

A CONGRUENCE OF INTERESTS: CHRISTIAN ZIONISM AND U.S. POLICY TOWARD
ISRAEL, 1977-1998

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Abstract

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This thesis examines the phenomenon of political Christian Zionism and its influence on U.S. policy toward Israel from 1977 to 1998. While there is a vast literature on America Middle East policy and the relationship between the U.S. and Israel; relatively little attention has been given to the actions of Christian evangelicals on behalf of Israel. Motivated by an eschatological system called dispensationalism, these Christian Zionists supported Israel through a variety of activities, including direct lobbying at the congressional level. Forming alliances with the Jewish pro-Israel lobby and the Israeli Likud party, Christian Zionists were active in pressuring Congress to oppose arms sales to Arab countries and gaining recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The rise to political prominence of the Christian Right during the 1980s and 1990s facilitated the growth and influence of Christian Zionist efforts, connecting dispensationalism to political power as never before. While scholars in the field of diplomatic history have noted the strategic and economic concerns that drove U.S. policy toward Israel, as well as the influence of the American Jewish community and its lobby, they have failed to adequately understand or integrate the profound political actions of Christian Zionists. By examining the role that Christian Zionism has had in the myriad of factors that have influenced U.S. policy toward Israel a more complete understanding of the dynamics of the U.S.-Israeli relationship is gained. In short, this thesis adds Christian Zionism to the matrix of factors currently identified as underlying the unique partnership between the United States and Israel.

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Introduction

Historians have long contended with the dynamics of American interactions with the Middle East. The past century has witnessed the rise of the importance of oil, the formation of the state of Israel with the resulting conflict with the Palestinians and Arab nations thereafter, and multiple wars that have drawn the United States into an ever increasing involvement in the region. By the end of World War Two, the colonial powers were retreating from the region while growing tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union were drawing both powers into the area. Three key factors—the importance of oil, the desire to halt Soviet encroachment in the region, and the maintenance of the security of Israel—“propelled the United States into the affairs of the Middle East to an extent most Americans of the pre-1945 era could hardly have imagined.”¹ Thereafter a key arena in the Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union, the Middle East gained a central place in the minds of both policymakers and the general public of postwar America. The rise of militant Islam and the global threat of terrorism in the late twentieth century have again placed the Middle East at the forefront of America’s foreign policy agenda. While the dynamics of American involvement and policies in the Middle East have changed with differing circumstances, one element that has remained constant is the special relationship the United States has had with Israel since its inception in 1948.

The lure of oil and the threat of Soviet expansion in the Middle East were primary concerns of the Truman administration at the end of the Second World War, but a new

¹ H.W. Brands, *Into the Labyrinth: The United States and the Middle East, 1945-1993* (New York: McGraw Hill), xiii.

development would soon add a third pillar to U.S. policy in the region, the creation of the state of Israel on May 15, 1948. After a volatile fight with his top advisors and the State Department, "...Harry Truman gave Israel America's blessing by recognizing the new nation just a few minutes after..." David Ben-Gurion announced the creation of the state of Israel.² Despite periods during which this relationship became strained, America has been Israel's staunchest ally since its inception and has provided it with high levels of military, economic, and diplomatic support.³ However, despite this assistance the relationship has never been formalized by a defense pact or military alliance.⁴ This fact illustrates the complex dynamics of the U.S.-Israeli relationship, where the reasons for a strong American commitment to Israel have ranged from a humanitarian concern for the welfare of European Jewry after the Holocaust to the doctrine of Israel as a "strategic asset" in the region that began during the Cold War, but has now outlasted that conflict's demise.

When scholars in the fields of diplomatic history and international relations have examined the relationship between the United States and Israel, a variety of factors both domestic and foreign are identified as the reasons for the "special relationship." The traditional explanation is that the U.S.-Israeli relationship is based upon a combination of "hard" factors, such as strategic and economic concerns and "soft" factors, such as the pro-Israel lobby, the American Jewish community, shared democratic values, and a

² Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 77.

³ Not all scholars agree that the U.S.-Israeli relationship has been "special" from the time of Israel's inception in 1948, although most agree that the financial, military, and diplomatic support of the Israeli state by America has been profound, especially since 1967. For an argument against the "special relationship thesis" see: Yaacov Bar-Simon-Tov, "The United States and Israel since 1948: A Special Relationship?," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Spring 1998), 231-262, which argues that the U.S.-Israeli relationship became special only after 1967.

⁴ Bar-Simon-Tov, "The United States and Israel since 1948: A Special Relationship?," 231.

similar Judeo-Christian heritage. Most scholars acknowledge that U.S. policy toward Israel is not exclusively the result of strategic and economic concerns, the traditional causal factors of diplomatic and military alliances between nations, but there is no consensus on the exact influence that domestic considerations in America have had on policy formation.⁵ At the executive level, the main locus of foreign policy formation in the United States, political concerns both influence the goals of each administration's foreign policy agenda and constrain the degree to which these policies can be implemented.⁶ While the executive branch is responsible for much of America's foreign policy, Congress also plays an important role because of its constitutionally granted powers over the purse strings of American foreign aid and less formal powers that enable it to pressure the executive.⁷ In the case of Israel, it is Congress that has been the nation's staunchest supporter, displayed through massive aid and arms packages, as well as sometimes working against the executive branches' efforts to develop military, economic, and diplomatic relations with Arab states. David Schoenbaum notes that "[f]rom early on, Israelis and their American supporters have been tenacious and skillful

⁵ Examples of scholars that emphasize strategic and economic factors as the basis of the relationship between the U.S. and Israel, and dismiss the role of American domestic influences, see especially: A.F.K. Organski, *The \$36 Billion Bargain: Strategy and Politics in U.S. Assistance to Israel* (New York: Columbia University, 1990), and even one of the U.S.-Israeli relationship's most vehement critics, Noam Chomsky, *The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians*. Updated Version (London: Pluto, 1999). Most scholars take into consideration both domestic and foreign factors in explaining the relationship, although there is no consensus on which factor is primary; see Camille Mansour, *Beyond Alliance: Israel in U.S. Foreign Policy*. Translated by James Cohen (New York: Columbia University, 1994).

⁶ For theoretical work that examines the role of domestic politics in foreign policy formations see: Eugene R. Wittkopf and James M. McCormick, eds., *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidence* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, 1999).

⁷ For theoretical work on the relationship of Congress and the Executive on foreign policy see: Louis Fischer, *Congressional Abdication on War and Spending* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), Colton C. Campbell, Nicol C. Rae, and John Stack Jr., eds., *Congress and the Politics of Foreign Policy* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), and Lee H. Hamilton and Jordan Tama, *A Creative Tension: The Foreign Policy Roles of the President and Congress* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

in working the legislative branch of U.S. government, in effect melding Israeli politics with American politics.”⁸

The locus of domestic support for Israel in American society and government is complex and involves a convergence of a multitude of factors. The strongly pro-Israel stance of U.S. Congress and most presidential administrations in postwar America largely reflected overall public opinion. Eytan Gilboa has traced American public opinion polls from 1944 to 1985 and argued that throughout this period “[t]he American public has strongly supported economic and military assistance to Israel.”⁹ The general disposition of the American people as supportive of a strong relationship with Israel has been motivated by a multitude of factors, from guilt over the Holocaust after World War II, to perceived shared democratic values between Americans and Israelis, and a general anti-Arab attitude. While public opinion on the Palestinian issue in the past twenty years has undergone a radical transformation, support for Israel has remained consistently higher in the United States than in almost any other country.¹⁰ In addition to the strong level of support for Israel among Americans in general, certain groups within American society support Israel and the U.S.-Israeli relationship through a much more definable level: political activism.

America’s most vocal and active support for Israel has historically come from the large and politically active American Jewish community. Even before Israeli statehood the American Jewish community was a strong presence in the Zionist cause and played a

⁸ David Schoenbaum, “Commentary: More Special Than Others,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Spring 1998), 282.

⁹ Gilboa, Eytan, *American Public Opinion Toward Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath, 1987), 232.

¹⁰ On changes in American public opinion on the Palestine issue, see: Michael W. Suleiman, *The Arabs in the Mind of America* (Brattleboro, VT: Amana Books, 1988).

key role in convincing Truman to recognize and support Israel.¹¹ Throughout the history of the U.S.-Israeli relationship, the key role of the American Jewish community is seen in the form of financial and moral support for Israel, and perhaps most importantly, in the active pro-Israel lobbying efforts at both the congressional and executive levels.¹² While critics of the pro-Israel lobby see its influence as pervasive and argue that it distorts U.S. Middle East policy; its defenders argue that it merely reflects the interests of the American citizens and policymakers who already support Israel.¹³ Regardless, the pro-Israel lobby is effective because of the historically unique position of American Jews in the political arena of American life. Edward Tivnan describes the power of the American Jewish community as the result of three key factors: voting power, the product of high voter turnout among American Jews and their key placement in large urban areas with high numbers of electoral votes, the organized and generous amounts of money contributed to political campaigns, and the political weapon of identifying anti-Israel bias as anti-Semitism.¹⁴ Recent scholarship has done much to refute the idea that the “Jewish

¹¹ Most scholars agree on the key role that American Jews had in convincing Truman to recognize Israel, especially Louis Brandeis, Chaim Weizmann, and Eddie Jacobson. For a detailed study of the influences on Truman’s decision, see Michael J. Cohen, *Truman and Israel* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: University of California Press, 1990).

