A New Approach to the U.S.–Israel Alliance

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Introduction

Today, there can be little doubt that the relationship between the United States and Israel constitutes a *de facto* alliance. There is no formal treaty or agreement between the United States and Israel that includes a collective defense clause such as Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which stipulates that an attack against one member state shall be regarded as an attack against all the other member states, and that they shall respond to it accordingly. However, it is generally understood that the absence of such a treaty or agreement does not signify the nonexistence of a U.S.–Israel alliance.

Let us briefly review the current state of the bilateral security relationship between the United States and Israel. The most visible example is the military aid provided by the United States to Israel. According to data from October 2023, prior to the Gaza war, the total amount of military aid Israel had received from the United States since its establishment reached USD 130 billion, making Israel the largest recipient of United States military aid. At present, under the most recent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) covering 2019-2028, the United States provides Israel with a total of USD 3.8 billion annually, including USD 3.3 billion as grants under Foreign Military Financing (FMF)— this does not necessarily constitute a full grant, as it also includes loans—, and an additional USD 500 million per year for missile defense. Separately, under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) framework, Israel is to receive weapons and services worth USD 23.8 billion from the United States, covering approximately 600 items. The military aid from the United States to Israel is notable not only for its scale but also for its qualitative aspect. Israel has received cutting-edge weapons from the United States, including F-35 fighter aircraft. Israel's highly advanced air defense system, known as the "Iron Dome," was built with U.S. support totaling USD 1.3 billion since Fiscal Year (FY) 2011[1].

In addition to these bilateral agreements, various U.S. domestic laws stipulate the maintenance of a strong relationship with Israel. Israel has been designated as a "Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA)" since this category was first created in the late 1980s (countries including Japan, Australia, and Egypt were also designated at the same time). While the MNNA designation itself does not entail a security commitment by the U.S. to the country in question, it grants benefits in arms supply as well as weapons development and research comparable to those afforded to NATO member states. The Naval Vessel Transfer Act of 2008 explicitly articulated the policy of maintaining Israel's "qualitative military edge." Furthermore, the U.S.-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012, the U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014, and other such legislation stipulate the promotion of bilateral cooperation in diverse fields, including defense, cybersecurity, and energy. The 2014 Act also designated Israel as a "major strategic partner," although the definition of the term remains ambiguous[2].

These examples show that the security cooperation between the U.S. and Israel has been institutionalized in multiple layers through numerous agreements, understandings, and laws. What many of us have in mind when we refer to the security relationship between the United States and

[1] Department of State, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, "U.S. Security Cooperation with Israel: Fact Sheet," October 19, 2023, https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-israel/.

[2] Jim Zanotti, *Israel: Background and U.S. Relations*, Updated July 1, 2022 (Congressional Research Service, RL33476), pp. 11-12.

Israel as a *de facto* alliance is the entirety of this relationship, institutionalized through such agreements, understandings, and laws. This way of understanding the alliance may be referred to as an institutional interpretation of alliance[3]. Many previous studies have examined the origin of U.S.–Israel alliance by focusing on one of these institutions. However, because each study has a different focus, no clear consensus has emerged regarding the origin of the United States–Israel alliance.

This paper proposes a new approach as an alternative to the conventional one that seeks to trace the origin of the U.S.–Israel alliance by focusing on one of the institutions that constitute the alliance. This paper first examines, based on major previous studies and U.S. government publications, the origins of individual institutions that constitute the alliance and identifies limitations inherent in the institutional approach of the alliance. Next, the paper focuses on U.S. regional policy as an alternative factor to consider in examining the U.S.–Israel alliance, and from this perspective, analyzes the Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy administrations' policies toward Israel.

1. Origins of Various Institutions

This section provides an overview of the origins of the various institutions that constitute the U.S.–Israel alliance.

Harry S. Truman is remembered as a pro-Israel president because, shortly after the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948, he recognized the new state despite opposition from the Department of State and the military. However, previous studies based on the institutional interpretation do not regard an alliance relationship between the United States and Israel as having emerged during the Truman administration. During the first Arab–Israeli war, the United States maintained a neutral stance. In May 1950, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France issued the "Tripartite Declaration," confirming their intention to maintain peace in the Middle East region. This Declaration entailed no tangible commitments and lacked effectiveness. Nonetheless, it subsequently served as one of the rationales used by the United States government to oppose the arms race between the Arab states and Israel. The earliest bilateral security arrangements between the United States and Israel were the agreements concluded in 1951 and 1952, based respectively on the United States Mutual Security Act and the Mutual Security Assistance Act. However, these agreements did not signify a United States security commitment toward the signatory state, nor did they result in any active expansion of arms supplies from the United States to Israel.

[3] One recent research trend, distinct from the institutional interpretation of alliance, is the advocacy of a "new diplomatic history." This trend has emerged as a critique of traditional diplomatic history and the history of international relations, which have focused on relations between states, and can be summarized as an approach that seeks to incorporate not only the "state" but also "society" into the analysis of international relations. A study on the history of U.S.–Israel relations that aligns with the "new diplomatic history" is that by David Tal. Tal argues that every U.S. administration and president has, to varying degrees, been "pro-Israel," and attributes this to a widely shared sentiment within American society, namely, a sense of unity with "Judeo-Christian civilization." Even more striking is Tal's finding, based on his analysis of Israeli documents, that the Israeli government engaged in lobbying efforts to influence the White House, Congress, and pro-Israel organizations. He goes on to argue, however, that successive U.S. presidents pursued pro-Israel policies regardless of such lobbying or pressure. In other words, pro-Israel actions taken by the U.S. government were not the result of pressure from Israel or pro-Israel forces within the U.S. David Tal, *The Making of an Alliance: The Origins and Development of the U.S.-Israel Relationship* (Cambridge University Press, 2022). Tal's research, which makes use of Israeli documents, has significant value, and his fundamental understanding of the issue, which seeks to examine the U.S.–Israel relationship at a societal level, is significant. However, the author contends that Tal's analysis, which attributes the close U.S.–Israel relationship to "Judeo–Christian civilization," falls into a form of essentialism that stands in stark contrast to the institutional interpretation of alliance.

The subsequent Eisenhower administration is widely regarded as a period of stagnation in the U.S.–Israel relations. Although the Eisenhower administration officially proclaimed a policy of "impartiality" toward Arab states and Israel, in practice, it placed greater emphasis on relations with Arab nations. The perception that the Eisenhower administration was cold toward Israel at that time is indirectly evident from the fact that both the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC; originally known as the American Zionist Committee on Public Affairs) and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, which would later grow into a major pro-Israel lobbying group in the United States, were formed during the Eisenhower administration. Contrary to this perception, Isaac Alteras emphasizes that the Eisenhower administration's policies were not in practice as cold toward Israel as they appeared, and that, much like the Truman administration, it consistently took Israel's security into account[4]. Furthermore, studies by Douglas Little and Abraham Ben-Zvi can be cited as identifying the origin of the *de facto* alliance between the United States and Israel in the Eisenhower administration. According to Little, the origin of the bilateral "partnership" lies in the Eisenhower administration's favorable view of Israel's efforts after the Suez War to strengthen ties with anti–Arab nationalist states such as Iran and Turkey[5]. Ben-Zvi argues that, following the Iraqi revolution in July 1958, when the United States deployed troops to Lebanon and Britain to Jordan, demonstrating their support for the pro-Western regimes in both countries, Israel's decision to permit the passage of British and American military aircraft through its airspace, led the Eisenhower administration to view Israel as a strategic asset, which was the impetus for the U.S.–Israel alliance[6]. The Eisenhower administration's policies toward Israel are analyzed in detail in the following section.

All previous studies agree that U.S.–Israel relations grew closer in the 1960s. However, the studies differ in their views on the precise point in time that should be regarded as the origin of the U.S.–Israel alliance. One view identifies 1962 as the origin of the alliance, when the Kennedy administration decided to provide Israel with Hawk surface-to-air missiles, and in talks with the Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir, declared that the United States had "special relations" with Israel comparable to those with the United Kingdom[7]. However, the most prevalent view is that following the Six-Day War of 1967, the U.S. government came to regard Israel as a strategic asset and sought to deter the Arab states militarily by strengthening Israel's military capabilities, thereby preventing the recurrence of Arab–Israeli wars. The shift in U.S. policy toward Israel was clearly evident in the post-war settlement of the Six-Day War. After the Suez War of 1956, the Eisenhower administration compelled the complete withdrawal of the forces of Britain, France, and Israel from the occupied territories through diplomatic and economic pressure. In contrast, after the Six-Day War, the Lyndon B. Johnson administration did not demand that Israel withdraw from the West Bank, Sinai Peninsula, and Golan

[4] Isaac Alteras, *Eisenhower and Israel: U.S. Israeli Relations, 1953-1960* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1993), pp. 315-317. The detailed analysis in Chapters 8 and 9 of the book, which examines the Suez War and the process leading to Israel's withdrawal after the war, is particularly outstanding.

[5] Douglas Little, "The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and Israel, 1957-68," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 25, no. 4 (November 1993), pp. 563-585.

