CHAPTER IV

PEACE PROCESS
President Reagan put forth a major initiative as peace plan in the Middle East on September 1, 1982. In a televised speech at Burbank, California, he suggested the Palestinians, a self-government of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, "in association with Jordan". The US government made strenuous efforts to continue the Camp David peace process. It tried to find a permanent solution that would ensure peace in the Middle East. Menachem Begin, the Israeli Prime Minister, said that - "it was inconsistent with the Camp David formula for limited Palestinian autonomy and was not acceptable".

President Reagan outlined some of the following points:

1. Autonomy for the Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza. Autonomy to be preceded by a five year transition period, the purpose of which "was to prove that the Palestinians could run their own affairs and that such Palestinian autonomy posed no threat to Israel's security".

2. "The US would not support the use of any additional land for the purpose of settlements during the transition period". Immediate settlement freeze by Israel was needed to create confidence of the Arabs.

3. No independent Palestinian state should be created. But peace was not "achievable on the basis of the Israeli sovereignty or permanent control over the West Bank and Gaza".


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1 Address by President Reagan Burbank, California, September 1, 1982", in US, Department of State, American Foreign Policy: Current Documents 1982 (Washington D.C.: Department of State, 1985), p.753.

5. The Arab-Israeli conflict should be resolved on the basis of UN Resolution 242 according to the principle of "exchange of territory for peace".

6. It was the US position that ... the Resolution 242 applied to all fronts, including the West Bank and Gaza.

7. Jerusalem must remain undivided, but its final status should be decided through negotiations.³ (See Appendix II)

In the concluding part of the plan the President stated "that the US will oppose any proposal that threatens the security of Israel. America’s commitment to the security of Israel is ironclad. And I might add, so is mine".⁴

The most important aspect of Reagan’s Middle East peace proposal was the reassertion of his active American role in the peace process. The US gave up its role of mediator and became an advocate for shaping the future peace plan. The Reagan plan followed the guidelines of the U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 which approved unanimously the US interpretation of the "autonomy provisions" of the Camp David peace in the Middle East, which was signed in 1978 by Egypt, and Israel with US as the mediator. Reagan called for full autonomy, "giving the Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank real authority for the land and its resources".⁵ In

⁴ Ibid., pp.264-265.
accordance with the Camp David agreements, a five year transition period would begin after the free elections for a Palestinian self-governing authority. "The transition would prove to the Palestinians that they can run their own affairs, and that such Palestinian authority posed no threat to Israel's security".  

The Reagan plan made clear that the US expected the Palestinian inhabitants of East Jerusalem to participate in the elections for the self-governing authority. The US opposed the future Israeli settlement in the West Bank and Gaza and opposed Swe assertion of sovereignty there by either Israel or by an independent Palestinian state. The occupied territories at the end of the five-year transition period would be self-government by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan. Jerusalem would remain an undivided city but its status would be decided by negotiations. Reagan's peace plan was intended to answer fully the requirements of Israel's security and the aspirations of the Palestinians; moreover, the United States hoped to make it a package that would attract the participation of the Palestinians and Jordan.

Its Development

The war in Lebanon had a major effect on President Reagan's perceptions of the problems in the Middle East. The

6 Ibid.
one obvious lesson of the war was that there could never be permanent peace - or true security for Israel - as long as the Palestinian problem remained unsolved. Reagan expressed pride that a successful evacuation of the PLO from Beirut was accomplished due to the mediation of the US.

He complemented Premier Begin and President Mubarak for their courage in arranging a successful completion of Israel's withdrawal from Sinai on April 25, 1982 and declared that "the Camp David agreement remains the foundation of our policy". The question was how to reconcile Israel's legitimate security concerns with the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.7

The new Secretary of State George Shultz also addressed the underlying Arab-Israeli dispute, especially the Palestinian issue: "In his general principles, he stated that -

first, that the United States would maintain its commitment to Camp David; second, we will maintain our commitment to the conditions we require for recognition of negotiations with the PLO and third, we can offer guarantees of the position we will adopt in negotiations. We will not be able, however, to guarantee in advance the results of these negotiations.8

Israel's Response

Israel rejected the Reagan plan. First, the appraisal of the Reagan plan was Menachem Begin government. The Israeli cabinet voted unanimously to reject it as a basis for

7 George Lenczowski, n.3, p.264.
negotiation, asserting that the American proposal would lead to a Palestinian state and "create a serious danger" to Israel's security. The Begin government followed up its rejection by voting the new Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. However, Shimon Peres, leader of the opposition Labour Party expressed his clear interest in Reagan's proposals. "Begin informed all Israel is not Chile, and I am not Allende". 9

In the American Jewish community, reaction to the plan from several groups was cautiously approving. The American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), B'hai B'rith, the American Jewish Congress - all noted aspects of the plan which they regarded as favourable, opening a divide between the Begin government and some of Israel's most loyal backers in the American body politics.

The Israeli cabinet endorsed a statement that the US plan was inconsistent with the Camp David accords and a threat to Israel's security. The cabinet objected to the provision regarding several aspects as listed below:

a. Participation of East Jerusalem Arabs in elections,

b. Palestinian responsibility for internal security

c. No freeze on settlements

d. Full autonomy

9 Quoted in, Marlow Reedleman, n.5, p.82.
e. economic, commercial and cultural ties between the West Bank, Gaza and Jordan,

f. Israeli sovereignty

g. Establishment of a Palestinian entity in association with Jordan would lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state which could conclude a pact with Soviet Union and arms of modern weaponry.¹⁰

The Cabinet thus concluded:

"Since the positions of the Government of the US seriously deviate from the Camp David agreement, contradict it and could create a serious danger to Israel, its security and its future, the Government of Israel has resolved that on the basis of these positions it will not enter into any negotiations with any party".¹¹

Congressional Reaction

Various reactions were observed from the Congress. Former Secretary of State Alexander Haig commented to a meeting of the United Jewish Appeal in New York.