¹² While the official Israel lobby in the United States is the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which has its roots in the American Zionist Emergency Council of the 1940s, the Jewish “pro-Israel lobby” is much broader and includes other Jewish groups of various importance, such as the Conference of Presidents of American Jewish Organizations.

¹³ For strong condemnations of the pro-Israel lobby see: Cheryl A. Rubenberg, *Israel and the American National Interest: A Critical Examination* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), and Edward Tivnan, *The Lobby: Jewish Political Power and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon and Schuster Touchstone, 1988), and Janice J. Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Role of Lobbies and Special Interest Groups* (London and Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2005); most scholars note the lobby’s importance, but do not see it as determining U.S. policy in the Middle East, for example, see Abraham Ben-Zvi, *The United States and Israel: The Limits of the Special Relationship* (New York: Columbia University, 1993).

¹⁴ Tivnan, *The Lobby: Jewish Political Power and American Foreign Policy*, 54-55.

Lobby” has controlled U.S. Middle East policy, but its importance as a key factor in the base of support for Israel within America is hard to refute.¹⁵

While the American Jewish community and its pro-Israel lobby is a key influence on the domestic base of support for Israel, it does not encompass the entire range of Israel supporters within the United States. Both historically and in recent times, another group of Americans has been an important source of support for Israel: evangelical and fundamentalist Protestants. Christians in America and Britain, mostly Protestant and evangelical, have a long history of support for the restoration of the Jewish people to Palestine and later for the state of Israel that fulfilled that dream.¹⁶ Many of these Christians were motivated by a specific eschatological belief, dispensationalism, which arose out of nineteenth century British premillennial sectarianism. This belief holds that the Bible foretold the return of the Jewish people to Palestine and sees the fulfillment of this as a sign of the imminent return of Christ.¹⁷ The actions of these “Christian Zionists” in the early stages of the Zionist movement have been well-documented by scholars, mainly within religious circles, but the changing political situation in America during the late twentieth century has again brought dispensationalism, Zionism, and Israel to the forefront of American political life. The rise to political prominence of the “New Christian Right” during the 1980s and 1990s changed the dynamics of American political

¹⁵ For a work that makes a strong case against the power of the Jewish pro-Israel lobby, see: Steven L. Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

¹⁶ For important works that examine the historical roots of Christian support for the restoration of the Jewish people to Palestine and support for the Jewish state after 1948, see Yaakov Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes Towards Jews, Judaism, and Zionism, 1865-1945* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing House, 1991), Paul Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism 1891-1948* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), Barbara Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* (New York: Minerva Press, 1968), and Regina Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism: Its Roots in Western History* (London: Zed, 1983).

life and brought to the mainstream a dispensationalist motivated support for Israel by evangelicals and fundamentalist Protestants.¹⁸ These religiously motivated and politically active Christians drastically changed the dynamics of domestic support for Israel.

This thesis will add to the historical record of U.S.-Israeli relations by examining the influence of Christian Zionism on U.S. policy toward Israel during the 1980s and 1990s. A central argument of this work is that the rise of the religious right in American political life during the 1980s created the conditions that allowed for the Christian Zionism of evangelical and fundamentalist Protestants to influence U.S. policy toward Israel. While scholars in the field of diplomatic history have noted the strategic and economic concerns that drove U.S. policy toward Israel and the Middle East during the 1980s and 1990s as well as the influence of the Jewish pro-Israel lobby, they have failed to adequately understand or integrate the profound political actions and influences of Christian Zionists. Despite this omission in diplomatic history, the field of American religious studies has produced a vibrant literature on Christian Zionism that has done much to fill the historical gaps about the theological motivations of Christian Zionism and the actions of its adherents throughout the twentieth century. This has failed, however, to become integrated into the broader history of U.S.-Israeli relations.¹⁹ The

¹⁷ Sizer, Stephen, *Christian Zionism: A Road Map to Armageddon?* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 254-255. The term “eschatology” refers to Christian doctrines of the end-times, found in the Bible mainly in the book of Revelation, of which dispensationalism is only one version.

¹⁸ For important works on the rise of the “Religious Right” or the “Christian Right,” see: Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), and William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996).

¹⁹ Important recent works are: Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, and Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel’s Best Friend* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2004). An important new work that challenges this assumption is Irvine H. Anderson, *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy: The Promised Land, America, and Israel, 1917-2002* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005).

reasons for this have much to do with the inability of diplomatic history to understand or address religion as an important factor in the dynamics of the domestic support for Israel outside of the Jewish pro-Israel lobby. It is also a product of the limitations of religious scholars in addressing the dynamics of foreign policy formulation and implementation in the American and international systems and events that influence such policies.

This thesis will fill the historical gap regarding the political actions and activities of Christian Zionism, specifically lobby group efforts at the congressional level. By analyzing Christian Zionism at the level of measurable political activities and its influence on policy formation and implementation in America, a greater understanding of the actual influence of Christian Zionism will be possible. Further, by examining the role that Christian Zionism has had in the myriad of factors that have comprised the U.S.-Israeli special relationship a greater understanding of the domestic dynamics of the relationship will be gained. In short, this thesis will add Christian Zionism to the matrix of factors that are currently identified as underlying the unique partnership between the United States and Israel.

The first chapter of this study addresses the historiography of diplomatic history and the recent trends within the field to incorporate tropes such as culture, race, and gender into the analysis of American foreign relations. The case study of Christian Zionism is used to make the argument for the inclusion of religion in the field of American diplomatic history as an important element in understanding the domestic influences on American foreign policy in the Middle East, especially in the 1980s and 1990s. Further addressed in chapter one is historical background of U.S. policy in the Middle East and Israel in the twentieth century, including the role of the United States in

the formation of Israel and the subsequent relationship between the two countries from 1948-1995. The second chapter examines the historical development of Christian Zionism, specifically in its dispensationalist form, to show that American Christian Zionism had limited influence on American policy until it became part of the political mainstream with the rise of the New Christian Right in the 1980s and early 1990s. In addition, this chapter places the rise of the New Christian Right and the Christian Zionist beliefs of many of its constituents within the context of the New American Conservative movement since the 1960s. This is important to note due to the alliance between the Christian Zionists and neo-conservatives within the Republican Party on the issue of Israel; although each group had very different motivations for a pro-Israel stance. These chapters will do much to add the study of religion to American diplomatic history and to integrate the methodology and theories of U.S. foreign policy studies into an analysis of Christian Zionism.

Chapter Three will examine the growth of Christian Zionism as a political movement from 1977 to 1998. After addressing the broad outlines of how Christian Zionism functioned as a political bloc of support for Israel, the chapter will use two case studies to examine the impact of Christian Zionism on U.S. policy toward Israel and the Middle East. The first case study will address one of the main proponents of Christian Zionism in America, Jerry Falwell, to argue that Falwell was an important figure in mobilizing Christian evangelical support for Israel and in making connections between the Israeli government and the New Christian Right in America. The second case study examines the contentious sale of the airborne warning and control system (AWACS) to

Saudi Arabia in 1981 as a case study of the influence of Christian Zionism on a specific foreign policy issue.²⁰

The fourth chapter will examine two other case studies to more accurately measure the impact of Christian Zionism on U.S. policy. The first study will address the one issue that Christian Zionists have been most active in lobbying Congress on, the proposed move of the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.²¹ Christian Zionists were actively involved in pushing for congressional legislation requiring a move a move of the embassy that led to the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995.

The final case study examines the only registered Christian pro-Israel lobby in the United States, the Christian's Israel Public Action Campaign (CIPAC). CIPAC was formed in 1989 and became actively involved in direct lobbying of Congress on Israel issues thereafter. This case study will examine the actual influence of CIPAC within the context of the alliance between the prominent American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and the Christian Zionists, which dates from the mid-1980s. As the most visible representation of both political Christian Zionism in America and the alliance between the Jewish and Christian pro-Israel lobbies, the study of CIPAC will show that

²⁰ The debate arose over the proposed sale of the "airborne warning and control system (AWACS) to Saudi Arabia, which had been originally introduced by President Carter and was taken up by the Reagan administration

²¹ The Embassy debate over the proposed move of the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem is one issue in which the U.S. Congress had repeatedly attempted to undermine official U.S. policy toward the final status of Jerusalem. Since UN resolution 242 in 1967, U.S. policy has maintained that Jerusalem should be an issue resolved by the Israelis and Palestinians in "final negotiations." Because of this the U.S. refuses to recognize Jerusalem as the sole capital of Israel and kept its embassy in Tel Aviv. In 1984 the U.S. House of Representatives passed a non-binding resolution calling for the move of the embassy to Jerusalem, but no action was taken by the White House. Passed in Congress in 1995, the Jerusalem Embassy Act required president Clinton to actuate the move, but the move was delayed by Clinton. At this date the U.S. Embassy remains in Tel Aviv and official U.S. policy maintains that it will not move the Embassy, which is seen as a major step in getting U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as the sole capital of Israel. Christian Zionists are particularly interested in this issue because they view Jerusalem as solely belonging to the Jewish people and were actively involved in both the House and Senate resolutions calling for a move.

