Power, Pluralism and

American Support for Israel in the Middle East Conflict

A study of the nature and sources of Congressional and Executive attitudes and behavior with regard to domestic interest groups attempting to affect American policy in the Middle East.

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Introduction

One of the key analytical concepts in Political Science is power. What constitutes power? How is it exercised? How is political power distributed in society? What affects and determines that distribution? Is the existing distribution of power a fair one? If not, how can we alter it? Political Scientists have been grappling with these and other aspects of power for years, and over the last twenty five years this concern has taken the form of a debate between defenders of Pluralism as a valid theory of how power is exercised and as an accurate description of American politics, and critics of Pluralism who claim the opposite.

In this paper I will analyze the arguments of the Pluralists, particularly Robert Dahl, and of the critics, such as Robert Paul Wolff, Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, Matthew Crenson, and Steven Lukes, in the context of a specific "situation," American support for Israel in the Middle East conflict. Admittedly, this situation is not an ideal one within which to consider Pluralism and its critics. Domestic, rather than foreign policy matters are more adaptable to such an analysis, since citizens are more directly concerned with and affected by domestic matters. Moreover, the Executive Branch, rather than the Congress, the arena Pluralists and their critics usually focus on, is given primary responsibility by the United States Constitution to formulate and execute American foreign policy. The nature of foreign policy is such that it is usually formulated
on the basis of considerations other than domestic or electoral, such as international power relations or American interests as a whole.

Nevertheless, for a number of reasons, the analyses of the Pluralists and their critics can in fact be applied to this situation. American foreign policy in the Middle East to a large extent reflects a domestic political environment rather than the typical foreign policy considerations. First, a sizeable portion of the population is directly concerned with American foreign policy in the Middle East—American Jews and Arab Americans especially— and devote a significant amount of time in the form of political activity to affect that policy. A number of other domestic groups—labor, church, human rights, corporate, and black groups—are sometimes peripherally interested in American Middle East policy and therefore also attempt to make themselves heard in the policy-making process. In addition, the Executive Branch, especially the President, may be constrained by public opinion in formulating American policy and is somewhat vulnerable to the pressures of domestic foreign policy interest groups, particularly in this situation. The President must, for example, be sensitive to groups whose members' votes are partially determined on the basis of his actions and attitudes toward Israel. Moreover, the Congress, is much more vulnerable to domestic foreign policy interest group pressure because, in general, Congressmen must be sensitive and responsive to active interest groups in order to be re-elected. And the Congress does have some input into the process of foreign policy formulation
and execution. For instance, the Senate must ratify all treaties and has the power to disapprove certain military sales, and both the Senate and the House of Representatives are responsible for authorizing all foreign economic and military aid expenditures. Also, foreign policy pronouncements by Congressmen and Senators may occasionally constrain Executive actions; a foreign policy option or concern which has gained legitimacy in the Congress is one with which the President may have to reckon. The applicability of the debate between Pluralists and their critics to this situation will become clearer later on in the paper.

The importance of the debate between the defenders and critics of Pluralist theory cannot be minimized, for in addition to the theoretical implications of the different arguments as to how power can be studied, there are practical implications as well. At stake in this debate is nothing less than a determination of the openness and fairness of the American political system. I will not be concerned solely with the formal openness of American politics, the fact that a plethora of interest groups have access and influence over decisionmakers, the existence of meaningful electoral ties between citizens and elected officials, the fact that decisions are often made with the apparent acquiescence of the public, or the fact that meaningful compromise does often take place on certain matters. Rather, I am concerned with deeper, more penetrating questions: who wins what, why and how in American politics? Do systematic biases of outcomes as well as procedures exist? How can we
discover and explain these biases, if they do in fact exist? Are they reflected solely in the political decisionmaking process or in more insidious ways? What are the issues being debated in the political arena, what issues aren't being debated, and why? Many more questions will be raised in the course of this paper.

The debate between Pluralists and their critics has practical implications for the political "actor" as well as for the observer. A participant in politics must clearly understand the different ways in which power may be exercised and the biases, if any, which are at work in American politics, if he is to be successful.

The first part of this paper will deal with the arguments and analyses of the defenders and critics of Pluralism and the second part will consider American Middle East policy and support for Israel in the context of these arguments and analyses.
Pluralist Theory

Pluralist theory grew out of an attack on the "methodological individualism" of the classical liberal tradition of John Locke and John Stuart Mill that formed the basis of American political theory since the founding of the Republic, and attempts to reconcile the central ideals of this tradition with the realities of modern industrial society. According to this tradition, man is a self-interested being who joins a political society, an association of individuals who concert their wills and collect their power in the state for mutually self-interested ends. As John Locke explained, "Man enters into society...with an intention...to preserve himself, his liberty, his property...The great instrument and means of that being the laws established in that society."
The state is the supreme power and authority in society, since it is the representative of the collective will of the individual members of society. The actions of the state are legitimated by a democratic process of decision and control which ensures that all members of the community have an equal role in making the laws to which they submit.

Classical democratic theory thus postulated a clear and direct relation between the individual and the state, with no intermediary bodies interposed between the two. The issues debated in the legislature were to be comprehensible to all members of society, and the relevance of these issues to each member's interest clearly understood. Indeed, the image frequently invoked in connection with classical liberal democracy is that of a town meeting where all participate in an open discussion.
and decision-making process on matters important to the community.

By the middle of the nineteenth century it became clear that the classical democratic model of America no longer corresponded to reality as a result of two important developments. The first was the emergence of "mass politics" and "whole hog democracy" which paralleled the enfranchisement of the entire adult population. As the electorate grew larger and issues became more complex, matters were less frequently discussed intelligently, nor were they easily understandable.

More important, however, was the "growth of an elaborate industrial system in the private sphere of society which gave rise to a new 'pluralistic structure' within the political framework of representative government." Large corporations, labor unions, and trade associations emerged out of the industrial revolution; individuals in the economic sphere no longer confronted each other as the autonomous members postulated by classical democratic theory, but rather as members of some association. The immediate relation of the state to the individual was therefore destroyed. "The state...brought its authority to bear on the individual only indirectly, through the medium of laws governing the behavior of those groups. It became necessary to recognize that the state was mediated by a system of 'middle-size' institutional associations." The era of a simple idyllic society and of simple government postulated by classical democratic theory was over.

A number of factors peculiar to the United States facilitated the development of this pluralistic structure. First, from the
beginning of the Republic, mediating bodies did interpose
themselves between the individual and the central government
in the form of local and state government structures. Even the
institutions of the central government— the Executive, the
Congress, and the Judiciary— were designed to balance competing
interests or factions, not individuals, giving each faction a
small voice in policy but not domination over others. As
Madison states in Federalist 10, "Pure democracy...can admit
no cure from the mischiefs of faction...In the extent and proper
structure of the union, therefore, we behold a republican remedy
for the diseases" of faction.5

Secondly, America has always been a nation of "joiners." Tocqueville, upon visiting the United States, observed that
"in no other country in the world has the principle of association
been more successfully used or applied to a greater multitude
of objects than in America."6 For example, countless religious,
fraternal, ethnic, education, vocational and governmental associa-
tions have existed throughout American history. This plethora
of organizations also resulted from the extraordinary
heterogeneity of the American population. The country has
always been divided along religious, ethnic, economic, ideological,
and geographical lines, precluding the emergence of strong
national groupings or a unified electorate, and encouraging
the development of numerous private groups and associations.
The final picture of American society is that of a

complex interlocking of ethnic, religious,
social, regional and economic groups, whose
members pursue their diverse interests through
the medium of private associations, which in turn are coordinated, regulated, contained, encouraged and guided by a federal system of representative democracy. Individual citizens confront the central government and one another through the intermediary bodies of the voluntary groups to which they belong.

Thus, in order to "legitimize" the existing reality, in order to reconcile it with the basic tenets of traditional democratic theory, a theory which most held as ideal, a new theory both descriptive and prescriptive of American politics was necessary. Perhaps the most lucid, rigorous and sophisticated explication of this new theory, called Pluralism, is provided by Robert Dahl. Dahl’s explication purports to show first on a theoretical level how power is exercised in politics and how we can study power, and then he applies his theoretical conclusions to American politics in order to determine the openness of American government given the current "unhospitable" conditions for traditional democracy.

Dahl’s Theory of Pluralism

Dahl begins with what he calls his "intuitive idea of power." He postulates that "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do." Carol Greenwald modifies this definition of power to "group activities designed to alter the probable activity patterns of others." Dahl defines political power as the active participation in political decisionmaking and settling of conflicts between competing interests in society. Implicit in the Pluralist idea of power, then, is the notion of power as an individual's (or group's) realization of his will, despite the resistance of
Dahl often uses influence and power interchangeably, but he differentiates between the two by stating that power entails severer sanctions than influence. Dahl also distinguishes between direct and indirect power, and actual and potential power. Direct power is the immediate participation in decision-making and in initiating and vetoing proposals for policies. Indirect power means that individuals can affect the actions of decisionmakers. The difference between actual and potential power is that an individual may have potential power in the form of political resources, but that power does not take on any meaning unless those resources are actively and effectively employed.

The method used by Dahl in studying the exercise and distribution of power is to select for examination a number of "key" political decisions—decisions which members of a polity seem intensely interested in—identify the persons or groups who, in order to advance their interests, took part in the conflict over the decision, determine and analyze the specific outcome of the conflict over the decision, and then formulate an ideal of who has power; those who prevail in this political decision-making process, or who have a significant effect on the outcome, have power in proportion to this effect.

Using this method, Dahl develops a description of the distribution and exercise of power in the United States. The underlying assumption of this description is a Lockean-Liberal conception of the apolitical nature of man. "Homo civicus is not by nature a political animal...Sometimes, however, the actions
or inactions of government may threaten the primary goals of homo civicus. Then homo civicus may set out deliberately to use the resources at his disposal in order to influence the actions of government.\(^\text{10}\) When the primary interests of citizens are threatened, they react through political activity by joining or forming organized groups. Although a citizen may not be a member of an active group, he is probably a member of a "latent group" with a potential for organizing, and no significant obstacles to organizing exist. The level of activity of a group depends upon a number of factors, such as the resources, which Dahl claims are dispersed fairly widely throughout the population, options, opportunity costs, and especially, according to Dahl, the intensity of its members; for Dahl, "political activity is to a significant extent a function of relative intensity."\(^\text{11}\)

Electoral ties are the key to Pluralist theory, for voters "exert indirect influence on the decisions of leaders by means of elections."\(^\text{12}\) When disagreement exists between leaders or candidates over policy or over an election, they may actively seek the support of an active group in return for policies favorable to that group. Thus, although citizens may have little direct power, they have a significant amount of indirect power over policy; the "elected leadership keep the real or imagined preferences of constituents constantly in mind in deciding what policies to adopt or reject,"\(^\text{13}\) for their continued electoral success depends upon doing so. Therefore, groups, through pressure on elected officials, make the will of their members
felt on elected officials who work out compromises with opposing interests which would have been accomplished by the debate and deliberation in a "town meeting" in classical democracy.

As a result, the "immediacy, effectiveness, involvement and thus democratic participation are assured to individuals in his association. Control over legislative and national policy is in turn assured to associations through their ability to deliver votes to the legislator in an election." The politician is merely a "middle-man in the power transactions of society" who "absorbs pressures of his organized constituents, strikes a balance among them (on the basis of relative voting strength,) then goes to the floor of the Congress to work out compromises with his colleagues, who have suffered different compositions of pressures and hence are seeking different adjustments of competing social interests." The neutral state merely reflects the balance of power of opposing group forces in society and does not favor some groups over others. Any changes in this balance of power are mirrored in the state's policy outcomes. In this way the political system remains responsive to the pressures of intense interests of citizens, and decisions can be made "democratically," even during an interelection period, in the absence of the direct relation of individual citizens to the central government postulated by classical democratic theory.

Other aspects of American politics facilitate, according to Dahl, democratic participation by interest groups and democratic outcomes. For example, leadership and subleadership is specialized; no one sovereign center of power or "power elite" exists.
Although some groups may have more political resources than others, resources useful in one issue area may not be useful in another area. Virtually nobody is lacking in some political resources, and these resources are fairly widely distributed throughout society. Politically inactive groups are not guaranteed a role in decisionmaking, but active groups always are; the "political stratum," the most politically active segment of society, is open to all and the "independence, penetrability, and heterogeneity of the various segments of the political stratum all but guarantee that any dissatisfied group will find spokesmen in the political stratum."

Dahl's final conclusion, then, is that "there is a high probability that any active and legitimate group will make itself heard effectively at some stage in the process of decision." A legitimate group for Dahl is defined as one "whose activity is accepted as right and proper by a preponderant of the active." He defines being "effectively heard" as a situation in which "one or more officials are not only ready to listen to the voice (of the group) but expects to suffer in some way if they do not placate the group." I will define these two terms more rigorously. A legitimate group is one whose activities do not violate the most basic and elementary norms of "fairness" and legality in society. Being "effectively heard" means that any legitimate group will have an effect on the outcome of a decision roughly in proportion to its size and intensity.

