CONCLUSION
the revolution in Iraq in 1958 and the collapse of the Baghdad Pact, increasingly came to accept the Israeli view that a powerful Israel would be "strategic asset" for the US serving as a barrier against threats to American interests from radical Arab nationalists who might gain support from the Soviet Union. A declassified National Security Council memorandum of 1958 noted that a logical corollary of opposition to radical Arab nationalism would be to support Israel as the only strong pro-west power left in the Near East. The US was also cognizant of the explicitly weak, divisive and parochial nature of the modern Arab world, a factor that filled neatly into American strategic plans.

Reagan's approach to the Arab world was a combination of emotion, ideology, lack of knowledge and instinctive political acumen that made him so difficult for analysts to comprehend. He could proclaim a united pro-American Lebanon vital to US interests in January 1984 and then act as if the country did not exist the next. His administration sponsored the largest single arms sale in history to an Arab state (AWACS) to Saudi Arabia against bitter domestic opposition and then was unable to gain Saudi cooperation for US diplomatic and politico-military initiatives. He revealed in rebuilding American military might and failed to use arms effectively in Lebanon. He was preoccupied with the expansion of Soviet arms and influence and then watched helplessly as the Russian involvement escalated in Syria.
Ronald Reagan seemed blind to these contradictions. He used the actor's ability to reassure and convince before to compensate for the lack of policy expertise and managerial skill that he lacked sometime in the area of foreign policy. Howsoever frustrating Reagan's experiences in the Arab world were during his Administration, his efforts and their results were consistent with the history of the US relationship to the Arab-Israeli dispute. There had been occasional moments of his spectacular success, viz., UN Resolution 242 in 1967, the Kissinger's Shuttle diplomacy, the Camp David accords, and the Egypt-Israel peace treaty. Unfulfilled objectives, however, have been the norm: from trusteeship proposals to the Baghdad Pact; from the Johnson and Roger’s plans to autonomy and the Reagan plan. The frequent Arab-Israeli wars testified to the inability of American leaders to mould regional developments to their designs and interests. Where Reagan forged new ground was in deploying US troops during an Arab-Israeli crisis in an effort to stabilise a particular government. The experience of the marines in Lebanon substantially contributed to the US policy, whose makers had always to tread cautiously through the political mine-fields of intra-Arab tensions and Arab-Israeli conflicts.

Disagreements occurred over global views, or over other factors that governed the attitude of the two Presidents. President Eisenhower, whose overriding global concern was fighting communism, and President Carter, who favoured detente.
with the Soviet Union. They viewed the Arab states as crucial to the achievement of their aims in the Middle East.

Regional conflicts had pitted Arabs against Arabs and the Arabs against Israel. There had also been conflicts elsewhere in the region, in places such as Iraq and Iran; Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus; Ethiopia and Somalia. In the 1960s, radical Egypt was in conflict with moderate Libya; in the 1970s, radical Libya was hostile towards a moderate Egypt. A similar face occurred between Iraq and Egypt from the 1950s to the 1970s. In the 1970s, Iraq and Syria - whose regimes both originated from the Baathist party - were bitterly disputing which government was more ideologically pure. Jordan and Saudi Arabia, ruled by the once fiercely competitive Hashemite and Saudi families cooperated as moderate monarchies.

The Arab unity had seen wars within their world, as over Yemen in the 1960s and Lebanon in the mid 1970s and among the Palestinians in the early 1980s. Even Israel had played a part in these intra-Arab conflicts, as in 1970 when it was prepared to aid Hussein's Jordan against radical Palestinian insurgents and invading Syrians, its support of the christians in Lebanon after 1975, and its further entanglement in Lebanese politics after the June 1982 invasion.

Thus American policy towards the Arab-Israeli dispute involved three levels of decision making: first, the global, second, the regional, and third, the actual area of conflict. Any administration would always have global aims (for example,
containment of the Soviet Union, human rights, free trade). These aims were related to the Middle East, as in Eisenhower's and Dulles's pursuit of the Baghdad Pact and Carter's pursuit of stability for energy supplies. At other times the Middle East was peripheral to the administration's main concerns, Truman's Containment Policy or Kennedy's multiple options doctrine. There would also be regional aims, such as the promotion of a pro-American Arab unity around the favourite of the moment or the attempt to build Iran as a protector of the Persian Gulf. These were specific plans for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, such as Eisenhower's Johnston plan, Kennedy's Johnson plan, and Nixon's Roger's plan.

