CHAPTER-IV
Chapter-IV


President Carter had not left a bed of roses for the next incumbent. Still every problem was unsettled and the world was passing through various crucial stages due to the major events in the world and specially in West Asia that mushroomed in late seventies. The Soviet aggression in Afghanistan had given a severe blow to the United States and the second important menace was Khomein's Iran. This was the time when the illusion of superpower friendship of early seventies was shattered down and with Afghan incident the period of new cold war and fresh superpowers rivalry started. The difference was that the theatre of their objectives shifted from the 'domination of entire world' to the 'domination of the Third World'. This led to the arms proliferation in the world and hence armament competition intensified.

Unlike Carter and Ford, president Ronald Reagan was a firm believer in Soviet containment. His decisions to assist militarily to anti communist guerilla in the Third World, later come to be known as Reagan doctrine.¹ The most prominent feature of Reaganism or Reaganian policies was anti-Sovietism and the basic objective was to turn West Asia into an anti-Soviet bloc. Soviet Union had taken full advantage in West Asia during the Nasser period and Supported all its clients-Iraq, Syria, Algeria, Libya and Egypt with weapons and finance but since the 1967 Arab-Israeli crisis, it did not move forward and the aid rendered to the radicals was meagre.

¹ Newzealand International Review vol 15. No 3 May 1990. P 4
Soviet Union had lost its significance with the arrival of Anwar Sadat, apart from it Arab communist parties could not play a worthwhile role where they operated as in Iraq, Syria and Jordan. Thirdly, increasing price of oil after 1973 oil embargo enabled them to import technology from West and Japan. Finally, the beginning of Iran-Iraq war (1980) had badly splitted the Arab world and it was difficult to decide for the Soviet Union whom to support.

On the other hand, US was very much conscious about Gulf security and in its each and every move it wanted to give a tough blow to the USSR. US AWACS sale to Saudi Arabia and 'Operation Bright Star' were the cause of grave concern for Soviet Union. 'Operation Bright Star' was a military exercise to develop the capacity of a quick intervention if there is any outside threat to friends. Secondly, AWACS approval was more irritating thing for Soviet Union because this was to strengthen US-saudi relations and Gulf security. This might have provided facilities to the US; RDF in direct proximity to the extremely rich Persian Gulf oil fields. Though Moscow had close relations with the so called radical Arab states including Libya, South Yamen and Algeria they all overlooked Soviet's intervention in Afghanistan and did not say anything. There was another group of moderate states including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Iran, Qatar, Sudan, Tunisia, Somalia, Morocco and Bahrain. That criticized Soviet moves very stringently.

Another shock for USSR was GCC’s formation in May 1981. It was cohesive front of six conservative Gulf countries i.e. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates and Oman to enhance their internal

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3 Kauppi. V. Mark.... op cit.. pp 74-.97
and external security and to strengthen their military preparedness for their joint defence. GCC was the development aftermath of Iran-Iraq.4

The Reaganian diplomacy of ‘strategic consensus’ for Gulf security arrangement was another problem for the USSR. The Gulf security arrangement was to include -Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan particularly Saudi Arabia and Egypt as military allies, presumably on their common fear of Soviet expansionism though ‘Operation Bright Star’ did not have any link with ‘strategic consensus’ but hidden purpose was to prepare a strong anti-Soviet alliance the ‘Bright Star’ military exercise was headed by RDF as a device for intimidating progressive governments in West Asia such as Libya, Ethiopia and South Yaman. It was a technique to strengthen pro-US regimes in the region.

Saudi Arabia never liked Egypt-Israeli treaty; Despite of US-Saudi relations after 1979-80, Saudi government still was firm on Palestinian cause on August 7, 1981 Crown Prince Fahad in an interview announced eight point Fahad Plan this included

1. Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem.
3. Guaranteed freedom of worship for all the religions in the Holy places.
4. Affirmation of the right of the Palestine people to return to their homes and compensation of those who decide not to do

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4 Middle East Review Vol 19, No 4 summer 1987, p 51
5 Bark, L Dennis To promote Peace. US Foreign Policy In Middle East 1980’s. Hoover Institute Press. Stanford University. California. 1984 P. 176
5. UN control on West Bank and Gaza strip for a transitional period not exceeding a few months.

6. Establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

7. Affirmation of the right of all states in the region to live in peace.

8. The UN or some of its members to guarantee and implement these principles.

Instead of making new initiatives, the plan reinsisted traditional Saudi comprehensive plan. It called for establishment of Palestine state in West Bank and Gaza within the framework of UN General Assembly resolution. The plan marked Saudi Arabia’s first attempt to play an active and leading role in resolving Arab-Israeli conflict. Despite some constraints due to Syria’s objection on the plan the Saudis were convinced that the time was high to pursue their plan and at this finest hour some resolution could be brought out.

The Fahad plan was somehow controversial and triggered off various opinions and interpretations. Egypt criticized but mildly, Israel criticized sharply saying it as “an attempt to liquidate Israel in stages and this would be an obstacle in West Asian peace process”. The US was caught in a dilemma. it remained committed to the Camp David Agreements but on the other hand did not want to discourage Saudi Arabia, as recently the stale relations had got refreshed and redefined and both of them had realized each other’s need in the crisis. President Reagan and Secretary Haig considered it because there was no clause which negated Israel. Saudis wanted their plan to be considered in the next meeting in Fez at Morocco.

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7 Middle East Review vol 18, No 1, 1985-86, P 31
to be scheduled on Nov. 25, 1981. The radical Arab States and Soviet Union had also criticized the Plan, they presented their own proposal totally based on PLO’s right and independent Palestinian state. Unfortunately, neither Fahad plan nor the proposal of radical states was approved in pre-Fez meeting on Nov. 22, 1981.

After the death of Sadat (assassination of Sadat on October 6, 1981), president Mubarak moved forward to consolidate its regime and now the chances were bright as Saudi Arabia and other centerist regimes also took interest in this direction, and this was US’ long desired objective for West Asia.9

In the same year in mid November 1981 in G.C.C. meeting Saudi Arabia supported Kuwaits view which confirmed the need to keep the region as a whole away from international conflict specially the presence of military fleet and foreign bases. But this was indirectly a strong support to nonaligned country. Meanwhile US declared Saudi Arabia a major air and military command base for US RDF.10

President Reagan had repeatedly declared that they would not let Saudi Arabia fall either from trouble within or from aggression of outside. In 1981, debate in his successful proposal to permit the sale of 85 billion dollars worth of militry aircraft to Saudi Arabia, Reagan said in press conference that “Saudi Arabia will not be permitted to be an Iran.”11


Another Israeli invasion began on June 6, 1982. The war was

10. Ibid. p. 100  
disastrous and resulted in a great resentment among Arab states against US and Israel. President Reagan was not prepared for this because he never favoured such sort of act from Israeli side. Secretary Haig gave a green signal to Israel to attack on the Palestinian base in south Lebanon the outcome benefitted Israel.  

By early July 1982, Israel was making clarification that removal of Palestinians from west Beirut was necessary. Reagan was not at Washington at that time, might be the situation would have taken a different turn in his presence. He was attending European Economic Conference at Versailles, when he returned, the situation was quite grim. US alone voted against Israel in Security Council resolution on June 26, 1982, that called for Israeli pull back from Beirut and for Palestinian forces in Beirut to withdraw existing camp. The Middle East negotiator, Philip Habib, went to Jerusalem and Damascus to bring about ceasefire The US refused to talk with PLO directly and Habib had to shoulder this responsibility through Lebanese government representatives but failed to bring peace and Beirut was terribly bomborded. Lastly, PLO signed an agreement with Lebanon to withdraw from Lebanon and Syria. This affected US-Saudi relations because Saudi Arabia had long been involved in Lebanon since 1974 when a civil war broke out there. In the meantime President Reagan asked Secretary of state to quit the office in July 1982. His policy of unconditional commitment to Israel to oust PLO from Lebanon, placed the US in an awkward position. After his departure Reagan maintained some distance with Israel.  