Value judgments are implicit in any social theory, and in order to adequately evaluate a theory, we must make these
judgments explicitly. Pluralist theory is no different; Pluralism is not merely a description of the way American politics works, it is a normative prescription of the way politics should work. Some of the values of Pluralism for Dahl and others have already been stated: Dahl and others see Pluralism as a viable albeit imperfect way of salvaging the best of classical democratic theory and reconciling it with modern industrial society. Also, Pluralism allows any intense group to be effectively heard in matters important to the group and exercise though not abuse its power, clearly a goal for Dahl. (The state does not interfere with the lives of individuals in a Pluralist polity, it only protects their freedom to pursue different ends, yet individuals or groups with grievances have recourse to the government, which can remedy the situation. Moreover, Pluralism, through the compromise and give-and-take implied in the theory, achieves a measure of tolerance and harmony among a massive number of disparate and possibly hostile groups, and consequently produces social stability. And perhaps all these outcomes are all we can reasonably expect from any political system; Dahl frequently puts the American system in perspective by comparing it to dictatorships. "With all its defects, (the "American hybrid") does nonetheless provide a high probability that any active and legitimate group will make itself heard at some stage in the process of decision. This is no mean thing in a political system," Dahl concludes. The American hybrid "appears to be a relatively efficient system for reinforcing agreement, encouraging moderation, and maintaining social peace
in a restless and immoderate people operating a gigantic, powerful, diversified, and incredibly complex society."\(^{19}\)

**Critics of Pluralism**

The basic thrust of the arguments of the critics of Pluralism is that Dahl's approach to the study of power and his conclusions about the nature of American politics are flawed because Dahl focuses solely on the political arena, overt behavior, and political decisionmaking, instead of focusing on the context of the political arena within which decisions are made and on decisions that are not made. On theoretical grounds they object to Dahl's method of studying power and on that basis they claim that Pluralism is neither descriptive of American politics—many groups are systematically excluded—nor properly prescriptive of American politics—a system which ensures that any politically active, intense and "legitimate" group can "make itself heard" in the political decisionmaking process is not necessarily an open and democratic one. I will begin my analysis of the critics of Pluralism with Robert Paul Wolff.

Wolff defines political power as Dahl does: the ability to make and enforce decisions with regard to matters of major social importance. However, Wolff points out that in order to avoid making value judgments about what is important, Dahl defines matters of major social importance as those issues which are being intensely contested in the political arena. The result is that the very biases of the polity being studied are adopted
by the "disinterested" observer. Dahl's "value neutrality" is hence a false objectivity, according to Wolff; Dahl "replaces his own evaluations... (and) adopts unthinkingly the consensus gentilium of the moment. If everyone is talking about the decisions of war and peace, he studies the process of decision in the Pentagon. When interest shifts to urban renewal, he launches an investigation of the dynamics of city-hall politics."20

Faced with the inevitability of making value judgments, Wolff observes that there are a vast number of matters of major social importance which are not decided by anybody; they have not become "objects of decision," events or "state(s) of affairs which someone or other is in a position actually to choose to bring about." Consequently, any proper analysis of power requires an investigation of the sorts of matters of major social importance which are not anybody's object of decision, and an examination of why these matters did not become objects of decision. Dahl, in studying power, would ask: "Which group prevailed in this decision?" Yet more revealing, insightful questions would be: "What is the issue? How and why did the matter become an issue debated in the political arena? Why isn't a certain matter considered an object of decision when technically it could be? Whose interests were served when a matter became or was prevented from becoming an object of decision?" For Wolff, "the most significant fact about the distribution of power in America is not who makes such decisions as they are made, but rather how many matters of the greatest social importance are not objects at all."21

Wolff then claims that Pluralism does not accurately
describe the American political system: American politics "as it actually works out in practice, systematically favors the interests of the stronger against the weaker party in interest group conflicts and tends to solidify the power of those who already hold it." For example, producer interests appear to be systematically favored over consumer groups in the decision-making process.

Furthermore, Wolff states that the ideology of Pluralism produces a "plateau" which groups must scale in order to become "in-groups." True, a group accepted as legitimate will be able to affect policy outcomes, for the ideology of Pluralism guarantees that every legitimate social group has a right to a voice in policymaking and in sharing of benefits. But Pluralist ideology also means that until a group is considered legitimate, the group "receives no attention whatsoever and its proponents are treated as crackpots, extremists, or foreign agents." Thus, "the line between acceptable and unacceptable...is very sharp" and "the most important battle waged by any group in American politics is the struggle to climb onto the plateau; for once a group does gain legitimacy, "with bewildering speed" it becomes part of the plateau and can exercise some power over policy. Civil Rights and women's groups are two examples of groups which moved from the category of "extremists, crackpots, or foreign agents" to become part of the plateau during the 1960s. The net result is that "Pluralism has a breaking effect on social change; it slows down transformation in the system of group adjustments but does not set up an absolute barrier to change." 22
Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, in their book Power and Poverty, outline what they call the "second face of power." They agree with Dahl that power—the realization of one's will despite the resistance of others—is exercised through participation in political decisionmaking. However, their basic theoretical premise is that "power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A." The invoking or reinforcing of a "mobilization of bias," a "set of predominant values, beliefs, rituals, and institutional procedures ("rules of the game") that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain groups at the expense of others" is for Bachrach and Baratz just as crucial in studying power as is decision-making; a systematic bias as to which issues are actually considered in the political arena may in fact exist.

Bachrach and Baratz explain that the primary tactic for sustaining a given mobilization of bias is through "nondecisions." A nondecision is a decision that results in the suppression or thwarting of a latent or manifest challenge to the values or interests of the decisionmaker...a means by which demands for change in the existing allocation of benefits and privileges in the community can be suffocated before they are even voiced; or kept covert; or killed before they gain access to the relevant decision-making arena; or failing all these things, maimed or destroyed in the decision-implementing stage of the policy process.

Bachrach and Baratz outline many different forms of
nondecisionmaking: force, threats of sanctions against the initiator of a new demand, invoking an existing bias in the political system— a norm, precedent, or rule to exclude a threatening demand, deny its legitimacy, deflecting challenges through "time consuming and ritualistic routines that are built into the political system." The most insidious type of non-decision seems to be the "reshaping or strengthening of a mobilization of bias in order to block challenges to the prevailing allocation of values...reinforc(ing) existing barriers (or) construct(ing) new ones."26 For example, a plan for nationalizing oil companies or for national health insurance may be branded as "socialistic" or a "threat to free enterprise" and therefore excluded from serious consideration as issues in politics.

The methodology employed by Bachrach and Baratz is, generally, to widen the boundaries of what counts as a political issue by identifying potential issues that are either squashed in the political arena (overt demands) or identifying grievances which are prevented from entering the political arena (covert demands). Bachrach and Baratz thus still seem to consider expressed interests as a given, as Dahl does, but look at interests that are expressed outside of politics. More specifically, Bachrach and Baratz focus on and study (decisions involving possible enduring transformations in the manner in which the values and goods are allocated in the polity) and challenges to the value-allocation itself. Then, they accumulate clues about prevailing mobilizations of bias as they are reflected in the rituals and rules of the game operative in the decisionmaking process. This
will, according to Bachrach and Baratz, reveal which groups or persons are favored or disfavored as a result of the mobilizations of bias, and whether and with what success the interests of the disfavored are expressed in the political arena. Thus, whereas Dahl would, for example, examine a specific decision made in the Congress and see who wins in order to determine who has power, Bachrach and Baratz would proceed very differently. They would examine the norms and values of the Congress, the biased procedures of the Congressional system such as the Committee and Seniority systems, which may suppress the grievances of certain groups, and determine how a specific group used those norms and procedures to its advantage. In this way we will know "the values and biases that are built into the political system that, for the student of power, give real meaning to those issues which do not enter the political arena" and more thoroughly understand the exercise and distribution of power.27

Matthew Crenson, in The Un-Politics of Air Pollution, clarifies and extends the arguments of Bachrach and Baratz and Wolff and in addition demonstrates that the concepts of the second face of power can be operationalized; we can empirically study nondecisions. First, Crenson identifies an ideological bias in Pluralism: since it is thought that the "American Hybrid" is an open system in which any legitimate group can achieve a measure of satisfaction, "it follows that if people remain mute on some topic, or if some potential issue is never raised, the silence cannot be attributed to political constraints upon the
expression of discontent...Political institutions do not produce nonissues." 28 Pluralist ideology may therefore prevent the observer from discovering systematic biases in the issues which are considered in American politics; (the assumption that the only important issues are the visible ones may be false.)

Grenson contends, and demonstrates empirically, that power can be exercised through nondecisions, through controlling the agenda and restricting the scope of the political process to a limited range of acceptable issues and political demands. But Grenson extends the arguments of Bachrach and Baratz by clarifying the ways in which a political culture or domestic political environment can indirectly shape and regulate which issues are considered and how these issues are perceived and framed. As Grensom explains:

Any polity tends to exhibit a general and consistent bias in favor of some kinds of issues and in opposition to others...Much of this restrictive influence is likely to be exerted indirectly. For example, the citizens of a community will probably tend to frame their demands in such a way as to achieve a good political reception. They will often adopt their requests to the presumed inclinations of local political institutions and political leaders (and) perhaps omit some requests altogether. Local political forms and practices may even inhibit citizens' ability to transform some diffuse discontent into an explicit demand. In short, there is something like an articulate ideology in political institutions,—even in those that appear to be the most open-minded, flexible, and disjointed—a ideology in the sense that it promotes selective perception and articulation of social problems and conflicts, and so a town develops its own unique "political climate." 29

These built-in biases are ignored by the Pluralist, who considers the issues dealt with in the political arena as a
given, the starting point for his research; Crenson makes these biases the very object of his study of power.

Steven Lukes rejects the first two faces of power as by themselves inadequate in determining the exercise and distribution of power because of their emphasis on studying overt behavior. Also, Lukes makes explicit some of the assumptions implicit in Crenson's analysis. He holds that the biases of a political system can be mobilized or reinforced "in ways that are neither consciously chosen nor the intended result of particular individual's choices," but rather "by the socially structured and culturally patterned behavior of groups and institutions." Moreover, Lukes claims we must not only examine overt of covert conflicts as Dahl and Bachrach and Baratz do. Power may in fact be exercised in the absence of conflict. For Lukes, "the supreme and most insidious exercise of power (is) to prevent people from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, or because they can see or imagine no alternative to it...or because they see it as natural and unchangeable." Latent conflict, therefore, is suppressed by shaping people's actual preferences in such a way that they may not be aware of their true interest.

As in the case with Wolff, Bachrach and Baratz, and Crenson, Lukes understands that his approach entails making value judgments as to what is important in society. But whereas Bachrach and Baratz take people's policy preferences as
legitimate expressions of true interests (even though these preferences may be expressed outside the political arena and in some way other than what Dahl defines as "political activity"), Lukes, and to a lesser extent Crenson, contend that interests and expressed policy preferences do not have to correspond.

**Dahl's Response to the Critics**

Dahl acknowledges that on a theoretical level the "links in the chain of social causation" cited by the critics may exist, along with many other links, and that these links may be important to understanding why officials make certain decisions. Yet Dahl asserts that "it is such a staggering task to examine the indefinite number of faces of power." Many of these links, in fact, be manifested and reflected in the decisionmaking process; the biases in society and in certain political institutions favoring some groups at the expense of others can, to a significant extent be revealed solely by studying political decisionmaking. For example, Dahl could point out that a study of Congressional action on consumer protection legislation may disclose a bias in favor of producer interests, since producers consistently win on this legislation and consumers consistently lose.

Dahl would also claim that by introducing many immeasurable elements and nonevents into our analysis rather than focusing on overt political activity, the accumulation of empirical evidence becomes impossible. Furthermore, attempting to identify people's "real" interests as Lukes and Crenson do, rather than considering politically expressed preferences a given,
results in the observer imposing his own values on the people he is studying; the observer assigns to people interests that are important to the observer, interests the observer feels people should have in his estimation.

Instead, Dahl interprets the absence of conflict over a certain matter as an indication that a consensus on the matter exists:

The disputes over policy alternatives are almost always disputes over a set of alternatives which have already been winnowed down to those within the broad area of basic agreement. In this sense the majority nearly always rules, for politicians subject to elections must operate within the limits set by both their own values... and by their expectations about what policies they can adopt and still be re-elected.33

On an empirical level, Dahl would admit that biases in American politics do exist, and he cites many of them in *Preface to Democratic Theory*: institutional imperfections like the Senate and electoral college, problems in implementation of government decisions, the existence of a large bloc of nonvoters, problems of bureaucracy and clientelism, the fact that a candidate or elected official who represents a majority preference in one area may represent a minority preference in another area, and many others. Yet Dahl claims that these biases are random and unsystematic. "The benefits and disadvantages are allocated in an entirely arbitrary fashion and cannot be shown to follow any general principle."34 Though the "American Hybrid is not the very pinnacle of success... it often appears to operate in a creaking fashion vergin on total collapse"35 it may be unreasonable to expect
absolutely no biases in our system. The American political system is still remarkably open and responsive to new groups and new demands, Dahl would claim, for elected officials must be responsive to intense interests— their electoral success depends upon it. Any legitimate group therefore can make itself heard in some stage of the decisionmaking process. Dahl would cite the plethora of interest groups participating in American politics, the fact that groups dominant in one issue are are not dominant in another issue area, and point to the success of new groups in American politics such as black groups, Common Cause, the anti-nuclear movement, anti-abortion groups, and senior citizens groups.
Some Observations

The purpose of this paper is to try to determine how power can be accurately studied and how open and democratic the American political system is, with respect to a specific situation, American Middle East policy, recognizing, however, the constraints on domestic group influence over foreign policy. I wish to determine: do biases of outcomes exist? If so, how can they be accounted for—through examining only political decisionmaking, as Dahl does, or through examining the more insidious types of power exercise postulated by the critics? Are certain groups and certain types of demands systematically and consistently excluded from the political arena? Are meaningful policy alternatives being aired? Do any barriers to participation in decisionmaking exist? In short, how do the concepts employed by Dahl and the critics help us understand this specific situation?

Even if Dahl's theoretical and empirical conclusions are correct, I must ascertain so by examining the aspects of the political system emphasized by the critics and by determining for sure whether or not their claims are valid. For if the biases in the system itself do exist and do produce biased outcomes, as the critics assert, these biases in the system must themselves become the objects of our study.

