CONCLUSION

The United States policy towards West Asia was primarily motivated by significant factors like the thrust to contain communism in the region, to exploit the Middle East oil economy, and to safeguard the state of Israel as the US natural ally against the Palestinian Arabs who were deprived of their lands as a result of the partition plan and the subsequent creation of the state of Israel in 1947 and 1948 respectively.

With the establishment of Jewish state during the 1940s the American foreign policy perception and approaches towards the Middle East changed dramatically as the state Department officials gradually emphasised on maintenance of harmonious relations with the Arabs for two important reasons: firstly, the demand for oil was rising domestically in the United States; secondly, the region was becoming viable commercially. The US authorities adopted a policy of reconciliation and compromise both with the Israelis and the Arabs in looking at the Palestinian issue because the US national interests were also involved in the region.

The entrance of the Soviet Union in the Middle East politics as a favourable partner of Egypt and Syria both in peace and war, however, provided an opportunity for the Soviet presence in the region. Thus, both the Americans and the Soviets presented conflicting solutions to the Arab-Israeli issue as they remained far from compromising their national interests.
After the 1967 Arab-Israeli war debacle, in spite of the Egyptian leader, Gamal Abdul Nasser's "war of Attrition" on the Suez front, it yielded no concrete results except the cease-fire in the summer of 1970.

With the assumption of office as the President of Egypt following the death of Nasser, President Anwar Al-Sadat, in order to achieve the Arab lands, occupied by Israel during the 1967 war, sought the "offensive weapons" from the Soviet Union. But the Russians' disinterest to accelerate any war and her quest to continue the process of détente with the United States, prompted the Soviets to abstain from supplying Egypt with the weapons which further resulted in Sadat's apathy towards the Soviet Union and expulsion of the Soviet technicians from Egypt in 1972. At the same time, Sadat's expectations from the US Administration was belied as the Americans themselves did not want to take risks of alienating the most powerful pro-Israeli Jewish lobby and Israeli Government by supplying weapons to Egypt. It was never imagined that a war could be in the offing as the Arabs had not been so much strong to withstand a renewed war in the Middle East and also when the Soviet posture was not congenial. Besides, in view of the process of détente between the Soviet Union and the United States, the chances of Arab-Israeli war was quite remote. But Sadat's failure of the "year of decision" and his declining prestige prompted him to launch an
offensive war along with the Syria as a partner against Israel in October 1973. When the war started, the Soviet Union sought to maintain the balance through providing Egypt with certain sophisticated weapons as the Russians did not want to abandon the most significant Arab power in which she had made tremendous investment. On the contrary, the United States, which had already come to rescue Israel as a result of the initial Arab success over the Israeli forces, had to face new emerging problem due to the war - the oil embargo. The war led to the imposition of the oil embargo by the organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting countries (OAPEC) which not only affected the United States but also crippled the world industries and transport. Consequently, the leaders of the European countries and Japan reframed their policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict and declared their support to Arab cause.

At the same time, the Nixon Administration had undergone a tough test due to the "Watergate scandal" at the domestic front and it conferred the sole authority on the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger to settle the Middle East crisis. The war was contained through the step-by-step diplomacy, played by the Secretary Kissinger. His policy had, however, gone awry in the long run which resulted in the fragmentation of the Arabs.

With the conclusion of the October 1973 war, the Soviet influence in the Middle East, particularly in Egypt was reduced
as a result of President Sadat's inclination towards the United States and the Americans' favourable attitude towards Egypt which eventually became the base for the Russian exit from Egypt and the Middle East as a whole. In fact, the 1973 war had provided an opportunity for the United States to take Egypt in its fold. At the same time, the war had costed the Egyptians and the Israelis heavily and President Sadat was making his efforts to reconstruct the Egyptian economy and obviously, the United States seemed to be the largest financier and aid giving country to Egypt as compared to the Soviet Union. Sadat further thought that his tilt towards the United States would pay rich dividends to Egypt as the Egyptian territories could be brought back from the Israeli occupation only with the American assistance.

After the successful conclusion of the cease-fire agreement between Egypt and Israel, the US Administration sought to move ahead with the policy to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict through negotiations and international peace conferences on West Asia. The most important and thorny issue which was the crux of the whole Arab-Israeli conflict was the Palestinian problem. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) which was declared by the Arab Summit in Khartoum as the sole representative of the Palestinians did not accept the US contention to scrap the PLO's declaration of liquidating the state of Israel whereas the US Administration declined to modify the United Nations Resolution 242 which had treated the Palestinians as refugees instead of providing
their Right to Self-determination. This, according to the Israelis only meant to set up a Palestinian state in the occupied West Bank and Gaza strip.