The new incumbent George Shultz as Secretary of State was more

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12 Killerman, Barbara Jeffery & Z Rubin (Ed ) Readership and Negotiations In the Middle East, Praeger Publication, New York, 1988 P P213-214
13 Ibid. P 217
conscious about West Asian problems and US interests there. He was expected to be more practical in restoring US-Israeli traditional relations and good relations with PLO as well. As he joined the office, US policy took a decisive turn. President Reagan proposed a new peace initiative and this plan reiterated the idea of Israeli withdrawal in return for peace. It called for immediate freez on Israeli settlements and asked for self government by the Palestinian of the West Bank and Ghaza stripe in association with Jordan. The proposal clearly recognized Arab character of occupied territories and rejected the Israeli claim of sovereignty. Reagan reaffirmed US support for a five Year transition period outlined in the Camp David accord during which the Palestinian residing in West Bank and Ghaza would have full autonomy over their own affairs.\(^\text{14}\)

Naturally, the Reaganian stand was stringently criticized by the prime Minister Begin who rejected it absolutely. Shortly after nine days, Arab League states presented a plan for palestine at second Fez Summit in Morocco on September 9, 1982. This proposal had analogy with Fahad plan of August 1981.\(^\text{15}\)

The US Policy took a different turn in December 1983 after Yitzhak Rabin’s visit to US and gradually US returned on the same line and Arab cause was neglected again. Saudi Arabia was not happy with this posture. Saudi Arabia decided to turn to France for the purchase of air defence missiles and this was announced in January 1984 in reaction to the shift of US policy towards Israel.\(^\text{16}\)

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16 Ibid P P 127-128
All the plans were not very similar in their nature, they were different on certain grounds, if a comparison is made.

* While two Arab plans called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, the Reagan plan advocated only a Palestinian autonomy in association with Jordan.
* The Arab plan favoured return of East Jerusalem to Arab rule, while Reagan plan pleaded undivided Jerusalem.
* Fez plan II of 1982 September mentioned PLO as the Palestinian’s role representatives while Reagan did not.
* All the plans ended in glorious conclusions, it was not revived till 1988 under modified form.\(^\text{17}\)

C. **US AWACS Deal With Saudi Arabia** :-

The Reagan administration pursued a two fold foreign policy towards West Asia - First West Asia peace process and second Gulf Security arrangement that had already begun through Carter’s doctrine. The Carter doctrine had already established a background for Reaganian strategies especially through R D.F and F-15 deal with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. The new administration decided to upgrade the US-Saudi relationship by agreeing to sell the fuel tanks and air to air missiles they requested for their F-15 fighters as well as five Airborne Warning Control System AWACS aircraft.

Another important aspect of his strategy was anti-Soviet nature of its policies. The strategic consensus was meant to keep away Soviet advancement and Arab resistance. Reagan’s purpose was to gain the cooperation of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Pakistan.\(^\text{18}\)

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The Reagan administration announced on March 6, 1981 that the US was ready to sell required additional equipment, except for bombs racks to Saudi Arabia to counter a growing threat from the Soviet Union in West Asia. The administration further agreed in April 1981 to sell Saudi Arabia additional F-15 and five AWACS of their own, pending their delivery scheduled for 1985. 

The total cost of the AWACS planes to be deployed in 1985 was estimated at 5.8 billion dollars. The four airforce AWACS planes that were sent to Saudi Arabia at the time of Iran-Iraq war in October 1980 were to remain there until the new deliveries.

The Reagan administration viewed the sales as vital to preserve and enhance the US interest and influence in the area, particularly in the wake of the Iranian revolution and Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The AWACS and F-15 enhancement sales issue had its origin in the arms sales package for Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia in May 1978.

The Carter administration had to provide specific assurances to Congress regarding the Saudi use of the F-15 and had to limit the offensive capabilities of the aircraft in order to win Congressional support for the role of 60, F-15 to Saudi Arabia. Saudi interest in AWACS was encouraged by seeing its capabilities first hand when it was operated in March 1979, during the north Yamen and south Yamen conflict. In September 1979 Saudi Arabia formally requested for AWACS deal with US. After some months in 1980, Zebignew Brezinsky visited Saudi Arabia and Saudi gave a list of items they wished to purchase i.e. MERZO0, CFTS AIM-9L and

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19 Seth, P Tillman ... op cit. 1982, P 119
Sidewinder missiles etc.\textsuperscript{21}