I will also need to define standards of openness, fairness and democracy. I do not define an open, fair or democratic political system solely in procedural terms. Rather, an open, democratic system is one in which all citizens have relatively equal chances to influence and control the making of important
decisions that affect them. No systematic biases which exclude a citizen's or group's demands from entering the political system, or which prevent the group from exercising power over decisions, should exist. A group should have power over decisions (or over "nondecisions") roughly in proportion to its numbers and its "intensity," though the group should not abuse that power by unfairly encroaching on or usurping the ability of others to affect decisions on matters that are important to them. Thus, although in most cases I will hold that intensity is a good indicator of the importance of a matter to an individual or a group, I usually will not use intensity as narrowly as Dahl does— in terms of political activity. Intensity will instead be considered in terms of activity outside the political system as well as within the political system— as Bachrach and Baratz use intensity— or even in terms of the "diffuse discontent" that Crenson cites.

I will not be considering the arguments of Lukes in this paper. Though Lukes' analysis of power is both penetrating and insightful, I doubt whether I have the knowledge or experience to seriously and rigorously consider such a difficult approach in this specific situation.

Finally, although I will for the most part be examining the effect of domestic forces on American Middle East policy, I do not wish to convey the impression that domestic groups are the sole determinant— or even the main determinant— of Congressional and Executive attitudes and behavior with respect to the Middle East. The set of issues which figure prominently in the
formulation of all foreign policy, such as international power relations or the interests of the nation as a whole, the role that nonelected officials play in foreign policy formulation, and the nature of the execution of certain aspects of foreign policy—secret, delicate negotiations, for example—are a powerful constraint upon the possible impact of domestic groups on foreign policy. These factors must constantly be kept in mind.
The Situation: American Policy in the Middle East Conflict

In this next section I will analyze the nature and sources of Congressional and Executive attitudes and behavior toward Israel and the Arab countries, with respect to domestic forces attempting to shape and influence those attitudes and behavior. This analysis will be done in the context of Dahl and his critics. I will begin with a very brief outline of American policy in the Middle East.

As early as 1922, five years after the British Balfour Declaration, which stated that Britain, soon to occupy Palestine, "view(ed) with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people," Congress had supported the establishment of Israel. In that year Congress adopted a joint resolution expressing support for the Balfour Declaration. In 1944, 411 of the 535 members of the Seventy-Eighth Congress voted in favor of a resolution calling upon the United States to "use its good offices and take appropriate measures to the end that the doors of Palestine shall be opened for free entry of Jews into that country, and that there shall be full opportunity for colonization, so that the Jewish people may ultimately reconstitute Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth."36 The United States voted to support the United Nations General Assembly plan to partition Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state in 1947. When Israel declared her independence on May 15, 1948, President Harry Truman, ignoring the advice of the State Department and breaking with traditional policy of hesitating to recognize governments
of new states, formally extended American recognition to the State eleven minutes after independence had been declared. Once recognition had been accorded, the United States helped Israel during her war for independence with numerous loans, foreign aid, and diplomatic support in the United Nations and elsewhere.

Though no formal treaty arrangement between Israel and the United States exists, the relationship between the two countries has been characterized as a "Special Relationship," based on a supposed convergence of American and Israeli moral and strategic interests. The United States has a "historical and moral commitment to the survival and well being of Israel" and the United States recognizes Israel as a strategic asset, a bulwark against Communism and Soviet expansion, and a stable, democratic, dependable ally in a critical yet unstable region of the world.

This Special Relationship has been translated into tangible policy, especially in the Congress. The Congress has shown a "preoccupation ... with legislation that affected Israel's interest" and has been consistently and overwhelmingly supportive of Israel's interests. "At least 75% of the Senate is pro-Israel," remarked one observer, amounting to what some call a "Congressional veto" over certain aspects of American Middle East policy. Support for Israel in the Congress is reflected in numerous declarations of support for Israel, Congressional pressure on the Executive branch in favor of a more pro-Israel stance, favorable action on every military and economic aid program to Israel, initiation of aid packages to Israel, reduction or elimination of aid packages to Arab countries, and special treatment in aid terms for Israel. (Israel often gets lower loan rates on aid
packages than other countries). A study of Senate roll call votes on seven important Middle East issues during 1972-1973 revealed that 84% of the votes "could be considered supportive of Israel."40 Indeed, Congressional support for Israel "is bipartisan, has a wide geographical base, and runs the ideological gamut."41 On the other hand, Congress has, until very recently, displayed a complete attitude of indifference toward the Arab cause.

Whereas the Congress has been a bastion of support for Israel, the Executive Branch—more important than the Congress since it has primary responsibility for formulating American foreign policy—has favored Israel but has advocated a more "evenhanded" approach. As we will see later, however, the Executive Branch is often constrained in implementing this approach.

The most pro-Arab advocate in American government has traditionally been the Department of State. That our close relationship with Israel, a nation of just three million people, jeopardizes American relations with twenty one Arab states, with a population of 140 million, has never sat well with the State Department.

Official Executive policy over the last thirty years has been to ensure the political independence and territorial integrity of all the countries in the Middle East and to use American influence toward this end and toward the achievement of a lasting peace in the area. United States policy has also included taking steps to promote basic American interests in the Middle East: prevent Communist and Soviet "encroachment," support pro-Western
countries like Jordan and Saudi Arabia, ensure the flow of oil from countries in the area. These goals have often conflicted with America's deep support for the State of Israel. For example, American Presidents have often proposed military sales to Jordan, one of Israel's "confrontation states; U.S. support for Israel in the 1973 Yom Kippur War led to the Arab countries imposition of an oil embargo on the United States; in 1978, the U.S., recognizing the increasing importance of Saudi Arabia, another state extremely hostile to Israel, in terms of world oil supplies, sold $2.5 billion worth of advanced weaponry to Saudi Arabia. Our close relations with Israel have often prevented the development of close relations with many Arab states.

During the 1950's and early 1960's, the United States granted Israel over $1 billion in economic aid and made the survival and security of Israel an integral feature of American policy. Nevertheless, the United States refused to aid Israel militarily "so as not to jeopardize either its friendships with Arab countries during the cold war or its oil interests in the Middle East."42 However, when France, Israel's principal arms supplier during that period, declared an arms embargo against Israel after the 1967 Six Day War, the United States began military assistance to Israel in order to counter Soviet assistance to Israel's enemies. The first sale of advanced weaponry came in 1968. In 1970, the Congress passed legislation authorizing the transfer of unlimited amounts of aircraft and supporting equipment to Israel, and since 1973, the United States has supplied Israel with approximately $14 billion in aid. In 1979 Israel received
nearly 20% of the total U.S. foreign aid for the year; 48% of all military sales credits, and 56% of all military grants. Over the last five years the United States has allocated more military and economic aid to Israel than to any other country. The United States, as part of the 1979 Israeli–Egyptian Peace Treaty, now guarantees Israel oil supplies for the next fifteen years and will help pay for the relocation of Israeli airfields in the Negev. Aid programs to Arab countries are not nearly as extensive, though Saudi Arabia and now Egypt have received significant amounts of American aid and weaponry.

Over the years the United States has put forth a number of peace proposals, and during the last five years the United States has become more deeply involved in mediating between Israel and her neighbors; the U.S. recognizes the crucial necessity of producing peace in an increasingly important yet unstable region of the world. Most Executive proposals since the Rogers Plan of 1969 have included the following proposals: Israeli withdrawal to approximately 1967 borders, with minor adjustments for defense and security; a "just settlement" of the Palestinian refugee problem; the establishment of a genuine, lasting, permanent peace between Israel and her Arab neighbors.

American mediation efforts over the past five years have produced some tangible results: disengagement agreements between Israel and Egypt and Israel and Syria (1974 and 1975), the Camp David Agreements (1978) and the Egyptian–Israeli Peace Treaty (1979) which established a permanent peace between Israel and Egypt and a framework for settlement of the Palestinian problem.
Domestic Forces Attempting to Influence American Middle East Policy

The Middle East conflict is a much more salient issue in domestic American politics than other foreign policy matters, and domestic forces often have a significant impact on Congressional and Executive attitudes and behavior in this situation. In this next section I will outline the different groups attempting to influence American Middle East policy.

Pro-Israel Groups

For the American Jewish population- 5.7 million- the survival and security of the State of Israel is an extremely important matter. "Israel has become the religion of American Jews," writes Nathan Glazer. In a 1974-1975 Harris poll, 95% of all Jews proclaimed a sympathy with Israel in the Middle East conflict, 94% said they would be upset if Israel were overrun, and 96% favored American military aid to Israel. A long history as strangers in the Diaspora has imparted to most Jews the attitude that they must look to themselves to protect their most basic interests, one of which is the well being of the State of Israel. American Jews are also by and large more educated and politically alert and active than the rest of the American population. A network of Jewish organizations across the country- some religious and others secular- claims a total membership of over four million. Israel is a primary concern for some groups but a major concern for almost all. An aide to Representative Stephen Solarz asserted that "the American Jewish community is
very active and well informed in foreign policy matters, and it will make its views known." 44

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is a national organization which lobbies to maintain and improve friendly relations between Israel and the United States and coordinates the pro-Israel lobbying effort of American Jewish organizations. AIPAC is registered as a domestic lobby in both the House and the Senate, and its Washington office is headed by Executive Director Morris Amitay, a former State Department official and aide to Senator Ribicoff (D– Ct.). AIPAC was founded in 1954, has a staff of about twenty people, is fairly small and unbureaucratic, and operates on an annual budget of less than $1 million. This money comes in individual donations of $25 to $5,000, and from dues from its 15,000 members. The Presidents of all major Jewish organizations sit on AIPAC's Executive Committee, and every week the Washington Representatives of 13 major American Jewish organizations meet with AIPAC officials to discuss matters of interest to Israel. AIPAC does not contribute to candidates, nor does it rate members of Congress, but confines itself solely to lobbying activities.

An official at the Israeli Embassy described the Embassy's relationship with AIPAC as "informal" and AIPAC, though registered as a lobby on behalf of Israel, sometimes demonstrates considerable independence and often takes stands on issues other than those relating directly to Israel.

AIPAC is also associated with the Near East Report, a "Washington letter on American policy in the Near East," which is published every week and which shares offices with AIPAC.
Though legally separate from AIPAC, Near East Report is generally considered to be AIPAC's newsletter, and many of AIPAC's staff also serve on the staff of Near East Report. The newsletter has a readership of 30,000 and is mailed to foreign embassies, all members of Congress, Executive branch officials, U.N. delegations, press and media officials, and other important segments of American public opinion. Congressmen "often used (Near East Report) as a source material...In fact, Congressmen, Senators, and their aides call upon AIPAC to draft speeches and for other research assistance." 45

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations (or the "Presidents Conference"), the other major Jewish organization working on behalf of Israel, was founded in 1959 and is composed of thirty two national Jewish secular and religious organizations, whose members represent the overwhelming majority of American Jews in the United States. The official purpose of the Presidents Conference is to "protect and enhance the security and dignity of Jews abroad. Toward this end, it speaks on international affairs of Jewish interest as the voice of the most all-embracing coalition of the world's largest Jewish community. In its activities it has given highest priority to the safety of the people of Israel." 46 The Presidents Conference is "responsible for formulating and articulating the "Jewish Position" on virtually all important foreign policy matters... (and) continues to be an important institutional device that allows the pro-Israel lobby to voice its opinions with a forcefulness and unity that generally escapes its domestic opponents." 47
The Presidents Conference, along with AIPAC, coordinates the
government mobilization of the Jewish Community. Also, the
Presidents Conference publishes a periodic Middle East Memo
of comment on current developments affecting the Middle East. Whereas
AIPAC usually lobbies the Congress, the Presidents Conference
is the primary link between the Executive Branch policymakers
and the American Jewish community.

Other important American Jewish organizations, all of which
are members of the Presidents Conference, include: The American
Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith,
the Zionist Organization of America, and the National Council
of Jewish Women. Mr. Hyman Bookbinder, the Washington Representative
of the American Jewish Committee, is highly respected in Washington
as a leading spokesman for pro-Israel groups.

The Israeli Embassy in Washington, like most other embassies,
performs both diplomatic and public relations functions, and is
considered one of the best run and most effective in Washington.
The Embassy publishes a wide range of publications explaining
the Israeli point of view on Middle East issues and Embassy
officials meet formally and informally with American government
officials, opinion-makers, media, and interest groups.

A number of non-Jewish groups are peripherally interested
in the Middle East and have consistently expressed support for
the safety and security of Israel. A few organizations like
the National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel exist. Organized labor has solidly supported Israel, and American veterans groups have long been sympathetic to Israel. While most civil rights, black, and church groups have consistently supported Israel in the past, many of these groups are now split on the Middle East issue.

AIPAC often supplies information and other assistance to other domestic groups. For example, AIPAC was invited to help write the Near East resolution of the twenty-first convention of the Americans for Democratic Action. AIPAC's representatives succeeded in having included in that resolution not only an expression of support for Israel but also a call for U.S. arms sales to Israel.

Many of these non-Jewish groups engage in political activity in support of Israel. For example, when Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yassir Arafat spoke at the U.N. in November, 1974, the Presidents Conference organized a protest rally to which 65,000 attended. The AFL-CIO and the NAACP participated in the rally.

Pro-Israel Spokesmen in the Congress: A number of Senators and Congressmen have, for a variety of reasons, taken the lead in promoting pro-Israel policies. Among them are Senator Jacob Javits (R-N.Y.), Senator Henry Jackson (D-Wash.), Senator Richard Stone (D-Fla.), Congressman Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.) and Congressman Ben Rosenthal (D-N.Y.). Significantly, many staunchly pro-Israel Senators and Congressmen come from states
and districts with a very small Jewish population. In fact, despite the successful passage of every piece of legislation dealing with aid to Israel, not a single Congressional district is made up of a majority of Jews, and with the exception of New York, no state has a Jewish population of greater than 6% of the total state population. Ted Kaufman, Senator Joseph Biden's (D-Dela.) legislative assistant, said he "believe(s) that support for Israel is so strong in the Congress because Congressmen think Israel is right." Part of the task of this paper is to explore the meaning of this statement and determine why support for Israel is so strong.