[6] Abraham Ben-Zwi, *Decade of Transition: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Origins of the American Israeli Alliance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

[7] Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 95-96. As is well known, Walt's works aim to quantitatively analyze the exact nature of "alliances" and therefore rely on data from previous studies for factual details. In other words, Walt considers 1962 as the origin of the U.S.–Israel alliance because he regards this as the broad consensus among previous studies. However, following his definition (working hypothesis) of "alliance" as "a formal or informal agreement concerning security cooperation between two or more sovereign states," Walt identifies as many as 36 "alliances" that emerged over the approximately 25-year period from 1955 to 1979, and the U.S.–Israel alliance is counted merely as one of them.

Heights, which it had occupied, and accepted the principle of "peace for territory[8]." Although views differ on the alliance's origin, there is a broad consensus that 1967 was a major turning point in U.S.–Israel relations[9].

Many previous studies also note a shift in the types of weapons supplied by the United States to Israel in the 1960s. Until then, the U.S. government had pursued a policy of avoiding becoming a primary arms supplier to either side in the Arab–Israeli conflict. As a result, in the late 1950s, for example, the Israeli Air Force's fighter aircraft were primarily composed of French-made Ouragan, Mystère, and Mirage. The decision to supply Hawk surface-to-air missiles in 1962 marked the first time the United States provided Israel with advanced weapons[10]. In 1965, the Johnson administration indicated its willingness to permit the supply of A-4 Skyhawk fighter aircraft (with actual deliveries beginning in 1968), and following the Six-Day War, it decided to supply F-4 Phantoms[11]. As a result, from this period onward, the Israeli Air Force was equipped with advanced U.S.-made fighter aircraft. However, the decision to supply F-4 Phantom jets to Israel can be attributed to a large extent to France's shift toward a pro-Arab policy and its suspension of fighter aircraft supplies to Israel. This fact strongly suggests that whether the supply of advanced U.S. weaponry signified a qualitative transformation in the bilateral relations requires separate consideration.

Related to this, it remains unclear when the policy of maintaining Israel's military superiority, now institutionalized in U.S. policy toward Israel, was initially adopted. An often-cited early example of such a policy being articulated by a U.S. government official is Secretary of State Alexander Haig's testimony before Congress in April 1981, in which he testified that maintaining Israel's military superiority had been an important U.S. policy objective since the Yom Kippur War. However, previous studies have not empirically demonstrated that such a policy had, in fact, been decided as of 1973. Looking at specific cases, while Hawk surface-to-air missiles and A-4 Skyhawk fighter aircraft were not supplied to other Middle Eastern states at the same time as to Israel, F-4 Phantoms began to be supplied to Iran at the same time as to Israel. Later, in the 1980s, Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft were supplied to Saudi Arabia but not to Israel. However, it has also been pointed out that when powerful weapons were supplied to Arab states, arms packages were also supplied to Israel as an "offset." There is room for further examination as to when the policy to maintain Israel's "qualitative military edge," codified in the 2008 legislation mentioned above, was first formulated and institutionalized[12].

Finally, when attention is directed to the trends in U.S. aid, a more complex picture emerges. The total amount of U.S. aid (including military and economic aid in grants and loans[13]) to Israel first

[8] Nadav Safran, *Israel---The Embattled Ally* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981), chaps. 21 and 22; William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967*, revised edition (University of California Press, 2001), pp. 41-52.

[9] For example, some studies argue that Israel's cooperation with the Jordanian government in the Jordanian civil war of 1970 was an important turning point in leading the U.S. government to regard Israel as a strategic asset. Yaacov Bar-Simon-Tov, "The United States and Israel since 1948: A 'Special Relationship'?" *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Spring 1998), 231-261.

[10] Ben-Zvi, *John F. Kennedy and the Politics of Arms Sales to Israel* (London: Frank Cass, 2002).

[11] Zach Levey, "The United States' Skyhawk Sale to Israel, 1966," *Diplomatic History*, vol. 28, no. 2 (April 2004), pp. 255-276; David Rodman, "Phantom Fracas: The 1968 American Sale of F-4 Aircraft to Israel, " *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 40, no. 6 (November 2004), pp. 130-144.

[12] Jeremy M. Sharp, Jim Zanotti, Kenneth Katzman, Christina L. Arabia, and Clayton Thomas, *Israel's Qualitative Military Edge and Possible U.S. Arms Sales to the United Arab Emirates*, October 26, 2020 (Congressional Research Service Report R46580), pp.10-13.

[13] The actual differences between various aid categories are not as clear as the neatly categorized figures suggest. The

exceeded USD 100 million in FY 1966, but remained unstable for some time thereafter. For example, while aid surged to USD 630 million in FY 1971, it declined to around USD 400 million over the following two years. The sharp increase to USD 2.6 billion in FY 1974 was an exceptional figure associated with the Yom Kippur War. In contrast, starting with USD 1.76 billion in FY 1977, aid entered a phase of gradual increase, surpassing USD 2 billion in FY 1980 and USD 3 billion in FY 1985[14]. In other words, the point when the United States began providing Israel with stable aid came considerably later than the period considered by many previous studies as the origin of the U.S.-Israel alliance.

It is even more interesting to note that the stabilization of U.S. aid to Israel almost exactly coincided with the period following the Camp David Accords, when the United States began providing military aid to Egypt. The Camp David Accords marked the point at which Egypt came to be clearly recognized as a *de facto* U.S. ally. From then until the Muhammad Mursi administration, the United States provided Egypt with approximately USD 1.3 billion annually in military aid. Although far behind Israel, Egypt was the second-largest recipient of U.S. military aid[15]. In other words, taking the U.S.–Egypt relationship into account, Israel was able to secure stable aid from the United States for the first time only after achieving peace with Egypt and once the possibility of another inter-state "Middle East War" had been effectively eliminated.

As described above, although the *de facto* alliance between the United States and Israel has been institutionalized in multiple layers, the informal nature of the alliance inevitably makes interpretation of its origin somewhat arbitrary. Another reason for this arbitrariness lies in the tendency of previous studies to focus on the bilateral relationship between the United States and Israel without sufficiently examining how that relationship fits into the broader U.S. regional policy toward the Middle East[16]. In the following sections, this paper attempts to present a new interpretation of U.S.–Israel relations by placing the U.S. policy toward Israel within the framework of its regional policy.

distinction between military aid and economic aid is often a matter of convenience. Likewise, the distinction between loans and grants is also ambiguous. In the 1970s, when military aid increased, Israel preferred not to receive military aid in grants because of the strict monitoring and constraints imposed by the United States. As a result, about half of the military aid provided up until the mid-1980s took the form of loans. However, since the United States later waived the repayment of many of these loans, a substantial portion was effectively converted to *de facto* grants. Between U.S. FY 1974 and FY 2003, the U.S. government had waived the repayment of USD 45 billion in loans to Israel, nearly half of all loans provided.

[14] Clyde R. Mark, *Israel: U.S. Foreign Assistance*, updated on April 26, 2005 (Congressional Research Service Report, IB85066), pp. 1, 6, 13-14.

[15] Jeremy Sharp, *Egypt: Background and U.S. Relations* (CRS Report, RL33003), updated May 2, 2023, pp. 32-34.

[16] While somewhat different from an analysis of regional policy, an important previous study closely relevant to the author's research interest is Spiegel's work, which traces the policies of successive U.S. administrations on the issue of the Arab–Israeli conflict. Steven L. Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israel Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

2. Regional Policy and Israel in the 1950s

2.1. From the Western integration policy to the offshore balancing policy

As mentioned above, a few previous studies have regarded the U.S.–Israel alliance as having emerged during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. While Alteras's observation that the Eisenhower administration was not indifferent to Israel's security is acceptable, his argument, which seeks to establish continuity with preceding and succeeding administrations by extracting elements from the Eisenhower administration's statements and actions that could be described as "pro-Israel," includes aspects that seem rather arbitrary. Most previous studies, including Alteras's, attribute the failure of a U.S.–Israel alliance to emerge during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations to the importance that both administrations attached to maintaining relations with the Arab states. In other words, these studies examined the origins of the U.S.–Israel alliance by supposing a policy spectrum between pro-Arab and pro-Israel stances, and analyzing where the U.S. stood on this spectrum in terms of its policies and actions. In reality, however, U.S. policymakers were not actually formulating and implementing Middle East policy by positioning themselves somewhere between the pro-Arab and pro–Israel poles. As far as can be ascertained, the question of whether to form an alliance with Israel was never seriously considered within the U.S. administrations in the 1950s. It is because the Truman and Eisenhower administrations were pursuing regional objectives that were incompatible with a U.S.–Israel alliance that neither even contemplated the possibility of such an alliance.

From 1951 to 1957, the United States pursued a regional policy aimed at integrating the entire Middle East into the Western bloc. The author refers to this as the "Western integration policy." The most distinctive feature of the Western integration policy was its ambitious objective of integrating not only certain states in the Middle East, such as pro-American, pro-Western nations or countries with conservative regimes, but "the Middle East as a whole" into the Western bloc. As long as the United States was pursuing such regional objectives, the possibility of an alliance with Israel, contradicting those objectives, was never considered. This section offers a brief overview of the development and setbacks of the Western integration policy, and of the subsequent emergence of a new regional policy that can be characterized as an "offshore balancing" policy[17].