Christian Zionism is influential in maintaining the strong pro-Israel stance of the U.S. Congress.

Chapter One: Diplomatic History, American Foreign Policy in the Middle East 1945-1995, and the U.S.-Israeli “Special Relationship”: Historical Background

Diplomatic History: The Field

The field of diplomatic history has undergone many transformations in the past sixty years. Long the realm of traditional power relations between states and mainly focused on geo-strategic or economic motivations for foreign policy, the field in recent years has been influenced by trends within historiography to concern itself with tropes such as culture, gender, and race. While debates continue within the field, the influence of mainstream historiography after the “cultural turn” has had a slow but sure impact on the field of diplomatic history at the theoretical and practical levels. Historians of American foreign relations are now examining the cultural influences on American foreign policy, how race and gender illuminate America’s interactions with the world, and the complex ways international events and domestic politics interact in America.¹

In the latter half of the twentieth century the field of history has undergone enormous changes as many of the fundamental assumptions of modern scholarship have been challenged by postmodern theory.² The rise of gender studies, post-colonial theory, and linguistic/cultural critiques of the text, to name a few examples, have entered into the historiographical mainstream and deeply impacted the historical profession.³ The main

¹ For recent works that exemplify these trends in American diplomatic history, for culture see: Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and the World Order* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1997), for race and gender see: Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, N.J.: Chichester: Princeton University Press, 2002) and Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), for international influences see: Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge, Mass. And London: Harvard University Press, 2003).

² For a good summation of the postmodern position and its influence on the study of history see: Alun Munslow, *The New History* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2003).

³ For examples, see: Joan Wallach Scott, “History in Crisis: The Other’s Side of the Story,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 94, No. 3 (Jun., 1989), 680-692; Gyan Prakash, “Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial

subjects of traditional historical inquiry, such as politics, economics, and the state, no longer were deemed relevant for many historical fields. The new topics of relevance were culture, gender, race, and international history. The field of diplomatic history had long been resistant to such changes and during the 1990s a vigorous debate began within the field over how these changes were to impact the methodology and theoretical framework of the field.

An important symposium entitled “A Round Table: Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations,” was printed in the *Journal of American History* in June of 1990 and later edited and published in book form by Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Patterson.⁴ The leading historians in the field were brought together to end its “long crisis” and “overcome what many see as the isolation of diplomatic history.”⁵ Of central concern to this project was the inclusion of mainstream trends in historiography into the field of diplomatic history, most predominantly seen in the essays on gender and culture. Akira Iriye, in his essay “Culture,” argues that “culture may become as crucial a concept of international affairs as security and trade.”⁶ Emily Rosenberg’s essay “Gender” suggests that “the discourse of international relations is packed with terms and images that represent gender differences.”⁷ Further essays by Michael W. Hunt and Melvyn P. Leffler argue that no longer can diplomatic historians examine only the results of foreign

Criticism,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 99, No. 5 (Dec., 1994), 1475-1490; and Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

⁴ The forum; “A Round Table: Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations,” *Journal of American History* 77, No. 1 (June 1990), 93-180., was published in book form, with revisions, as Michael Hogan and Thomas G. Patterson, eds, *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, and Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁵ Michael J. Hogan, “Corporatism,” in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 236.

⁶ Akira Iriye, “Culture,” *Journal of American History* 77, No. 1 (Jun., 1990), 107.

⁷ Emily S. Rosenberg, “Gender,” *Journal of American History* 77, No. 1 (Jun., 1990),

policy: they must also address the ideologies that produce these policies.⁸ One of the key failings of diplomatic history, according to Leffler, has been the unwillingness to acknowledge the domestic influences on American foreign policy.⁹ Hunt suggests that “no diplomatic historian will be able to regard evidence in quite the same way after reading the new cultural historians on the relations of language to power, the complexity of reading a text and relating it to context, and the creation of meaning through discourse.”¹⁰

This debate within the field has caused some diplomatic historians to argue that the field should not move closer to the historiographical trends of mainstream history, but rather should ally with social scientists and international relations theorists.¹¹ This school of thought within diplomatic history views the incorporation of theory into the history of American foreign relations as a better alternative than trying to become mainstream within the historical field by incorporating the post-structuralist critique into its analysis. Scholars such as Ole R. Holsti and J. Garry Clifford have argued that the inclusion of international relations theory and bureaucratic politics models will bring greater relevance to the study of American diplomacy.¹² While these scholars see the salvation of diplomatic history as being found in an organizing theory or model that “explains”

⁸ Michael W. Hunt, “Ideology,” in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 193-201, and Melvyn P. Leffler, “National Security,” in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 202-212.

⁹ Leffler, “National Security,” 204-209.

¹⁰ Hunt, “Ideology,” 196. The views of Hunt are further developed in his work, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

¹¹ A work that explores this topic is: Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, eds., *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 2001).

¹² Ole R. Holsti, “International Relations Models,” in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 57-85 and J. Garry Clifford, “Bureaucratic Politics,” in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 141-150.

America's foreign policy formulation and implementation, Leffler argues that "no single theory can explain the dynamics of American foreign relations."¹³

Partly as a response to these debates, in recent years the field has experienced a reconfiguration and reorientation. Culture has become a central concern of many diplomatic historians, gender has established itself as necessary component to understanding international relations, and racial hierarchies have been identified as underlying much of America's foreign policy in the twentieth century.¹⁴ In the historiography of American foreign policy in the Middle East, the work of one scholar has produced landmark changes in the way historians' approach the relationship of America to the Middle East, Edward Said.¹⁵ His influential works, *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), introduced into the field of American foreign relations the theory of "Orientalism," described by Said as "...a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."¹⁶ The very culture of the West and its historical dominance over the Orient has made historical inquiry into the relationship between America and the Middle East a profoundly political experience. Scholars in diplomatic history have accepted Said's arguments to varying degrees and

¹³ Melvyn p. Leffler, "New Approaches, Old Interpretations, and Prospective Reconfigurations," in Michael J. Hogan, ed., *America in the World: The Historiography of American foreign relations since 1941* (Cambridge, England and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹⁴ In addition to Akira Iriye, on culture and foreign policy see: Robert Dallek, *The American Style of Foreign Policy: Cultural Politics and Foreign Affairs* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), and the works of Frank Costigliola; Costigliola, "Reading for Meaning: Theory, Language, and Metaphor," in Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Patterson, eds., *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*. 2nd ed. (Cambridge, U.K., and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 279-304., "Language and Power in the Western Alliance," in Kathleen Burk and Melvyn Stokes, eds., *The United States and the European Alliance since 1945* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1999), 101-127. For the continuation of the arguments for the inclusion of gender see essays by Emily S. Rosenberg, Elaine Tyler May, and Amy Kaplan in "Culture, Gender, and Foreign Policy: A Symposium," *Diplomatic History* 18 (Winter 1994), 47-124. On the role of race in early American foreign policy see Michael W. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

¹⁵ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978) and Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993).

many historians now see his theoretical framework of Orientalism as essential for understanding American foreign policy in the Middle East.¹⁷

Important recent works on American foreign policy and relations with the Middle East that incorporate Said's theory of Orientalism have done much to incorporate culture, gender, and race into the field of diplomatic history.¹⁸ Douglas Little's *American Orientalism* argues that beyond the geo-strategic calculus of oil and the Soviet threat, an "American Orientalism" influenced U.S. interactions with the Middle East.¹⁹ Peter Hahn's recent *Crisis and Crossfire* follows most traditional diplomatic treatments of American policy in the Middle East in giving primacy geo-strategic concerns, but also has a subtle treatment of how religious influences played a role in both Truman and Carter's policies toward the region.²⁰ Despite these works, most of the major treatments of U.S. policy in the Middle East since 1945 focus heavily on the traditional elements of U.S. foreign policy, geo-strategic and economic concerns, and do not include culture, gender, race, or religion as prominent factors.²¹

Other fields, such as American Studies, have been quicker to accept the influence of the cultural turn in history and have moved toward a post-Saidian understanding of

¹⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

¹⁷ For a discussion on the utility of Said in diplomatic history, see: Andrew J. Rotter, "Review Essays: Saidism without Said: Orientalism and U.S. Diplomatic History," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 105, No. 4 (Oct., 2000), 1205-1217.

¹⁸ See especially: Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), chapter one., and Peter L. Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc., 2005).

¹⁹ Little, *American Orientalism*, Chapter One., see also, Little, "Historiography: Gideon's Band: America and the Middle East since 1945," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 18, Issue 4 (Fall 1994), 513-541.