Pro-Israel Staff Network: One author has written that "the real organizers and directors of Jewish efforts on Capitol Hill are certain key staffers" and that it is the "coordinated efforts of these staff people (which) results in the passage of key legislation." Morris Amitay, while still working for Senator Ribicoff, explained that "there are a lot of guys at the working level up here who happen to be Jewish, who are willing to make a little bit of an extra effort to look at certain issues in terms of their Jewishness and this is what made the thing go so effectively in the last couple of years." Others have downplayed the significance of the staff network and Ted Kaufman claimed that the staff network "is not a major factor" in explaining the high level of support for Israel in the Congress.
Pro-Arab Groups

The Arab American population, estimated at 1.8 million, is much less close-knit, visible, and articulate than the American Jewish community, and therefore has had severe difficulty in organizing politically to influence policy. Substantial differences exist within the Arab-American population. For example, a large portion of the Arab-American population is Lebanese-Christian, and they are anti-Palestinian and not very politically involved. Palestinians who have settled in the United States are, by contrast, very active, since they have the greatest grievances, but they tend not to mix at all with the Lebanese Americans. "There's no (Arab) equivalent to...the involvement of American Jews," asserted John Richardson, the Public Affairs Director of the National Association of Arab Americans, "Arab Americans have generally put the affairs of the homeland into the background." As a result, the American Jewish community has for the most part dominated the domestic debate on the Middle East.

Yet with the rise of ethnic consciousness in the late 1960's, Arab Americans began to recognize "the emotive bonds of ethnicity" and this eventually culminated in an Arab "ethnic...interest group articulation on U.S. foreign policy" in the Middle East. Arab Americans are finally becoming politically active and organized on a national level.

The National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA), now the most important Arab-American interest group in the United States,
was founded in 1972 by prominent businessmen and lawyers of Arab descent. The NAAA is an umbrella political organization for over 800 Arab-American groups and has a membership of about 200,000. The NAAA's office in Washington is headed by Public Affairs Director John Richardson and publishes a biweekly newsletter called Focus, which is essentially the NAAA counterpart of the Near East Report. Though the organization does promote Arab cultural activities, it is explicitly political (the NAAA is registered as a domestic lobby with the Congress) and its purpose is to involve Arab Americans in politics and "neutralize what is said to be a bias in the American government in favor of Israel." The NAAA does not contest the survival of Israel, but the combat, what Richardson called "favoritism and special treatment (of Israel) taken to an irrational extreme," and they argue for a more "even-handed" approach to the Middle East. The NAAA is especially eager to persuade the American government to cut off aid to Israel by showing how this aid is detrimental to American interests in the long run, and to promote "normal and healthy relations with the Arab world." In addition, "championing the Palestinian cause has become one of NAAA's important priorities." Thomas Ruffin, the former Executive Director of the organization, said that the NAAA is "giving Congress a viable alternative which up to a year or two ago it never had." One observer speculated that the NAAA is the one Arab-American organization that "may well present a future threat to the influence gap" that AIPAC and the American Jewish community have created over the years." Among the
activities of the NAAA are: lobby efforts aimed at the Congress and the Administration, testimony at relevant hearings in the Congress, protest rallies in support of Arab causes, and court actions in defense of Arab rights.

The American Near East Refugee Aid organization (ANERA) was founded in 1968 to serve as a national coordinating agency for relief and rehabilitation of Palestinian refugees. Although ANERA purports to be nonpolitical and its main activity is solicitation of contributions for Palestinian relief, ANERA does engage in some political activities. Its officials have testified before Congressional committees on the plight of the Palestinians, and ANERA has signed on to pro-Arab letters and advertisements.

The Palestine Human Rights Campaign (PHRC), a relatively small but growing organization founded in 1977, concerns itself exclusively with Palestinian "human and national rights." The goal of the PHRC is "the establishment of a just peace for all the people of the Middle East. We believe, however, that there can be no just peace until the Palestinian question is resolved." The PHRC "calls on Israel to end its occupation of Palestinian lands and to immediately cease and desist all violations of Palestinian human rights."

According to Dr. James Zogby, founder and Chairman of the PHRC, the organization tries to "develop support for specific victims of human rights violations" and is also "involved politically in an effort to change U.S. policy" in the Middle East. Dr. Zogby often testifies before Congressional committees and the PHRC is involved in a broad range of political activities, including an attempt to build
a grass roots network of political support for Palestinian rights across the country. Every year the PHRC holds a convention on Palestinian rights in which Congressmen, press, civil rights leaders, and other prominent citizens participate. The PHRC is located in the same building as the Palestine Information Office, which is essentially a Palestine Liberation Organization information center, and PLO literature and posters are available in the PHRC's office.

The Arab Information Center is an adjunct of the League of Arab States, which provides AIC with money for presentation and dissemination of Arab views. AIC publishes a biweekly newspaper called the Arab Report and a monthly journal called the Palestine Digest, a collection of news articles, editorials, and speeches sympathetic to the Arab cause. AIC has sponsored speaking tours by prominent Arabs and has offices in five American cities.

Arab Embassies: Arab embassies essentially perform the same twofold diplomatic and informational functions that the Israeli Embassy performs, but are much less effective: "There is a general consensus that Arab embassies have indeed suffered from understaffing and a general failure to understand the American mind." Recently, however, Arab governments, particularly Saudi Arabia, have engaged in a sophisticated "energetic and expensive lobbying campaign" to present their positions and influence American policymakers and public opinion. The "Saudi Arabian Lobby" consists of public relations experts, political consultants, influential Washington lawyers like
Clark Clifford and Frederick Dutton, and ad agencies employed to change America's pro-Israel policy and promote close relations between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. In addition, Saudi Arabia often presses American companies with interests in Saudi Arabia to make their views on the Middle East known to Congressmen and Executive officials. The lobby takes a "soft sell" approach, stressing the mutuality of interests between the two countries, and has become a potent "new force on the American political scene." 63

Non Arab Groups:

Corporate interests:

A number of American corporations, particularly oil companies, have extensive operations in Arab countries like Saudi Arabia. Since the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War

Arab governments began to tie the continued profitability, and in some cases, the independent existence of American firms in the area, to American government policy toward the conflict. Since then, the American corporations-particularly oil companies-have seen a need to remind policymakers that deviation from an "evenhanded" policy would seriously jeopardize American business operations and investments in the Middle East. 64

For example, in July, 1973, Standard Oil of California Board Chairman O.N. Miller wrote a letter to stockholders describing the growing oil shortage in the U.S. and urging the U.S. government to "work more closely with the Arab governments to build up and enhance our relations with the Arab people...support their efforts toward peace in the Middle East (and) acknowledge the legitimate interests of all the peoples of the Middle East." 65

During the 1973 Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur War, oil executives tried
to persuade President Nixon from resupplying Israel with badly needed military equipment. Since the 1973 war, which significantly impinged upon the operations of American firms in Arab countries, corporate political activity on the Middle East issue has increased. Many oil companies have "issued public statements that reflected their host governments" positions that a return to normal oil supplies would have to be tied to some kind of just and equitable settlement in the Middle East."66

Nevertheless, corporate interests have shied away from open, direct involvement in the domestic debate over American Middle East policy. Such activity is open to serious challenge by pro-Israel and other groups, Congressmen, and media as "unfair." Thus, the "agents of these interests retreat swiftly when their direct activities are detected."67 Instead, corporate interests have mainly confined their activities to quietly making their views known to Executive officials. Corporate groups "continue to receive a warmer reception from Executive Branch officials than pro-Israel or pro-Arab groups primarily because they have succeeded in equating their narrow economic interests with the country's."68 And many top corporate officials have direct access to the President, Secretary of State, and other high officials in a way that domestic lobbies do not have.

American corporations have also contributed to many Palestine relief organizations. For example, after the 1973 war, Gulf Oil made a $2.2 million contribution to ANERA.
(Because of the difficulties in detecting the activities of corporate groups, their activities, though important, will not be as thoroughly considered as the activities of other domestic groups, in this paper.)

**Black Groups:** Until recently, Black and Civil Rights groups have either stayed out of the domestic debate on American Middle East policy, or have almost unequivocably supported Israel. However, the resignation of Andrew Young as United States Ambassador to the U.N. in August, 1979, and the circumstances surrounding his resignation has changed the situation. Black groups have asserted their independence in this debate, and some of them have endorsed the idea of an independent Palestinian state. The resignation may create a "Palestinian constituency" in the U.S. in American blacks, according to some. For example, on resigning, Andrew Young explained that "what Blacks are saying is that the survival and integrity and security of Israel should not interfere with similar rights for Palestinians." Walter Fauntroy, the District of Columbia's nonvoting Representative to the Congress, was more explicit:

> We as blacks have a high stake in this issue because no matter who starts the (Middle East) conflict, it is going to send shock tremors through the Western world, and black people in the U.S., the last hired and first fired, will be hardest hit. When America is in a recession, black America is in a depression...

> It remains to be seen whether the black-Jewish split over the Middle East issue will continue and whether blacks will take on the cause of Palestinian rights.
Pro-Arab Spokesmen in the Congress: Over the years there have been very few "champions of the Arab cause" or even advocates of an alternative, more pro-Arab approach to the Middle East in the Congress. Until recently, very few Congressmen or Senators have seriously questioned or challenged basic American support for Israel. Former Senator J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) did advocate a more pro-Arab policy in the 1960's and early 1970's. Former Senator James Abourezk (D-S.D.), a Lebanese-American, had consistently supported and advocated Arab and Palestinian causes in Congress during his term in office, from 1972-1978. Recently, Congressman Paul Findley (R-Ill.), the Ranking Minority Member of the House Foreign Affairs Mideast Subcommittee has also advocated change in America's Mideast policy, and has spoken up for American recognition of Palestinian national rights and contacts with the PLO. Findley himself has met with PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat twice. But there are very few prominent pro-Arab spokesmen in the Congress.
At one level of analysis, the efforts, approach, and varying successes of the pro-Israel and pro-Arab groups conforms to Dahl's model of how power is exercised and his description of the relative openness and fairness of the American political system. This is so despite the atypical nature of the Middle East issue from a Pluralist point of view. Dahl's Pluralism can explain with great insight a significant amount of the actions of these groups and Congressional and Executive attitudes and behavior with respect to the Middle East issue.

First, with respect to pro-Israel groups, American Jews have an intense, immediate interest in maintaining the safety and security of the state of Israel, and a deep, abiding belief in the moral rightness of Israel. Therefore, American Jews are "to a degree self-mobilizing on issues affecting the safety of Israel;" anything perceived as a threat to Israel elicits a strong, reflex-like response from a highly informed and active American Jewish community. This community—relatively small, but in absolute numbers quite large (5.7 million)—has developed over the years an elaborate organizational structure which "allows it to transform the deep-felt support for Israel" into political action by "provid(ing) a ready mechanism for communication between politicians and large segments of the Jewish community."70

A common communications network, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, provides daily bulletins to individual institutions and Jewish community presses, informing them on issues of concern. Two well-organized and effective organizations, AIPAC and the Presidents Conference, staffed with skillful and competent and
committed professionals, coordinate the Jewish community's mobilization and lobbying effort. These two groups employ the collective resources and assets of the American Jewish community—its numbers, intensity, distribution across the country ("widespread enough to allow representation in many regions, yet concentrated enough in some states to have a significant impact there"), the general high level of activity, education, and personal commitment to Israel of its members. The two groups combine these assets and resources with the assets and resources AIPAC and the Presidents Conference have developed over the years: "they have unusual political savvy, they are plugged into the Washington-based network, they are well armed with the usual vehicles that lobbyists need, they are adept and intelligent, and they know how the cats meow." 

The pro-Israel lobby then effectively brings pressure on government officials—elected more so than non-elected officials—in an effort to affect policy, in much the way the Dahl postulated groups would. The pro-Israel lobby engages in both direct and indirect lobbying. Direct lobbying involves face-to-face contacts with government officials, statements of position and policy, letter-writing campaigns by constituents, testimonies before Congressional committees, and other activities. Indirect lobbying involves utilization of the group's contacts with other interest groups, appeals to the press, and other tactics in order to indirectly pressure decisionmakers. The pro-Israel lobby also attempts to create and maintain a "permissive public opinion context," for if a group can create an appearance of massive
support for its policy preferences in the general population, this appearance of support will facilitate the adoption of pro-Israel policies. As Morris Amitay of AIPAC claims, "Our point of strength is not that we're so highly organized, but that so many people are committed to Israel. We have lots of non-Jewish support. I'm very glad we don't have to rely just on Jews. If we did, we would be an ineffective group." 74

The pro-Israel lobby makes its case on the basis of subtle electoral pressure—"merely approaching a Congressman indicates vote (pressure)," asserted Jacob Stein, former Chairman of the Presidents Conference 75—and on the basis of the Special Relationship; pro-Israel groups try to persuade officials as to the essential rightness of Israel and of the convergence of American and Israeli interests. "A strong and secure Israel best serves America's own national interest," Amitay said during Congressional testimony in 1979. 76 And the government-elected officials more so than nonelected ones—is highly responsive to the demands and interests of pro-Israel groups, despite their relatively small numbers. Not only is the Israel lobby highly effective in Congress, but as a result of its efforts, Congress and public opinion constrain the Executive Branch, which views the Middle East from a more global perspective, from formulating and implementing a more pro-Arab policy. True, aspects of American policy in the Middle East can also be explained in terms of the global perspective of the Executive branch; its special attention to Russia and to world oil supplies; the substantial impact that pro-Israel groups have had on American policy cannot be denied. In this way the relatively small but active American
Jewish community translates its collective resources, mainly intensity, numbers, and technical skill, into indirect power and influence over policy outputs. The group does make its voice "effectively heard" on matters important to the group.

Let us examine three cases in which pro-Israel groups have significantly influenced American Middle East policy. By doing so we will more completely understand how the American Jewish community exercised power in a manner consistent with Dahl's theoretical conception of power and his description of the openness and responsiveness of the American political system. Despite the atypical nature of this issue, in each of the three cases the government was remarkably responsive to the demands of the group and the group "realized its will despite the resistance of others" by obtaining favorable decisions on matters important to the group.