The Western integration policy unfolded in several phases. The final two years of the Truman administration (1951–1952) marked a period of consensus-building among policymakers around the regional objective of integrating the entire Middle East into the Western bloc. This coincided with the period in Western Europe when NATO was rapidly building its military structure and agreeing on ambitious force goals. In the Middle East as well, the goal became the establishment of a multinational alliance, the Middle East Command (later renamed the Middle East Defense Organization), encompassing the entire region. As discussions surrounding the MEC/MEDO continued, a regional objective of integrating the entire Middle East into the Western bloc came to be shared, not only among Department of State officials responsible for Middle East policy but also among the senior military leadership.

In June 1953, shortly after taking office, the Eisenhower administration announced its decision to place MEDO "on the shelf." However, it continued to pursue the regional objectives that had been

[17] Unless otherwise indicated, the content of this section is based on the author's previously published book. Toru Onozawa, *Illusory Alliance: American Regional Policy for the Middle East in the Early Cold War* (Nagoya: University of Nagoya Press, 2016).

formulated under the previous administration. What changed was the diplomatic tactics for achieving these objectives. As a more pragmatic means of achieving its ultimate goal of integrating the Middle East as a whole into the Western bloc, the Eisenhower administration pursued differentiated diplomacy in the northern and southern parts of the region, supposedly suited to the political conditions in each sub-region, with the aim of eventually combining them into a pro-Western Middle East. Because the countries in the northern Middle East, referred to as the "northern tier," were regarded as already under pro-Western leadership, the United States supported the creation of a pro-Western alliance network there. In contrast, the southern Middle East, comprising the Arab states and Israel, was not in a condition conducive to a pro-Western regional organization. The Egyptian Government that emerged after the 1952 revolution demanded the complete withdrawal of British forces from bases in the Suez Canal Zone, which intensified tensions between Britain and Egypt. This issue carried significant implications for the U.S. The United States consistently declined to assume direct military responsibility for defending the Middle East, maintaining instead that such responsibility should rest with Britain, and pressed Britain to establish a necessary military posture in the region. Accordingly, British participation in a multinational treaty encompassing the entire Middle East, such as the MEC/MEDO, was taken for granted. However, so long as the Suez base issue remained unresolved, it was impossible to realize a multinational treaty that included both Britain and Egypt, a major Arab state. Moreover, the Arab–Israel conflict also constituted a major obstacle to the Western integration policy. The Eisenhower administration's clear recognition that multinational alliances could not be established where serious regional conflicts existed is also evident from the determined efforts it made to integrate West Germany into the Western European defense system by overcoming the longstanding Franco-German rivalry.

In 1955, U.S. efforts to organize the northern part culminated in the Baghdad Pact. A key element of U.S. policy toward the pact was to avoid making it a focal point of regional conflict. However, Iraq and Turkey, which regarded Egypt's leader, Gamal Abdul Nasser, who leaned toward neutralism, as an adversary, sought to strengthen the Baghdad Pact as an alliance composed solely of pro-Western states and pressed the United States to join the pact without delay. In order to preserve the Baghdad Pact as a framework that might eventually include Egypt, the United States refrained from joining the pact and sought instead to restrain attempts to use the pact as an instrument of regional conflict. However, Turkey and Iraq ignored U.S. requests, intensified their hostility toward Nasser, and exploited the Baghdad Pact in pursuit of their own interests. Consequently, any possibility of extending the pact to the southern Middle East region was lost.

Meanwhile, in the southern part, following the conclusion of the 1954 Anglo-Egyptian Agreement that stipulated the British withdrawal from the Suez base, the United States began efforts to resolve the Arab–Israeli conflict. However, because Nasser leaned toward neutralism in 1955 and began receiving arms from the Soviet Union, the Arab–Israeli peace plan code-named "Project Alpha" was not presented to Egypt and Israel until January–March 1956. For Nasser, who was expanding his influence in the Arab world by appealing to neutralist, pan-Arabist, and anti-Israeli Arab nationalism, there was no political incentive to accept the peace plan. For Israel, the plan's proposal to cede territory in the Negev in the southern part of the country was entirely unacceptable. The failure of Project Alpha brought the Western integration policy in the southern part to a standstill.

From that point onward, the Eisenhower administration pursued a modified Western integration policy, seeking to pressure Nasser by strengthening ties among pro-Western States in the Middle East,

particularly between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, in the hope of inducing him to return to a pro-Western stance. The U.S. response to the Suez Crisis and subsequent Suez War was driven by global objectives rather than regional ones: specifically, to prevent the Third World from being drawn into the Eastern bloc and to secure America's international legitimacy as the leader of the Western bloc. Nonetheless, throughout this period, the Eisenhower administration continued to pursue its revised Western integration policy with the goal of applying pressure on Nasser. In other words, the U.S. Middle East policy in the latter half of 1956 consisted of two layers: addressing the Suez Crisis and Suez War from a global perspective, and a revised Western integration policy aimed at exerting pressure on Nasser.

The Eisenhower administration, believing that its firm stance against the United Kingdom, France, and Israel during the Suez War had enhanced American prestige among the Arab states, announced the so-called Eisenhower Doctrine, a new framework for the Western integration policy, which centered on U.S. support for Middle Eastern countries that demonstrated a willingness to oppose "international communism." The Eisenhower Doctrine aimed to bring in as many Middle Eastern states as possible into the Western orbit by lowering the threshold for cooperation with the West. Contrary to the administration's expectations, however, the Eisenhower Doctrine failed to gain broad support. As a result, by the summer of 1957, the Eisenhower administration gave up its goal of integrating the entire Middle East into the Western bloc. For over a year thereafter, the administration struggled in vain to devise a new regional policy framework to replace the Western integration policy. The U.S. policy drift during the Syrian crisis in the summer of 1957 and the Lebanon crisis that began in May 1958 stemmed from the absence of a regional policy framework.

A new framework for U.S. regional policy finally emerged following the Iraqi Revolution of July 1958. This new regional policy can be characterized as an "offshore balancing" policy. In contrast to the Western integration policy, which pursued the ambitious goal of integrating the entire Middle East into the Western bloc, the offshore balancing policy sought a more flexible management of the regional balance of power. U.S. policymakers were now determined to concentrate on the two bedrock objectives: to prevent, insofar as possible, the expansion of Soviet influence in the Middle East and to ensure the uninterrupted flow of oil from the region.

The United States continued to avoid direct military responsibility in the Middle East, instead positioning the United Kingdom as its surrogate. This resulted in even closer U.S.-U.K. ties on Middle Eastern affairs. On the other hand, after shifting to the offshore balancing policy, the Eisenhower administration took a more impartial stance toward all Middle Eastern countries. The United States adopted a policy of developing friendly relations with countries oriented toward neutralist Arab nationalism, by various means, including the provision of economic assistance, with the goal of preventing these countries from falling under Soviet control. Economic aid to one such country, Egypt (more precisely, the United Arab Republic (UAR), a union of Egypt and Syria from February 1958 to September 1961), increased during this period. Although U.S. aid was far less than what Egypt received from the Soviet Union, which included one for the construction of the Aswan High Dam, U.S.–Egyptian relations remained cordial. In September 1960, Nasser visited the United States to attend the UN General Assembly, where he held his first and only summit meeting with President Eisenhower. Although the summit revealed differences of opinion over Western support for Israel and the Palestinian refugee issue, both sides expressed general satisfaction with the state of U.S.–Egyptian bilateral relations[18]. In contrast, the United States adopted a cautious stance toward strengthening the

[18] Memorandum of a Conversation, Waldorf Towers Hotel, New York, September 26, 1960, 4:30 p.m., *FRUS, 1958-*

former Baghdad Pact, which was renamed the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), and deepening cooperative relations with its member states. The Eisenhower administration prioritized the promotion of "peace and stability in the area" over strengthening ties with pro-Western countries, fearing such a move would intensify regional conflicts[19]. As a result, the United States kept a distance from its pro-Western partners, making relations with these states differ little from those with more neutralist states. The regional policy pursued during the final two years of the Eisenhower administration, marked by distancing from the Middle East as a whole, can therefore be characterized as a passive offshore balancing policy.

2.2. Regional policy and Israel: The Eisenhower administration

Was Israel, then, an exception to the United States' passive offshore balancing policy?

In July 1958, immediately after the Iraqi Revolution, the United States and the United Kingdom dispatched troops in response to requests for intervention from Lebanon and Jordan. As noted earlier, previous studies point out that Israel's decision to allow U.S. and British military aircraft en route to Jordan to pass through its airspace became the catalyst for the U.S. government to begin viewing Israel as a strategic asset. When British forces intervened in Jordan, the United States also provided logistical support to the British forces deployed there. However, since supply routes via the Red Sea and Aqaba required considerable time, the overflight of Israeli airspace held substantial military value for both the United States and the United Kingdom. For its part, Israel sought to avoid its neighbor being overrun by pro-Nasser Arab nationalists and therefore welcomed the U.S. and British military intervention. This was the point at which a convergence of interests actually emerged among the United States, the United Kingdom, and Israel[20].