²⁰ Hahn. *Crisis and Crossfire*, 23, 61. Hahn argues that Truman's Protestant evangelical upbringing was one factor influencing his role in supporting the formation of the state of Israel in 1948. Hahn also sees Carter's religious upbringing as a factor in his vision for peace in the Middle East.

²¹ See especially: Brands, *Into the Labyrinth*, T.G. Frasor, *The USA and the Middle East since World War Two* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), and Burton I. Kaufman, *The Arab Middle East and the United States: Inter-Arab Rivalry and Superpower Diplomacy* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996).

America's relationship with the Middle East.²² Michelle Mart argues that gender, ideology, and rhetoric are essential to understanding America's Cold War policies in the Middle East.²³ Some of these scholars have been leaders in the field of American foreign relations, arguing for the importance of tropes, such as culture, in the analysis of foreign policy. With the exception of Hahn's brief treatment of religion, noticeably absent from even these progressive interpretations of American foreign policy is the inclusion of religion as a viable subject of inquiry in the dynamics of American foreign policy in the Middle East.

Although the debates over the relative importance of culture, gender, and race continue within the field of diplomatic history, the acknowledgement of religion as its own category of analysis within the dynamics of American foreign policy has yet to receive the same kind of attention. Noting the importance of the domestic dynamics of American foreign policy, this thesis makes the argument that an understanding of the religious influences on U.S. Middle East policy is essential. As a study of American relations with Israel, this thesis offers the case of Christian Zionism as an argument for the inclusion of religion into the matrix of American foreign policy formulation and implementation.

The interactions of the United States with the Middle East, and Israel in particular, are complex and not reducible to a single factor. Historians of American foreign relations have identified the strategic and economic factors, as well as many of the domestic factors that define the U.S.-Israeli relationship. In American foreign policy

²² See Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

²³ Michelle Mart, "Tough Guys and American Cold War Policy," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Summer 1996), 357-380.

this relationship is regarded as unique in the extent to which domestic considerations have impacted American policy both toward Israel and the Middle East at large. This thesis takes the position that differentiating the domestic and foreign elements of the U.S.-Israeli relationship is a false dichotomy.²⁴ A central argument of the work is that one crucial element of the domestic dynamics of the U.S.-Israeli relationship that has been neglected is the influence of evangelical and fundamentalist Protestants. In particular, the political actions of Christian Zionists will be shown to be an example of the primacy of religious considerations in political activities related to foreign policy in the United States.

American Foreign Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1995: Historical Background

By historical standards, American policy in the Middle East is a relatively recent development. As in many parts of the world, early American interactions with the Middle East in the nineteenth century were confined to the businessmen and missionaries who, although not representatives of the American government, were to have an enormous impact on the development of American interests in the region.²⁵ Despite these early dealing with the Middle East, until 1945 it was the colonial powers of the region, Britain and France, whose policies dramatically influenced the dynamics of the region. Following the arguments put forth by Edward Said, some scholars have noted

²⁴ Some scholars see the separation of domestic and foreign policy within American academia as occurring during the Cold War and make the argument that they are integrally related. See Ronald Steel, "The Domestic Core of Foreign Policy," in Wittkopf and McCormick, eds., *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy*, 23-31.

²⁵ For work on the influence of American economic and cultural connections with the world prior to 1945, see: Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).

that although the U.S. was not heavily involved in the Middle East during the nineteenth century, it was an important period for developing an Orientalist mindset among Americans.²⁶ The twentieth century would usher in a new era of America's involvement with the world and the Middle East often played center stage in this new drama.

The early twentieth century brought momentous changes to the Middle East, but it was not until after the Second World War that America would become fully involved in the region. Indeed, it was not until 1902 that the term "Middle East" was coined by American naval historian Alfred Thayer to designate the area between Arabia and India and signify its importance from a naval perspective.²⁷ The First World War resulted in the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, the dominant power in the region for the past four centuries, and led to Britain and France to enlarge their colonial empires to encompass most of the Middle East.²⁸ As the victorious diplomats of Britain and France gathered in Paris at the League of Nations, the Middle East was of primary concern. To the frustration of President Woodrow Wilson, the principle of self-determination in the former Ottoman Empire was trumped by the famous secret wartime agreement between Britain and France, the Sykes-Picot pact of May 16, 1916.²⁹ This essentially divided up the Middle East between the two colonial powers and led to the mandate system that "provided Britain and France with an opportunity to secure their strategic interests in the

²⁶ See: Faud Sha'ban, *Islam and Arabs in Early American Thought: The Roots of Orientalism in America* (Durham, N.C.: Acorn Press, 1991), which argues that Americans in the nineteenth century began to apply the ideology of "manifest destiny" toward the Middle East; and Holly Edwards, *Noble Dreams, Wicked Pleasures: Orientalism in America 1870-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), a collection of Orientalist representations of the Middle East in American artwork.

²⁷ Bernard Lewis, *The Shaping of the Modern Middle East* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 3.

²⁸ The definitive work on this period is David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Avon Books, 1989).

²⁹ "The Sykes-Picot Agreement, May 16, 1916," reproduced in *Selected Documentation Pertaining to U.S.-Arab Relations* (Washington D.C.: American-Arab Affairs Council, 1990), 2.

[region] while paying lip service to...self-determination.”³⁰ As the modern nations of the Middle East were formed, they did so with borders drawn by French and British diplomats that created arbitrary states with little or no resemblance to the Ottoman provinces that preceded them.

As the modern Middle East was being created out the dissolving Ottoman Empire, a declaration by the British Prime Minister during the first World War, Lord Arthur Balfour, brought a new dynamic to the region. Balfour, in a letter to one of the leaders of the Zionist movement in Britain, Lord Rothschild, stated, “His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people....”³¹ Although Balfour’s declaration also included a clause that the “civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine” would also be protected, this was the sign that the Zionist movement had been waiting for. This declaration greatly increased Jewish immigration to Palestine, which further “added to the confusions and tensions created by the end of the Ottoman order.”³² The Zionist dream of creating a Jewish state in Palestine would have an enormous impact on the region and would be a primary concern of U.S. presidents Roosevelt and Truman, but until 1939 it was Britain who was fully involved in the complexities of the Palestine situation.

In summing up American policy in the Middle East during the period of 1900-1939, John DeNovo argues that the tradition of isolationism within America made the

³⁰ William Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colorado and Oxford: Westview Press, 2000), 170.

³¹ “Balfour Declaration, November 2, 1917,” reproduced in *Selected Documentation Pertaining to U.S.-Arab Relations*, 3-4.

³² Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 171. There were Jewish settlements in Palestine throughout the nineteenth century, but it was only from the 1880s onward that this became a mass phenomenon.

“[nation]...not yet ready to abandon its historic abstinence from Middle Eastern politics.”³³ During the inter-war years of 1918-1939 “[o]fficial American policy toward the Arab Middle East was characterized by deference to British political hegemony.”³⁴ The postwar years of the twentieth century were to bring increased American involvement in the Middle East as Britain and France, devastated by the war, retreated from the region. In addition, the emerging Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union made the Middle East a primary battleground between the powers in a newly bi-polar world system.

T.G. Frasor argues that “[t]he years 1947 and 1948 saw America’s decisive entry into Middle East affairs when Truman first ensured that the resolution for the partition of Palestine found the necessary [votes] within the United Nations General Assembly and then extended de facto recognition to the state of Israel within minutes of its proclamation.”³⁵ Other scholars, such as Douglas Little, Peter Hahn, and H.W. Brands argue that in addition to the emerging relationship of the United States with Israel, U.S. officials regarded secure access to Persian Gulf oil and the halting of Soviet encroachments within the region as central objectives of American policy.³⁶ These three pillars—oil, Israel, and containing the Soviet threat in the region—were the foundations of U.S. policy in the Middle East during the Cold War. From Truman through Bush I, America’s Middle East policy would struggle to reconcile these three often contradictory aims in the region.

³³ John DeNovo, *American Interests and Policies in the Middle East, 1900-1939* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963), 345.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 321.

³⁵ Frasor, *The USA and the Middle East since World War 2*, 24.

³⁶ Brands, *Into the Labyrinth*, xi, Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire* 7-13, and Douglas Little, “Historiography: Gidoen’s Band: America and the Middle East since 1945,” 513-520.

For the first American president of the postwar era, Harry S. Truman, “the economic and strategic imperatives of the Cold War quickly made the words Middle East synonymous with national security...”³⁷ The experience of World War II highlighted the connection between the petroleum hidden under the sands of the Middle East and America’s national security.³⁸ As Moscow sought to increase its presence in the region in the early stages of the Cold War, American policymakers began to look for friendly, stable regimes in the Middle East as allies against the Soviet threat.³⁹ The dissolution of the former mandates led to several newly independent Arab nations following the war who eventually became part of the struggle between the U.S. and the Soviets for influence in the region. While these concerns were central to Truman administration in 1945 and 1946, developments in Palestine by 1947 came to dominate American policy in the Middle East.