The call for a settlement freeze, was a "very serious mistake". Furthermore, the future of the West Bank was "a thing for the local nations to decide, not the U.S. to dictate"... when we are true to Israel we are true to ourselves. The peace process will only move downward if there is a spirit of cooperation between Israel and the US."¹²


¹¹ Ibid.

Republican Benjamin S. Rosenthal, a Foreign Affairs member and a strong supporter of Israel, complained that, Reagan was "violating some of the Camp David agreement and just stepping out a little too far before Israel had withdrawn from Lebanon". But Republican Paul Findley, a prominent critic of Israel said in a statement that Reagan "left his role as a mediator and became a leader". He said the right things and suggested a good beginning for peace negotiations. Findley remarked: The President's proposals are an excellent beginning to what can be a lasting settlement to the Middle East question. And Senate Republicans John W. Warner, Va., and Richard G. Lugar, Ind., both praised Reagan's "courageous" move.

The Arab League Reaction

The Arab world did not reject the Reagan plan outright. In the upcoming Arab Summit meeting that was held at Fez, Morocco, Clovis Maksoud, the Arab League's delegate to the United States approved strongly Reagan's new attention to the Palestinian problem and acknowledgment of the Palestinian's legitimate rights, as well as the apparent separation of the American aims from those of Israel. He expressed two reasons for the Arabs. First, its inadequate treatment of the

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13 Ibid.

Palestinian self-determination and its position to a Palestinian state, and second, the absence of any reference to a role for the PLO. He urged direct US contacts with the PLO, and warned that in order to have a positive Arab response, the US would have to recognize that the Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem wanted the PLO to represent them and negotiate on their behalf. Finally, he advised that "the Arabs also wanted a comprehensive peace, but that success would depend largely on the firmness with which the US dealt with Israeli intransigence".15

The Palestinian Mayor of Bethlehem, Elias Freij, wrote a letter to President Reagan on 5 September expressing his support for the plan and desire for peace. King Hussein of Jordan called the plan "the most courageous stand taken by an American administration ever since 1956, very constructive and a very positive move which he wanted to see continue and evolve".16 Jordan’s King Hussein initially gave cautious support to the plan and opened talks with Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). But Hussein failed to secure permission from the PLO to negotiate on behalf of the West Bank Palestinians, and by April 1983 he had backed out from any further involvement.

Elsewhere, Riyadh Radio reported to have called the plan a "break through". Egypt’s President Hosni Mubarak termed it

15 Clovis Maksoud, New York Times, 3 September 1982
"positive and constructive". However, a Syrian newspaper editorial said that the plan did not respond to the Arab interests and would not achieve a just and lasting peace.

The Reagan peace plan was highly important, both for its content and for its significance as a renewed commitment of the US to find a solution to the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Reagan emphasized that the Camp David agreement would remain the foundation of his plan. The framework was that of Camp David, providing for a five-year transitional period during which the final status of the West Bank and Gaza would be negotiated between the Arabs and the Palestinian participation in the negotiations.

The fact that the US committed itself to the positions on specific issues was a major change in the American policy since the Camp David accords were signed. The three important points in the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations on the West Bank Gaza autonomy had been the definition of autonomy, the status of East Jerusalem. The Arabs in elections for the self-governing authority, and the Jewish settlements. The Reagan plan favoured the Arab-interpretation on all three counts.

The Reagan plan encompassed the expansion of existing settlements as well as the creation of new settlements. "It strongly opposed both an independent Palestinian state and

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17 see Juliane S. Peck, n.10, p.91.
18 Ibid.
Israeli sovereignty calling for West Bank Gaza self-government in association with Jordan. The proposals stated that the US will not support these solutions. George Shultz told the Committee on Foreign Affairs -

We emphasize that any guarantee must be based on the free give and take of the negotiating process. We do not guarantee to any party the outcome of the negotiations on any issue.

Later, in a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing Shultz further said:

The President has set out what you might think of as certain boundaries on how we think. This might come out. He has set out the boundary of the necessity for strong attention to the security needs of Israel. He has set out the boundary of not accepting the ideas that all of this territory would be sovereign Israeli territory.

So, certain boundary conditions have been set out, but within those boundaries. There is a tremendous amount of detail that has to be worked out, and it can vary a great deal depending upon the negotiations. These are positions that we intend to support, and we have stated them publicly, in part, as a way of letting people know in advance what we will be talking about, giving some reassurances, and at the same time saying to people who let us say, advocate an independent Palestinian state, we are saying, we hope you come in, but do not come in under the assumption that somehow we are going to

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The United States maintained its existing policy on recognition and negotiation. Reagan’s speech called for the transition of authority to the Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza and supported "self-government" by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan. As stated the final status of these lands must of course, be reached through the give and take of negotiations, but it was the firm view of the US that self-government by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan offered the best chances for a durable, just and lasting peace.  

The President further said that the US position was based on the principles that the Arab-Israeli conflict should be resolved through negotiations involving an exchange of territory for peace as set out in the UN Security Council Resolution 242 of 1967. He said - "the resolution called for Israel to withdraw from territories occupied in the recent conflict clearly applied to the West Bank and Gaza".  