Subcommittee on September 17, 1981 made a reference with Israel's strong support "We must not let our friends worried about one another (Saudi Arab and Israel that diminishes our commitment to their security or hinder our plans to extend strategic cooperation with them."\textsuperscript{22}

President Reagan and Secretary Haig had always some differences so far as their country's foreign relations were concerned. Reagan always looked AWACS sale to Saudi Arab with a positive angle despite the Secretary's reluctance and Congressional opposition. The security concern was a major feature of his Gulf policy and for this to equip up Saudi regime was a very important and inevitable question. He announced on 1st October 1981 that "It is not the business of other nations to make US foreign policy." This was a harsh responsive indication to the Israeli prime minister Begin who sharply opposed any defence pact with Saudi Arab and specially on AWACS\textsuperscript{23}

Despite its support for Saudi Arabia the Reagan administration also maintained with its allies in the region, particularly Israel. If it allowed for AWACS deal to Saudi Arab, the conditions imposed on Saudi Arabia were also very diplomatic and strategic so far as Israeli security was concerned. The conditions were—

1. No AWACS flights outside of Saudi Arabian border would be permitted without prior US consent
2. No AWACS would be used against Israel that might threaten its security.

\textsuperscript{21} The Congress and the US Foreign Policy. US Govt Printing Press. 1982 PP 25-26
See details also in Hearing Committee on Foreign Relations. Arms sale package to Saudi Arab. 97th Congress. First session. Oct. 1 to 15, 1981. Washington
\textsuperscript{22} Seth, P Tillman. op cit. P 120
\textsuperscript{23} Bradly, Paul op cit. P 119
3. Third world country modification to AWACS equipment would be prohibited and no third party country personnel would be allowed to perform AWACS maintenance.

4. A detailed plan to ensure the security of AWACS technology and equipment was a matter of great concern to many Congressmen who feared that AWACS plans might fall into the hostile hands.

5. An assurance that AWACS intelligence shared with the US should not be transmitted to the third parties.24

Some of the Congress members were too adamant to this sale to Saudi Arabia because Saudi Arabia opposed Camp David accord of 1978 and Egypt-Israeli treaty of 1979. Moreover, it refused to offer a base for R.D.F immediately after Carter doctrine was announced.25 When Israel expressed great concern on this step of US, Reagan administration assured Israel that any arms package to Saudi Arab would not harm and endanger Israeli security and the principal reason for that decision was Soviet threat to the Persian Gulf. Only two Senators John Tomer and Gold Water supported this plan.26

On the other hand Saudi Arabia looked Israel with suspicious eyes. Petroleum minister Ahmad Zaki Yamani's reaction was very sharp. He pointed out that Israel and international communism are the principal dangers to Saudi Arab and Gulf as a whole. In New York he addressed oil executives and declared that "Soviet threat reinforces our (US-Saud) friendship and Israel is threat to US". He was certain and confident that the US would not reverse from its promises. Those who favoured this deal expressed that Saudi friendship was vital and valued for US interests.

in West Asia and for the defense of oil fields.

Truly speaking, the administration was in a deep trouble with its Saudi Arms sale proposal. The proposal could not be effectively presented regarding AWACS/F-15 package to the Congress. The administration had to face a lot of sharp condemnation and at that time Legislative (Congress) was getting strong over executive (President). Later on Saudis were offered a compromise in which the US would retain joint control of the aircraft in 1990s in exchange for a fuller compliments of electronic equipments on the planes. The Saudis by all accounts rejected any agreement that would lead to joint control. Secretary of State Alexander Haig and Secretary of Defence said that rejection of this proposal would be a serious set back to their effort to counter Soviet threats in the region. President Reagan vowed very strongly that Saudi Arabia would not be allowed to be an Iran that indicated that US had earlier planned to sell AWACS to Iran during the Shah’s period. He further stated that the deal would not compromise their security.

Evidently, it was total failure so far as US-saudi relations were concerned at that time. Neither Saudi Arabia could get AWACS planes easily. it had to face severe criticism, nor it was appreciated for its efforts to support Arab cause and palestine. The relations during this period remained troubled, ambivalent and insecure between both.