First, in December, 1969, Secretary of State William Rogers, calling for a "balanced approach" to a Middle East settlement, proposed a peace plan calling for Israeli withdrawal from territory occupied in the 1967 Six Day War in return for Arab assurances of a binding commitment to a Middle East peace. The Nixon Administration then deferred the sale of 24 Phantom jets to Israel. The American Jewish community reacted immediately. The Israeli government, through its Washington Embassy, issued a nine page attack on the proposals which was distributed to every member of Congress. American
Jewish organizations complained that U.S. Mideast policy had undergone an abrupt reversal and charged that the U.S. was "abandoning Israel." The Presidents Conference called an emergency meeting and launched a lobbying effort in Washington. Over 500 delegates to the meeting marched through Congress armed with four-page "summary of argument" memos. The result was "a cascade of speeches and 'sense of Congress' resolutions supporting the Israeli government's position of direct, unhampered negotiations between Israel and the Arabs" in which 300 Congressmen and Senators participated.77

Meanwhile, the State Department issued "clarifications" intended to allay the fears of pro-Israel groups and President Nixon reconsidered the Israeli request for Phantoms. Congressional pressure mounted and on June 1 Secretary Rogers received a letter signed by 73 Senators, requesting that the United States supply 25 Phantoms and 100 Skyhawk fighter bombers to Israel. Finally, in November, 1972, the Administration relented and requested from the Congress $500 million in military aid for Israel. Though other factors, such as the Soviet arms buildup in Egypt, influenced President Nixon's decision, "the role of Congress as an advocate of the Israeli position and the ultimate source of appropriations cannot be dismissed."78

Similarly, in 1975, when President Ford publicly blamed the Israelis for the failure of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's "shuttle diplomacy" between Israel and the Arabs and announced a "reassessment" of American Mideast policy and
aid programs, pro-Israel groups again reacted strongly. AIPAC organized a major lobbying effort culminating in a letter to President Ford signed by 76 Senators. The letter urged Ford to "make it clear, as we do, that the U.S., acting in its own national interests, stands firmly with Israel in the search for peace in future negotiations and that this promise be the basis of the current reassessment of U.S. policy in the Mideast" and that Ford "be responsive to Israel's urgent military and economic needs." The letter of the 76 Senators "was a stunning triumph for the lobby, a capital rebuke for Kissinger in Congress" and "dealt reassessment its coup de grace."79 Meanwhile, the Senate voted 68-22 to extend until 1977 U.S. credit authority for Israel's purchase of American supplies, despite the Administration's suspension of weapons commitments during the "reassessment" period.

Finally, in July, 1975, when President Ford asked Congress to approve the sale to Jordan of 14 improved Hawk missile systems worth $256 million, the American Jewish community strongly protested. AIPAC almost immediately produced a two page memorandum "succinctly describing the scope and nature of the Hawk sale, concluding that it was a 'weapon capable of providing cover for offensive operations' against Israel."80 The memorandum was mailed to all members of Congress and distributed by the major American Jewish organizations across the country. "Within 24 hours of the distribution, Congressmen were deluged with phone calls, telegrams, and mailgrams from Jewish constituents, urging them to oppose the Hawk sale to Jordan."81 Morris Amitay of AIPAC testified against the sale before the Senate Foreign
Relations Committee and Senator Case (R-N.J.) and Congressman Bingham (D-N.Y.) submitted, along with many co-sponsors, resolutions opposing the sale. Eventually the Ford Administration withdrew the request.

Thus, pro-Israel groups are, for Dahl, a good example of how a group can collectively employ its resources—mainly votes and intensity—to convert electoral pressure into indirect power, and translate this power into favorable decisional outcomes in the specific areas in which the groups are interested. The groups "make themselves heard" in decisionmaking because, as Dahl contended, elected officials do "expect to suffer in some way if they do not placate the group(s)." As one Senator asserted, "There's no political advantage in not signing (a certain letter supporting Israel). If you sign, you don't offend anyone. If you don't, you might offend some Jews in your state."82 Similarly, Julian Sirer, an aide to Congressman Rosenthal, said, "There aren't many Jews in, say, Arizona, but they let a candidate know that their support is contingent on his support for the basic question of Israel's survival...It's not often a factor, but it's got to be in the mind of any sensitive politician."83 Israel's American supporters make the cost of taking what is perceived to be an anti-Israel stance very high, and in addition persuade and convince elected officials of the moral and strategic necessity to maintain a strong and secure Israel. The three cases outlined above are good examples of how pro-Israel groups can exercise power by affecting policy outcomes in the Congress and constraining
the actions of Executive officials.

Dahl could also explain the actions, efforts, and varying successes of pro-Arab groups within his Pluralist framework. Arab Americans may have been unorganized for years, but the nature of American government--in this case the fact that the President, more so than the Congress, formulates foreign policy and considers the interests of the country as a whole in doing so--prevents pro-Israel groups from completely dominating Mideast policy decisions. In this way the "evils of faction" are controlled. In addition, some alternative policy positions and new issues have been placed on the Mideast agenda by Congressmen, Presidents, and by prominent leaders of different groups. Moreover, pro-Arab groups have now begun to organize in order to influence decisions in matters in which they are interested. However, their smaller numbers compared to the pro-Israel groups necessarily means that they will not be able to bring much electoral pressure on elected officials; the benefits for a Congressman or Senator of taking an anti-Israel or pro-Arab stand are small, so officials do not have to worry much about pro-Arab electoral "sanctions." As John Richardson of the NAAA remarked, "We will always dilute our strength" when having to compete on the basis of size of constituencies against pro-Israel groups. The lower intensity of Arab Americans and other pro-Arab groups on the Mideast issue described earlier translates into less political activity and therefore a reduced effect on policymakers. Dahl could therefore account for the "influence gap" between pro-Israel
and pro-Arab groups, the domination by the pro-Israel groups of the domestic debate on Middle East policy, and the biased outcomes on certain Middle East decisions (especially those in which the Congress participates) in Pluralist terms. The biases of outcomes for Dahl seem to be based on differences between the groups in numbers and intensity, which for the Pluralists form the heart of their conception of power in American politics.

Furthermore, Dahl could point out that the ability and success of pro-Arab groups in organizing in recent years on issues important to them and the fact that a few members of the political stratum are at least willing to listen to these groups indicates the openness and penetrability of the American political system. Dahl would also say that their activities demonstrate an absence of significant barriers to new groups or new demands entering the political arena. And though these new groups do not yet have any measurable influence over policy owing to their currently small numbers and low intensity, they at least have some access to important decisionmakers. For example, in 1975 representatives of the NAAA met with President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger to present their views on Middle East Peace and have met with various officials of the Carter Administration. Representatives of the NAAA and the PMRC have testified before Congress on such matters as aid programs in the Middle East and Israeli treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank. Elected officials like former Senator Abourezk and Congressman Findley have consistently presented a pro-Arab position in Congress.

In October, 1979, Senator Hatfield (R-Ore.) introduced an amend-
ment proposing a 10% cut in aid to Israel because of her actions in South Lebanon which was enthusiastically supported by Arab-American groups (The amendment was defeated, 78-7). Some black groups have begun to actively advocate a more pro-Palestinian policy and John Richardson of the NAAA claims that his organization was instrumental in convincing the Ford Administration not to sell more cluster bombs to Israel in 1975. Dahl's theoretical and empirical framework therefore provides significant insight as to the nature of power and American politics with respect to this specific issue area.

Nevertheless, by relying exclusively on Dahl's analysis and framework, we will not fully understand or recognize what is happening in domestic politics with respect to the Middle East conflict. Lobbying and political activity in the domestic debate over Middle East policy is not so much a question of twisting arms on issues through electoral pressure as it is a matter of shaping and changing attitudes and perceptions through invoking and reinforcing mobilizations of bias.

First, the contest between domestic groups in this situation is not only a conflict over decisions, but more importantly, over public perceptions or mobilizations of bias, "set(s) of predominant values, beliefs, and rituals...that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of some at the expense of others." Domestic groups devote a substantial amount of time and energy to creating a domestic political climate that is favorable to their policy preferences and to
strengthening and reshaping public perceptions, norms, values, or mobilizations of bias which favor their demands over the demands of others. The power and influence of certain groups, the "realization of their will despite the resistance of others," cannot be explained solely in terms of electoral pressure, numbers and intensity, or in terms of the outcomes of certain decisions. Rather, it is the strengths of these predispositions, perceptions, and biases that give real meaning to the decisions that are made. These biases, not just electoral pressure, are largely determinative of decisional outcomes.

Secondly, the battle over creating and reinforcing a certain domestic political climate or norms and perceptions which make up that climate is only partially revealed through examining decisions. For once we assert the importance of the biases and the political context itself, it becomes clear that power is being exercised in ways other than through participating or prevailing in the decisionmaking process. Mobilizations of bias and deeply held perceptions ingrained in the American political system are not only invoked or reinforced during decisionmaking, but also through nondecisionmaking, preventing matters from being placed on the political agenda. Moreover, mobilizations of bias can shape the way demands are perceived and framed. For example, mobilizations of bias may determine the wording or language of a certain question or issue. Thus, meaningful alternatives on certain matters may not be considered or given an adequate hearing in the political arena, and dissent may be stifled. Controlling the agenda of politics, through controlling the political context and political climate within
which decisions are made seems to be the key to the exercise of power by domestic groups with respect to American Middle East policy.

Moreover, deeply held perceptions and mobilizations of bias operative in American politics in the Middle East issue are not easily challenged or changed; only dramatic events can affect or change these mobilizations of bias. Because of the difficulty in challenging or changing values or perceptions favoring some at the expense of others, especially when these values are widely held and have persisted over time, these biases represent significant barriers to the exercise of power by new groups attempting to change policy or bring new issues onto the agenda. With respect to the Middle East issue, therefore, a consistent and systematic bias in favor of the "in-groups" exists.

Finally, as a result of these biases, the plateau between demands and groups perceived as legitimate and those perceived as illegitimate that Wolff postulated is, in this situation, roughly an accurate description of American politics. So long as a group and its demands are considered illegitimate, the group will not "realize its will" and exercise power in proportion to its size and intensity. But once groups do achieve legitimacy, they do move "with bewildering speed" onto the plateau and are assured of some power. Pro-Israel and pro-Arab groups acknowledge the existence of this plateau by waging a fierce battle over the legitimacy of new groups (mainly pro-Arab groups) and their demands. Wolff is correct in asserting
that the most important contest in American politics is the struggle to climb onto the plateau.

Consequently, Dahl's assertion that any active group will make itself heard in proportion to its numbers and intensity is somewhat undermined. Significant biases operate to impose barriers which prevent new groups from achieving legitimacy and exercising power. The political system is not as open as Dahl claims it is.

The activities and approach of interest groups outlined above seem to be a fundamental part of American politics. Moreover, in this case mobilizations of bias do not seem to be invoked in an underhanded or devious manner, but at many times unconsciously, out of a deep feeling on the part of the actors that they are right.

The key to understanding mobilizations of bias and how they develop and operate is to comprehend the relation between interest groups, decisionmakers, and public opinion, the "general climate or distribution of opinions among the population at large on a given issue or set of issues." Public opinion is generally passive, as Dahl claims, forming a backdrop for the more goal directed and articulate opinions and activities of interest groups. Yet interest groups do try to use public opinion to indirectly influence policy. First, as stated earlier, interest groups try to build and control the appearance of massive public support for their goals; Public opinion polls, for example, may "create an impression of widespread consensus
on a specific solution to a policy problem, thereby establishing clear expectations for policymakers as to what decisional output would be preferred by the public. 86

More importantly, however, public opinion, "by becoming a relevant part of the 'cultural milieu' that helps shape the perception of governmental policymakers" can significantly affect policymaker attitudes and behavior. Robert Trice lucidly describes the process of the development of mobilizations of bias:

The process by which a body of political opinion becomes so widely accepted that it is no longer the subject of meaningful debate, but rather is transformed into a cultural norm of sorts, is a gradual one. General policy orientations which attain the status of 'national traditions' develops over time from a series of mutually supportive and at least reasonably successful decisional outcomes. In the absence of obvious failure, mass public opinion will tend to support the continuation of existing policies and to reinforce existing ways of approaching problems that arise in that policy area. 87

Trice goes on to explain the advantages that accrue to the in-group and the biases working against those seeking to change policy created by this phenomenon. Interest groups that are able to frame their position on specific issues in terms of a long-standing general policy hold an advantage to the extent that they are more likely to elicit 'knee jerk' supportive reactions from both decisionmakers and mass public alike. Obversely, groups that are seeking a reversal in a 'traditional' policy orientation are at a disadvantage. The burden of proof as to why a change in policy is necessary and desirable falls on their shoulders, along with the arduous task of convincing the public that the assumptions
that have undergirded its support are no longer valid.