Shortly thereafter, Israel requested the United States to provide it with tanks, anti-tank recoilless rifles, small submarines, helicopters, and anti-aircraft guided missiles as reimbursable (that is, non-grant) military aid. Up to that point, the United States had adhered to the principle of not becoming a major arms supplier to the Middle East. It had refrained from supplying lethal weapons to the countries in the region, including Israel, while encouraging Israel to procure arms from Western Europe. On this occasion, however, the United States agreed to supply 100 recoilless rifles and ammunition, worth USD 1 million, as a *de facto* reward for Israel's granting of overflight rights. Because these were defensive weapons, the decision was also intended as a gesture that would make it easier to deflect criticism from Arab states[21]. However, this cannot be regarded as a major policy shift, still less as the origin of a U.S.–Israel alliance. The Eisenhower administration regarded the supply of recoilless rifles as an exceptional measure, and apart from permitting the export of helicopters intended for both military and civilian use, would not revise the existing principles governing its aid policy toward Israel. This became clear soon afterward when the administration rejected an Israeli request to increase economic assistance to help offset its financial burden of importing tanks from Western Europe[22].

In February 1960, Israel once again requested substantial FMS from the United States, including

1960, vol.13, pp. 600-607.

[19] NSC 6011, "U.S. Policy toward the Near East," July 19, 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, vol. 12, pp. 262-273.

[20] Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, July 21, 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, vol. 13, pp. 67-72.

[21] Memorandum from Rountree to Dulles, August 22, 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, vol. 13, pp. 88-91.

[22] Memorandum from Rountree to Dulles, October 9, 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, vol. 13, pp. 98-99; Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, October 17, 1958, ibid., 101-103.

Hawk surface-to-air missiles[23]. During a visit to the United States in March, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion expressed grave concern over Egypt's expansion of its air force, particularly through arms purchases from the Soviet Union. He requested that the United States provide electronic equipment for the construction of an early warning system, as well as Hawk surface-to-air missiles[24]. The Eisenhower administration agreed to supply the electronic equipment, but refused to provide the Hawk missiles[25].

There were multiple factors behind this decision. The Eisenhower administration sought to curb the arms race between Israel and the Arab states as far as possible. At the time, Israel had decided to procure Super Mystere fighter jets from France, prompting Egypt to move toward acquiring Soviet MiG-19s. Whereas Israel regarded Egypt's expanding military strength as a grave threat to its survival, the United States judged Israel's military capabilities to be sufficient for both defense and deterrence, and therefore considered the Hawk missile system militarily unnecessary for Israel. Although the Hawk was a defensive weapon, the United States judged that supplying it to Israel would give the Arab states and the Soviet Union further incentive and justification to intensify their military buildup. A more subtle, yet no less significant factor, was the Eisenhower administration's belief that Israel was seeking to acquire the Hawk under the pretext that it was a defensive weapon in an attempt to gradually undermine the U.S. policy of not becoming a major arms supplier to the Middle East, and ultimately to draw the United States into open confrontation with the Arab states.[26] In light of these considerations, a letter sent by Secretary of State Christian Herter to Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in August made the U.S. government's position clear: rejection of Hawk missile supplies to Israel on the grounds that doing so would escalate the arms race in the Middle East and increase the risk of war[27].

It is clear from the above that the Eisenhower administration's policy toward Israel was consistently pursued within the framework of its regional policy. During the period when the United States was pursuing the Western integration policy, its objective was to integrate the entire Middle East into the Western bloc. Consequently, a formal alliance with Israel, which would have inevitably antagonized the Arab states, was not even contemplated. It was against this backdrop that the Arab–Israeli peace plan known as Project Alpha was formulated, with the United States actively pursuing peace efforts. The goal was to break the deadlock and bring both the Arab states and Israel into the Western bloc. After shifting to the offshore balancing policy, the Eisenhower administration, with the goal of preserving peace and stability in the Middle East, maintained a policy of keeping the United States at a distance from the region and of avoiding the role of a major arms supplier to the region. Israel was no exception to this policy. Therefore, the Eisenhower administration rejected Israel's request for Hawk missiles, knowing that approval would inevitably overturn its regional policy.

[23] Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for NEA (Jones) to the Secretary of State, February 12, 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, vol.13, pp. 263-264.
[24] Memorandum of a Conversation, Secretary of State Herter's Residence, Washington, March 13, 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, vol.13, pp. 296-300.
[25] Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for NEA (Jones) to the Under Secretary of State (Dillon), May 26, 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, vol.13, pp. 327-329.
[26] Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary for NEA (Jones) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Merchant), July 7, 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, vol.13, 344-349; Memorandum from the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Merchant) to the Secretary of State, July 15, 1960, ibid., 349-350; Memorandum for the Files of a Meeting, July 27, 1960, ibid., 356-357.
[27] Letter from Herter to Ben Gurion, August 4, 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, vol.13, 358-361.

3. The Kennedy Administration and Israel

3.1. Reform of the policy-making process

Before tracing the development of the Kennedy administration's policy toward Israel, it is necessary to note the changes the administration introduced in the process of formulating foreign and national security policy. The most significant of these was the discontinuation of the practice, initiated under the Truman administration and institutionalized under the Eisenhower administration, of preparing policy statements at the National Security Council (NSC) dealing with each region and issue. During the Eisenhower administration, NSC policy statements were not prepared on an ad hoc basis whenever individual problems or diplomatic issues arose. Instead, they were updated on a regular basis, serving both to provide guidance for the day-to-day conduct of policy and to act as reference points when considering how to address newly emerging issues. In other words, a broad policy framework was to be established in advance, and individual cases were expected to be handled within this framework. Many NSC policy statements were initially drafted by the Department of State, reviewed and revised as necessary by the NSC Planning Board, composed of representatives from relevant agencies such as the Department of State, Department of Defense, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and finalized through discussions in the NSC, chaired by the President and attended by concerned cabinet-level members. This systematic and bottom-up approach to policy formulation often required lengthy debates over the wording, and it can hardly be said to have been an efficient or flexible system. However, this decision-making process, whereby drafts prepared on the basis of input from working-level officials in the departments responsible for each issue were meticulously refined while they went through discussions until finally approved by the cabinet-level NSC, had the advantage of enabling the administration to build consensus on policies that, while maintaining a medium- to long-term perspective, were not far-removed from on-the-ground realities.

The Kennedy administration regarded this process as wasteful, abolished the conventional practice of preparing NSC policy statements, and instead adopted a system of making flexible and ad hoc decisions in response to specific issues as they arose. While this change may have accelerated decision-making, it also rendered both the process and the discussions around individual policies increasingly ambiguous and opaque. With the loss of an institutionalized system for policy-making, discipline in the decision-making and implementation process slackened, and both the substance of policy and the logic underpinning it tended to become ambiguous.

This tendency was compounded by changes in the character of the NSC under the Kennedy administration. In contrast to the previous administrations, where the NSC, including its Planning Board, lacked its own policy staff, the Kennedy administration established a permanent staff under the President's national security adviser, and this staff came to wield considerable influence in the policy-making process. Furthermore, as discipline in the decision-making slackened, White House officials who were normally excluded from the formulation of foreign policy often became involved in shaping it. The White House staff, including those on the NSC, were political appointees whose foremost concern was the President's political standing. Unlike the Department of State and the Department of Defense, which were bureaucracies staffed with permanent officials engaged in policy planning from a professional standpoint, the frequent and fluid intervention of White House staff significantly transformed the policy-making process from that of the Eisenhower administration. The process of

formulating the Kennedy administration's policy toward Israel was a typical example of this new system, in which White House officials such as Robert W. Komer, Senior Staff member of the NSC, and Myer Feldman, Deputy Special Counsel to the President, came to exercise significant influence on policy formulation.

3.2. Initial moves of the Kennedy administration

After the Kennedy administration was inaugurated, Israel renewed its efforts to acquire the Hawk missile from the United States. This time, the Israelis sought, as far as possible, to bypass the Department of State's usual diplomatic channels and instead make a direct appeal to the Kennedy White House.

In mid-February, shortly after the new administration took office, Israeli Ambassador to the United States Abraham Harman called on National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy to request the provision of the Hawk missile. Harman portrayed the Eisenhower administration's refusal to provide the Hawk as if it had been merely a temporary measure, stressed the growing military threat from Egypt, and pressed for the provision of the Hawk[28]. Upon receiving the report of this meeting, the Department of State pointed out that Harman was attempting to give a misleading impression and conveyed to Bundy its view that the reasons for the Eisenhower administration's refusal to provide the Hawk remained valid[29].

Israel then launched a further diplomatic offensive. In mid-April, through diplomatic channels, Israel proposed that Prime Minister Ben-Gurion visit the United States as early as later the same month for an informal summit meeting with President Kennedy. Even if it was an informal meeting, making such a last-minute request to meet with the U.S. president, at a time when there were no crises or pressing diplomatic issues, defied accepted norms. Accordingly, not only the Department of State but Kennedy himself initially expressed reluctance. However, Feldman, who served as an informal liaison with the Israeli Government, together with influential Jewish figures in New York, persuaded Kennedy to accept the meeting[30].