Reagan reaffirmed the US commitment to Israel and urged that Israel’s enemies recognize Israel’s right to exist. The US took the decision on Jerusalem in Israel’s favour. "We

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21 Ibid.  
23 Ibid.
remain convinced that Jerusalem must remain undivided, but its final status should be decided through negotiations".\textsuperscript{24}

Reagan plan was proposed between two peace plans emanating from the Arab states. One was on on August 7, 1981, crown Price (later King) Fahd of Saudi Arabia enunciated eight principles as guidelines towards a just settlements of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The final declaration of the peace proposal issued by the government of Saudi Arabia on August 8, 1981 appeared to be largely a restatement of previously known Saudi government position and of principles outlined in the UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and other UN resolutions relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Crown Prince Fahd's principles for peace were -

1. that Israel should withdraw from all Arab territory occupied in 1967, including Arab-Jerusalem,

2. that Israeli settlements built on Arab land after 1967 should be dismantled,

3. a guarantee of freedom of worship for all religions in the Holy places,

4. an affirmation of the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and to compensate those who do not wish to return,

5. that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip should have a transitional period under the auspices of the United Nations for a period not exceeding several months,

6. that an independent Palestinian state should be set up with Jerusalem as its capital,

7. that all states in the region should be able to live in peace,

8. that the United Nations or member states of the United Nations should guarantee the execution of these principles.\(^\text{25}\)

The eight principles advanced by the Crown Prince Fahd for a Middle East peace which included the recognition of the rights of all states in the region to exist in peace, which again was a reaffirmation of support for UN Resolution 242. With respect to the peace process there had been long standing concern in Saudi Arabia about the provisions of Camp David. The Saudis were more cooperative in the peace process between Egypt and Israel, and secondly Lebanon situation. The Saudis had been extremely helpful in the Lebanon situation. In the first crisis when the missiles were introduced into the Bekka Valley, and in the second crisis when the PLO and Israel began to fight along Israel’s northern borders. The autonomy talks and the withdrawal from the Sinai, there was the long term question of Jerusalem, PLO and the Palestinian participation. They have outlined by the Crown Prince in his right points.\(^\text{26}\)


The *Fez Peace Plan*

The announcement of the Reagan Plan on September 1, 1982 brought together twenty Arab League states for an Arab Summit Conference on September 9, in Morocco. They proclaimed their nine-point "Fez plan" for the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Its principles were almost identical with those of the Fahd plan, even in terms of their sequence. There was one minor difference, point four of the Fez plan, instead of speaking for the return of the Palestinians to their homes and ask for compensation, and for their right to "self-determination".\(^7\)

The Summit adopted the following principles:

1. The withdrawal of Israel from all Arab territories occupied in 1967, including the Arab Al Qods (Jerusalem).

2. The dismantling of settlements established by Israel on the Arab territories after 1967.

3. The guarantee of freedom of worship and practice of religious rites for all religions in the holy shrines.

4. The reaffirmation of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the exercise of its imprescriptible and inalienable national rights under the leadership of PLO, its sole and legitimate representative and the indemnification of all those who do not desire to return.

5. Placing the West Bank and Gaza Strip under the control of the United Nations for a transitory period not exceeding a few months.

6. The establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Al Qods as its capital.

\(^7\) Lenczowski, n.3, p.265.

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7. The Security Council guarantees peace among all states of the region including the independent Palestine state.

8. The Security Council guarantees in respect of these principles. 28

On 6 September the Arab League convened its Summit Conference at Fez was attended by all members except Libya, and Syria to accept Egypt back into the Arab League, realignments in the PLO, and repeated, unambiguous, statement by its Chairman, Yasser Arafat, of his willingness to accept a two-state solutions and to process towards the settlement of the Palestinian problem. To many in the Congress, it seemed evident that in the first half of the 1980s the Arab states were positioning themselves towards settling their conflict with Israel. 29

The Fez plan was not simply a reaction to the Reagan plan but an independently formulated peace proposal based primarily on King Fahd’s 1981 plan. The five and six points of the Fez plan were identical with the Fahd plan, calling for the Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in 1967; the dismantling of settlements; freedom of worship at the holy

28 "Final Declaration of the 12th Summit Conference of Arab Heads of State, Fez, Morocco, 9 September 1982", in US, Department of State, American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1982, see n.1, p.758.

places; a transitional period of several months under UN auspices for the West Bank and Gaza; and the creation of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

The seventh point of the Fez plan called for the Security Council to draw up guarantees for the peace for all the states of the region, including the independent Palestinian state. The declaration adopted the principles of both, the Fahd plan and the 1965 "Bourguiba plan" were based on international legitimacy for solving the Palestinian question. The Bourguiba plan was denounced by most of the Arab world. It was proposed by the Tunisian President who called for direct Arab-Israeli negotiations to achieve a settlement plan of 1949 which indicated the right of Israel to return the Palestinian refugees to Israel, and the recognition of Israel by the Arab countries. The Fez plan did not clearly recognize the right of Israel to exist. Its references to the Bourguiba plan and to the Fahd plan had been that, all states in the region should be able to live in peace which were implicitly meant recognition of Israel's right to exist.30

The greatest significance of the Fez plan was that it represented an Arab consensus. In 1981 the First Fez Summit had broken up in disagreement over the Fahd proposals. In 1982 all members except Libya including the PLO, agreed to adopt the declaration. While it did not explicitly agree to Israel's right to exist, it was in King Hussein's words, "a major

30 See Juliana S. Peck, n.10, p.86.
milestone in the annals of the Arab world".\textsuperscript{31}

Final statement from Fez, which included the declaration of peace principles, made no mention of the Reagan peace plan. There were two peace proposals: one from the US, the other from the Arab League, while the American plan opposed dismantling of Israeli settlements on the West Bank. The Arab plan called for their removal whereas the Reagan proposals ignored the PLO and opposed an independent Palestinian state, the Fez plan called for the Palestinian self-determination under the PLO leadership and an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital. Nevertheless, the Arabs did not reject the Reagan plan. Vice President George Bush publicly acknowledged that the Fez plan provided an implicit recognition of Israel. But, he said, it isn’t enough.\textsuperscript{32}