Also crucial to understanding how mobilizations of bias work in this situation is to recognize the "circular relationship" between Congressional behavior and attitudes, public opinion, and domestic group activities. Congressional support is important to these groups for a number of reasons. Congress is not only important in terms of its official policymaking functions, but also because of its legitimizing effects for interest group activity and because of the direct access to the media and Executive branch officials enjoyed by Congressmen and Senators. As Trice explains:

An unreceptive Congress creates severe handicaps for domestic groups seeking to affect foreign policy. If an interest group is forced to rely solely on its own political resources, it will rarely be able to marshal the support from the mass and articulate publics necessary to play an effective policy-making role. But the ability to successfully petition Congress for support is likely to be closely tied to an ability to obtain widespread support from the articulate public. One generally does not come without the other. Foreign policy groups are dependent on Congress, as they are dependent on the mass media, for amplifying and disseminating their policy preferences in a manner that is beyond the group's own capabilities. If Congress is receptive to the arguments of the domestic actors, the legitimacy of those arguments in the eyes of both the mass public and Executive branch officials is likely to be enhanced. However, if Congress fails to provide its amplifying and legitimizing services, a domestic group is likely to find itself isolated in a political environment that is either apathetic or hostile towards its policy objectives.
We will see how the power of pro-Israel groups, their ability to exercise power far in excess of their numbers and intensity, derives from certain mobilizations of bias, and more specifically, from these two factors. First, pro-Israel groups have succeeded in creating and maintaining a body of public opinion and public perceptions which have become so deeply ingrained in the American political context that they have achieved the status of "national traditions," part of the "cultural milieu" that Trice, Crenson, and Bachrach and Baratz discuss. These perceptions and mobilizations of bias were until now not subject to meaningful questioning and therefore elicited the "knee jerk" supportive responses. I will also explore the implications of this phenomenon. Secondly, pro-Israel groups have succeeded in cracking the "circular relationship" between interest groups, Congress, and public opinion and have accumulated all the advantages that this relationship— or being on the plateau— entails; pro-Arab groups have, until now, been unable to penetrate this relationship, and are thus at a distinct disadvantage.

Before carefully examining the above propositions, which combine elements of the analyses of Wolff, Bachrach and Baratz and Crenson, I wish to explain one specific type of mobilization of bias operative in most domestic debates on foreign policy. These debates usually conceive of American policy in terms of idealism, yet in fact the different positions proposed involve national aggrandizement rather than self-sacrifice. The U.S
has consistently acted in foreign affairs on the basis of a convergence of idealism and self-interest. Indeed, in American foreign policy "the ideal flourishes on the soil of self-interest."\(^\text{90}\)

The notion of a "Special Relationship" between Israel and the United States is the most important bias, or cultural norm or value taking on the form of a national tradition, operating in the domestic political arena with respect to the Middle East issue. The Special Relationship is not only based on certain biases or prevalent norms or values, but has itself become a mobilization of bias deeply ingrained in the fabric of American politics. The Special Relationship is also an example of the type of bias that is successful in foreign policy debates, as it is based on the idea that America's self-interest in the survival of the Jewish state and our moral commitment to that country coincide.

The Special Relationship is based on a number of additional factors and perceptions, including: a respect for the Israeli people as a tough, hardworking people who "made the desert bloom;" Israel's position as an underdog, a David against Goliath, a tiny, isolated "oasis of freedom" amidst autocratic, reactionary Arab states which as been able to survive and prosper for thirty years in the face of overwhelming odds and four onslaughts of Arab armies; feelings of guilt or sympathy for Jews arising from memories of the Nazi persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust; a common cultural heritage between Israel and the U.S.; a mutuality of beliefs in the basic principles of democracy and human rights; a desire by the U.S. to demonstrate its resolve by "making good"
on one of its fundamental commitments and not to be appeased or blackmailed.

Pro-Israel groups have succeeded in influencing public opinion and shaping the American political context to the extent that the Special Relationship and the assumptions, values, and perceptions on which it is based have become an integral part of that context, deeply ingrained in our political system. In fact, the Special Relationship has almost achieved the status of a paradigm or a value-laden lens through which Americans view the Middle East conflict.

Public opinion polls taken over the last fifteen years demonstrate the widespread public acceptance of the Special Relationship and its underlying assumptions and perceptions. The depth of this acceptance is even more astonishing when one considers that just 3% of the U.S. population is Jewish and that the American public is often indifferent to foreign policy matters. While before 1967 there was not much interest in the Middle East conflict (though in 1948, during the Israeli War of Independence, 33% of the public sympathized with Israel while 13% sympathized with the Arabs), the 1967 War seems to have led to a "groundswell of sympathy for Israel among the American public." A Harris poll taken during the 1967 War between Israel and her Arab neighbors revealed that 41% of the public sympathized with Israel while only 1% sympathized with the Arabs. Since 1967, American support for Israel has been even greater, despite the oil crisis, an increase in isolationist sentiment after the Vietnam War, increasing distance from the
events of the Holocaust and growing concern for American oil supplies. From 1967-1977, sympathy for Israel in the Arab-Israeli conflict has averaged about 50%; sympathy for the Arabs has averaged about 6%. Sympathy for Israel in the "political stratum," a "national leadership group drawn from government and politics, business, labor, communications, education, religious and voluntary associations" is even greater: 56% sided with Israel, and only 5% with the Arabs.

Deeper, more revealing questions indicate even more widespread support for Israel and acceptance of the basic assumptions of the Special Relationship. For example, when asked the following question: "If it came down to it and the only way we could get Arab oil in enough quantity and at a lower price were to stop supporting Israel with military aid, would you favor or oppose such a move by this country?" only 18% chose "oil" while 64% chose "Israel." 55% opposed the U.S. pressuring Israel into giving back the occupied territories, 58% saw Yassir Arafat "as an extremist who conducts terrorist activities." Another Harris poll revealed that 44% would be very upset, 34% mildly upset, 2% mildly pleased, and only 1% very pleased "if there were another war in the Middle East and Israel were overrun by Arabs." 66% of those questioned agreed that "the continuation of the State of Israel as a Jewish state is important to our country and people like yourself," while only 27% replied that it is not important. Only Great Britain and France ranked higher in these polls on the question of whether we should sell arms to certain countries.
The finding that 66% of the public is in favor of sending Israel what it needs in the way of military hardware is remarkable because 66% of the public is opposed to the U.S. giving aid in general.

Americans have consistently and overwhelmingly seen the Arabs as the obstacle to peace. In 1976, a Yankelovich poll disclosed that 56% of the public agreed that "the Arab nations are not interested in making peace but rather in destroying Israel," while only 19% disagreed. With regard to the territories occupied in the 1967 War, "the heavily prevailing view is that Israel has helped develop occupied Arab lands and will work out a fair way for the Arabs to rule themselves in their own territory. A 1975 Harris poll agreed with the statement that "Israel is a small, courageous democratic nation which is trying to preserve its independence." Indeed, the "Special Relationship" and its underlying assumptions are deeply ingrained in the thinking of the vast majority of the American public.

Given what appears to be a general acceptance of the Special Relationship and a widespread consensus in favor of American support for Israel in her conflict with the Arabs, it is no wonder that the Congress has acted favorably on every piece of legislation relating to Israel and that Israel receives special treatment in aid programs. And one can also understand how pro-Israel groups have cracked the circular relationship described earlier and exercise power far beyond their numbers and intensity. "For many Americans, Congressional backing of
Israel has come to be generally expected, irrespective of the ethnic or religious makeup of the district; even Senators from states with less than a 2% Jewish population, like Frank Church or Henry Jackson are staunchly pro-Israel. It is also no wonder why Congress and public opinion seriously constrain attempts by the Executive Branch to implement a more "even-handed" pro-Arab policy. It is the deeply held perceptions and values described above which give real meaning to decisions made in this issue area, not simply pro-Israel group electoral pressure.

During all domestic discussions on the Middle East, pro-Israel groups try to reinforce and strengthen the Special Relationship "optic" and its underlying assumptions. A typical AIPAC policy statement begins:

The bonds between the U.S. and Israel are secured by commitments to democracy, justice, and freedom, and common strategic goals. Their peoples share ideals, values, and spiritual roots.

Near East Report constantly reminds us of our moral commitment to Israel, the democratic underdog whose safety and security help strengthen the United States. Titles of articles are often: "Israel Isolated," "A Matter of Justice," "Oil and Terror-Blackmail and Murder," "Palestinians Shoot and Talk," and "Israel as an American Asset." A typical article will describe the loneliness of Israel, the massive support given by the Communist states to the Arab countries, the need to make good on a basic American commitment, the fanatical nature of the Arab governments, and conclude: "Israel is an outpost of freedom,
now embattled with the entire Arab world strengthened by the Soviet Bloc. Its appeal for aid must not be ignored by the leadership of the Free World committed to freedom and peace for all."96 Other publications by pro-Israel groups stress aspects of the Special Relationship mentioned earlier. One group published a pamphlet entitled "David and Goliath," showing a map with Israel as a tiny dot in a sea of Arab states. Another pamphlet stated that the "U.S. must avoid paying political blackmail to the Arab states and must not commit itself to a policy which would sacrifice the independence of American foreign policy."97 Pro-Israel spokesmen always stress the Special Relationship in testifying on Capitol Hill.

Pro-Israel Senators and Congressmen frequently frame their position on Israel in terms of the perceptions of the Special Relationship. For example:

Frank Church (D—Idaho): If there was ever a test of principle and morality in American foreign policy, this is it...I've always felt strongly about our bond with Israel because I think that it serves the interests of the U.S. to preserve in that part of the world a bastion of friendship in a little land that has demonstrated its determination to live and its capacity to defend itself. I suspect that much of the venom directed against Israel in the U.N. and in the Middle East is a reflection of the resentment that this small nation engenders because it is an oasis of freedom in the midst of a desert of authoritarian governments.98

A new dimension in the perception of Israel as a lonely democratic underdog has emerged since the 1973 Yom Kippur War: Israel as an underdog against the powerful "petrodollar" lobby of the large oil companies and oil producing states.
In describing the potentially powerful influence of petrodollars, *Near-East Report* writes:

Petrodollars may exercise tremendous influence especially if pages of advertising flow from Arab oil fields. Public relations firms retained by Arab principals are in a position to place articles in the media and arrange interviews with Arab personalities. Arab diplomats greatly outnumber Israelis and make the society columns.

Large commercial institutions which win lucrative contracts in the Arab world can have an impact on business associations and editors who are sensitive to the establishment in their communities.

After Standard Oil of California Board Chairman wrote a letter to stockholders urging a more pro-Arab policy by the Nixon Administration, *Near East Report* warned its readers that "the oil lobby has always had a powerful impact on American foreign policy...but now there is a new and ominous development. SOCAL, one of four Aramco partners, has opened a campaign to pressure our government to support the Arab position."100 *Near East Report* then stated, "American friends of Israel are well aware of the propaganda effort to exploit the energy crisis and to shift the blame for its economic consequences from the Arabs to the Israelis. They are spending vast sums in advertising to justify their blackmail," and calls on Americans to resist such pressure.101 Thus, pro-Israel groups portray Israel as a lonely underdog fighting not only against reactionary, fanatical Arab states, but also against the powerful petrodollar lobby.

Another deeply held perception operating in favor of Israel in the U.S. and which is invoked by pro-Israel groups
is the perception of Arabs as intransigent and of Palestinians as terrorists.

The widely and deeply held perception of Israel's reasonableness, moderation and desire for peace contrasted with the extreme bellicosity and irrational blood lust of the Arabs (and) the Israeli characterization of the PLO as a "gang of murderers, terrorists, and thugs" has deeply influenced the American view of what has been going on in the Middle East. 102

This influence is reflected in the opinion polls cited earlier and other polls which reveal, for example, that 77% of those surveyed feel the Israeli government is "reasonable in wanting a peace settlement." 103

This widely held perception or belief is frequently reinforced or invoked by pro-Israel groups. "With the recent exception of Egypt, the Arab states have never accepted Israel's right to exist...The attitude of Arab leaders and officials from 1948 to the present has always demonstrated a commitment to the destruction of Israel." 104 The case for a Palestinian homeland is rejected because "Palestinians shoot and talk," and because a Palestinian state would be a "Soviet satellite at Israel's doorstep...a foothold for rejectionist Arab states." Pro-Israel groups on the other hand demonstrate at great length the reasonableness and moderation of Israel.

Still another mobilization of bias connected with the Special Relationship that is invoked by pro-Israel groups is that of appeasement; our support for Israel is framed in terms of the need to resist Arab and Communist blackmail by standing firm on our commitment to Israel. For example, in discussing
pressure on the U.S. to change its policy and to recognize the PLO in 1974, Near East Report, in an article entitled, "Are We Back to Munich?" related:

We begin this gloomy recital with a reminiscent reference to 1951. We could have gone back to the 1930's... The U.S. now faces a major test. Will it be strong in principle? Will it support Israel in a dangerous hour? Will it rally other Western powers to a realization of the peril and to the necessity of a reassessment of their policies and to resist blackmail and aggression? 105

The article went on to invoke images of "the rise of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini; the days when the Nazis exploited the Sudetan to dismember Czechoslovakia; the failure of the League of Nations, the isolationism in the U.S.; the collapse and ruin of Europe, and the Holocaust." At a protest rally in 1974, one official declared, "There is a stink of Munich in the air and it reeks of Arab oil."

Pro-Israel groups at times invoke the image of antisemitism when discussing those favoring pro-Arab policy. Antisemitism has by now become an unacceptable part of the American cultural milieu; an aversion to bigotry and a tolerance of "positive" ethnic groups is firmly ingrained in American politics. By invoking this aspect of the American political context and by portraying anti-Zionists as antisemites, pro-Israel groups deny legitimacy to anti-Israel demands or to pro-Arab positions. "If you're in opposition, you get a big white paintbrush that says you're anti-Semitic," said one House aide. 106
For example, in one article, Near East Report linked former Senator Abourezk's anti-Israel stand to his questionable attitude towards Jews. Abourezk later responded:

In this country it is much easier to criticize our own government than it is to criticize Israel. Critics...are fearful of being characterized as anti-Semitic...It is becoming a widely used technique to mischaracterize any political criticism of Israel as criticism of Judaism or of Jews. We now see a foreign country wrapping itself in its state religion so that criticism of the state or its policies is perceived as a form of racism. 107

At an AIPAC dinner in May, 1978, Senator Lowell Weicker (R-Ct.), in discussing National Security Council President Zbigniew Brezinski's advocacy of a more evenhanded approach to the Middle East conflict, charged:

We know from history that time and time again when national leaders ran into difficulties, they found it convenient to blame their problems on Jews and we know what were the results...If there is any meaningful distinction between those historical proclivities and the signals which Mr. Brezinski is sending today, I don't know what it is. 108

Statements like these often operate to cut off debate or discussion on certain matters.
The Special Relationship and other mobilizations of bias forming the optic through which the public and policy-makers view the Middle East conflict has profound implications. The Special Relationship engenders a black-white view of the problem: Israel, the moderate, peaceful party whose actions are always right, just, and moral, and the extremist, war-loving Arabs who are always evil and wrong. A correlative to this black-white portrayal is an "either-or" view: either the United States loves Israel completely and does nothing to endanger the Special Relationship (through questioning Israeli policies, using economic and military aid as leverage, and having close relations with certain Arab countries), or the United States is "abandoning Israel." As Congressman David Obey (D-Wisc.) remarked, "If you question their programs, they say you are for their enemies and against them." 109

Consequently, the Special Relationship optic determines not only how issues are perceived, but also how they are framed; the language of debate in Mideast issues is this black-white, either-or language. For example, support for the Palestinians until recently was considered the equivalent of wanting to "throw Israel into the sea." The idea of a Palestinian state was, until now, considered unthinkable. The issue was worded: "Do we support the tiny democracy of Israel or should we support the Communist, terrorist PLO?" instead of: "Do we support the concept of an independent secular state based on open and universal citizenship regardless of race and religion?" which is the wording used by pro-Arab groups to describe a
Palestinian state. (This is not to say that the present wording or framing of the issue is necessarily false or unfair.) Rather, the point is that in studying power we must not only take into account the outcome of a decision, but also which group prevails in the language and conception of the issue.