In any administration the global perspective would be paramount. Every President began with foreign policy priorities and objectives, however obscure and inarticulate. Most of the President's major advisers shared their primary notions.

In the Ford administration, for example, secretary of state Henry Kissinger and UN Ambassador Daniel Patrick Moynihan both saw the Middle East as a key element in their top priority effort to limit Soviet influence. But Kissinger in his shuttle diplomacy pursued an even-handed strategy and Moynihan believed in close American identification with democratic Israel. Similarly in the Truman era, Clark Clifford, the President's Special Council, advocated a new Jewish State to thwart Soviet aims in the area where Secretary
against the danger of war or radical revolutions; supporting and strengthening allies; and assured the continued supply of oil at reasonable prices. While as always there were danger and tension in the Middle East, in 1985 the overall picture in regard to these four concerns was a reasonably positive one.

The United States had a greater degree of leverage in the Middle East because of the region’s lack of reliably consistent alliance systems or the availability of an internationally recognised leadership. As Arab states have developed their separate identities, Pan-Arabism became a less tenable ideology. The willingness of Egypt to sign the Camp David accords, of Lebanese Maronite Christians to ally with Israel, or of Syria and Algeria to support Iran against Arab Iraq, all were pointers to this development.

Egypt could not play a leadership role in the region while it continued to be penalized for the Camp David accords; Iraq was tied up with an expensive war effort; Syria’s obvious ambitions brought it to isolationism; Saudi Arabia’s economic leverage steadily declined as its petroleum prices and production fell. In this situation every state for itself Washington’s role therefore became crucial.

The very conflict, search for security, and disunity that invited US involvement also made it complex and frustrating for several reasons. (i) There were discordant state objectives, not only between Arabs and Israel but equally among the Arabs themselves. Syria, for example, was determined
to sabotage negotiations that would allow a Jordanian role on
the West Bank, Egypt's return to the Arab fold, or the
emergence of an independent PLO. Jordan's king Hussein and PLO
chief Yasser Arafat would compete to dominate any future
Jordan-West Bank confederation. (ii) There were internal
contradictions in the bargaining positions and goals of each
individual state. Jordan would like to have the West Bank,
but did not want to pay the price of recognizing Israel.
Israel wanted peace, but some Israeli political groups want
to retain the occupied territory and almost all of them were
determined to prevent PLO's participation. Arafat would like
to have his own West Bank state, but neither recognised Israel
nor approved the Palestinian stand. (iii) All of these
difficulties were inter-connected. It is a diplomatic solution
without Syrian participation but almost impossible to see any
framework or outcome that would please Damascus and still be
acceptable to Israel, Jordan and the PLO. King Hussein could
not step forward to negotiate without Arafat and apparently,
could not persuade the PLO leader to make concessions either.

Consequently, the U.S. government had tended to focus on
other more pressing or promising areas of the world, except
when developments in the Middle East itself had forced action
or given hope that might succeed.

During the Reagan Administration's first term in office,
Middle East policy went through the following distinct phases:

From January 1981 to August 1982, the Administration
played an important role in the Arab-Israel conflict in order
to concentrate on Persian Gulf security problems that had
emerged from the Iranian revolution. Also the activity of the
Islamic fundamentalist groups, and the Soviet occupation of
Afghanistan created an anxiety among the US policy planners.

From September 1982 through May 1983, the Administration
pursued an activist policy aimed at developing a settlement to
the Lebanese civil war and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The
Reagan plan proposed the establishment of a Jordan-West Bank
confederation as a framework for Palestinian self-
determination. In exchange for Israel yielding territory, the
Arabs would recognise the state and agree to some border
modifications that would enhance its security. As it happened,
the US efforts to end the Lebanese civil war and moderate the
Arab Israeli conflict both failed. Syria refused to withdraw
from Lebanon; the Lebanese political factions could not settle
their differences. Heavy losses among the US marines shocked
Americans into demanding their withdrawal. Meanwhile Arafat,
Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin rejected
President Reagan's plan. The announcement of the Reagan plan,
on September 1, 1982 brought together twenty Arab League
states for an Aram 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.