However, this did not lead to any change in U.S. policy. Prior to the meeting, the Department of State once again recommended maintaining the policy toward Israel that had been pursued since the previous administration. Specifically, the Department of State reaffirmed its refusal of the security guarantee requested by Israel through diplomatic channels, on the grounds that granting it would provoke the Arab states. Regarding military assistance, it argued that Israel's military capabilities would, for the foreseeable future, continue to surpass those of the Arabs, and that supporting further Israeli military buildup would only intensify the arms race by prompting increased Soviet arms supplies to Egypt. Accordingly, this too should be rejected[31]. Kennedy fully accepted these recommendations. At the summit meeting with Ben-Gurion held on May 30, Kennedy made clear that the United States would not supply Hawk missiles to curb the Middle East arms race, while leaving open the possibility of revising policy should circumstances change[32].

[28] Memorandum of Conversation, February 16, 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 17, pp. 26-31.
[29] Memorandum from the Department of State Executive Secretary (Stossel) to Bundy, February 24, 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 17, pp. 34-36.
[30] Memorandum of Conversation, April 13, 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 17, p. 81; Editorial Note, ibid., p. 86.
[31] Memorandum from Talbot to Rusk, May 1, 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 17, pp. 92-92.
[32] Memorandum of Conversation, May 30, 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 17, pp. 134-141.

Thus, the previous administration's regional policy of maintaining an impartial stance toward both the Arab states and Israel was carried over into the new administration through the bureaucratic machinery of the Department of State. Nevertheless, subtle shifts were beginning to emerge within the Kennedy administration. The Department of Defense had begun to show a willingness not to oppose the provision of the Hawk missiles to Israel. The Department of State suspected that the Department of Defense was taking Israel's claims at face value[33], but the precise reasons for this shift in the Department of Defense's position are not entirely clear.

One factor contributing to the shift in the Department of Defense's position, and to the subsequent disputes within the Kennedy administration over Israel policy, was the U.S. government's wavering assessment of the military balance between Israel and Egypt. An intelligence analysis on Arab–Israeli situations submitted to the White House prior to Ben-Gurion's visit presented the basic view that Israel's overall military superiority over the UAR was being maintained. However, it noted that this margin of superiority was gradually narrowing. Although the Israeli Air Force maintained superiority over the numerically larger UAR Air Force due to its excellent command and high level of training, it was expected that the present qualitative superiority of the Israeli Air Force would soon be offset by the rapidly expanding and improving UAR Air Force, given the accelerated Soviet assistance in aircraft and air force training to the UAR. Furthermore, it was pessimistically projected that, if carried out without prior detection by Israel, there was little doubt that a devastating surprise attack could be carried out against Israel by the UAR Air Force[34]. In other words, within the Kennedy administration, there was a clear recognition of Israel's increasing vulnerability to a sudden aerial attack, and it is likely that the Department of Defense, operating from this understanding, became favorable towards providing the Hawk missiles.

However, the U.S. government's assessment was not entirely pessimistic. A National Intelligence Estimate on Israel, prepared six months after the above-mentioned intelligence analysis, presented an optimistic view of Israel's military capabilities. It pointed out that Israel possessed sufficient military strength not only to repel any combined attack by neighboring Arab states but also to occupy the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, and southwestern Syria, including Damascus, and to maintain this capability for the two to three years covered by the analysis. The greatest threat to Israel would be an Egyptian air attack. Israeli intelligence, however, was expected to detect such an attack in advance, and even if it succeeded, Israel's superior air force meant that an airstrike would almost certainly not be decisive[35].

Since no developments were observed that significantly enhanced Israel's military capabilities during the six months following the earlier analysis, the differences between the two assessments can largely be attributed to differences in the analysts' judgments. Both assessments, shared the view that Israel's military capabilities were sufficient to ultimately repel any attack by the Arab states, while also recognizing that Egypt's air force was becoming an increasing military threat to Israel. Depending on which of these aspects was emphasized, the conclusions regarding Israel's security could differ significantly. The ambiguity in the Kennedy administration's intelligence assessments regarding the

[33] Memorandum of Conversation, May 8, 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 17, pp. 102-103.
[34] A Working Paper Prepared by an Ad Hoc Working Group of the United States Intelligence Board, No. 2050/61R, "The Arab-Israeli Situation," April 6, 1961, in "Ben Gurion Visit: The Arab-Israeli Situation, 4/6/61," folder, box 119, National Security File (NSF), John K. Kennedy Presidential Library (JFKL), pp. 14-15, 17, 19.
[35] National Intelligence Estimate, Number 35-61 (Supersedes 35-58), "The Outlook for Israel," October 5, 1961, in "Israel 1961-63, 2 of 2" folder, Box 427, NSF, JFKL, pp. 5-6.

military balance between Israel and the Arab states likely played a significant role in the internal policy disputes over how to approach Israel.

3.3. Policy-making process leading to the decision to supply Hawk missiles

In June 1962, the Kennedy administration initiated a reassessment of its policy toward Israel. One of the factors behind this policy reassessment was the heightened Arab–Israeli tensions. In 1962, military tensions along the Syrian–Israeli border and elsewhere heightened while rival Arab countries vying for influence in the Arab world were competing with anti-Israeli stances. Another factor was the shift in the Kennedy administration's Middle East policy. The administration sought to strengthen ties with reform-oriented Third World leaders, with Nasser being one such figure in the Middle East. As mentioned earlier, U.S.–Egyptian relations had improved toward the end of the Eisenhower administration. The Kennedy administration sought to build on this improvement, aiming to strengthen ties by extending the food aid agreement from a one-year arrangement into a three-year commitment in 1962 (the agreement was concluded that October)[36]. Since the policy-making process under the Kennedy administration had changed, comprehensive NSC documents defining overall Middle East policy were no longer produced. Nonetheless, it can be said that the Kennedy administration was beginning to shift from the passive offshore balancing policy of the previous administration to an active offshore balancing policy. The reassessment of Israel policy was prompted by voices from within the White House, which argued that, just as an active policy had been pursued toward Egypt, a comparable policy should also be formulated and implemented toward Israel.

It was NSC staff member Robert Komer who challenged the Israel policy carried over via the Department of State from the previous administration and called for a policy overhaul. Komer criticized the existing policy for leaving the deterioration of Arab–Israeli relations unaddressed, and asserted that the United States should pursue a more active policy by combining various new policy elements. They included broad options ranging from giving Israel a security guarantee and/or the Hawk missiles to restraining Israel in order to draw Nasser away from the Soviet Union[37]. Komer's argument was not aimed at revising the policy simply in a pro-Israel direction. At the very moment he was calling for a policy overhaul, Komer expressed his unease about Feldman in a memorandum addressed to his superior, McGeorge Bundy. In the memorandum he complained, "I'm not sure he [Feldman] realizes that our long-term ability to promote steps toward an Arab–Israeli settlement depends largely on a sufficiently even-handed attitude toward Arab *and* Israel to give us leverage with Arabs" (original emphasis). This clearly shows that Komer, recognizing the necessity of maintaining an "even handed" policy toward the Arab–Israeli conflict, was wary of Feldman, who seemed intent on shifting policy away from impartiality toward a pro-Israeli tilt.

Komer's call for a policy overhaul was primarily intended to restore U.S. influence over Israel. He explained his position: "I agree that the pendulum has swung sufficiently [toward the Arab side] that compensatory gestures toward Israel [are] desirable, but I believe that: (1) what Israelis really need and want is reaffirmation of our security guarantee; (2) we should use this prospect to get certain

[36] William J. Burns, *Economic Aid and American Policy toward Egypt, 1955-1981* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), pp. 121-134; Douglas Little, "The New Frontier on the Mile: JFK, Nasser, and Arab Nationalism," *Journal of American History*, vol. 75, no. 2 (September 1988), pp. 501-510.
[37] Memorandum from Komer to Feldman, May 31, 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 17, pp. 691-692.

concessions from them"[38]. Komer sought to pursue an "even handed" policy toward the Arab–Israeli conflict by actively engaging Israel, just as the United States was doing with Egypt. He aimed to advance an "impartial" policy based on active engagement, replacing the Eisenhower administration's approach of maintaining impartiality by keeping its distance from the Middle East[39].

By contrast, the Department of State strongly opposed changing the existing policy toward Israel. The department, tasked with drafting a policy document on Israel, presented the following arguments in its draft dated June 7. The central problem in U.S.–Israel relations was Israel's "unrequired" desire to establish "a special relationship" with the United States. Israel's persistent requests for "military consultation" and a "security guarantee," it maintained, were intended to demonstrate to the Arab states that it was "allied" with the United States. "We consider it important not to give in to Israeli and domestic pressures [within the United States] for a special relationship in national security matters." It further stressed that "To undertake, in effect, a military alliance with Israel would destroy the delicate balance we seek to maintain in our Near Eastern relations." The draft also noted that pressure from Israel and pro-Israel forces within the United States would likely intensify as the U.S. midterm elections approached that fall. The Department of State, with Feldman's moves presumably in mind, was wary of Israel and domestic pro-Israel forces improperly pushing for a policy shift.

As grounds for opposing a policy change, the Department of State argued that Israel's security was not under threat. It pointed out that the Arab states feared Israel's military power, that the Arab solidarity essential for military victory over Israel was unlikely to materialize, and that Arab leaders recognized the grave consequences of being defeated by Israel. It also noted that Egypt, the largest Arab state, had thus far acted prudently in line with its national interests, and at least for the time being, was prioritizing its domestic affairs. Therefore, the draft concluded that the likelihood of a surprise Arab attack on Israel in the coming years was low. As noted above, such an optimistic assessment was not inconsistent with U.S. intelligence analyses at the time.