The tragedy of the Holocaust in World War II led to increased efforts by Jewish Zionists to fulfill the dream of a Jewish state in Palestine. Ever-increasing immigration from a ravaged Europe and elsewhere led to outbreaks of violence between Jews and Arabs in Palestine in the years leading up to World War Two. Britain maintained its control over Palestine, but on November 29, 1947, Truman led an effort to gain the required two-thirds vote in the United Nations for a partition plan to separate Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab.⁴⁰ This UN resolution was largely the result of the American Zionist effort and went against the advice of Truman’s own State and Defense departments, which argued “for the usefulness of maintaining cordial relations

³⁷ Little, “Historiography: Gideon’s Band: America and the Middle East since 1945”, 515.

³⁸ Little, *American Orientalism*, 48, 52.

³⁹ Brands, *Into the Labyrinth*, 19.

with the newly independent Arab states.”⁴¹ Events on the ground would soon outpace the diplomatic struggles, as Britain declared that it would not implement the UN partition plan and announced that the Palestine mandate would be terminated on May 15, 1948. This announcement led to increased violence between Jews and Arabs and the pronouncement of the state of Israel on May 14, 1948. Within minutes of the announcement Truman extended de facto recognition to the fledgling state and early the next day the armies of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Iraq responded by invading Israel.⁴² The Israeli army was victorious in 1948 over these Arab armies; with the result being the mass exodus of Palestinian Arabs from the newly created Jewish state.⁴³ The defining element of the Truman administration’s Middle East policy was its role in the creation of the state of Israel; however, the president was concerned primarily with Korea during his second term and it was under Dwight D. Eisenhower that America again become involved in the region.

The Eisenhower administration’s foreign policy, described by Gaddis as the “New Look,” was concerned with “achieving the maximum possible deterrence of communism at the minimum possible cost.”⁴⁴ This led Eisenhower to avoid active interventions against the Soviets, if possible, and focused on using the threat of a nuclear response to halt Soviet encroachments. Eisenhower’s first active involvement in securing American

⁴⁰ This was a United Nations Special Commission on Palestine (UNSCOP) measure, see “Security Council Resolution No. 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, in *Selected Documentation Pertaining to U.S.-Arab Relations*, 19-27.

⁴¹ Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 257. For a work that explores the generally pro-Arab stance of the U.S. State Department regarding U.S. policy in the Middle East see: Robert Kaplan, *The Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite* (New York: MacMillan, 1993).

⁴² Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 260.

⁴³ Recent Israeli historiography of the revisionist school has acknowledged that the flight of Palestinians in the years before and after 1948 was largely the product of Israeli policies, not as has long been claimed the orders of Arab leaders to flee, see especially: Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (New York: Cambridge University, 1987).

interests in the Middle East was covert. A CIA-led coup in 1953 overthrew the democratically elected Premier of Iran, Mohammed Mossadegh, and re-instated the Shah.⁴⁵ By 1954 Iran, along with Turkey, Pakistan, and Iraq became the core of U.S. strategy in the region by forming a “northern tier” of defense against the Soviets in the region.⁴⁶ In 1956, it was the actions of two NATO allies and Israel, not the Soviets, which brought the region to the attention of Eisenhower and his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles.

Gamal Abdel-Nasser, the stridently nationalist leader of Egypt since 1952, had nationalized the Suez Canal in July of 1956. This was met with an invasion of Egypt by Britain, France, and Israel on October 31, 1956. Eisenhower responded with a strong condemnation of the actions of three of America’s closest allies and under tremendous pressure, France and Britain withdrew their forces in 1956 and the Israeli army evacuated the Sinai territory in 1957.⁴⁷ The Suez Crisis marked the final gasp of the British Empire in the Middle East and a low point in the U.S.-Israeli relationship. It also led to an important new direction for U.S. policy in the Middle East. In January of 1957, the “Eisenhower Doctrine” was approved by Congress, which authorized the president to use force and economic aid against any nation in the Middle East “requesting assistance against armed aggression from any country controlled by international communism.”⁴⁸

⁴⁴ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (Oxford, New York, Toronto, and Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1982) 164.

⁴⁵ The first authoritative account of the CIA orchestrated coup is: Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah’s Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken, New Jersey and Canada: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003).

⁴⁶ Little, *American Orientalism*, 129.

⁴⁷ Cleveland, *A Modern History of the Middle East*, 304.

⁴⁸ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Waging Peace*, 199, cited in Little, *American Orientalism*, 134.

This doctrine was soon put to the test as Eisenhower sent American troops to Lebanon in 1958 to help reinstate the conservative government that had been overthrown by a military coup. As a military venture, this was a disaster for the U.S. and was to set a precedent for ineffective American troop involvement in the Middle East. The two definitive works on U.S. policy toward the Middle East in the Eisenhower era both argue that the policies pursued were essentially flawed and failed to secure U.S. interests in the region.⁴⁹ Peter L. Hahn argues that the American approach of “dual containment,” of both the Soviets and the Arab-Israeli conflict, resulted in a flawed policy that by 1960 left in place a “volatile formula for perpetual conflict perpetuated by explosive wars.”⁵⁰ Salim Yaqub argues that “[o]stensibly the Eisenhower Doctrine was a mechanism for protecting the Middle East from Soviet encroachment, but its purpose was also to contain Nassar’s radical Arab nationalism.”⁵¹ As the Eisenhower era drew to a close, “the years between John F. Kennedy’s inauguration in January 1961 and the end of the October War of 1973 saw the Middle East develop from an area where the United States had interests but no deep commitments into one of Washington’s main priorities in foreign policy.”⁵²

The Kennedy and Johnson administrations would see one pillar of U.S. policy in the region again rise to the forefront, the U.S.-Israeli relationship. It was Kennedy who first sold American weapons to Israel (Hawk missiles) and his administration witnessed increasing ties between the two countries as a result of their shared commitment to

⁴⁹ See: Peter L. Hahn. *Caught in the Middle East: U.S. Policy toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945-1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004) and Salim Yaqub. *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine in the Middle East* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

⁵⁰ Hahn, *Caught in the Middle East*, 277.

⁵¹ Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, 269.

⁵² Frasor, *The USA and the Middle East since 1945*, 77.

contain radical Arab nationalism in the region.⁵³ Initiated under Kennedy and perpetuated under Johnson, U.S. policy in the region became oriented towards Iran and Saudi Arabia as conservative bulwarks against encroaching Arab nationalism and the Soviet threat, as well as providers of secure access to large oil reserves. Douglas Little argues that “[t]he most significant feature of U.S. policy in the Middle East during the Johnson years, however, was not the cultivation of partnerships with Saudi Arabia or Iran, but rather the consummation of a special relationship with Israel symbolized by Washington’s tilt toward Tel Aviv in June 1967.”⁵⁴ This occurred during the defining event of this period, the Six-Day War, which began on June 5, 1967 when the Israeli air force attacked Egypt and won a stunning victory over its major enemy in the region. In addition, the war brought Israel massive territorial gains, most importantly in the West Bank and Jerusalem, which along with the rise of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) after 1967 brought the Palestinian issue to the forefront.

Passed in November of 1967, UN Security Council Resolution 242 essentially stated that Israel must withdraw from the land it acquired as a result of the June War in return for a comprehensive peace settlement with the Arabs.⁵⁵ Thereafter, this “land for peace” resolution would be the foundation of all U.S.-led peace initiatives between the Israelis and Palestinians. The Kennedy and Johnson years saw the U.S.-Israeli relationship reach new heights, as well as laying the foundations of a “three pillars” policy in the Middle East along with Iran and Saudi Arabia. The power of the U.S.-Israeli relationship is seen in the fact that the Johnson administration did not respond with

⁵³ Little, *American Orientalism*, 78. For the definitive work on Kennedy his role in the making the U.S.-Israeli relationship, see: Warren Bass, *Support Any Friend: Kennedy’s Middle East Policy and the Making of the U.S.-Israeli Alliance* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁵⁴ Little, “Historiography: Gideon’s Band: America and the Middle East since 1945”, 536.

force or sanctions against the Israelis after the Israeli bombing of the U.S.S. Liberty ship in 1967, which killed 34 American soldiers and wounded 171.⁵⁶

The Nixon-Kissinger years would be defined by “détente” with the Soviets, with the Middle East often put to the periphery of the administration’s global strategy. For Nixon and his National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, the pursuit of détente with the Soviets and rapprochement with China dominated the foreign policy agenda. This period also witnessed the formation of Israel as a “strategic asset” in the region as key element in American strategic thinking.⁵⁷ The key event that gave rise to this was not so much the 1967 war, which did much to advance the reputation of Israel’s military might, but the successful intervention of Israeli forces in support of King Hussein of Jordan in 1970 when he faced the threat of an overthrow by Syrian and PLO forces.⁵⁸ The other event that influenced U.S. policy in the Middle East was the 1973 War (referred to as the Yom Kippur War by Israelis), when a coalition of Arab forces led by Egypt attacked Israel. American-Soviet relations became tense during the war as Soviet supplied weapons and supplies were used by the attacking Arab armies to inflict devastating losses on Israel.⁵⁹ Israel was able to turn the tide in the war in large part because of U.S. aid and an airlift of supplies and weapons.⁶⁰

As Israel was affirming its strategic value to the United States as a strong military proxy in the region during the early 1970s, the thorny issue of the Palestinians gained

⁵⁵ “U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 Concerning Principles For A Just And Lasting Peace in the Middle East,” in *Selected Documentation Pertaining to U.S.-Arab Relations*, 28.