The Reagan Administration entered a third phase, one of
low activity. Its disillusionments and failures, plus a belief that new opportunities were lacking U.S. policy-makers reasoned that only an initiative by reasonable forces would make American involvement worthwhile.

Fourth phase came when the regional developments - including a diplomatic initiative taken by King Hussein and the instituting of a new, more flexible government in Israel was major concern of US policy in 1985. Washington sought to encourage the formation of a new joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation as sought by Hussein. US policy was that self-government by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza, in association with Jordan, offered the best chance for a durable, just and lasting peace. (Israel labour party leader Shimon Peres 1984) Peres was favoured to the Reagan plan concept and eager to negotiate with Jordan. (The terms of coalition agreement Peres was handed over his office to Yitzhak Shamir of Likud bloc in October 1986). Whereas labour favoured territorial compromise with Jordan on the West Bank, the Likud was more skeptical about the possibility of successful negotiations and more interested in permanently retaining the territories captured by Israel in the 1967 war.

By seeking Arafat's consent to a joint Jordanian-Palestinian negotiating delegation, Hussein hoped to develop a series of talks with the US, leading to some form of negotiations with Israel. The object was a peace agreement based on mutual recognition between the Arab side and Israel
and on the establishment of a Jordan-West Bank confederation with Amman as their senior partner. This led the 11 February 1985 agreement between Hussein and Arafat.

After the announcement of the Jordanian government, the PLO's demand including a joint delegation consisting of all the Arab governments plus the PLO, independence for a PLO-led Palestinian state, criticism of the "land for peace formula", insistence on their refusal to recognise Israel or to accept U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338. The PLO leader Hani al-Hassan stated that they reject UN Resolution 242. They rejected it in past and will reject it in the future.

Successive U.S. Administrations had preferred a Jordanian option precisely because they deemed an independent Palestinian state under Arafat's leadership to be contrary to US national interest. The framework for negotiations Hussein and Arafat insisted on an international conference including the members of the UN Security Council and all relevant Arab states. Washington and Jerusalem wanted direct negotiations, and finally the international conference failed.

Six months after in the February 11 accord, the US stressed diplomatic explorations with Jordan and Israel aimed at solving the issue of Palestinian participation. The fundamental US approach on the representation issue was to give PLO a choice. The Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy explained the new policy. The parties in the region have imported a new momentum to the search for peace... we
strongly support King Hussein's efforts to move toward negotiations, but only time will tell whether the agreement will ultimately enable him to do so. On a visit to Washington, King Hussein presented a comprehensive plan for moving the process forward.

The Israel's response to Hussein's ideas was given by Prime Minister Peres in a five point plan announced in June. He called for Jordanian-Palestinian-Israeli summit with US participation. The support of anti-Arafat Palestinians, however, Assad had forfeited the very flexibility that had ensured the Syrian position in Lebanon. Syrian attempt was to control the PLO and drove Arafat closer to Hussein.

The US support for Jordan in the event of a Syrian invasion, as well as the strength of hostile Israeli and Iraqi forces on its border, Damascus was not likely to send its army into Jordan. The real danger was that Syria would step up its campaign of terrorism, assassination and subversion against Amman.

After his meeting with Hussein in September, President Reagan remarked, "Jordan has been moving steadily and courageously forward in the search for a peaceful negotiated settlement for conflict in the Middle East had not wavered despite attacks and threats". Washington was still "direct negotiations" under appropriate auspices before the end of this year.

Jordan responded by its relations with Syria; Amman
pledged to lose support for Syrian Islamic fundamentalist revolutionaries and, late in December, King Hussein travelled to Damascus for a meeting with President Assad.

The crisis of terrorism and reprisal Israel sank a boat carrying a PLO terrorist task force which had been dispatched from Algeria by Arafat's right-handman, Khalil al-Wasir. Secretary Shultz warned, Those who perpetrate violence deal themselves out of the peace process. Terrorism had earlier played a major role in wrecking the US marines mission in Lebanon. Seven Americans had also been kidnapped by Islamic fundamentalist groups in Beirut and held hostage for well over a year. The Administration warned Iran that retaliation would follow if any of them were harmed.