Based on this analysis, the Department of State recommended continuing with the existing policy. It concluded that providing Israel with a "security guarantee" would give the United States absolutely no advantage in foreign policy. With respect to the provision of Hawk missiles, the department reiterated the concern dating back to the Eisenhower administration that such a move would accelerate the arms race in the Middle East and leave the United States bearing responsibility. In addition, it anticipated that supplying Hawk missiles might not satisfy the Israelis but rather encourage further demands. The department asserted that any decision to provide Israel with Hawk missiles should be postponed until at least 1964, unless Egypt or Syria were to acquire surface-to-air missiles from the Soviet Union. In 1964, Israel was expected to launch a large-scale project to divert water from the Jordan River, and the Arab states were anticipated to strongly oppose this. Therefore, the department argued that relations with Arab states should not be worsened over the Hawk issue before such problems arose[40].

The outline of the June 7 draft was endorsed at a conference in Athens of U.S. ambassadors to the Middle Eastern states held shortly thereafter. The Athens conference indicated that if U.S. intelligence

[38] Komer to Bundy, June 1, 1962, in "Komer June 1962" folder, Box 322, NSF, JFKL.

[39] Komer was a figure who harbored an almost abnormal aversion to policy stagnation or inaction. The author previously analyzed U.S. policy toward Iran during the Kennedy administration and found that Komer consistently pressed both Iran and the United States to take new initiatives. Toru Onozawa, "Pahlavi Iran and the United States", Edited by Eisaku Kihira, "*The Past and Present of American Democracy: Questions from History*" (Kyoto: Minerva Shobo, 2008), pp. 227-267.

[40] Memorandum from Talbot to Rusk, June 7, 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 17, pp. 710-718.

analysis confirmed that Egypt possessed Soviet-made missiles, the United States should provide Israel with Hawk missiles after a frank explanation to Nasser. The conference also highlighted the risk that U.S. delivery of Hawk missiles would escalate the arms race between the Arab states and Israel. It recommended that, before finalizing its decision to sell Hawk missiles to Israel, the United States should take advantage of its position as not being a major arms supplier to the Middle East to strongly urge the leaders of both the Arab states and Israel to pursue arms limitations[41]. This gave rise to a new idea: using the provision of Hawk missiles as a means to promote arms control between the Arab states and Israel.

Based on the recommendations of the Athens conference, Komer conveyed his understanding that the Department of State had agreed to provide Hawk missiles to Israel once Egypt had "actually" acquired missiles from the Soviet Union. He also supported the recommendation that Nasser be approached on arms limitations before the United States moved forward with providing the missiles. However, Komer's support for the arms control proposal was largely tactical. He argued that although Nasser was unlikely to accept arms control, putting forth such a proposal would serve as a useful alibi to justify the United States's provision of Hawk missiles to Israel. Komer also reported to Bundy that Phillips Talbot, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, had agreed to develop an Arab-Israeli policy that combined various policy options[42].

As suggested by Talbot's reaction, it appears that senior officials of the Department of State were leaning toward the position that the provision of Hawk missiles to Israel was inevitable. Secretary of State Dean Rusk expressed dissatisfaction with the June 7 draft's discussion of the Hawk issue and called for a reassessment of Egypt's capability to launch air strikes against Israel, as well as Israel's ability to defend itself against such attacks. In response, the Department of State requested the Department of Defense to examine Israel's vulnerability to air strikes, the extent to which this vulnerability could be reduced through the provision of Hawk missiles, and the potential impact such provision would have on the military balance between Israel and the Arab states[43]. In its response dated July 16, the Department of Defense stated that Israel's vulnerability to Egyptian air strikes was increasing as Egypt continued to acquire Tupolev TU-16 bombers from the Soviet Union. It concluded that although the provision of Hawk missiles would help reduce Israel's vulnerability, it would not alter the military balance between Israel and its neighboring Arab states[44]. As previously noted, the Department of Defense had already been favorable toward providing Hawk missiles since the previous year, so Rusk should have been able to anticipate such a response in advance.

Moreover, the Department of State's position had already begun to shift before receiving the Department of Defense's response. The interim report on the revision of the Israel policy document, which Talbot sent to Rusk on July 9, largely followed the content of the June 7 draft. The July 9 draft, however, acknowledged that the provision of Hawk missiles would reduce Israel's vulnerability to incursions by low-altitude aircraft while maintaining the basic stance of opposing the provision of Hawk missiles to Israel, arguing that military deterrence against Egypt remained effective and that Egypt had little to gain from attacking Israel[45]. At the same time, the Department of State had also

[41] Athens to DOS, #1337, June 15, 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 17, pp. 728-730.
[42] Memorandum from Komer to Bundy, June 22, 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 17, pp. 747-748.
[43] Memorandum from Grant to Rusk, June 17, 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 17, pp. 734-736. See also footnote 4 on p. 735.
[44] Letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (W. Bundy) to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for NEA (Grant), July 16, 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 18, pp. 8-9.
[45] Memorandum from Talbot to Rusk, July 9, 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 18, pp. 2-8.

begun to express conditional support for the provision of Hawk missiles. The department agreed to provide Hawk missiles to Israel if no prospects for an Arab-Israeli arms limitation arrangement emerged within two months, on the grounds that "Acquisition of missiles by the UAR is clearly indicated by US intelligence as being in process." If the United States refrained from providing missiles before the Soviet Union did, the department argued, it could avoid being criticized for initiating an arms race and "would reduce the political cost to the U.S. to a bearable level[46]." The department's approval of the provision of Hawk missiles to Israel, even on the condition that arms control efforts be prioritized, marked a major shift in its position.

Nevertheless, whether it was the inquiry to the Department of Defense prompted by Rusk's directive or the vague situation analysis that "Acquisition of missiles by the UAR is clearly indicated by US intelligence as being in process," the Department of State's actions during this period appear somewhat unnatural, suggesting that the decision to provide Hawk missiles to Israel had already been made. Furthermore, the reference to the "political cost" associated with providing the Hawk missiles strongly suggests that the department's approval was reluctant. Shortly after these developments, in early August, before the formal decision to provide Hawk missiles to Israel was made, a Department of State document stated that "the President has determined that the Hawk missile shall be made available to Israel" out of consideration for Israel's security and economic welfare, as well as the result of its lobbying efforts[47]. It is reasonable to infer that President Kennedy had privately decided by July at the latest to provide Hawk missiles to Israel, and that the Department of State was compelled to revise its policy to align with the President's decision.

The final version of the Israel policy document, completed on August 7, included a recommendation that Hawk missiles be provided to Israel if no prospects for an arms limitation arrangement emerged within two months. This final version reaffirmed the existing policy of rejecting a "special military relationship" or *de facto* military alliance with Israel, on the grounds that such a relationship would "destroy" U.S. relations with the Middle East. However, many of the arguments that had previously restrained the United States from providing Hawk missiles were removed. These included the cautionary statements, found in earlier drafts, regarding pressure from Israel and pro-Israel forces within the United States[48].

Discussions within the administration shifted to the timing and conditions under which the Hawk missiles would be provided. At this point, a new link began to emerge between the provision of the Hawk and the so-called Johnson Plan, a proposal aimed at settling the Palestinian refugee problem. The origins of this plan dated back to the previous year. In the first half of 1961, Arab states at the United Nations intensified their calls for the protection of the assets of Palestinian refugees left in Israel. A UN resolution was adopted calling on the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (PCC)—which had been established during the First Arab–Israeli War with the United States, France, and Turkey as members, but had not been able to carry out effective activities—to take action toward resolving the refugee problem. The Kennedy administration also believed that addressing the Palestinian refugee problem was essential for promoting regional stability. It was further spurred into

[46] Memorandum, "Hawk Missiles," undated, in "Israel 1961-63 2 of 2" folder, box 427, NSF, JFKL. This document is considered to correspond to Tab D of the July 9 memorandum from Talbot to Rusk (cited in footnote 7, *FRUS, 1961–1963*, vol. 18, p. 5).

[47] Memorandum, "Suggested Approach and Talking Points," undated, attached to Memorandum for the President from Myer Feldman, August 10, 1962, in "Israel 1961-63 1 of 2" folder, box 427, NSF, JFKL.

[48] Memorandum from Rusk to Kennedy, August 7 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 18, pp. 27-32.

action by growing dissatisfaction in the U.S. Congress at the fact that the United States was being compelled to provide virtually unlimited funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). At the summit meeting with Ben-Gurion on May 30, 1961, Kennedy had already raised the possibility of utilizing the PCC to work toward resolving the Palestinian refugee problem. Ben-Gurion expressed strong opposition, arguing that the Arab states would send in anti-Israel refugees. However, under pressure from Kennedy, he ultimately conceded, stating, "It is always worth trying[49]."