After a long hue and cry, President Reagan paid a gratitude to Congressmen as Congress approved the proposal for F-15 and AWACS and James Baker played a key role in this process.

The impact of the AWACS was likely to extend for year to come.

Ibid. P.266
28 Facts on File Vol 41, No 2133, October 2-9 Pp 705-706
because the sale promised to entail US involvement with Saudi AWACS operations beyond 1990s. The administration asserted that the sale would not affect Israel’s military superiority and in the long run would contribute to the stability in the Gulf. In a press conference President Reagan supported Fahad plan as Saudi Arabia for the first time considered Israel as state. A month after, US and Israel agreed on a proposal (memorandum) of understanding based on Reagan’s policy of strategic consensus. But the US had suspended all this after December 18, 1981 when Israel annexed Golan Heights. As a matter of fact, it was Israel that betrayed and initiated tension that led to the Lebanon war of 1982. Obviously, Israel reacted sharply. Palestine problem remained standstill and reactions on AWACS continued for a long time.

D- US And Iran-Iraq War:

US took full advantage of Iran-Iraq war as it continued for eight years. The US and many other powers took hands off postures on the ground that they could have little effect on the outcome of the conflict. The US took a sharp turn when Iran became more violent in 1985-86 and it started heavy retaliation that inflicted neutral shipings enroute to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Consequently, US moved a substantial number of naval ships to the Gulf and managed all its efforts to protect international shipping. By the end of 1987 there were approximately seventy NATO warships in Gulf including twenty nine Stingers.

Significantly, the US wanted to give a tough blow to Iran indirectly.


or directly, that is why Iraq come closer to US and US supported Iraq wholeheartedly at that time. for the first time US and Iran were on opposite directions, and hostage problem enhanced the US resentment. Moreover, US had hidden intention to weaken two nonaligned countries. These two contries—Iran and Iraq are nonaligned countries and both of them were loosers in that war. The differences among the Arab nations and their disunity paved the way for US interest to be fulfilled in West Asia.

Eventually, Soviet-Iraq relations at that time were strained and US took all possible advantages as the circumstances were favourable to it. US supported Iraq as never before and it was used as tool against Soviet Union (whose Iraq was an ally and friend) and Iran (whose it was enemy) on international chessboard. Iran was already declared as terrorist state by the US. In reaction Iran declared US as a ‘Club of Saitans.’

**Gulf States Response:**

The Gulf Sheikhdoms moved towards Saudi Arabia to seek protection from the harmful repercussions of Iran-Iraq war. On the other hand Saudi Arabia was also interested to expand its security cooperation with smaller Gulf states e.g., Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and U.A. E. etc. Eversince grand Mosque and Kaba was attacked in 1979, Saudi Arabia took a different turn for its internal security and enlarged its circle including all the smaller Gulf states. Much attention was paid on internal security and AWACS, F-15 etc. were purchased to serve this purpose.

As far as US policy towards Gulf was concerned it had to face some problems in early 80.

1. The determination of the Gulf states to avoid any US military presence in the Gulf.
2 Growing perception of US as pro-Israeli imperialist power
3 Growing Soviet threat in the region.

All these challenges compelled US to improve its credibility with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states through the sale of sophisticated weapons. Concomitantly, Saudi Arabia found itself in the ironic position of having a negative cashflow problem in its current account. However, economic and commercial relations were not disturbed with US. In 1982, US exports of industrial products including (weaponary) to Saudi Arabia exceeded 9 billion dollars with another 500 million dollars in agriculture product.

In US - Saudi Joint Economic Commerce Commission (1974) with its eight formal session in October 1983, held in Riyadh, the senior US officials reviewed with their counterparts the progress achieved over the last years. Two major programmes were signed in the area of emergency, medical services and technology transportation. Apart from it the commission expressed its appreciation to all of the participating Saudi Arabian ministers and US agencies for their commitment and dedication in achieving goals of US - Saudi economic and technical cooperation.