In June 1985, the US airliner was seized by Shiite fundamentalist hijackers and flown to Beirut. One American passenger was murdered and 40 others were held for over two weeks. The crisis, then had more to do with the ramifications of Lebanese politics - with each group trying to prove its militancy and effectiveness - than it did with US policy or interests. The US continued to be a refusal to negotiate with terrorists or meet their demands. The Administration urged Israel to accelerate the release of the prisoners. Syria worried about any spread of pro-Iranian Islamic fundamentalism in Lebanon and finally hostages were released safely.

The Beirut airport hostage affair showed the continued uncertainty among US political leaders and the general public
on the question of how to deal with terrorism. But most Americans wanted the hostages to be released even if this required yielding to terrorist demands. A US attempt to organise an international boycott of Beirut's insecure airport gained almost no support, even among US allies. In a major speech, President Reagan attacked Iran and Libya. The US was an ally of Israel and enthusiastic supporter of counter-terrorism, but at the same time was ally of several Arab states, including Tunisia, and a mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

As far in peace process which was already in significant trouble, the Achille Lauro affair made the PLO seem less attractive as a negotiating partner and less credible as a moderate force. A planned meeting between joint Jordanian-PLO-delegation and Britain, which secured almost like a dress rehearsal for the bug-awaited conference with US representatives fell through after the PLO refused to authorise signing a statement of willingness to recognise Israel.

The US aid levels were at an all-time high, 1985 was generally a year of closed US-Israeli cooperation. The US ratified a Free Trade Area that would encourage trade and technology transfer. However, bilateral friction and some restrictions on information exchanges followed the arrest, on November 21, of US Navy employee Jonathan Pollard, who was stealing American intelligence reports on the Arab world for
Israel. Israel promised cooperation in the investigation, but bitter feelings remained within the US. Though not Syria or Iraq, as countries supporting terrorism. One of the terrorists Jeered - The American war machine is nothing "a child's try" and argued that the hijacking demonstrated the ability of the oppressed to confront Americas. The US became helpless, Arab League leaders complained of US bullying, while they clamoured for American aid, arms, technology, support and mediation on a whole range of issues.

Dramatic series of events in 1985 revived some of these controversies. Attacks against Israeli civilians culminated in the murder of three Israelis in Cyprus on September 15. Israel blamed the PLO, and a fortnight later launched a bombing attack on the organization's office in Tunisia. Six days after that, Palestinian terrorists whose close links with the PLO were later revealed, hijacked an Italian cruise ship, the Achille Lauro, murdering an elderly, crippled American before surrendering to Egyptian authorities. Three days later, an Egyptian airline carrying the three terrorists was forced by US fighter planes to land in Italy, where the terrorists were tried and convicted.

Secretary Shultz abstained on a UN resolution that condemned Israel for the attack without mentioning the terrorists actions that had motivated it. The US bureaucracy and even among American Jews were supportive of Israel.

Despite the emphasis on the Arab-Israeli peace process,
the US was also concerned with the region’s ongoing Iran-Iraq shooting war and with the preservation of the Persian Gulf, its stability and security. The greatest immediate threat was an Iranian victory or subversion endangering the friendly states of the Persian Gulf, US leaders also had to take into account the danger that a cornered Iran might turn decisively toward the Soviet Union.

These events, and some experiences from previous years, also heightened US skepticism over Saudi Arabia’s potentiality positive role in resolving regional problems. The Saudis were largely absent from the diplomacy over the peace process. Jordan and Egypt played the key Arab roles. Further, in an effort to initiate a major new arms sale to Saudi Arabia, Riyadh had agreed to allow the US use of bases in Saudi Arabia in the event of Soviet aggression. The specific contingency for which the US Rapid Deployment Force was nominally intended. Egypt continued to make progress toward regaining its key role in the Arab world. President Mubarak was adept at pursuing balanced policies: he normalised relations with Jordan and for all practical purposes, with Iraq and the PLO, without retreating from Egyptian positions. Cairo carefully maintained peaceful relations with Israel.

Despite the inevitable vicissitudes and uncertainties, the overall strategic and political situation in the Middle East was not favourable to US interest at the end of 1985 terrorism, often aimed against Americans, hypnotized the media
and caused terrible losses in human terms, but hardly destabilised the region. The Lebanese civil war raged on, but it was clear that neither Syria nor radical anti-American forces could really dominate the country. A bloody Iran-Iraq war remained indecisive but showed no sign of spreading or endangering the Persian Gulf oil exports.