⁵⁶ Frasier, *The USA and the Middle East since World War 2*, 82.

⁵⁷ Schoenbaum, David. *The United States and the State of Israel* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 182.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire*, 57-61.

⁶⁰ Little, *American Orientalism*, 243.

increased international attention with the rise of the PLO.⁶¹ Beginning in 1969, American Secretary of State William P. Rogers introduced a peace plan for the Middle East that was based upon the trading of land for peace envisioned earlier by UN Security Council Resolution 242.⁶² Of further concern to the United States was that the massive amount of aid it had given to Israel resulted in a 1973 oil embargo by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). This completely changed the power dynamics of the region as the oil-producing Arab nations of the region achieved an influence and power that was previously unimaginable.⁶³ While the pressures of the oil embargo hurt the United States economically, the flow of financial and military aid to Israel reached record levels and the idea that Israel was a “strategic asset” became doctrine in Washington.⁶⁴ By late 1974 Kissinger was in the Middle East brokering a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt and Nixon was on his last legs as a result of the Watergate scandal. The pillars of Israel, the conservative Arab regimes of Iran and Saudi Arabia, and NATO ally Turkey continued to be the bulwarks of U.S. policy in the region under President Ford; but the dynamics of U.S. Middle East policy would experience a multitude of changes under Jimmy Carter.

When Carter was elected to the presidency in 1976 the prospects for peace in the Middle East seemed dim, yet by late 1978 he was able to bring Israel and Egypt together

⁶¹ The PLO was given “observer status” by the UN in 1967 and became the de-facto head of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination.

⁶² “Letter From P. Rogers, United States Secretary of State, To Mahmoud Riad, Foreign Minister of the United Arab Republic (The “Rogers Plan”), in *Selected Documentation Pertaining to U.S.-Arab Relations*, 30-31.

⁶³ Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 366. OPEC was originally made up of five oil-producing nations, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela, and was an attempt to gain some control over oil pricing policies. Later the organization expanded to thirteen nations.

⁶⁴ Between 1970 and 1983 U.S. aid to Israel rose from less than 100 million to more than 2.6 billion in 1983, according the conservative estimates made in: Mohamed El-Khwas and Samir Abed-Rabbo, *American Aid to Israel: Nature and Impact* (Vermont: Amana Books, 1984).

to the negotiating table and to sign a peace agreement. The Camp David Accords, the first such peace agreement between Israel and an Arab nation, was the major foreign policy success of the Carter administration.⁶⁵ The Carter administration's success in the Camp David Accords was short-lived as events in Afghanistan and Iran in 1979 led Carter to make the most sweeping statement of U.S. intentions in the region since the Eisenhower Doctrine in 1958. In 1979, one of the pillars of American policy in the region, the Shah of Iran, was ousted by a grass-roots Islamic revolution and a new government led by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was stridently speaking against American involvement in the Middle East. The U.S. Embassy in Tehran had been captured and 57 U.S. personnel were taken hostage. In Afghanistan, the Soviet Union sent troops support a threatened communist government in 1979. The Carter team's efforts at brokering peace in the Middle East were now the victim of circumstance.

As a result of the Soviet invasion, Carter and his NSC staff promulgated the Carter Doctrine in 1980. Stating that Soviet actions represented unprecedented aggression in the region, Carter declared that “[a]n attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled with any force necessary, including military force.”⁶⁶ The U.S. now explicitly stated what had been understood since the Truman administration, American oil interests in the region were so vital that American national security could not be separated from them. By the end of 1980 Iraq had invaded Iran, initiating a bitter war between the two rivals that would last

⁶⁵ “The Camp David Accords, Washington D.C., 17 September 1978,” in *The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement: A Documentary Record*. Rev. 2nd ed. (Washington D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1995), 235-242.

until 1988. In the end, the United States not only lost Iran as an important ally in the region, but Carter lost his re-election bid in large part due to American frustration over Carter's Middle East policy, especially the Iran-hostage crisis.

The Reagan years would bring more war to the Middle East and a re-affirmation of the U.S.-Israeli relationship. George Lenczowski argues that Reagan's initial Middle East policy was a "search for "strategic consensus" in the Middle East that was designed to bring about American cooperation with Israel and certain moderate Arab states to oppose Soviet designs in the region.⁶⁷ This policy would eventually fall victim to the political realities of the Middle East, and after the Lebanon War of 1982 Reagan's policy became strongly tilted towards Israel. This period witnessed the strengthening of the U.S.-Israeli relationship, with the first official agreements explicitly beholding America to maintain Israel's security, the Memorandums of Understanding of 1981 and 1983, and the first free-trade agreement between the two countries in 1985. As Reagan's first Secretary of State Alexander Haig notes, "Israel has never had a greater friend in the White House than Ronald Reagan."⁶⁸

Despite Israeli actions that often seemed to threaten U.S. interests in the region, such as the bombing of the Osirak nuclear reactor in Iraq in 1981, the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the Jonathon Pollard spying case in 1985, and the Iran-Contra scandal of 1985-1986; Israel and the United States were drawn ever closer together.⁶⁹ In 1982

⁶⁶ Jimmy Carter, "State of the Union Address," 23 Jan. 1980, *PPP, Jimmy Carter, 1980-1981*, 1:196, cited in Little, *American Orientalism*, 152.

⁶⁷ George Lenczowski, *American Presidents and the Middle East* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990), 213.

⁶⁸ Alexander M. Haig, Jr., *Caveat: Realism, Reagan, and Foreign Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1984), 167.

⁶⁹ Jonathon Pollard was convicted in 1985 of spying for the Israelis from his post in U.S. Naval Intelligence and is currently serving a life sentence for espionage. Pollard was vigorously defended by the pro-Israel lobby and had many connections with AIPAC.

Israeli forces invaded Lebanon after the Knesset voted to annex the Golan Heights area disputed by Israel and Lebanon. The cause of the Israeli invasion was the presence of the PLO leadership in Beirut, where they had fled after the 1970 debacle in Jordan. This war eventually brought U.S. troops back to Lebanon, 241 who died in a bombing of Marine barracks in 1983. This signaled the entrance of a new foreign policy concern in the Middle East, terrorism. While terrorism has a long history in the Middle East, the bombing of the Marine barracks and the U.S. Embassy in Beirut made terrorism a central concern for the United States. Israel was again seen as a “strategic asset,” this time against terrorism rather than the decreasing Soviet threat. The end of the Reagan administration saw a momentous change as the United States recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians, in part motivated by the Palestinian Intifada of 1988, and Secretary of State George Shultz again made a peace plan the center of the U.S. policy agenda for the region.⁷⁰

Another development of the Reagan years deserves mention, the rise in influence of the pro-Israel lobby, specifically AIPAC, in Washington. The Reagan White House butted heads with the lobby on arms sales to Arab nations, notably the AWACS sale of 1981, and soon found its policies in the Middle East constrained by a well-organized and effective pro-Israel lobby in the U.S. In his memoirs, Reagan remarks that whenever he attempted to be “even-handed” on arms sales in the Middle East he was “threatened by

⁷⁰ “Statement by Secretary of State George Shultz on Dialogue with the PLO, 14 December, 1988,” in Yehuda Lukacs, *Documents on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict 1967-1983* (New York: Cambridge University, 1992), 119-120. For the early efforts by the Reagan administration on the Palestinian question, see: Juliana S. Peck, *The Reagan Administration and the Palestinian Question: The First Thousand Days* (Washington D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1984).

the friends of Israel in Congress, and some of the Arab nations began turning to China and other countries for arms.”⁷¹

The Bush I and Clinton years saw many of the patterns of Cold War U.S. policy in the Middle East continue even after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The importance of securing oil and the special relationship with Israel continued to be primary concerns of U.S. presidential administrations, with the notable exception of the disagreements between Bush I and Israel on the issue of settlements in the West Bank. The major event of the Bush administration was the 1991 Gulf War, which H.W. Brands describes as “the culmination of a trend toward greater involvement in the Middle East, a trend that had been under way since 1945.”⁷² Responding to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the Gulf War “reaffirmed an abiding commitment to an open door for Middle East oil that had shaped the foreign policy of the United States for nearly a century.”⁷³ The foreign policy issue that dominated the early Clinton administration’s Middle East policy was the continuing pursuit of peace between the Israelis and Palestinians. On September 13, 1993 the Oslo Accords were declared, which for the first time gave Palestinians rights of some self-government in the West Bank and Gaza while also officially giving Israel recognition as a state by the PLO.⁷⁴

In summing up U.S. policy in the Middle East since 1945, Douglas Little argues that beyond “oil, containment, and hard calculus of national interest, intangible ‘American Orientalism’ has guided and shaped policymakers in America.”⁷⁵

⁷¹ Ronald Reagan, *An American Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 704-705.

