul Avigur, the former Head of the Haganah, Isser Harel, the chief of intelligence and espionage - Ha Mossad, and other ad hoc security experts. The group advised not only on the question of military strategy and doctrine but on foreign policy issues as well. This ad hoc cabinet which included Dayan and Peres, was vested with responsibility for making major decisions concerning Israel's security and the army's future. The cabinet ministers were expected to approve and defend these policies at home and abroad.43

As noted earlier, the foreign minister Golda Meir often resented the foreign policy initiatives or issues affecting foreign policy, that were taken up by Ben Guron and Shimon Peres without her knowledge. Yet when she became Prime Minister the policy did not change. Quite often because of the threat perceptions, and the nature of security considerations necessary for the survival of Israel, the Foreign Minister is the last person to know of many developments. It is understandable that when a nation lives in a hostile atmosphere, the advice of the Defence Ministry and intelligence services are bound to have greater impact on decision-making than the Foreign Minister, even in foreign policy matters. Michael Brecher in his analysis of the foreign policy system of Israel says:

Foreign service cables are not the crucial source about the external world for Israel's high policy elite. For most, Ben Guron, Golda Meir, Levi Eshkol and Moshe Dayan, the reports and briefings by the intelligence services, notably Aman and Ha-Mossad, are more authoritative. Their assessments are available to a few, cabinet ministers and

Director General. And the unanimous view of recipients is that these are more decisive in arriving at high policy decisions. (44)

It is interesting to note that a wider distribution of cables among Israeli public figures, arose because of a prevalent appetite for the prestige associated with "secret matters of state." Indeed over the years, Foreign Ministry officials have become cynically convinced that if their cables are not dispatched "secret," they are not taken seriously. The high value placed on access to code cables has more to do with this prestige, than with the actual content. Earlier it was an established practice to use "open" cables for transmitting reviews of the foreign press and radio including editorials and feature articles. One further reason for the unequal access of coded cables is noteworthy: both the Foreign Office and the Mossad have their own code. On many occasions, Ben Guiron and others used the Mossad facilities when they wished to avoid diffusion of certain kinds of information to the officials of the Foreign service and their colleagues. Michael Brecher further points out in his analysis that Israel's decision-makers derive their day-to-day perceptions of the contemporary world through four basic channels. The bulletins of Kol Yisrael in Hebrew, the Hebrew Press, cables and reports of the envoys around the world and reports often in the form of oral briefings from Israel's intelligence services. He classifies the Directors of Central and Military

Intelligence as part of the "Parallel-Technical Service elite", or in other words, Directors of agencies that do not belong to the Foreign Service, but yet have an impact on the foreign policy decision-making process.

The choice of the method for foreign policy implementation will be determined by the pursued objective and the existence or non-existence of capabilities. Obviously some instruments tend to be better suited to the implementation of certain objectives than others. Thus depending on its capabilities at any given time, a state pursuing expansionary goals and revolutionary objectives will usually resort to such methods of implementation as propaganda, clandestine activities and/or the threat and use of force. On the other hand, a state pursuing status quo objectives will normally utilize the method of diplomatic interaction as its primary instrument of foreign policy. In this there exists a continuous process of interaction between capabilities, values, objectives and instruments.

The decade 1957 to 1967 marks the aggressive period of Egyptian foreign policy. In an effort to assume leadership in the Arab world and to spread the revolution in states ruled by monarchies, Egypt resorted to clandestine activities, the instrument being the Mukhabarat. Clandestine activities can be defined as the unauthorized political and/or quasi-military penetration

46 Dawisha, n. 41, p. 200.
by one government into the affairs of foreign societies in order to achieve political objectives. The primary and most widely used clandestine activity is subversion. Subversion can be defined as "a rebellious activity inside a country which is organized, supported and/or directed by a foreign power using for its own purposes the disaffected members of society."

Obviously, analysts find it difficult to ascertain, with any degree of certainty or objectivity, the utility of this instrument to the achievement of a state's foreign policy. Very occasionally, if at all, do governments admit to specific acts of subversion in foreign countries. Consequently the alleged utilization of this instrument by a government usually emanates from the "target" country in the form of "accusations". However, due to the nature of the instrument, such accusations are rarely satisfactorily substantiated or documented. This problem is relevant to this particular study, since all available data on Egypt's use of subversion and other clandestine activities come from rival Arab nations. Nevertheless there is enough evidence to suggest that clandestine activity constituted an important, if not a major instrument of Egyptian foreign policy. 47

During the decade 1956-1966, Egyptian attaches were expelled from Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Sudan, (in this case together with the ambassador and rest of embassy staff), Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Syria (before the union with Egypt). In fact Nasser wanted to fly arms to the Congo during the 1960 crisis to help the break-away pro-Russian government of Antoine

47 Ibid., pp. 177-8.
Gizenga, but Sudan denied overflight rights. Cairo was made headquarters of the Arab Revolution and propaganda warfare carried out through "Voice of Arabs": radio Cairo. The city became the base for rebel undergrounds and liberation movements that were often in competition with one another. Some of their leaders were public men and others kept a low profile, but most went to Cairo for arms, money and asylum. If as it happened occasionally, they were not the leaders wanted at that time, they were placed under house arrest and kept out of circulation. The military intelligence was responsible for organization, financing, training and directing these groups. According to Wilfred Burdett, "Nassir's ends were beyond his means, he had all the weapons with which to achieve or impose Arab unity, except the obvious indispensable one of military force."

Although the Egyptian authorities usually reacted with extreme indignation to any suggestion relating to the alleged participation of UAR in clandestine activities, there is enough evidence to suggest that this instrument was frequently resorted to by the UAR authorities to achieve their foreign policy objectives. Within this context, subversion and other clandestine activities seem to have been particularly effective in situations of intensive intrastate as well as interstate conflict. Consequently this instrument was specifically directed at states undergoing domestic turmoil and upheaval. On the other hand, the

relatively minimal utility of this instrument to the Egyptian leadership in their struggle against Tunisia and Saudi Arabia, suggests that they correctly perceived the low level domestic conflict existing within these two countries.

It was only after Anwar el-Sadat came to power in 1970-71, that the fundamentals of Egyptian foreign policy changed. After the first uncertain year, Sadat gradually adopted "Egyptian patriotism" as the major value of Egypt's foreign policy. Consequently he began to pursue the objective of "Arab solidarity" which emphasized the continuation of the status quo in inter-Arab relations. As such, the Sadat period which had coincided with the general deradicalisation of inter-Arab politics, until the late seventies, witnessed the primacy of diplomatic interaction over the other instruments of foreign policy.

The utilization of covert action by any nation however depends on its capability, willingness and historical experience. Unless a nation has the capacity to influence events in other nations, clandestine efforts to do so, would result in disaster. Very often however the compulsion to use this instrument increases with capability. Certain nations have a flair for clandestine activity which most arises from past experience. As Professor David Vital points out, the Egyptian counterintelligence and activity in the Arab world were quite effective

49 Dawisha, n. 41, p. 179. See also Appendix II, n. 13.
50 Ibid., p. 200.
because of Egypt's past experience as a colony of Britain. The willingness to use this instrument depends on past familiarity with its usage. In the case of Israel however, it must be noted that its covert operations were directed only towards the gathering of intelligence and improvement of military strength and preparedness of the Tzahal. It did not have the capability to influence internal events in the Arab world, unlike Egypt which had a common culture, language and religion and therefore access to the Arab masses.

51 See Appendix III, n. 10. Personal interview with David Vital, Jerusalem. 17. 3. 82.