Significantly, the US retained a wide variety of allies, while the USSR's influence remained extremely limited. Moscow's achievement of diplomatic relations with Amman and the United Arab Emirates only symbolized how weak the Soviet regional position had become.

The Iranian revolution and the failure of US-leverage in Lebanon demonstrated the limits of American power, especially military power, in the region. 1985 provided a lesson on the continuing importance of the US's political and diplomatic role. US attempts to mediate - and its failure to resolve - the Arab-Israeli conflict often seemed to produce acrimonious reactions in the areas, it was universally acknowledged that only Washington could foster any peaceful conclusion. The regional conflicts or forces had to take the lead in seeking to solve their own conflicts in the matter also the only US could help this process. But, within this framework, controversy remained over the proper degree of US activism and initiative in the peace process. The Administration's patience and increased sophistication about the workings of Arab League politics was welcome, active in promoting negotiations. (The
appearance of US concern is an important in the region as is the reality). Leaders in the conflict to commit themselves to negotiation. Jordan, the PLO, Israel or Syria do not fail to make peace merely because the US has not managed to convince them to do so, but rather because of very real internal and regional considerations. Arafat was unwilling to risk domination by Jordan, or to loss control of the PLO, Hussein is paralysed by Arafat's intransigence, not by a lack of US arms.

In early December 1987 the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza initiated the intifada, or uprising. The sudden drama of this event forced Secretary of State George Shultz to become re-engaged in the peace process. The only way to achieve a breakthrough in the peace process was to involve Jordan's King Hussein. Shultz undertook shuttle diplomacy and made three visits to the area in February, April and June 1985, trying to support for a revised Middle East peace plan.

The Shultz plan was the provisions of the Camp David accords and on September 1, 1982, Reagan peace plan, was based on the well known 'land for peace' formula laid down in UN Resolution 242. It called for an international conference and implied that Israel would have to give up some of the Arab territory it occupies. King Hussein encouraged Shultz in his efforts but refused to endorse the policy. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and his Likud supporters adamantly rejected it. So did the PLO, since the plan did not provide
for the creation of a Palestinian state or accept the right of the PLO to participate in the peace process.

Two dramatic events overshadowed the Shultz plan: King Hussein's decision to relinquish Jordanian sovereignty over the West Bank in favour of the PLO. The PNC meeting in Algiers in November which passed a resolution proclaiming an independent Palestinian state and giving implicit recognition to Israel by accepting under certain conditions, UN Resolutions 242 and 338. The US did not consider it to open a dialogue. Following the Algiers's meeting, PLO leader Yasser Arafat applied for an American visa to attend a UN General Assembly meeting in December. The UN voted almost unanimously to move the General Assembly to Geneva.

Thus in the Geneva General Assembly session, at Stockholm brought out an active commitment on American-Jews to move the part or American and Israeli policy makers towards a compromise on the Palestinian issue. At the end of the meetings Sweden's Foreign Minister Sten Andersson, was issued a joint statement. The position previously taken by the PNC in Algiers was reiterated. It established an independent state for Palestinians and accepted the existence of Israel as a State in the region, "and declared its rejection and condemnation of terrorism in all its forms, including state terrorism".

At a Press Conference Arafat affirmed the rights of all parties in the conflict to exist in peace and security,
including the state of Palestine, Israel and their neighbors. He repeated his call for an international peace conference based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338. On terrorism, Arafat declared that we totally and absolutely renounce all forms of terrorism, including individual, group and state terrorism. The US on the other hand said that the US would enter into the long withheld dialogue with the PLO. Two days later U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia Robert Pelletreau met with PLO officials in Tunisia for preliminary task to discuss the procedures for a substantive dialogue. A new, historic watershed in the Arab-Israeli conflict had been crossed.

Thus the Reagan Administration achieved a great deal of success in the externally conflict ridden area, which had also been an eyesore to many of his predecessors etc. It may be worthwhile to mention that Reagan Administration brought out new dimensions of future stability and peace in the Middle East with the coming of the altered international situation in the form of the post cold war.