Israel’s persistent refusal to allow the PLO’s participation in the international peace conference and the differences of approach among the Arab countries on the one hand and Arabs and Israelis on the other, was felt by Sadat as undermining his interest to restore the Sinai Peninsula from Israelis. Finally, President Sadat took a historic step to visit Israel and to demonstrate his interest also to solve the Palestinian imbroglio. His visit shook the Arab world’s confidence in general and the Palestinians in particular. Sadat’s visit to Israel, however, was conducive to the Carter Administration to start the negotiations with both the Arab and Israeli leaders in order to achieve a breakthrough to solve the Arab-Israeli problem amicably.

After a prolonged and a series of negotiations, conducted by the United States, President Carter ultimately succeeded to frame the Camp David Accords which was signed in 1978 between President Sadat of Egypt and Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel. The two Accords - "The Framework for peace in the Middle East" and the "Framework for the treaty of peace between Egypt and Israel" was considered to be the triumph for both the United States and Israel. President Sadat was vehemently condemned by the Arabs as a traitor and betrayed the Arab cause. Equally, the
Soviet authorities condemned him for having negotiated the Camp David Accords with Israel. The accords which ignored the Syrian losses in the October 1973 war, led the Syrians to oppose Camp David Accords whereas the PLO strongly condemned and rejected it. Both Syria and the PLO found it contributory to spread the anti-Camp David climate in the West Asian politics in view of the fact that Egypt surpassed the Arabs consensus against the settlement with Israel. 1

It may be pointed out that during the Camp David negotiations President Sadat had to make certain concessions as he sought to achieve a breakthrough in the Arab-Israeli conflict and further his credibility at the domestic front was at stake. In an interview to the Journal of Palestine Studies, Eric Rouleau, the Middle East editor of Le Monde, a French newspaper, expressed that: "Begin wasn't threatened if Camp David failed on the contrary, he could go back and say to the Israelis that they were trying to force him into a settlement jeopardising the security of the state of Israel. And few Israelis would have then turned against Begin. The person who was really threatened by the collapse of Camp David was Sadat. He had promised his people that if his initiative failed he would resign. Failure would have put him in a very difficult position. And if he did not want to resign he could have put up

a show by saying that he was now going to try other means - in
other words go back to the Arab fold, to Syria and the PLO and
especially the allies of those people, the Soviet Union for
which he has an allergy". 2

The most crucial moment came in March 1979, when the
treaty for peace between Egypt and Israel was concluded. Pre-
sident Carter was also a signatory as a witness to the treaty.
The treaty primarily provided for the recognition of Israel by
Egypt and the restoration of Israeli occupied Sinai to Egypt.
Massive American aid to both Egypt and Israel was promised by
the Carter Administration as a reward for signing of the treaty.
The Egypt-Israeli peace Treaty generated a world wide reaction,
particularly from the Palestinians whose cause were undermined by
the treaty. The Arab summit Conference passed the resolution for
the political and economic sanctions against Egypt but the
Conference also exposed the differences between the hardliners and
the moderates. Finally, Sadat's stubborn attitude towards the
Arab States led to the expulsion of Egypt from the Arab League and
organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

On the contrary, the Soviet Union strongly supported the
PLO cause in order to re-enter the Middle East region. The Soviets

2. "Options and Risks after Camp David: An Interview with Eric
Rouleau" Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. VIII, No. 2,
Winter 1979, pp. 42-43.
however, also had to lose their prestige in the Middle East as a result of their intervention in Afghanistan and they could not evoke a considerable response due to the fact that the Soviet Union was an atheism oriented state and most of the Arab countries had inherent xenophobia of such a state.

Although, Egypt had succeeded in its goal to achieve the Sinai area and the massive economic aid from the United States yet, she was the greatest loser of her prestige in the Arab world and she ceased to be the leader of Arabs as well. After the treaty, one of the most significant issues cropped up in the midst of the talks, was to grant autonomy to the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza strip. In fact, the Israelis were in no mood to grant the full autonomy to the Palestinians not only because they feared a militant Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza but they also sought to preserve their settlements which were being increased by the Begin Government. Apart from the Egyptians, the Israeli settlement policy also perturbed the Americans as it was one of the main obstacles in the way of the autonomy talks between Egypt and Israel. But the US Administration could not stop the Government to pursue the policy of settlements as it had to bow to the pro-Israeli Jewish lobby which not only played a significant role in the US Administration but also influenced the American mass media and the socio-economic and political spheres in that country.
What really lacked in the autonomy talks was that the negotiations were being conducted between the Egyptians and the Israelis along with the Americans but they were not participated by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza strip who never conferred the authority on Egyptians to negotiate on their behalf. The autonomy talks, however, failed to evoke any viable results and its failure was due to the fact that the Camp David Accords had not adequately provided solutions to solve the Palestinians issue. Further, the Israelis never cared for the settlement of the Palestinian problem but to lurk the talks whereas Egypt's attitude was also meek and mild towards the solution of the Palestinian imbroglio, partly because of her desire to early retention of the Sinai and the oil fields and partly to emerge as a champion of Palestinian cause. At the same time, the rapprochement between the two countries was initiated with enthusiasm and the growing friendship was further strengthened by mutual co-operation between Egypt and Israel despite the failure of the autonomy talks.