\textbf{Arab League and the President}

The delegation headed by the King Hassan II from the Arab League, met President Reagan on October 22, 1982. Its main aim was to achieve peace in the Middle East. It was an important milestone along the road towards a common objective, a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. It meant achieving security for troubled regions security for the


Israel and a sense of identity for the Palestinian people.\textsuperscript{33} King Hassan of Morocco met with President Reagan in Washington to clarify the principles of the Fez declaration and said:

And our mutual goal should achieve through negotiations, that we will find in the framework of Security Council Resolution 242 and 338 and your programme - your plan for peace and the decisions of the Fez conference, we will find in all these which will save us in order to achieve our noble aim and objective which is, peace and co-existence and construction for the welfare of the region and all mankind.\textsuperscript{34}

While differing from the Reagan proposals in a number of respects it restated, the Arab demands for a Palestinian state. The Fez charter was seen by most experts on the Middle East as a significant move in Washington's direction. The Fez charter, although not stated outright, was Arab recognition of Israel's right to exist within its pre 1967 borders. Israel immediately turned down the Fez plan on grounds that it called for a Palestinian state and would lead to destruction of the

\textsuperscript{33} "Remarks by President Reagan and King Hassan II of Morocco, 22 October 1982", in US, Department of State, American Foreign Policy: Current Documents n.1, p.770. King Hassan II headed the delegation from the Arab League which met with President Reagan on October 22. The other members of the delegation were: Arab League Secretary General Chedli Klibi of Tunisia, Moroccan Foreign Minister Mohammed Bouretta, Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, Jordanian Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal, Syrian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Abdel Halim Khaddam and Tunisian Foreign Minister Beji Caid Essebsi. The President spoke at 1.45 p.m. at the Diplomatic Entrance at the South Grounds of the White House.

\textsuperscript{34} "Arab League Delegation Meets the President Reagan", Department of State Bulletin, vol.82, no.2069, December 1982, p.43.
Jewish state. "An Israeli offer to open direct negotiations with Arab nations - a proposal the Arabs have rejected". But Reagan's initiative stated that Mideast peace was to be achieved.

The comparison of the three peace plans revealed some differences and similarities. The differences centered on three main points.

First, while the two Arab plans called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, the Reagan plan advocated only a Palestinian autonomy in association with Jordan;

Second, the Arab plans favoured return of East Jerusalem to Arab rule, while the Reagan plan said Jerusalem should remain undivided but was ambivalent on its final status;

Third, the Fez plan but not Fahd's plan made explicit mention of the PLO as the Palestinian sole representative, while the Reagan plan did not mention the PLO. These differences were not negligible but they were counter balanced by important "similarities" of which the following were:

1. In essence all the three plans subscribed to the formula of exchange of territory for peace, that is, the principle originally enshrined in UN Resolution 242 of 1967,

2. Israel's sovereignty or permanent control over the West Bank and Gaza was repudiated by all three

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the three plans opposed any further proliferations of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories with the two Arab plans actually demanding the dismantling of those already in existence,

4. all the three plans, explicitly in the Reagan plan and implicitly in the Arab plans, recognized the existence of Israel as a state by calling the peace among all states of the region (Article 7 in each Arab plan). 36

Assessment of the Reagan Peace Plan

United States and Israel: The US relations with Israel were strained, but there was a little public criticism of Israel's rejection. On November 3, Israel announced that five more settlements would be established in the West Bank. A world Zionist organization spokesman Alan Romberg responded, "The US regards this latest announcement of Israel's intention to begin work on additional settlements as most unwelcome, and President Reagan called it a hindrance to what we're trying to accomplish in the peace agreement". 37

The reaction of the State Department spokesman was that the department had, "expressed our concern to any actions in

36 Lenczowski, n.3, pp. 265-266.

the occupied territories that have a negative impact on Jordanian and Palestinian attitudes to the peace process".\textsuperscript{38}

Inspite of public statements, the administration did lobby hard in Congress to prevent Committee approval of an increase in aid to Israel for the fiscal year 1983. On 30 November, the President met with a House Subcommittee to oppose increased aid, and on the same day Senator Mark Hatfield said "that he had received a note from National Security Advisor Clark saying that additional aid would undercut the administration's peace efforts. Nevertheless the Appropriations Committee approved a $ 125 million increase in economic aid over Reagan's request of $ 785 million".\textsuperscript{39}

A few days later the Israeli government approved the establishment of four new settlements South of Hebron, at the same time Deputy Prime Minister David Levi announced that a massive building was being undertaken at existing settlements. By the time the troop withdrawal talks began in Lebanon at the end of December, the Reagan Administration found itself concentrating its dealings with Israel on securing withdrawal from Lebanon rather than promoting Israeli cooperation with the broader peace process. At the same time, the major settlement and its expansion could continue while Americans' attention was diverted to the issue of withdrawal from

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Lebanon. However, it was predicted on the belief that the problems of Lebanon were on their way to a solution.

"The assassination of President Gemayel just two weeks after the plan was announced and in reprisal, the systematic murder of hundreds of Palestinians in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila by members of Gemayel's phalangist militia who had been invited into West Beirut by the Israeli security forces that had occupied this zone, effectively buried the Reagan peace initiative".  

Israel's view towards all of them however was negative. Its important objection being the principle of exchange of territory for peace. Israel's leadership, such as Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Shamir, and Ariel Sharon of the Likud group, rejected the notion that UN Resolution 242 applied to all Arab lands under Israeli control since 1967. They claimed that Israel had fulfilled the resolutions intention by relinquishing Sinai to Egypt in exchange for a peace treaty of 1979 and that the West Bank and Gaza (main objects of controversy as the lands inhabited by the Palestinian) were not occupied territories, hence not subject to UN Resolution 242 but liberated areas which Israel intended to return under its control.