The proposed 10% cut in military aid to Israel is another example of how the Special Relationship optic reduces issues into either-or, black-white terms. Senator Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.), who introduced the amendment to protest Israeli actions in South Lebanon, has consistently supported Israel in the past and claimed, "This is not a vote on the test of our loyalty to Israel. This is a cry for conscience...that says we deplore violence whether it is by the PLO or by the Israeli Air Force."

Many Senators responded:

Robert Packwood (R-Ore.): If we adopt this amendment today, we are sending a signal alright. It is a signal to those intransigent Arab governments and to the PLO to keep it up, that time is on your side; sooner or later America will give in and bully and blackmail Israel and they will have to give in.

Charles Mathias (R-Md.): The world would consider the adoption of the amendment as a moral judgment on Israel by the Senate. It is a source of strength for Israel that she has a great tradition of acting justly in her dealings with the world. As I have fought for justice for Israel, I have the confidence that Israel will do justice. The amendment should be defeated.

Eventually the Senate defeated the amendment by 78-7.

In addition, the Special Relationship optic, by attaining the status of a national tradition, part of our cultural milieu, which is no longer subject to meaningful questioning,
has prevented a number of potential issues from being placed on the Mideast political agenda until very recently. For example, Israeli settlement policies in the Sinai and the West Bank, Palestinian national rights, close ties with certain Arab countries, advanced arm sales to certain Arab countries, and the possibility of using our economic and military aid to Israel as leverage to force the Israelis to be more flexible in negotiations have, in general, been kept off the political agenda until very recently. (Again, this is not to say that these potential issues are "matters of major social importance" in this specific area.) Nevertheless, these are matters that pro-Arab groups and some Executive officials do consider important, and policymakers could possibly construe these matters to be important to the interests of the nation as a whole, as is being done to some extent now. The power and influence of pro-Israel groups and the strength of the Special Relationship optic and other deeply held perceptions and beliefs is therefore manifested in both decisionmaking and nondecisionmaking.

A number of more subtle mobilizations of bias working against Arabs have prevented Arab Americans from effectively organizing, gaining legitimacy for their grievances, and placing issues important to them, such as close ties with Arab countries and Palestinian national rights on the agenda until recently. "Arab Americans suffer from an inferiority complex," one author commented.

Let us examine the negative stereotype of Arabs in the
United States. A 1975 poll by Pat Cadell suggest(ed) that a significant minority has negative, close to racist attitudes towards Arabs...Nearly half or more (of the respondents) said the terms 'greedy,' 'arrogant,' and 'barbaric' apply to Arabs.

Relatively few described the Arabs as "peaceful" or "honest" or "friendly" or "like Americans," while a majority used these terms to describe the Israelis. 111

The popular myths about Arab character, Arab society and Arab culture portray the Arabs as primitive peoples locked into backward social patterns by a decadent, stagnating culture...the ignorant, degraded, lazy, unwashed loafers and savages of the followers of the degenerate religion of the false prophet. 112

James Zogby of the PHRC described the prevalent image of the Arab as that of the "Muslim fanatic...the bad guy in international intrigue." 113

Some claim that these stereotypes are popularized through novels, movies, and mass media. For example, one study of elementary and junior high school textbooks found that nomadic bedouin life, which accounts for only about 6% of the entire Arab population, "provides the basic education information about Arab society." Herblock cartoons portray Arabs as "ugly, mean and dirty." Novels like The Pirate and Exodus, which describe Palestinians as "the dregs of humanity, thieves, murderers, highway robbers, dope runners, and white slavers," 114 Sherlock Holmes' portrayal of "the street Arab, the opium addict" and a media image of Arab soldiers (before 1973) as "mentally retarded cowards who couldn't handle modern machinery and
could not stand and fight" have all reinforced this negative perception of Arabs.

Frederick Dutton, a Washington lawyer who acts as a consultant to the Saudis in their public relations and lobbying effort in America, described the image that Senators and Congressmen have of Arabs. Dutton stated that Congressmen are poorly educated about Arabs. "The first perception is almost zero," he said, "The Lawrence of Arabia stereotype is now being replaced by the petrodollar stereotype, the rich Arab." Dutton concluded that although the situation is changing, "the overwhelming bulk of opinion (toward Arabs) is still negative" in the Congress.

Thus, Arab-American demands or "diffuse discontent" were kept "covert," outside the political arena for many years. Arab Americans were "alienated from the American political system by the apparent unanimity of American hostility against the Arabs" and "generally refrained from identification with "Arab" issues, considering that the political system was closed on such issues and fearing that they would be subject to social and economic repercussions." In this way a mobilization bias against Arab Americans prevented them from exercising power.
Pro-Arab groups have not so much concentrated on affecting Middle East policy decisions by Congress and the President as they have concentrated on trying to change the optic through which the public and the Congress view the Middle East conflict and penetrate the "circular relationship" between interest groups, the Congress, and public opinion. Pro-Arab groups seem to recognize the nature of these mobilizations of bias and perceptions which have become so deeply ingrained in American politics and how they are determinative of outcomes. As James Zogby, Chairman of the PHRC explained, "There has been a problem in breaking through the conception of what the problem is." The current "way of approaching the problem is not at all conducive to our understanding of the problem." He said the PHRC and other groups try to "restructure consciousness and reframe options in a different language." For example, the PHRC tries to convert the Palestinian issue into a question of "Jewish people and Palestinian people," instead of "Israeli people and Palestinian problem." 118

The NAAA has specifically taken on the task of trying to change Americans' perception of Arabs and "fostering the development of a humanized image of Arabs" by disseminating information and educational materials about the Arab world and Arab Americans. For example, in a publication entitled "Counterpoint—Arab-U.S. Investments: No Need for Confrontation," the NAAA tried to dispel American fears and negative perceptions of OPEC and Arab "petrodollars." "Arab investment triggers an emotional response out of proportion to its relative size and
scope," the article states, and goes on to explain that only seven members of OPEC are Arabs, that Arab countries have relatively little investment in the U.S., and that "the principal Arab investors are conservative by nature, major holders of dollars who would themselves be hurt by precipitous action, and politically allied with the non-Communist West." 119 Frederick Dutton has tried to convince Congressmen and Administration officials that the Saudis are "sharp, savvy, sophisticated," forward thinking and educated businessmen, not backward sheiks.

In addition, pro-Arab groups have tried to combat both the moral and strategic images and perceptions that undergird the U.S.-Israeli Special Relationship. They attempt to portray Israel as a racist, oppressive, powerful state overarmed with American equipment, not a lonely, isolated democracy. The PHRC accuses Israel of a "denial of basic political freedoms (of the Palestinians), expulsion from their homes and properties, prolonged detention without charges or trial, collective punishment, and torture." 120 The NAAA ridiculed what it called Israel's "most-martyred-nation status" after Israel's preemptive strikes in South Lebanon, and said:

We have had enough of the destruction of South Lebanon by relentless air and artillery strikes on civilian populations. We are tired of a double standard that converts Menachem Begin the terrorist into a statesman but refuse[d] to even speak with Yassir Arafat... The American people have had enough of a state which plays on sympathy for a people who have suffered but acts like a classic oppressor.

Secondly, pro-Arab groups dispute the widely held belief that America's self-interest is served by the U.S.'s
strong support for Israel. "We have had enough of seeing friendly Arab nations like Jordan and Saudi Arabia alienated," the above article continues. One pro-Arab publication, Palestine Perspectives, stated that Americans must protest "the bloated military budget and escalating amount of military aid to Israel at a time of cuts in social programs and rising unemployment," thereby linking aid to Israel with the domestic economic situation. A letter from nineteen Arab-American organizations to members of Congress made a similar link:

We the undersigned representatives of millions of American citizens from all over the U.S. strongly urge you to vote absolutely no arms and advisers to Israel. Vote against further harm to the U.S. economy and the American people, your country, and the hope for world peace. Turn your attention to the needs of millions of Americans who need our dollars at home.

The NAAA and Arab embassies try to make explicit "the linkage between American ties with the Arab world and continued access to imported oil." In this way pro-Arab groups attempt to show that U.S. aid-to-Israel policies are detrimental to the long range interests of the U.S. in the Middle East.

Just as pro-Israel frame the need for American support for Israel in terms of a convergence of ideal and self-interest, pro-Arab groups try to portray American support for Arab countries, Palestinian rights, and a cutoff of aid to Israel in the same language of morality and self-interest.
For example, the NAAA, at its 1979 national convention, passed the following resolution:

We of the NAAA urge therefore, the U.S. government to support the creation of an independent Palestinian state on Israeli occupied Palestinian land, including Jerusalem. It is reasonable to recommend that a dispossessed and suffering people be allowed to possess what is, in fact, theirs. We urge that their right to national sovereignty be recognized. Indeed, in the name of justice, as well as American self-interest, we demand it. 125

Pro-Arab groups and corporate interests continually remind legislators, Administration officials, and the media of the importance of healthy social and economic ties to Arab states, especially in terms of our dependence on Arab oil. SOCAL's letter to its stockholders in July, 1973 mentioned earlier began by stating, "All of us are well aware that the U.S. is not producing enough oil and gas to meet the overall demands ... We are becoming increasingly dependent on foreign oil imports." After citing the fact that the Arab Persian Gulf area contains nearly two-thirds of the Free World's oil reserves, SOCAL Board Chairman Miller recounted "the long history of friendship and cooperation with the Arabs" and the moral need to "acknowledge the legitimate interests of all the peoples of the Middle East." 126 Congressman Paul Findley frequently asks, "Why is it that the Palestinians are the only people on this earth that the U.S. denies the right of self-determination?" 127
Ironically, those advocating a change in U.S. Middle East policy and a more pro-Arab and pro-Palestinian stance invoke the exact same mobilizations of bias or perceptions that are used by pro-Israel groups to secure American support for Israel. In fact, pro-Arab groups use this tactic even to the extent that they use the exact same language of the Special Relationship optic and the assumptions underlying it. For example, the Saudi Arabian public relations campaign in the United States stressed the "Special Relationship" between Saudi Arabia and America. Also, pro-Arab groups say that the Palestinians have endured such suffering that they deserve international support in the same way that the Jews deserved it after World War II and invoke the same language and images previously used only in discussing Jews and the Holocaust.

In a publication of the Palestine Information Office, Hatem Hussaini, who heads the office, wrote, "All are exiles, Palestinians in the diaspora, far from their country...The Palestinians have suffered a devastating tragedy." The publication reprints PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat's 1974 speech before the U.N. General Assembly in which he claimed that "our Palestinian people have not lost their spirit in Israeli prisons and concentration camps...(We must) promote the progressive ingathering of the Palestinian exiles now living in the diaspora." Many pro-Arab groups stress the "exile, persecution and oppression" suffered by Palestinians.

Pro-Arab groups at times go as far as to equate Israel
and Zionism with anti-semitism. In Yassir Arafat's address he charged, "Zionism is an ideology that is racist. It is profoundly reactionary and discriminatory; it is united with anti-Semitism in its retrograde tenets...Ours is a revolution for the Jew." Dr. Zogby made similar allusions in an interview.130

In a more explicit acknowledgement of the plateau that exists in American politics between those interests perceived as legitimate and those perceived as illegitimate, and a recognition of the importance of being perceived as legitimate, pro-Israel groups have specifically attacked groups attempting to alter long-standing American policy and the Special Relationship optic or bring new issues onto the Mideast agenda. In an effort to undermine the demands of these groups and to erect or strengthen barriers to their entry into the political arena, pro-Israel groups invoke certain mobilizations of bias and, in Wolff's words, portray their opponents "as crackpots, extremists, and foreign agents." In this way they take advantage of their position on the plateau and stifle the threatening demands of those off the plateau, those "absolutely beyond the pale."