Surprisingly, despite some strains and lack of confidence due to controversy over F-15 and AWACS package, their economic relations remained sound. The Reagan administration's primary concern was to keep away Soviet Union and its influence. He gave importance to anti-Soviet stand than anything, not only in West Asia put in Latin America,
In 1984, the U.S. president was re-elected and his second term in its later years was quite deferent in comparison with the first one. The intensity of cold war had reduced and an era of competition slowed down. However, US policies towards Saudi Arabia continued to be flexible (smooth) as they were in other stages earlier. President Reagan authorized the immediate sale to Saudi Arabia of 200 ‘Stinger’ air to air defence missile in May 1984. This deal was in connection with neutral shipping that was attacked by Iran. Such fatal activities could have threatened Saudi Arabian oil fields and supplies on which much of the industrial infrastructure depends. Saudi Arabia was ready and shortly after the proposal was approved it paid for weapon and its transportation. US was really very much concerned to the growing Gulf war influence in West Asian area. With this delivery the US sent fuel tanks CFTS for 101 tanks sets which were sold to Saudi Arabia in 1981. 

In the same connection the Under Secretary of State for political affairs (Armacost) presented statement before a subcommittee of the Senate on 5th June 1984. He pointed out four pronged US Gulf policy consisted of:

1- Free flow of oil to the West from West Asia,
2- containment of the influence of the Soviet Union,
3- Firm and quick response to the request of Gulf states and Saudi Arabia and 4- Lastly, peace in West Asia and harmony between Arabs and Israel.

At that time Iran was a vigorous challenge to US and its allies. Had the war spread to the G.C.C. borders, it would have endangered Saudi Arabia.
and denied oil supplies to the free world. Access to Persian Gulf oil is vital to the world economy. Gulf countries were exporting nearly 8 million barrel oil per day to the (European state) free world. At that crucial moment provision of 'stingers' and the tankers were firm proof of US-Saudi relationship.

After one month of joining his office of second term in January 1988, King Fahad urged to president Reagan to take full advantage of his landslide victory to involve the US more vigorously in West Asia peace process. In a joint communique released by the White House President Reagan and king Fahad both leaders agreed to a comprehensive Middle East peace process.

The US played an active part in the effort, the visits to the US of king Fahad in February 1985 and Hosni Mubarak's visit in March 1988 provided opportunities for finding ways to peace process. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy made an exploratory trip to the region in April 1985. Secretary Shultz recently visited the area and met with Israeli prime Minister. Jordanian king Shah Hussain and Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. These recent discussions were centrally based on two objectives.

1. The prospects for direct negotiations between Jordanians, Palestinians and Israelis on terms that all can accept it.

2. The second was to strengthen ties between Israel and Egypt. Despite the chances were least bright to solve the problems but the US was optimistic having faith, commitment and determination of its friends

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[36] Facts on file Vol 45, No 2308, Feb. 15, 1985 P 100
in the region towards peace.  

In early March 1986 the US Administration sent to Congress an informal notification for sale of additional air to air, air to sea and ground to air missiles to Saudi Arabia for defense with an assurance they did not pose any threat to Israel. Four new considerations led the US Administration to take these steps immediately.  

1. Iran’s escalating influence and crossing of Shattal Arab river.  
2. US Administration’s willingness to support Saudi self defence that would be a deterrent to Iran.  
3. The unstable situation of South Yamen exacerbated by Soviet Union.  

These were the major US policy determinants towards Saudi Arabia to make its US position strong and to check the Soviet influence in West Asia. Saudi Arabia has been the only country which could support US in its own interest. The strengthening of Saudi air defence capability was a major contribution in Saudi defence and most important aspect of this was it did not pose threat to Israel. The deal had total cost of 354 million dollars.  

As usual, this proposal was also disapproved by the Congress by a decisive margin of the votes. One of the discontentment of Congressional opponents was that some of the missiles sold to Saudi Arab might be
transferred to the terrorists hands. However, a classified General Accounting Office report disputed that idea that there was no any evidence that any of weapon or 'stinger' had fallen into the hands of terrorists. Some other Congressmen criticized Saudi Arabia for financing PLO.41

This refusal triggered off President's resentment as he endured another set back in Congress and obviously later on it would have become the prestige matter on President's side. President's Deputy Secretary declared on May 7, 1986 that Congress had discouraged and endangered their longstanding security ties to Saudi Arabia. The President would not allow to happen that The proposed sale was more in favour of US interest than the Saudi's. It was necessary to defend its ally against radicalism, terrorism and communism.42