The Israeli cabinet gave formal expression to the Reagan


41 Lenczowski, n.3, p.266.

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plan. It claimed that the plan had "deviated" from Camp David and that it rejected negotiations with any party as proposed by the US and it announced plans for the establishment of forty-two new Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. Thus, the Reagan initiative came to a somewhat inglorious end. And immediate concerns stemming from the Lebanese conflict took priority in the US government's agenda. For all practical purposes the peace plan was abandoned, not to be pressed for a number of years through the 1980s. It was revived until 1988, under a modified form.

United States, and the Arab League

Reaction in the Arab world became difficult to be assessed so easily. Egyptian President Mubarak, uninvited to the Arab Summit at Fez expressed his support for the US plan. The Reagan peace plan supported for Palestinian self-government in association with Jordan, as well as its call for Jordanian participation in negotiations. As Secretary Shultz noted, "the Fez plan was at considerable variance with the administration's proposals. There was still the possibility of a 'break through', if the plan provided for the Arab recognition of Israel. On this, however, the Fez plan remained ambiguous".42

The US hoped that King Hussein of Jordan would come forward to embrace the new US peace plan, but the Fez

42 Marlow Reedeleman, n.5, pp. 82-83.
conference gave him no green signal. He was reluctant to take steps at variance with the opinions of the Arab consensus. Nonetheless, "Hussein called the President's peace plan "a very constructive and a very positive move" and said that he would play "a very active part" in trying to bring about a federation between Jordan and the Palestinians. Before the Reagan plan, the White House publicly announced, we do not agree that Jordan is a Palestinian state."  

In October, King Hussein and PLO Chairman Arafat held twelve hours of discussion, looking in detail at the Reagan plan. The Jordanian participation in negotiations was a prerequisite for Hussein, because of the decision of the 1974 Rabat Summit meeting that the PLO was the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. After their talks Arafat declared that, "the Reagan plan was insufficient because it did not recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and an independent state." At the same time, even as Syria and the radical PLO factions based in Damascus condemned it outright. Their opposition, and unyielding opposition of the Begin government, remained formidable obstacles to the Reagan plan's chances for success.

The Jordan government and the PLO officials issued joint statement saying that they had agreed to a special and

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43 Ibid.

distinctive relationship between Jordan and a liberal Palestine. Hani al-Hassan, head of the PLO delegation, indicated that the PLO was in favour of a confederal relationship.  

Hussein and Reagan held two special meetings with each other. Hussein emphasised that he would not be able to persuade any Palestinian or other Arabs to enter peace talks while Israel continued to build settlements on the West Bank. In their second round of talks, Reagan had given a secret written promise to Hussein that if he offered to enter peace talks, the US would try to halt Israeli settlement construction. He said furthermore, "you will not be pressed to join negotiations on transition arrangements until there is a freeze on new Israeli settlement activity".  

The next hurdle to the Reagan proposals was the Palestine National Council meeting, which opened in Algiers on 14 February 1988. The Reagan plan was one of the central issues dealt with by the 350 member parliament debated during the nine day session. The plan was insufficient without having it rejected altogether. Other leading PLO officials such as George Habish, head of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and Nayeb Hawatmeh, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) leader, argued that the Reagan plan should be rejected outright. On the other hand,

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Salah Khalif, the member of PLO, told reporters at Algiers that if the Reagan Administration would recognize the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the creation of a state, the PLO would be willing to allow Palestinian mayors from the West Bank to negotiate.\textsuperscript{47}

Arafat was expected to arrive in Amman for talks and Reagan also renewed his own personal involvement of American support for Jordan. On 24 March a Jordanian official was quoted saying "there has been a vast acceleration of the peace of negotiations between Jordan and the other key Arab parties in an effort to constitute a formula that would lead the King to announce his readiness to take part in the Reagan plan".\textsuperscript{48}

On 10 April the Jordanian cabinet issued a long formal statement explaining that Jordan would not enter talks on the basis of the Reagan plan. The statement said:

\begin{quote}
We respect the decision of the PLO it being the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Accordingly, we leave it to the PLO and the Palestinian people to choose the ways and means for the salvation of themselves and their land, and for the realization of their declared aims in the manner they see fit.\textsuperscript{49}
\end{quote}

Although President Reagan proclaimed himself to be "very hopeful" that King Hussein would still enter peace talks, the Jordanian leader made clear that until both the PLO and the


United States modified their attitudes there was nothing he could do. After Hussein's rejection, President Reagan called for the Palestinian leadership to make "a bold and courageous move to break the deadlock". However, his administration did not appear ready to make any further move. A senior state department official declared, "we are not running around with our cap in hand chasing the PLO". It was described as only coincidence that Under Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger was in Tunis on 14 April when Yasser Arafat arrived for a PLO meeting.

The peace process did not produce results in building a peaceful relationship between Israel and its neighbours until it was understood as a series of negotiations on specific technical steps embedded in a larger political process designed to change the political environment. The peace process can be and what it must be if it moved Israeli's, Palestinian's and other Arabs towards peace and resolution of their conflict. Putting the peace process in a global context also generates insight for conducting other relationships in other places.