Initially, the Carter Administration sought to achieve a comprehensive peace and repudiated the former Secretary of State Kissinger's step-by-step approach but soon Sadat's Jerusalem visit and the opposition by the Arab states prompted the US Administration to follow step-by-step approach which eventually led to the signing of the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel and it was in fact, a separate deal. The United States had presumed that the accords and the subsequent peace treaty
between Egypt and Israel, would lead to a permanent peace in the region. But the accords were outrightly rejected by the entire Arab world on the ground that it did not build up any premises for ensuring the lasting solution to the Palestinians nor accorded authority to the PLO even to demonstrate the right of self-determination in the West Bank and Gaza strip. The accords, however, had contained the war to some extent as 1973 war was the last Arab-Israeli confrontation.

Egypt was adversely affected both in economic and political spheres after having signed a separate peace treaty with Israel as Egypt was isolated by the Arabs, economic sanctions were imposed and the Egyptian goods were boycotted, apart from condemning Egypt in international forum. Even some of the Arab chauvanists advocated that Egypt should be expelled both from the Arab League and organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). In fact, Egypt-Israeli Peace Treaty divided the Arabs and jeopardised the chances of restoring peace in the Middle East as the Arabs raised arms against themselves and the US Administration lost its credibility and prestige instead of exerting influence among the Arabs. At the same time, the legitimacy of the Palestinians to create a separate state in the West Bank and Gaza strip was recognized by the world community. The accords and the subsequent peace treaty assumed the great importance from the Israeli viewpoint that she got the recognition of a potential Arab State - Egypt and established its permanent credentials in the region.
Palestinian issue which is characterized as the bone of contention and the crux of the whole Arab-Israeli conflict, must be solved in order to reduce the tension in West Asia and certain measures may be suggested for the same.

(a) At the first instance, Israel should withdraw from the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza strip and the UN Force should replace the Israeli forces as a prelude to the Palestinian state in return to the PLO's commitment to repudiate its preamble to liquidate Israel as Israeli existence is now a reality. The withdrawal of the Israeli forces was also justified by the former US President Richard Nixon, who has expressed in his book *1999: Victory Without War* that "... the peace process must focus on the future of the West Bank and the riot-torn Gaza strip ... Israel's interests require a peace settlement for the land occupied in 1967. If Israel annexes these lands, it will become a binational garrison state, with disenfranchised Arabs composing about half its population. Moreover, given the high birth rates of the Palestinian people, Jewish people will soon be a minority in the Jewish state. If, it continues its military occupation and gradual colonisation of these territories, it will eventually bring about a United Arab world hostile to Israel, with greater opportunities for Moscow to enter the region than ever before". 3

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Both the former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger and Cyrus Vance have expounded the similar points in their Joint article in *Foreign Affairs*. They pointed out that: "Israel should not and cannot stay when it is in the occupied territories. The demographic trends there are running against Israel; the militancy of a hostile population will increase, radicalism will grow in the rest of the Arab world... The Palestinians have legitimate rights which should be recognized, provided they in turn unambiguously recognize the right of Israel to live within secure and recognized boundaries".  

(b) Secondly, the Arab States should negotiate with the United States to persuade the Israelis for the Palestinian homeland in West Bank and Gaza. In fact, the United States is the only country which is politically, economically and militarily close to Israel and capable of admonishing Tel Aviv to accept the legitimacy of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza strip. 

(c) The Israeli public opinion should be mobilised through the various organisations and movements like the Peace Now movement which aimed to maintain the public pressure on the Israeli Government through urging them "to initiate moves, actively and constantly" 

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to achieve a peace between Israel and its neighbours. In fact, the Peace Now movement has been playing an important role in moulding public opinion in Israel since 1979. It should further pressurise the Israeli Government to adopt a policy of amicable settlement of Palestinian issue. Moreover, it also has the support of world Jewry, which in turn can influence the Jewish lobby in America.

(d) In order to solve the Palestinian imbroglio, all the powers which had been contributory to the creation of the state of Israel should negotiate with the Israelis and even use pressure tactics like economic, military and political sanctions, particularly by the United States. This can only be materialised if all the Arab States seriously take interest in quest for the Palestinian solution and generate a public opinion all over the world for convening international conference under the aegis of United Nations to establish a separate Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza strip. Unanimous world opinion alone can create a separate state for Palestinians and thus pave the way for restoration of permanent peace in the Middle East otherwise, the Palestinian issue would become intractable and the US Administration may always insist on the Camp David Accords whenever the issue is raised at the international fora.