In response, in August 1961, the Kennedy administration appointed Joseph E. Johnson of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace as the PCC's Special Representative[50]. After two tours of the Middle East, Johnson had, by August 1962, drafted a proposal centered on the partial repatriation of Palestinian refugees to Israel. In contrast to the Eisenhower administration's Project Alpha, the Johnson Plan did not aim at interstate peace. Instead, it envisioned the PCC as the intermediary, gathering the preferences of individual refugees and facilitating their return without infringing upon Israel's sovereignty—that is, by recognizing Israel's right to decide on the admission of each refugee. Although implementation of the Johnson Plan was envisaged as a UN project, the United States was expected to act as the *de facto* leading power, and to be perceived as such, in order to spur other parties to engage seriously. For example, the plan provided for compensation from Israel to refugees who chose resettlement outside Israel rather than return, and the U.S. government anticipated contributing financial assistance to cover the costs of the plan's implementation, including the fiscal burden imposed on Israel[51].

The Department of State strongly supported the Johnson Plan and argued that Hawk missiles should be leveraged to secure Israel's acceptance of the plan. As already noted, the department had also recommended that, before notifying Israel of the provision of Hawk missiles, the United States should take at least two months to explore the possibility of Arab–Israeli arms control. Assistant Secretary Talbot stressed that "Our resolve on the quid pro quo is firm and remains firm", insisting that Israel's agreement to these conditions must be made a strict prerequisite for the provision of Hawk missiles[52]. A memorandum by the Department of State, apparently submitted to the President at this time, analyzed the importance of Arab–Israeli arms control from a broad perspective and urged a reconsideration of the decision on the provision of Hawk missiles. (Since, as noted above, Kennedy is considered to have decided to provide Hawk missiles, it was reasonable for a memorandum addressed to him to urge its reconsideration.) It warned that if the arms race intensified, Egypt's military spending would expand, resulting in the collapse of both Egypt's economic development and the U.S. friendship with Nasser, leading to a "*cul-de-sac*" in which the Soviet Union would exercise effective control over Egypt. Conversely, if Nasser agreed to arms control, the United States might be able to draw Egypt away from the Soviets through the provision of military assistance. Thus, before deciding on the Hawk supply to Israel, the memorandum urged that a special presidential envoy be secretly dispatched to Egypt to press Nasser strongly on arms limitations[53]. In short, the Department of State proposed a

[49] Circular Telegram from DOS to Certain Near Eastern and North African Posts, April 15, 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 17, pp. 83-85; Bowles to Kennedy, "An Approach to the Arab refugee Problem," April 28, 1961, ibid., 91-92;Memorandum of Conversation, May 30, 1961, ibid., pp. 139-140.
[50] Editorial Note, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 17, pp. 221-222.
[51] Memorandum from Rusk to Kennedy, August 7, 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 18, pp. 33-47.
[52] Memorandum from Talbot to Feldman, August 9, 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 18, pp. 51-52.
[53] Memorandum, "Points to be made on Middle East arms race," undated, attached to Memorandum for the President from Myer Feldman, August 10, 1962, in "Israel 1961-63 1 of 2" folder, box 427, NSF, JFKL. Feldman's

diplomatic tactics of using the Hawks to the fullest as a bargaining card to obtain Israel's consent to the Johnson Plan, while at the same time seeking an arms control agreement with Egypt.

In contrast to the Department of State, Feldman argued that the likelihood of Nasser agreeing to arms limitations was extremely low and that, in order to persuade Ben-Gurion to accept the Johnson Plan, the United States would need to offer not only the Hawk missiles but even a security guarantee to Israel as compensation. The principal point of divergence from the Department of State was Feldman's insistence that the decision to provide the Hawk missiles be conveyed to Israel before it agreed to the Johnson Plan, in effect, making the offer unconditional[54].

As opinions within the administration remained divided, on August 14, Kennedy, Rusk, Bundy, Feldman, and Johnson held a meeting to review policy toward Israel. The meeting was also intended to determine the course Feldman should take in his upcoming unofficial consultations in Israel. The discussion centered on the substance and merits of the Johnson Plan. The Department of State's proposal to postpone the decision on the provision of Hawk missiles and to prioritize arms-control talks with Nasser was not even considered. U.S. domestic politics emerged as a hidden theme in the discussions of the Johnson Plan. During the discussion of the possible reactions of American Jews, Feldman remarked, "If we could tie in the Hawk [with the Johnson Plan], it might work." In response, Kennedy candidly stated that if information leaked about a large-scale refugee repatriation plan that Israel would be unable to accept, "People would stir up because of elections. We should find out what Israel will do. I don't want to get into a costly fight without getting something." Toward the end of the rather unfocused discussion, Feldman stated that the decision to provide Hawk missiles should be conveyed to Ben-Gurion before gauging Israel's reaction to the Johnson Plan. Kennedy replied that U.S. policy on the Hawk missiles should first be conveyed to Nasser. The meeting concluded, however, with the President suggesting that the details be left to Feldman[55].

In the end, it was Feldman's approach that was put into practice. On August 19, while visiting Israel, Feldman informed Ben-Gurion that Kennedy had decided to provide the Hawk missiles without attaching conditions[56]. The fact that this was not treated as a violation of instructions suggests that the policy of offering the Hawk missiles unconditionally had already been decided at some point before Feldman's departure[57]. According to Feldman's report, Ben-Gurion stated that if Nasser agreed to arms control, the provision of Hawk missiles would no longer be necessary. Moreover, while attaching various conditions and showing great reluctance, he nonetheless indicated that he was not necessarily opposed to the Johnson Plan. Having failed to make the supply of Hawk missiles conditional, the Department of State secured the minimal concession it had sought from Israel as the possibility of

memorandum to the President is included in *FRUS, 1961–1963*, vol. 18, pp. 53–54, though its source is a separate file at the JFKL. In the memorandum, Feldman referred to "two memoranda from the State Department dealing with Near East problems," and note 1 on p. 53 of *FRUS, 1961–1963*, vol. 18, states that these refer to the two documents contained in *FRUS, 1961–1963*, vol. 18, pp. 27–47. However, another copy of the same memorandum, preserved in the "Israel 1961–63 1 of 2" folder, box 427, appears to have had attached to it both the two documents cited in this note and those cited in note 47.

[54] Memorandum from Feldman to Kennedy, August 10, 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 18, pp. 53-54.

[55] Notes of Conference, August 14, 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 18, pp. 54-58.

[56] Tel Aviv to DOS, #180, August 19, 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 18, pp. 64-65.

[57] According to Ben-Zvi's study, which draws on Feldman's oral history and other sources not used in this paper, Kennedy agreed to Feldman's approach at the meeting on the 14th, on the assumption that providing the Hawk missiles unconditionally might elicit a favorable response from Israel toward the Johnson Plan. Ben-Zvi, *John F. Kennedy and the Politics of Arms Sales to Israel*, pp. 75-77. Ben-Zvi's study is the most detailed prior research on the issue of providing the Hawk missiles. However, it pays little attention to the Department of State's arms control proposal or to the regional nature of the U.S. interest definition.

Israel's acceptance of the Johnson Plan remained open[58].

Five days later, on August 24, U.S. Ambassador to Egypt John S. Badeau met with Nasser and conveyed that the United States had decided to supply Hawk missiles to Israel. At the same time, he explained that if Egypt were to agree to arms control, the decision to provide the missiles might be reconsidered. In response, Nasser, citing examples such as the continued supply of Western arms to Israel in violation of UN resolutions during the first Arab–Israeli war, expressed the view that the West could not enforce arms limitations on Israel, thereby indicating a negative stance toward it. On the other hand, regarding the Johnson Plan, Nasser showed a generally positive attitude, albeit with numerous reservations. Badeau assessed Nasser's position on the Johnson Plan as being roughly on par with Ben-Gurion's reserved stance[59]. Nevertheless, Nasser's lack of interest in arms control extinguished the possibility of Arab–Israeli arms limitations that the Department of State had envisioned, thereby removing an obstacle to supplying Israel with the Hawk missiles. In retrospect, even if the Department of State's recommendation to first sound out Nasser on arms control had been followed, the provision of Hawk missiles to Israel would likely still have taken place.

3.4. Diverging interests

After the notification of the policy to provide Hawk missiles, however, U.S.–Israel relations deteriorated further. Israel soon made its opposition to the Johnson Plan clear, thereby eliminating potential avenues for resolving the Palestinian refugee issue. Moreover, Israel's provocative stance during the minor clashes with Syria and Jordan along their borders further intensified the Arab–Israeli tensions. The provision of Hawk missiles did nothing to ease Arab–Israeli tensions or enhance regional stability. Thus, as early as the autumn of 1962, not only the Department of State but even Komer began to voice dissatisfaction that Israel had failed to take appropriate policies and actions in response to the Kennedy administration's favorable reaction to Israeli concerns, including the decision to provide Hawk missiles, among others[60].