International Conference

There was a multilateral effort to convene an international peace conference in Amman in 1985. The idea of a conference was a major tenet in Soviet diplomacy for over a

decade. It was King Hussein's desire to conduct negotiations with Israel within the framework of an international conference. King Hussein stated -

The negotiations which we consider essential within the framework of an international conference for peace would revolve around the ways and means and the adequate guarantees for achieving the principle of territory in exchange for peace. As for the international conference, it shall be held under the supervision of the UN, with the participation of the permanent member states of the UN Security Council and all parties to the disputes. 51

The meetings were held between Prime Minister Peres and King Hassan of Morocco and between Peres and President Mubarak. All sides asked the United States to take an active part and all agreed on the necessity of direct bilateral negotiations. They supported the efforts to enhance the quality of life on the West Bank and Gaza. 52 The understanding regarding the conference was stated by the Assistant Secretary of the State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs on May 21, 1987.

As the Secretary commented in his speech that - "we approach the concept of a conference carefully and skeptically and with the very firm view that its purpose is to serve as


the means of direct bilateral negotiations.\textsuperscript{53}

After that, the understandings were reached over the several months on the following:

1) A conference would invite to the parties to form geographical, bilateral negotiating committee,

2) A conference could not impose solutions or veto agreements reached bilaterally,

3) Palestinian representatives would participate in face-to-face negotiations within a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation,

4) Participants in the negotiations would be expected to accept UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and to renounce terrorism and violence.\textsuperscript{54}

In late 1985, Shimon Peres had begun to speak positively about some type of international forum or sponsorship of direct Arab-Israeli negotiations. The Administration's previous opposition to the idea of an international conference weakened. As early as September 23, 1985, Shultz was clearly edging toward the idea of some type of international "event" to accommodate the Arab concerns. The recent American peace initiatives advanced in 1970, 1975, 1978 and 1982 proposed a conference that would neither impose solutions nor veto agreements. It would legitimate direct

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p.387.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
negotiations between the parties, immediate discussion of 
Palestinian self-administration in the territories, and the 
start of long-term peace negotiations based on Resolution 242 
and 348. 55

In early 1986, after the breakdown between Jordan and the 
PLO, King Hussein had placed renewed emphasis on the idea of 
an international conference. He had always maintained that he 
needed either the PLO or Syria to provide cover for his talks 
with Israel. Hence the need for an international conference 
of some sort. Inevitably, that would mean some degree of 
Soviet participation as well. The Reagan Administration was 
still unenthused about the international conference. 
American hostility to the idea of an international conference 
was partly rooted in the notion that such an arrangement would 
bring the Soviet Union back into the Middle East, from which 
it had supposedly been absent since Kissinger's maneuvering of 
1973-74. 56

Jordan had firmed up its ties with Syria to the point 
that an emissary of King Hussein met with Shultz on April 7, 
1987, to say that Syria was prepared to attend an 
international conference of the sort Jordan had been 
proposing. Shultz was skeptical, but he realized that Soviets

55 Michael Curtis, "The Uprising Impact on the Options for 
Peace", Middle East Review (Washington, D.C.), vol.19, no.1, 

56 William B. Quandt, Peace Process: American Diplomacy and 
the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967 (Washington, D.C.: 
might now be ready to help.

Meanwhile, King Hussein and Israeli Foreign Minister Peres met secretly in London to workout the principles for convening an international conference. The agreement was reached on April 11, 1987. Jordan and Israel both supported the idea that a conference would not have plenary powers. It could not impose its views or veto the results of the bilateral negotiations that would take place under the umbrella of the conference.

Shamir's rejection of the idea of a nonbinding international conference was rooted in his determination never to cede an inch of the historic land of Israel in practice, this meant no Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. However, Shamir would not object if the permanent members of the UN Security Council met to endorse direct Arab-Israeli negotiations.

In September, Peres suggested that the idea that Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan as part of their upcoming summit meeting, might invite Shamir and King Hussein to meet with them. Initially Reagan did not agree. Finally on September 23, Reagan gave his approval.

Shultz flew to the Middle East in October 1987 while enroute to Moscow to put the finishing touches on arrangements for US-Soviet Summit meeting in Washington. The idea was a

57 Ibid., p.361.
58 Ibid., p.363.
blessing for direct negotiations. Shultz presented the idea to King Hussein in London. The King, who was about to host an Arab Summit in Amman, did not show any interest for fear of being ridiculed by the other Arabs.  

When the Arab Summit was held in Amman in early November, it even seemed as the Arabs had turned their backs on the Palestinian question. Even the acceptance of Egypt back into the fold, which most members of the Arab League endorsed, seemed driven more by Gulf concerns than by a desire to coordinate the diplomacy of Arab-Israeli peace making with Cairo.

The Palestine Uprising (Intifada)

Anti-Israeli demonstrations and violent incidents in the occupied territories (West Bank and Gaza Strip) had increased after April 1987. However, it was frustrated of being under military occupation for twenty years and increasing colonization of the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Israel which led to intifada (uprising) on 8 December 1987. By the end of 1987, many Arab countries were relegating the Palestinian problem to a lower level in their order or priorities, as was shown at the Arab Summit meeting in the Amman in November 1987, and international attention was being distracted away from that problem, as the Reagan-Gorbachev meeting in December

illustrated. More than 120 Jewish settlements had been constructed in the occupied territories. The number of Jewish settlers had risen to more than 70,000.60

The immediate trigger for the uprising was the death on 8 December of four Arab Palestinian labourers, who were killed when an Israeli taxi crashed into them as they waited at the roadside near the Jabalaya refugee camp (in the Gaza Strip) for transport to their jobs in Israel. Claiming the drivers had driven into the men deliberately, camp residents staged angry demonstrations the following day, attacking Israeli patrols with stones and petrol bombs. The soldiers responded with live ammunition and killed two of the demonstrators. Violence gradually spread to other areas of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Nablus Palestinian causalities mounted as Israeli troops used live ammunition against the rioters. The outbreak of demonstrations and strikes had occurred frequently over the two decades of military occupation. The uprising gained momentum and acquired a structure that would sustain it for more than five years. On 22 December the UN Security Council voted unanimously (with the USA abstaining) to approve a resolution which strongly deplored the violation of the human rights by the firing by the Israeli Army, resulting in the killing or wounding of many defenceless Palestinian civilians. The Israeli Cabinet repeatedly

endorsed in January 1988, the "iron-fist" policy of the security forces. However, the uprising continued unabated. The spontaneous uprising showed to the world that the Palestinians were serious about shaking off the occupation and having an independent state.\textsuperscript{61}