Consequently, president sent a message to Congress in which he referred long back US Saudi relationship what was started by President Roosevelt and King Abdul Aziz in 1943 and endorsed by each president since then This longstanding policy would not be allowed to be dismantled because it was against their vital interests Moreover, priority would be given to the security of Israel. However, great importance was to be given to the oil rich Gulf states. Saudi willingness to stand against the Iranian threat has been a key factor in preventing the chaos in the region and this showed Saudi Arab's confidence and faith in US commitments. He expressed anxiety if the sale of arms was to be shut off because that would weaken the US credibility and Saudi ability to defend themselves He stressed that Saudis had proved their friendship and goodwill they assisted the US efforts to support responsible government in Egypt, Jordan and

41 Facts on File, vol 46, No 2371, May 2, 1986 P 332
Ultimately, president Reagan won Congressional approval but Congress’s pressure reduced the weapons package to less than 10% of the Saudis required list of arms. In the month of June 1986, President Regan reminded Congress about the sale of AWACS. He pointed out that already deployed AWACS significantly contributed to the Gulf stability and security. The President admired Saudi efforts towards peace in West Asia and Saudi mediation mission to pacify Iran-Iraq war. The Fahad plan of 1981, the Arab endorsement in 1982 at Fez, significantly, and irreversibly modified the Arab consensus of three ‘Nos’ initiated at Khartoom conference during the oil embargo period of 1973-74: ‘no recognition,’ ‘no negotiation’ and ‘no conciliation’ with Israel.

Significantly, Saudi Arabia sought to convince the modernization and expansion of its force by obtaining arms from the US. Unfortunately, the Reagan administration could not make Congress satisfied in most of the cases, specially in Saudi matters. The present arms deal was reorientation and rebuilding of US strategic relations with Saudi Arab after the failure of F-15 package and Saudi moved toward Britain and France for weaponry. Reagan administration began to fight against Congressional obstacles and lastly won enough by resorting to veto power whenever necessary.

Soon in June 1987, administration recommended for 1600 Maverick missiles of 360 million dollars, to enhance Saudi Maverick inventory capacity through RASF with an anti Tank missile. But lately, Reagan had

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Sudan

43 Weekly Compilation of Presidential Speeches, May 26, 1986, p 675
44 Facts on File, vol 46, No 2375, May 1986, p 408 Col 3
45 Department of State Bulletin, vol 86, No 2714 Sept 1986, P 80
to withdraw this proposal because of strong Congressional opposition. President greatly regretted on this suspension but assured the Saudi Government that US would be there at the time of crisis and if necessary it would provide 'Mavericks' from its own defence stock. 47

In October 1987, Secretary of State visited Saudi Arabia and tried his best to make the Saudi authority assured of US instant assistance during the crisis time shortly after his visit, Prince Abdullah went US and reaffirmed US Saudi relationship of 50 years. 48 Whatever the US Saudi relationships remained during the Reagan period but frequent Congress opposition automatically drifted the Saudi direction for arms sale towards China. Saudi Arabia purchased 25 C-SS 5 from China despite US and Israel's grave concern. Reaction and anxiety prevailed in administration and in May 1988 Secretary of State for Near Eastern matters proposed that in the light of US foreign policy towards Saudi Arabia this new sale would include Boeing's renewal of operation and maintenance contract for the Saudi AWACS programme. This also included KE-3 aerial refuelling tankers and five Saudi AWACS with their electric instruments. Saudi Arabia had to purchase these systems because of Iranian threat.

The Secretary for Near East Richard Murphy said—"Our relationship with the friendly Arab states in the Gulf including Saudi Arabia have been vitally important factor for our own national security interests. To the extent that Saudis choose to rely on US and for this to happen we must continue to be seen as reliable and consistent supplier" 49

Though the security dimension of both the countries US and Saudi

47 American Foreign Policy Current Documents 1977, P 252 in 45
48 Ibid P 458
49 Ibid P 463-465
Arabia were centrally on normal grounds and their mutual interests were vested in that, specially during 1980s it was not free from constraints, pressure and tensions. Both the countries shared broad objectives but many times differed in their priorities—— Saudi Arabia always fought for Arab cause directly or indirectly and financially supported PLO (sometimes in low voice or sometimes in articulated way). On the other hand, US, despite supporting Saudi Arabia, (not let to cease fabulous oil flow from those states to it), never compromised on Israeli security. Both of them reacted accordingly so far as Israeli factor was concerned.