The meeting between President Kennedy and Israeli Foreign Minister Meir, held in Palm Beach on December 27, should be understood in this context. While this meeting, at which President Kennedy described U.S.–Israel relations as a "special relationship," has often been portrayed in prior studies as an epochal event signifying the deepening of bilateral ties, the Kennedy administration's actual objective in this meeting was to express candid dissatisfaction with Israel's failure to take U.S. interests into account and to determine whether Israel was willing to respect U.S. priorities. The briefing paper prepared for the meeting stated that the principal purpose of the talk was to determine "whether Israel will reciprocate adequately for the assistance and support of the United States," or "whether continued one-sided support by the United States for Israel so prejudices our position with the Arabs that our own effectiveness in ameliorating the tensions of the Arab–Israel conflict will be diluted." As examples of Israeli policies and actions that ran counter to U.S. policy, the briefing paper detailed Israel's announcement of the decision to provide Hawk missiles in a manner that flaunted its strong ties with the United States, its uncooperative stance on resolving the refugee issue, and its provocative posture

[58] DOS to Tel Aviv, #176 August 20, 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 18, pp. 66-67; Memorandum of Conversation, August 24, 1962, ibid., pp. 73-74.
[59] DOS to Cairo, #190, August 22, 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 18, p. 71; Cairo to DOS, #331, August 24, 1962, ibid., pp. 74-77.
[60] Ben-Zvi, *John F. Kennedy and the Politics of Arms Sales to Israel*, pp. 81-89.

towards Syria and Jordan[61]. Kennedy conducted the meeting with Meir in accordance with these briefing papers.

At the outset of the meeting, Meir delivered a lengthy monologue that sought unilaterally to justify Israel's position. In response, Kennedy remarked that, "Our concern is in maintaining the balance of power in the interest of the free world," not only in the Middle East but across all regions of the world, and then proceeded to make the following statement.

> The United States, the President said, has a special relationship with Israel in the Middle East really comparable only to that which it has with Britain over the wide range of world affairs. But for us to play properly the role we are called upon to play, we cannot afford the luxury of identifying Israel---or Pakistan, or certain other countries---as our exclusive friends, hewing to the line of close and intimate allies (for we feel that about Israel though it is not a formal ally) and letting other countries go. If we pulled out of the Arab Middle East and maintained our ties only with Israel, this would not be in Israel's interest.

The terms "special relationship" and "allies" were used to criticize the situation in which Israel was unilaterally benefiting from the United States' friendly posture. Put bluntly, Kennedy's point was that, due to Israel's unilateralist policies and actions, the United States was compelled to judge that its relationship with Israel was not appropriate to describe as a "special relationship" and an "alliance." Kennedy then pointed out that Israel's statements and actions regarding the Jordan River water diversion, its border clashes with neighboring Arab states, the refugee issue, and the decision to provide Hawk missiles had all become burdens for the United States, and he pressed the point with the following remarks.

> I think it is quite clear that in cases of an invasion the United States would come to the support of Israel. We have that capacity and it is growing. Also, the United States is helping Israel economically. We would like now to see if we can make some progress on refugees and maintain our friendship with Israel without constantly cutting across our other interests in the Middle East. When Israel takes actions in these matters, we hope it will understand our problems as well as its own.

From the perspective of a discourse-level analysis, the opening sentence of the cited passage could be read as implying something akin to the security guarantee that Israel sought. However, when considered in the context of the policy statement, Kennedy was attempting to convey his frustration over Israel's repeated actions that ran counter to U.S. regional interests. While the opening sentence describes the United States' current consideration for Israel's security, it cannot be understood as indicating an intention to extend a new commitment. What is reiterated throughout Kennedy's remarks is his dissatisfaction with Israel, arising from the recognition that the interests of the United States and Israel were diverging. Particularly noteworthy is that U.S. interests were consistently defined in regional terms. Kennedy made it clear that the United States could not support Israel in a manner that contradicted its regional interests.

Despite Kennedy's strong message, Meir's position remained unchanged from her opening remarks

[61] William H. Brubeck to McGeorge Bundy, "President's Meeting with Israel Foreign Minister: Briefing Materials," December 14, 1962, in "Israel 1961-63 (1 of 2)" folder, Box 427, NSF, JFKL.

throughout the meeting[62]. Although later some scholars highlighted the "special relationship" discourse in this meeting and portrayed it as the starting point of the U.S.–Israel alliance, in reality, the meeting ended inconclusively.

Conclusion

The U.S.–Israel alliance can be regarded as having been formed through the accumulation of various institutions. From the perspective of this institutional interpretation, the provision of sophisticated weapons by the United States to Israel represented one of the institutional foundations that constituted the present U.S.–Israel alliance. The supply of Hawk missiles marked its inception. However, an examination of the policy-making process and the subsequent course of U.S.–Israel relations makes it difficult to conclude that the bilateral relationship normally associated with the concept of an "alliance" had emerged in the latter half of 1962. Kennedy himself, who is considered to have taken the lead in the decision to provide the Hawk missiles, regarded Israel by the end of 1962 as a hindrance to U.S. regional interests in the Middle East. In contrast to the Eisenhower administration, which in 1958 had considered Israel to be a potential strategic asset, it may even be said that by the end of 1962, the Kennedy administration regarded Israel as a strategic liability.

The Kennedy administration's decision to provide Hawk missiles was influenced, at least in part, by domestic political considerations in the United States. Notably, Feldman, who acted as a link between the Israeli Government and American Jews with the Kennedy administration, strongly pressed for the unconditional provision of the Hawk. In a meeting before he visited Israel, Kennedy made clear his concern for domestic political repercussions in the United States. Domestic political considerations were an important factor in explaining both the decision in August 1962 to provide the Hawk missiles unconditionally and the subsequent continuity of this policy. Nonetheless, domestic political considerations alone cannot explain why Kennedy and Komer shifted to a more critical stance toward Israel following the provision of Hawk missiles. Actually, they account for only part of the complex process that culminated in the decision to supply them. To understand these developments consistently, an analysis from the perspective of U.S. regional policy is necessary.

In June 1962, Komer called for a revision of the U.S. policy toward Israel, seeking to correct what he perceived as an excessive pro-Egyptian bias in U.S. policy. Unlike Feldman, who sought to strengthen U.S.–Israel ties unconditionally, Komer sought to maintain the basic principle of impartiality between the Arab states and Israel, a principle upheld since the previous administration, while moving beyond passive impartiality to foster regional stability by actively strengthening relations with both sides. One focal point of the reassessment of U.S. policy toward Israel was how the military balance between Israel and Egypt should be viewed, but U.S. intelligence analysis left room for various interpretations. In this situation, the Department of Defense's acknowledgment of Israel's vulnerabilities and its justification for providing the Hawk missiles from a military point of view became one factor prompting a shift in the Kennedy administration's policy on the issue. In addition, likely reflecting Kennedy's prior inclination toward the policy of providing Hawk missiles, the Department of State adopted a somewhat strained intelligence assessment that "the UAR was progressing in acquiring missiles." On this basis, it positioned the provision of Hawk missiles solely

[62] Memorandum of Conversation, "Conversation with Israel Foreign Minister," December 27, 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 18, pp. 276-283.

as a policy aimed at preserving the military balance between Egypt and Israel, thereby justifying it within the framework of the existing policy of impartiality in Arab–Israeli relations. It may be said, without much exaggeration, that from July 1962, the Department of State was forced to adjust regional policy to align with the President's intention to provide the Hawk missiles. From another perspective, regional policy was to be upheld even at the cost of the inverted task of altering situational assessments to fit predetermined conclusions. As a result, the provision of Hawk missiles was adopted as a policy that remained within the framework of the policy of impartiality between the Arab states and Israel.

Underlying this policy of impartiality was the broader regional objective of preserving and promoting stability in the region. The Johnson Plan, which envisaged the alleviation of the Palestinian refugee issue, as well as a proposal for arms control between Egypt and Israel, was precisely intended to achieve the broader objective of regional stability. As Kennedy stated in his meeting with Meir, the decision to provide the Hawk missiles carried the expectation that, by demonstrating concern of U.S. for Israel's security, Israel in turn would act with regard for U.S. regional interests—specifically by fostering amicable relations with Arab states—and thereby contribute to regional stability. Although less visible under the Kennedy administration, where the policy-making process often lacked discipline and policy content tended to be ambiguous, the framework of regional policy established under the Eisenhower administration, aimed at maintaining impartiality between the Arab states and Israel for the sake of regional stability, persisted, evolving from a stance of passive impartiality to one of active impartiality. Thus, there was no room to regard Israel, which repeatedly acted contrary to U.S. regional interests, as an ally.

Policy elements, such as the arms control proposal and the Johnson Plan, expected to promote U.S. regional interests, were ambiguously linked to the provision of Hawk missiles within a policy-making process that lacked discipline. They were presented to both Israel and Egypt, but ultimately failed in both cases. In retrospect, even if these policies had been systematically developed through a more orderly decision-making process, they likely would not have contributed to achieving regional stability. Immediately following the decision to provide Hawk missiles, the Yemeni civil war broke out, and Nasser's intervention turned the conflict into what increasingly resembled a proxy war between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Disregarding U.S. approaches advising restraint, Nasser deepened Egypt's intervention in Yemen, further accelerating its military buildup[63]. The United States was unable to steer either Israel or Egypt in a direction aligned with its regional interests. The active offshore balancing policy, like the earlier Western integration policy, failed to alter the policies and actions of Middle Eastern states and, as a result, did not further U.S. regional interests. The Middle East, characterized by multipolar conflict and competition, remained outside the sphere of U.S. hegemony.

[63] Burns, *Economic Aid*, pp. 134-148; Little, "The New Frontier on the Nile," pp. 510-527.