**US Response**

Six days after the intifada began, Richard Murphy said in a statement before the Sub-committee on Europe and the Middle East of the House Foreign Affairs Committee:

US policy toward the West Bank and Gaza Strip has two major objectives: First, we support a resolution of the status of these territories in the context of a lasting peace to be achieved through direct negotiations between Israeli and its Arab neighbours. Second we want to improve the quality of Palestinian life in the territories.

We encourage Israel to ensure that its occupation practices are consistent with accepted international standards and the legitimate needs of maintaining security.

We have provided over $96 million fund projects to private voluntary organizations in the West Bank and Gaza, since 1975.\textsuperscript{62}

US officials believed that if the "quality of life" for Arab Palestinians could be improved, this would serve to coopt them and induce them to accept Israeli (or Israeli-Jordanian) sovereignty over the territories. Assistant Secretary of


State for Human Rights, Richard Schifter expressed the fundamental US attitude when he told a Congressional Committee that "in our view, Israel clearly has not only the right, but the obligation, to preserve or restore order in the occupied territories, and to use appropriate levels of force to accomplish that end."\(^{63}\)

And Richard Murphy in a statement before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the House Foreign Affairs Committee could say on 27 July 1988 that the situation in the West Bank and Gaza "continued to exact a heavy toll on both Palestinians and Israelis."\(^{64}\)

The Shultz Peace Plan of 1988

The Arab "uprising" soon spread to the larger areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It was the first time that active Arab resistance occurred on a massive scale within the areas controlled by Israel during the decades of occupation. Israel had never before faced a similar situation inasmuch as resistance to it usually came from Palestinian groups operating from the neighbouring countries. In spite of its overwhelming military superiority Israel was not prepared to face such an internal turbulence. Its troops first responded by firing at the most aggressive rock throwers but later

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\(^{64}\) "Review of US Policy in the Middle East", *Department of State Bulletin*, vol.88, no.2139, October 1988, p.63.
Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin issued orders to stop shooting and resort to beating the protesters. By the fall of 1988 close to 300 Palestinians had been killed by the Israeli forces and many more wounded.  

As a result of this explosive unrest (intifada - uprising) US was re-engaged and the result was a new peace initiative in January 1988 was launched by the Secretary Shultz. His proposals were discussed with the Israelis, Jordanians, Egyptians and unspecified Palestinian leaders. The procedure envisaged by Shultz in his letter on March 9, 1988 to Premier Shamir of Israel and detailed his peace proposals. An identical letter was also sent to King Hussein of Jordan. The New York Times carried the letter on 10 March 1988. (See Appendix III).

Shultz outlined the goal of a comprehensive peace to be achieved through direct bilateral negotiations based on Resolutions 242 and 338. Shultz added a new element called "interlock" between the negotiations on the transitional period for the West Bank and Gaza and the negotiations on "final status". Palestinian issue was addressed in negotiations between an Israeli delegation and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

Negotiations between Israel and each of its neighbours would begin on May 1, 1988. Israel would negotiate with Jordanian-Palestinian delegation on arrangements for a

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65 George Lenczowski, n.3, p.270.

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transitional period and would complete them in six months. The
transitional and the final settlements were to be based on UN
Security Council Resolution 242 and 338, in all their parts.
The US would participate in both negotiations and would submit
a draft proposal. Two weeks before the opening the
negotiations, an international conference was held. It was
convoked by the UN Secretary General and attended by the five
permanent members of the UN Security Council (USA, USSR, UK,
France and China) and the parties involved in the Arab-Israeli
conflict. Although the negotiating parties by agreement, might
report to the conference from time to time. The conference
would have no power to impose its means or to veto the results
of the negotiations.66

Both Israel and the US feared that the presence of the
Soviet Union in the Conference might inject unrealistic
maximatism into the posture of the Arab parties. Shultz had
expressed "An international conference as an event in itself,
has no appeal to us: we don’t see that it has a chance to do
anything except cause problems. And he added I don’t see that
the United Nations had distinguished itself in this area".67

The most important aspect of Shultz initiative was that
it gave importance to the Palestinians. Palestinian should be
represented in a combined Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.
Shultz wrote - "The objective of the negotiations was to


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achieve a comprehensive peace providing for the security of all the states in the region and for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people".68

His plan and his pleas, however, seemed to flawed. In early March Premier Shamir virtually rejected the American proposals. A major demonstration of some 50,000 Israelis in Tel Aviv took place for his strong support. In a parallel move, the PLO also objected to the peace proposals because they did not explicitly provide for PLO representation in the negotiations and did not mention Palestinian self-determination as an objective.69

To make initiative a success, Shultz tried to wear down the opponents of his initiative. His biggest problem was Prime Minister Shamir, who rejected the idea of an international conference. He also rejected the interlock concept claiming it was contrary to Camp David. The Camp David accords had made the final status talks dependent on prior success in reaching agreement on transitional arrangements. Under Shultz proposal the talks on the final status would begin whether or not agreement had been reached on an interim period, thus providing little incentive for the Palestinians to negotiate seriously on the initial transitional stage.