⁷² Brands, *Into the Labyrinth*, 210.

⁷³ Little, *American Orientalism*, 74.

⁷⁴ For a complete record of the Oslo Accords, see: *The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement: A Documentary Record*. Rev. 2nd ed. (Washington D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1995), 117-129.

⁷⁵ Little, “Historiography: Gideon’s Band: American and the Middle East since 1945,” 538.

This general anti-Arab attitude and the coinciding strong support for Israel, T.G. Frasor argues resulted in “[t]he Palestinians have come to feel themselves the principal victims of American policy.”⁷⁶ The end of the Cold War changed the dynamics of the U.S. Middle East policy, but the central dilemma remained; how to broker a peace agreement and settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. Always at the core of America’s involvement with the region, Israel continued to be a central component of U.S. policy in the Middle East, along with oil and now a new kind of containment, that of containing radical Islam. Indeed, the special relationship between the United States and Israel has produced a voluminous scholarship.

The U.S.-Israel Special Relationship Thesis: Historical Background and Historiography

When scholars in the fields of diplomatic history and international relations examine the U.S.-Israeli relationship, a variety of domestic and foreign factors are identified as the foundations of this “special relationship.” The foreign, or “hard” factors, are geo-strategic and economic concerns, while the domestic “soft” factors are the American Jewish community, the pro-Israel lobby, or even the shared democratic values and Judeo-Christian heritage of the two nations. The historiographical literature on the U.S.-Israeli relationship is generally divided into those who support the U.S. commitment to Israel’s security and see Israel as providing multiple benefits for the U.S., and those who argue that the privileged place of Israel in U.S. policy has distorted its overall policy in the Middle East and contributed to denying Palestinian self-determination.

⁷⁶ Frasor, *The USA and the Middle East since World War 2*, 186.

An instructive start to an analysis of the literature on the U.S.-Israeli relationship is a forum held in the journal *Diplomatic History* in 1998 entitled “The U.S. and Israel since 1948, A Special Relationship?” In this debate, Israeli scholar Yaacov Bar-Siman Tov argues that “The U.S.-Israeli relationship became special after 1967.”⁷⁷ For Bar-Siman Tov, it was only when the United States saw Israel as a strategic asset that could enhance its own global and regional interests that Israel received “tremendous economic and military support.”⁷⁸ Thus, it was not until 1967 that “a full-fledged patron-client relationship between the United States and Israel emerged.”⁷⁹ Under Nixon, the “strategic asset” idea became doctrine when he stated that “because Israel had an important role to play in the U.S.-Soviet power balance, it should be kept strong.”⁸⁰ In concluding, Bar-Siman Tov argues that it was America’s perceptions of Israel’s role in the Cold War as a strategic asset, not the domestic influences of the American Jewish community or the Jewish lobby that provided the “real rationale” for the relationship.⁸¹

Responding to Bar-Siman Tov’s essay were two other prominent American scholars of the U.S.-Israeli relationship, Peter L. Hahn and David Schoenbaum. Hahn sees much merit in Bar-Siman Tov’s arguments that “before 1967 U.S.-Israeli relations remained sound on the soft factors but fell short of special because of divergence on the hard factors.”⁸² To Hahn, the “U.S.-Israeli relationship is considered special because of its intimacy, pervasiveness, and importance to both powers.”⁸³ While Hahn notes the

⁷⁷ Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, “The United States and Israel since 1948: A Special Relationship?,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Spring 1998), 261.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 237.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 262.

⁸² Peter L. Hahn, “Commentary: Special Relationships,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Spring 1998), 263.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 266.

importance of domestic factors in America, such as the strong support for Israel among evangelical Protestants and the pro-Israel lobby, the concern of U.S. officials prior to 1967 was that a close commitment to Israel would endanger the objective of containing Soviet influence in the region.⁸⁴ Hahn also points out that the U.S.-Israeli relationship was often strained by Israeli initiatives, notably the development of nuclear weapons at Dimona beginning in the 1960s.⁸⁵ For scholars such as Hahn and Bar-Siman Tov, the special relationship thesis is based upon the primacy of geo-strategic and economic hard factors in explaining and analyzing the relationship. Many other scholars see the special relationship between the two countries as primarily the result of underlying soft factors, such as domestic support for Israel within America.

David Schoenbaum responds to the argument put forth by Bar-Siman Tov by stating that the connection between America and Israel is far older and far deeper than is acknowledged, and the relationship can be described as “special” before 1967.⁸⁶ For Schoenbaum, the “essential drama of Israeli-American relations has been the still larger psychodrama of common origins, challenges, and symbols that have made it possible, even easy for...very large numbers of non-Jewish Americans to look at Israel and see themselves.”⁸⁷ The most remarkable thing about the relationship, according to Schoenbaum, is the way it “has survived and outgrown so many of the challenges and circumstances that initiated and nominally explain it.”⁸⁸ For scholars such as Schoenbaum, it is the unique and strong domestic support for Israel within the United

⁸⁴ Ibid., 264-269.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 269. For the authoritative accounts on the Israeli nuclear program see: Avner Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) and Seymour M. Hersch, *The Samson Option: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Random House, 1991).

⁸⁶ David Schoenbaum, “Commentary: More Special Than Others,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Spring 1998), 277-278.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 273.

States that accounts for the endurance of the “special relationship” even as the rationales from a strategic perspective have drastically differed in many periods.

This debate sets forth the general outlines of the literature on the U.S.-Israeli special relationship. While the field can generally be divided into those scholars who see the relationship as a beneficial one for America’s security, other scholars view the relationship as hindering U.S. policy in the Middle East. Further, there is a divide between those scholars that emphasize strategic or economic concerns as the basis of the relationship against those who argue that the U.S.-Israeli relationship is the result of domestic pressures within the United States. The majority of the scholarship that directly addresses the domestic considerations of the U.S.-Israeli relationship deal mainly with arguing for or against the power of the “Jewish Lobby.”

The main arguments for the primacy of hard factors explanation for the U.S.-Israeli relationship are clearly seen in works by an Israeli scholar Abraham Ben-Zvi, Steven L. Spiegel, and A.F.K. Organski.⁸⁹ These works argue that America has historically viewed Israel as a strong ally in the Middle East and see the special relationship as the result of the role that Israel plays in securing U.S. interests in the region. While the domestic factors, such as the American Jewish community and the pro-Israel lobby are acknowledged as part of the rationale for the relationship, it is strategic and economic concerns that are seen as primary. These works also emphasize the points of divergence in the relationship, such as Israel’s nuclear weapon program and its invasion of Lebanon, to show that the special relationship has not always constrained

⁸⁸ Ibid., 283.

⁸⁹ See: Ben-Zvi., *The United States and Israel: The Limits to the Special Relationship* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), Steven L. Spiegel., *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America’s Middle East Policy from Truman to Reagan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), and A.F.K. Organski,

Israeli actions.⁹⁰ The other argument, that domestic concerns form the basis of the U.S.-Israeli relationship emphasizes the importance of the cultural connections between the two countries, the vital role of Congress as Israel's background of support, and the American Jewish community and the pro-Israel lobby which provide a firm foundation of pro-Israel support within the United States.

The basic argument among scholars who emphasize the soft factors of the U.S.-Israeli relationship is over how much power the "Jewish lobby" has had in influencing and constraining U.S. Middle East policy. The main critics of the Jewish pro-Israel lobby, including the American Jewish community, argue that the special relationship between the United States and Israel is unduly the result of the domestic lobbying of pro-Israel supporters, especially at the congressional level, and has the effect of hindering U.S. policy in the Middle East.⁹¹ One of the most well know cases of the power of the "Jewish Lobby" was in the defeat of Senator Paul Findley (D-IL) in 1982 by a flood of

The \$36 Billion Bargain: Strategy and Politics in U.S. Assistance to Israel (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

⁹⁰ Other works that emphasize the "hard factors" of the relationship are: Moshe Arens, *Broken Covenant: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis between the U.S. and Israel* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), Naseer Aruri, "The United States and Israel: That Very Special Relationship," *American-Arab Affairs*, Vol. 1 (Summer 1982), 31-43, Abraham Ben-Zvi, *Decade of Transition: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Origins of the American-Israeli Alliance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), Douglas Little, "The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and Israel 1957-1968," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 25:4 (1993), 563-585., Gabriel Sheffer, ed., *Dynamics of Dependence" U.S.-Israeli Relations* (London: Westview Press, 1987), and Peter L. Hahn, "The Influence of Organized Labor on U.S. Policy toward Israel, 1945-1967," in Peter L. Hahn and Mary Ann Heiss, eds., *Empire and Revolution: The United States and the Third World since 1945* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2001).