For example, in a special report on Arab propaganda in the U.S., Near East Report in 1964 wrote that "lunatic fringe operators assume front seats at Arab conferences, whether they are encouraged or not. They embarrass the proceedings with anti-Semitic harangues and literature. There is evidence that Arab officials trafficked with the hatemongers in their
early days in this country." In a 1969 survey of Arab propaganda on American campuses, Near East Report described the activities of a group called the Organization of Arab Students. The survey stated that some of the OAS's objectives were to "win the radical blacks, to be popular with the militant left" and cited parts of the group's 1969 platform which "sincerely thanked the USSR and other friendly Socialist states." The issue went on to cite support for the Arab cause by Black Panthers, Black Muslims, and Malcolm X.131

Another tactic used by pro-Israel groups to deny legitimacy to pro-Arab groups, to create obstacles to their reaching the plateau, is to question the propriety of the funding of pro-Arab groups and spokesmen. For example, in discrediting an organization called the American Friends of the Middle East, a pro-Arab organization during the 1960's, Near East Report outlined AFME's source of funds: "Oil companies primed AFME with substantial grants when it was first established" and AFME had since received substantial monies "from international oil companies like Aramco, which derive their profits from oil concessions and split them with Arab governments."132 Near East Report often invokes the "petrodollar" image in discussing, for example, the substantial contributions ANERA has received from oil companies. Another official of a pro-Israel group charged that NAAA receives money from Arab governments.133

AIPAC, through Near East Report, attempts to discredit pro-Arab spokesmen by implying that their stands are not
motivated by sincerity but rather by expectation of monetary reward. *Near East Report* tied former Senator Abourezk's pro-Arab stand to the contributions he has received from Arab Americans:

Senator James Abourezk (D-S.D.), who has taken to the platform to espouse the Arab cause since his election in 1972, has found it highly lucrative. Last year, Abourezk received $49,000 for his 13 speeches, including an unprecedented $10,000 honorarium for an address on June 30 before the NAAA in Detroit. A spokesman for Abourezk told the *Near East Report* that he did not know if Abourezk's honoraria were 'normal' but he thought they were 'pretty neat.'

An official at the Israeli Embassy speculated that Congressman Findley "could have gotten some money" from Arab governments was the cause of his support for the Palestinians.

More recently, AIPAC has tried to discredit the pro-Arab stands of John Connally, a Republican candidate for President, and Jesse Jackson, a Civil Rights leader:

After Connally's speech (propounding a Mideast Peace Plan perceived as pro-Arab) several reporters began to research Connally's dealings with the Arab world, and some of these ties will likely appear in the press this week. Jesse Jackson's financial ties were already discussed last week. Jackson seems most concerned with attracting Arab oil money for his financially pressed PUSH.
Despite the difficulties cited by Bachrach and Baratz, Grenson, and Trice in challenging or changing a prevailing optic through which the public and policymakers view a certain situation and the consequent disadvantages of "out-groups" attempting to alter that view, significant changes in the way the Middle East conflict is perceived have occurred. These changes provide further insight into the nature of frameworks, paradigms or mobilizations of bias that are crucial to understanding the exercise of power in American politics.

First, the pro-Arab lobby—Arab-American groups, certain corporate interests, and public relations activities of Arab governments—has become much more sophisticated, coordinated and articulate in their approach. "The Arabs are doing a much better job now," said Ted Kaufman of Senator Biden's office, "They're getting money and they're gaining skill. They're powerful now, well educated, sophisticated and they make very good arguments."137 Frederick Dutton explained that the Arab lobby is developing "an appreciation of the complexities of domestic politics. They now understand the need to talk to the community at large, to talk to our media very directly and often. Congressmen and other officials (now) see the terribly sophisticated Saudi Arabians and quickly the mind changes." Dutton described a dinner party held by Saudi Prince Saud to which a number of staunch supporters of Israel were invited, such as Senators Javits (R-N.Y.) and Metzenbaum (D-Ohio). Dutton said that many "came out of the evening with their heads
completely turned around." So the improving techniques of the pro-Arab lobby and the greater exposure of Arabs to Americans—policymakers especially—has, according to most, had some impact.

More important, though, in changing the way the public and policymakers view the Middle East conflict, are three dramatic events which have occurred during the past six years. The first was the 1973 Arab oil embargo against the United States and the subsequent energy shortage. For the first time many Americans realized how dependent they were on Arab oil for their basic energy needs. This engendered a reappraisal by many of American interests in the Middle East. The events of 1973 and afterwards therefore forced many to be more sensitive to Arab needs and pressures.

Although policymakers, especially those in the Executive branch, increasingly questioned our strategic commitments in the Middle East and pushed for more "evenhanded" policies as a result of the oil shortage, the American public and Congress remained skeptical of the authenticity of the oil shortage and resentful of growing Arab power. Indeed, most still viewed the situation in terms of the Special Relationship framework. Most Americans "felt that (the country's) fuel shortage was contrived by the oil companies to get higher prices or by federal officials seeking to divert attention from Watergate and inflation...Very little (of the public) blames Israel or her American friends." The persistence of the Special Relationship optic was reflected in the Harris poll data of
1974-1975 cited earlier and other polls which made it "clear that most Americans are unwilling to make Israel the victim of what many feel is a game of Arab oil blackmail." In fact, Harris speculated that Israel may have in fact benefited from sympathy generated from the possibility of being the object of blackmail and the "anti-Arab sentiment" that generated.

Instead, two other dramatic events have significantly shaken the very foundations of the Special Relationship framework and therefore have substantially altered public and Congressional attitudes and therefore policies. The first event was the election in May, 1977 of Menachem Begin, "a man the British had called a terrorist and whom even other Israelis and friends of Israel called an extremist," as Prime Minister of Israel. Begin's West Bank, settlement, anti-terrorist and other policies and his confrontations with President Carter "puzzled and pained" Americans. "Begin does not make it easy," remarked Ted Kaufman. Then, in November, 1977, "Americans got an entirely new image of Arab peace-making from the bold and startling journey to Jerusalem of President Anwar Sadat of Egypt." During the difficult negotiations afterwards it was Begin who seemed to be intransigent and Sadat the appeared to be the flexible one. Under these circumstances, many Americans began to question their previously held perception of warlike Arabs menacing peace-loving Americans.

As a result of these two events, therefore, the black-white, either-or portrayal of the Arab-Israeli conflict dictated
by the Special Relationship may no longer hold:

Once the moral pre-eminence of one side vis-a-vis its opponents has been so visibly and shockingly undercut, the entire framework of discourse of an issue is transformed. No longer does the certitude that one side is basically right and the other basically wrong condition the public's response... Thus it seems unlikely that Israel's American supporters will ever again be able to reduce the Arab-Israeli conflict to a simple moral equation of good and evil, innocence versus malevolence... The black-white portrayal of the antagonists has suffered a blow from which it may not recover.142

The American public has therefore begun to seriously question its previously unchallenged belief in the assumptions of the Special Relationship and in Israel's righteousness and Arab malevolence. This is reflected in numerous public opinion polls which demonstrate that support for Israel has significantly eroded.143 "Israel's support is at its lowest ebb," remarked Jacob Stein, former chairman of the Presidents Conference, "This is manifested when an announced Presidential candidate (John Connally) announces a Mideast policy that at least on the surface is inimical to Israel."

Even in the Congress, traditionally the bastion of support for Israel, there has been much more questioning of the Israeli position. This change in attitude was clearly reflected in the May, 1978 Senate vote not to block the sale of advanced warplanes to Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, the first time lethal planes were ever sold to Egypt and advanced offensive planes to Saudi Arabia by the United States. Many traditionally solid backers of Israel, including Senator
Ribicoff (D-Ct.), who is Jewish, voted in favor of the package, which became a test of the strength of the pro-Israel lobby and the Special Relationship. "A few years ago there would have been no question about this," said Hyman Bookbinder, Washington Representative of the American Jewish Committee, "Things have changed." The New York Times called the sale "the turning point of (Israel's) thirty year Special Relationship with Washington."

With this dramatic change in public and congressional attitudes towards the Middle East, the range of policy options the Executive branch (and to a lesser extent, pro-Arab groups) can advance which are acceptable to Congress and the public is now much wider. The 1978 plane sale was one example of the lessening of constraints upon the issues which could be placed by the Executive branch on the Middle East agenda. The very fact that the Administration took on the pro-Israel lobby openly and directly and challenged the basic assumptions of the Special Relationship indicated how the situation has changed. Other examples include: open questioning by Secretary of State Vance and others of the use of American weapons in South Lebanon, Administration charges that the Israeli West Bank settlements are illegal and "obstacles to peace" (the Labor government had built many more settlements than Begin's government, but Labor's settlement policies were rarely questioned in the U.S.), overtures to the PLO, acknowledgement of Palestinian national rights, and other new issues. "With the bewildering speed that Wolff
had described, new demands and issues are suddenly being perceived as legitimate and are receiving significant attention.

Pro-Arab groups, located off the plateau until now, have found themselves in a much more favorable position. For the first time, Congressmen and others are "eager to hear both sides of the story," according to John Richardson of the NAAA, "I'm staggered by the change." Indeed, the mobilizations of bias operative in the domestic debate on American Middle East policy are undergoing a fundamental change.
Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to analyze the arguments of the defenders and critics of Pluralism in the context of a specific situation: the nature and sources of Congressional and Executive attitudes and behavior with regard to domestic interest groups attempting to affect American policy in the Middle East. I surely have not explored all the facets of this most complex situation, but I do hope my analysis has shed light on power, Pluralism and the domestic debate on American Middle East policy. At this point it is appropriate to briefly review some of my conclusions:

Robert Dahl's Pluralist framework provides significant insight as to the nature of power and American politics with respect to Congressional and Executive attitudes and actions in this issue area, despite its atypical nature from a Pluralist point of view. A relatively small but active American Jewish community translates its collective resources, mainly intensity and numbers, into power and influence over policy outputs through electoral pressure and persuasion, in much the way Dahl postulated groups would. The group does make its voice "effectively heard" in matters important to its members, for government officials—elected officials more so than nonelected—are highly responsive to the group; pro-Israel forces make the cost of taking an anti-Israel position very high. Pro-Arab groups, because of their lower intensity and numbers, necessarily have a reduced impact on policymakers. The differences in numbers and intensity
between the two groups—numbers and intensity—form the heart of the Pluralist theory of power—can explain the biased outcomes in certain Mideast policy matters. Moreover, these biased outcomes can, to a significant degree, be revealed through examining decisions made on American Middle East policy.

Nevertheless, by relying exclusively on Dahl's analysis and framework, we will not fully understand or recognize what is happening in domestic politics with respect to the Middle East issue. Lobbying and political activity in the domestic debate over Middle East policy is not so much a question of twisting arms on issues through electoral pressure as it is a matter of shaping and changing attitudes and perceptions through invoking and reinforcing mobilizations of bias.

First, the contest between domestic groups in this situation is not only a conflict over decisions, but more importantly, over public perceptions or mobilizations of bias, "set(s) of predominant values, beliefs, and rituals...that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of some at the expense of others." Domestic groups devote a substantial amount of time and energy to creating a domestic political climate that is favorable to their policy preferences and to strengthening and reshaping public perceptions, norms, values, or mobilizations of bias which systematically favor their demands over the demands of others. The power and influence of certain groups, the "realization of their will despite the resistance of others," cannot be explained solely in terms of electoral pressure, numbers and intensity, or in terms of the outcomes of certain
decisions. Rather, it is the strengths of these predispositions, perceptions, and biases that give real meaning to decisions that are made. These biases, not just electoral pressure, are largely determinative of decisional outcomes.

Secondly, the battle over creating and reinforcing a certain political climate or norms and perceptions which make up that climate is only partially revealed through examining decisions. For once we assert the importance the biases and of the political context itself, it becomes clear that power is being exercised in ways other than through participating or prevailing in the decision-making process. Mobilizations of bias and deeply held perceptions ingrained in American politics are not only invoked or reinforced during decision-making, but also through nondecisionmaking, preventing matters from being placed on the political agenda. Moreover, mobilizations of bias can shape the way demands are perceived and framed. For example, mobilizations of bias may determine the wording or language of a certain question or issue. Thus, meaningful alternatives to certain matters may not be considered or given an adequate hearing in the political arena, and dissent may be stifled.

Controlling the agenda of politics, through controlling the political context and climate within which decisions are made, seems to be the key to the exercise of power by domestic groups with respect to American Middle East policy.

Moreover, deeply held perceptions and mobilizations of bias operative in American politics in the Middle East issue are not easily challenged or changed; only dramatic events can affect or change them. Because of the difficulty in challenging
or changing values or perceptions favoring some at the expense of others, especially when these values are widely held and have persisted over time, these biases represent significant barriers to the exercise of power by new groups attempting to change policy or bring new issues onto the agenda. With respect to the Middle East issue, therefore, a consistent and systematic bias in favor of the "in-groups" exists.

Finally, as a result of these biases, the plateau between demands and groups perceived as legitimate and those perceived as illegitimate that Wolff postulated is, in this situation, roughly an accurate description of American politics. So long as a group or certain interests are considered illegitimate, the group will not "realize its will" (and exercise power in proportion to its size and intensity.) But once groups do achieve legitimacy, they do move "with bewildering speed" onto the plateau and are assured of some power. Pro-Israel and pro-Arab groups acknowledge the existence of this plateau by waging a fierce battle over the legitimacy of new groups (mainly pro-Arab groups) and new demands. Wolff is correct in asserting that the most important contest in American politics is the struggle to climb onto the plateau.

Consequently, Dahl's assertion that any active group will make itself heard in proportion to its numbers and intensity is undermined. Significant biases operate to impose barriers which prevent new groups from achieving legitimacy and exercising power. (The political system is therefore not as open as Dahl claims it is.)
In studying power, therefore, one must not avoid examining the values and biases of a certain polity. It is these values and biases operating in a political system that must themselves become the object of one's study, for they are crucial to understanding the exercise of power in American politics.
Interviewees and Organizational Position

When Interviewed

Adler, Karen
Assistant Washington Representative
American Jewish Committee

Bremer, Allison
Staff Assistant
House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East

Dutton, Frederick
Lawyer (Consultant to Saudi Arabia)

Kaufman, Ted
Legislative Assistant
Office of Senator Joseph Biden

Kerem, Ariel
First Information Officer
Embassy of Israel

Richardson, John
Public Affairs Director
National Association of Arab Americans
Stein, Jacob
Former Chairman
Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations

Zogby, Dr. James
National Chairman
Palestine Human Rights Campaign

Unfortunately, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee has a policy of not granting interviews. I did, however, attend the weekly AIPAC meetings described in this paper in my capacity as an intern for the National Council of Jewish Women in Summer, 1978. Some of my observations of those meetings are incorporated into this paper.
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