Reagan gave a statement during the departure ceremony in the White House. "And those who say no to the U.S. plan they

68 Quoted in, George Lenczowski, n.3, p.271.
69 Ibid., n.3, p. 273.
need to answer to themselves and their own people as to why they turned down a realistic and sensible plan to achieve negotiations. The US will not slice this initiative apart and will not abandon it". The President did not pressurise Israel to accept the plan by renouncing economic or military aid. In fact, the administration had made a decision, even before Shamir’s visit, to speed up the delivery to Israel of 75 F-16 jet fighters. The other decision was to respond positively to Israel’s request for "institutionalization" of strategic cooperation agreement so that it would remain valid for five years even after the Reagan Administration left office. This decision was conveyed by Secretary Shultz to Premier Shamir during his visit to Washington. This new memorandum of understanding was signed on April 21, 1988.

On 9 June, the final communique of an extraordinary summit meeting of 21 members of the Arab League held in Algiers, Algeria, hailed the intifada. It endorsed the Palestinian claim to independent statehood and PLO participation on an equal footing with the other participants in an international peace conference, which would proceed on the basis of Fez plan. This constituted a rejection of the Shultz plan.

The Shultz plan was not a complete success. It depended


crucially on cooperation with King Hussein. During four trips to the Middle East in the first half of 1988, Shultz had tried to persuade Hussein and had even reached out to Palestinians in the West Bank. On July 31, Shultz initiative collapsed when King Hussein relinquished all Jordanian legal and administrative ties to the West Bank, stating that henceforth the PLO would be responsible for the Palestinians living there.

U.S. was left with no other alternative but to approach the PLO directly and start the dialogue. US forwarded certain conditions to the PLO to began dialogue with them. "The PLO knows very well what the conditions are for participation in the international conference, and I've outlined those: acceptance of 242, 338, renounce violence and terrorism".72 He also stated "the PLO also knows very well what the conditions are to enter into a dialogue with the United States - acceptance of 242, 338 and recognize the right of the state of Israel to exist".73

However, the Reagan Administration was signally a positive attitude. It was explicitly stated that talks would follow immediately on the PLO’s acceptance of the American terms. The PLO’s stand was not without problems.


73 Ibid.
insisted on American acceptance of Palestinians self-determination as the price for accepting 242. It was not willing to renounce terrorism. PLO also had not accepted Israel's right to exist.\textsuperscript{74}

PLO leader Arafat addressed the European Parliament in Strasbourg in mid-September 1988. He declared that, "I am ready to meet Israeli representatives of the United Nations. We set no preconditions for such a meeting... I extend to the Israelis the hand for peace negotiations".\textsuperscript{75}

U.S. was also not prepared to recognize an independent Palestinian state but Palestinian self-determination in association with Jordan. "The Palestinian people have to be represented in these negotiations from the beginning and in a manner that makes it possible for their means to be legitimately very much a part of this process. I believe that can be done in a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation".\textsuperscript{76} As the things developed and US sought to establish a democratic Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.\textsuperscript{77}

Only two days after Arafat's speech on September 16, 1988, Secretary Shultz, in a comprehensive review of American

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p.371.

\textsuperscript{75} George Lenczowski, n.3, p.275. See Arab News (Jeddah), 15 September 1988.

\textsuperscript{76} "Press Briefing by Secretary of State Shultz, Amman, April 8, 1988", in US, Department of State, American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1988, n.72, p.385.

\textsuperscript{77} William B. Quandt: Peace Process n.56, p.373.
policy toward the Middle East, reiterated the administration’s view that the Palestinians are entitled to political participation and economic decisions that affected their lives. But that the status of the occupied territories must not be determined by unilateral acts of either Arabs or Israelis. Hence he pronounced himself against a declaration of independent Palestinian statehood or government in exile. Shultz also rejected the idea that Israel might return to 1947 boundaries as proposed in the US-Palestine partition resolution. And he stated, "Israel must be prepared to withdraw as Resolution 242 says, from territories occupied in the recent conflict."  

In a special session of the UN held in Geneva on December 13, 1988, Arafat said what US wanted, except it did not renounce terrorism. "The speech did not meet our conditions."  

After the lots of efforts from both the sides, Arafat held a press conference, on December 14, 1988, when he finally said, "As for terrorism, I renounced it yesterday in no uncertain terms, and yet, I respect for the record that we totally and absolutely renounce all forms of terrorism, including terrorism."  

It opened the way for US-PLO dialogue. However, United States still did not accept or recognize an independent

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80 Ibid.

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Palestinian state. The position of the US was that the status of the West Bank and Gaza could be determined by unilateral acts of other side but only through a process of negotiations. The US did not recognize the declaration of an independent Palestinian state. The problem of opening a dialogue was removed for the incoming administration. But an equally daunting task of giving substance was given to it.81

The main shortcomings of Shultz's peace effort were its inability to find a way around Shamir's stubborn attitude, its failure to recognise the magnitude of the Palestinian issue, and its reluctance to insist on the territory for peace formulas. But then Shultz never made a significant effort to prevent Shamir from ruining the project. The Palestinian uprising eroded Israel's international standing to a large extent and divided Israeli public opinion. It left Shamir in an untenable position from which he could easily be dislodged.

The plan had original commitment to a comprehensive peace providing for the security of all the states in the region and for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. But US never took a strong position favouring full and unconditional PLO participation in negotiations towards a settlement. This reflected a particular disregard for the Palestinians, whose position had been strengthened by intifada.82 And the concept

81 "Statement by Secretary of State Shultz, December 14, 1988", in US, Department of State, American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1988, n.68, p.401.

82 Lenczowski, n.3, p.27.
of territory for peace, was never made an integral part of the initiative. These flaws led to its collapse in 1988. The Arabs insisting that the only workable solution to the conflict lay in convening an international conference with the guarantee of an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and self-determination for the Palestinians.  

– Middle East International, no. 320, 5 March 1988, p.6.