Some of Saudis did not realize and recognize US contribution somewhere and (sometimes totally selfless) they had been suspicious of US approaches and behaviour. Those Saudis argue that Saudi security is the guarantee to maintain the availability of petroleum (here US economic interests were hidden) And if Saudi Arabian security is jeopardized by Communist or Iranian threat, at that moment US support to Saudi Arabia and is just ‘show off’ nothing more than that and through these activities only US interests are served.  

However, Saudi and US interests converged on common desire to check Soviet influence and spread of radical and fundamentalist threats but on certain issues they differed. Specially Israel and PLO were the crux point of their differences. The special relationship was to be more strengthened but since 1979 conditions in West Asia and the world were not favourable and congenial in which US Saudi relationship could have flourished in a very special manner as it was imagined in mid 1970s after the end of oil embargo. Both the countries were drawn into the bewildering chain of global issues as Islamic revolution, Egypt-Israeli treaty, Mecca...

incident, Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, Lebanon Conflict, Iran-Iraq war, inter-Arab dispute all these presented a multitude of tension. US-Saudi domestic matters, Saudi suspicion and Congressional deprecation of any arm deal to Saudi Arabia had brought a distance between them. Though their economic and commercial relations remained unaffected, a gap in their mutual relationship was realized from both the sides. Both maintained a degree of ambivalence towards their relationship. Evidently, US did not let Saudi Arabia to be as Iran as they repeatedly expressed; and Americans got success in doing the things settled according to their requirements and objectives.

The Reagan administration passed through two major terms of eight years. His first term 1981-84 passed through an intense and severe cold war; the other four years 1984-88 were milder in their approach and foreign relations. Though President Reagan continued his anti-Soviet approach but since the arrival of Soviet leader Gorbachev their thinking started to change. A realization prevailed between the two rival superpowers that ideological war could not be won by either of them. This cold war was the preparation of actual Third World War, nuclear armament, idea of star war, amassing of nuclear weapon and their terrible and disastrous effect were just burden on their economy.

Therefore, Ronald Reagan’s second term in US presidency roughly coincided with the end of a period of uncertainty in Soviet leadership.

In the annals of US-Soviet relations Reagan had become the first president who had moved actively and frequently towards the direction of disarmament. In less than three year, he had four high yielding meetings including first summit in Nov. 1985 in Geneva, in 1987 in Island at Rykjavik, in April 1987 again in Geneva for INF treaty and that was
ratified in Washington in the same year in December. The forth one was in Moscow in June 1988. All these were testimony of a different kind of approach of the superpowers. On his part, Reagan felt restlessly to do something eventful of historical importance. On the other hand, Gorbachev also "played contributory role to bring international peace and security to move actively and pragmatically toward the end of mutual rivalry. This resulted into a striking departure from the conventional position of teaching each other lesson as potential rivals to look forward to a new modalities of bilateral conduct."

The objective of Reaganian policy was not just to contain Soviet Union but to defeat communism and conquer the ideological war. Reagan was one step further than Carter's 'Human Right' and he used it as a tool to defeat Communism and demoralize the Soviet Union."

The Reagan administration had to crack very hard nut many times due to the differences with Congress but the President did it firmly."

No matter how far Reagan was adament and firm in his decisions and policies but his second terms' second half passed very coolly. Signing of INF treaty in 1988 and different disarmament summits and most important by Gorbachevian policies and their own realization of annihilations and disastrous effects of the cold war—all these presented a picture of relief and calm atmosphere after a long time Iran Iraq war came to an end in July 1988 and agreement was signed on August 20, 1988. President Bush won the election in Nov 1988. President Reagan

left behind a period of intense cold war and reduction of cold war and president Bush entered into an era of threshold. Generally some regional problems were settled down but many of them remained unsettled specially Arab-Israel and PLO problem. A whirlwind of political crises was waiting to blow in coming years that stirred again many things in international politics.