⁹¹ See especially: George W. Ball and Douglas B. Ball, *The Passionate Attachment: America's Involvement with Israel 1947 to the present* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), Stephen Green, *Taking Sides: America's Relations with a Militant Israel* (New York: Morrow, 1984), El-Khwas and Abed-Rabbo, *American Aid to Israel: Nature and Impact*, Donald Neff, *Fallen Pillars: U.S. Policy Towards Palestine and Israel since 1945* (Washington D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1995), Cheryl A. Rubenberg, *Israel and the American National Interest: A Critical Examination* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), Charles McC. Mathias Jr., "Ethnic Groups and Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 59, Issue 5 (Summer 1981), 975-998., and Tivnan., *The Lobby*, and Mitchell Geoffrey Bard, *The Waters Edge and Beyond: Defining the Limits to the Domestic Influence on United States Middle East Policy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Press, 1991).

pro-Israel money because Findley had challenged the U.S.-Israeli relationship during his time as Senator.⁹² Other scholars in recent years have emphasized the strong cultural connections between Americans and Israelis as an explanation for the special relationship and do not see the American Jewish community and its lobby acting in a vacuum. Shared democratic values, a similar Judeo-Christian heritage, and even images of Israelis as “frontiersmen” in the mold of American western settlers have pre-disposed the American public towards support for Israel.⁹³

The definitive works on the U.S.-Israeli alliance see a combination of these factors at work in the U.S.-Israeli special relationship, but strongly argue for the domestic factors in the dynamics of the relationship. David Schoenbaum’s *The United States and Israel* argues that “Since the creation of Israel, three premises—the moral and psychic legacy of the Holocaust, the presumed affinities of what we now universally refer to as “Judeo-Christian” values, and the exigencies of the Cold War—have defined and driven the relationship.”⁹⁴ Bernard Reich echoes this thesis when he argues “[a]imed at assuring Israel’s survival, security, and well being, this special relationship rests on ideological, emotional, and moral pillars and on a commitment to democratic principles buttressed by strategic and political factors.”⁹⁵ For Camille Mansour, although it would be naïve to ignore the strategic and global concerns of the Cold War that influenced the development

⁹² For a full explanation of the dynamics of this event, one of the key arguments for the pervasive power of the pro-Israel lobby within the U.S., see: Paul Findley, *They Dare to Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel’s Lobby* (Westport, Conn.: Hill, 1985) and Findley, *Deliberate Deceptions: facing the facts about the U.S.-Israeli relationship* (Chicago: L. Hill Books, 1993).

⁹³ See Peter Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America* (New York: Knopf, 1983), Yossi Melman and Dan Raviv, *Friends in Deed: Inside the U.S.-Israeli Alliance* (New York: Hyperion, 1994), Mart, “Tough Guys and American Cold War Policy,” and Ilan S. Troen, “Frontier Myths and Their Applications in America and Israel: A Transnational Perspective,” *Journal of American History*, Vol. 86, No. 3, The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History: A Special Issue (Dec., 1999), 1209-1230.

⁹⁴ Schoenbaum, *The United States and Israel*, 320.

⁹⁵ Bernard Reich, *Securing the Covenant: United States-Israeli Relations After the Cold War* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995), 3.

of the special relationship between the United States and Israel, the “ideological-cultural” identification of Americans with Israel is an important and durable element of the relationship.⁹⁶

The literature on the U.S.-Israeli special relationship is extensive and does much to illuminate the dynamics of the alliance. However, one neglected area of the domestic elements of the relationship is the role that American evangelical Christians played in supporting Israel. By the 1980s and 1990s, these “Christian Zionists” were among the most vocal and active supporters of Israel within the United States and played an important role in the domestic base of support Israel enjoyed in America.

⁹⁶ Mansour, *Beyond Alliance*, Chapter Seven.

Chapter Two: Christian Zionism and the Rise of the Christian Right: Historical Background:

Understanding *Christian Zionism*

The origins and development of Christian Zionism is complex and before engaging in such as analysis, it is important to establish some working definitions of terms. In general terms, Zionism is defined as “the national movement for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland and the resumption of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel.”¹ The modern Zionist movement was a combination of both secular and religious impulses for the return of the Jews to their ancient land of Israel in modern Palestine.² Israel’s founders and early leaders were mainly secularists, convinced that a Jewish state was the only way that Jews would be safe from the anti-Semitism that reached its ugly fulfillment in the Holocaust. Since 1967 Messianic Zionism, which argues that Israel has the right to all the territory of the ancient Israelite kingdom of the Bible, has risen to prominence alongside the expansionist Likud Party.³ Christian Zionism, which also bases its understanding of Israel on a literal interpretation of the Bible, is closely aligned with the more expansionist elements of modern Zionism, such as Messianic Zionism and the Jabotinsky tradition of the Likud Party.⁴

¹ *A Definition of Zionism* (2004), Jewish Virtual Library, www.israel.org/jsouce/Zionism/zionism.html. accessed on March 15, 2006.

² For the definitive work on Zionism, see: Walter Laquer, *A History of Zionism* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, 1972).

³ Messianic Zionism is associated most prominently with the religious settlers of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and right-wing movements such as the Gush Enumin.

⁴ Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism: A Road map to Armageddon?* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 18-19. Vladimir Jabotinsky was an early Zionist leader in Israel who advocated sole Jewish control of all the territory of ancient Israel, including all of the occupied territories since 1967 and Jerusalem. Jabotinsky was viewed as a radical by most of the Israeli leaders of the Labor Party, such as David Ben-Gurion, but was influential in the rise of the Likud Party under one of his followers, Menachem Begin.

The term Christian Zionism is of relatively recent vintage, only becoming popular in the late twentieth century. Colin Chapman states that “[a]t its simplest, Christian Zionism is a political form of philo-Semitism, and can be defined as ‘Christian support for Zionism.’”⁵ Based upon the belief that the modern state of Israel is a fulfillment of biblical prophecy, Christian Zionism calls for Christians to give moral, financial, and political support to Israel. This support is not only altruistic and Biblically obedient; according to Christian Zionism those nations who bless Israel will be blessed themselves.⁶ While having antecedents as far back as the British restorationist tradition of the sixteenth century, Christian Zionism is a modern religious movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries found mainly within Protestant fundamentalism and is properly understood as being tied to the premillennial dispensationalist tradition.⁷ Thus, for the purposes of this paper Christian Zionism is a nineteenth and twentieth century religious and political movement within Protestant fundamentalism that supported the Zionist cause through moral, financial, and political support.

The Christian Zionist movement aligns within the broader religious framework of *dispensationalism*, described by Timothy P. Weber as “an intricate system that tried to explain the stages of God’s redemptive plan for the universe.”⁸ This specific eschatological (or end-time) doctrine has its roots in 1830s Britain with a sect of Protestants called the Plymouth Brethren and their leader John Nelson Darby (1800-

⁵ Colin Chapman. *Whose Promised Land?: The Continuing Crisis over Israel and Palestine* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2002), cited in Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 19.

⁶ This belief comes from Genesis 12:3 and is often cited by Christian Zionists as a reason that the British and later American nations were blessed.

⁷ British restorationism was an element of British Protestant sectarianism in the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries that held that the Jews should return to their ancient land of Israel. It is considered an antecedent to modern dispensationalism and Christian Zionism, which are strictly nineteenth and twentieth century developments.

1882). Darby believed that God's grace and saving work in history would occur in a series of seven distinct dispensations (or periods) in which God has a separate plan for humanity.⁹ For Darby, the whole of human history is explained as a series of God-given responsibilities for humanity and the various judgements that God will enact for the failure of his people to fulfill these requirements.¹⁰ The key element of the dispensationalist schema is the separation of Israel and the Church in regard to the promises of God's redemptive plan. Beginning with Darby, dispensationalists believe that there are two stories in the Bible, one divine plan for an earthly people, Israel, and the other for a heavenly people, the Church.¹¹ Thus, the promises made to Israel in the Old Testament, seen for centuries in Christian theology as pertaining to the Church after the death of Christ, now are interpreted as being literal promises to the modern Jewish people, most importantly a return to the biblical land of Israel.

In the dispensationalist plan humanity is now in the sixth and final stage of God's redemptive plan, the Grace age. Viewing the Bible as "progressive revelation," dispensationalists see God's plan unfolding throughout human history, including the history that had not yet occurred.¹² Thus, the biblical prophecies in Daniel, Ezekiel, and Revelation are a roadmap to interpreting the coming seventh age, the return of Christ and

⁸ Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2004), 20.

⁹ Yaakov Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes Toward Jews, Judaism, and Zionism, 1860-1945* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Carlson Publishing House, 1991), 19-20.

¹⁰ The dispensationalist schema is clearly laid out in the definitive works on premillennialism and dispensationalism within fundamentalist circles, Charles C. Ryrie, *The Basis of the Premillennial Faith* (New York: Loizeaux Bros., 1953) and Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965); The Seven dispensations and their Biblical references according to Ryrie are: 1) Innocency (Genesis 1:3-3:6), 2) Conscience (Genesis 3:7-8:14), 3) Civil Government (Genesis 8:15-11:9), 4) Patriarchal Rule (Genesis 11:10-18:27), 5) Mosaic Law (Exodus 19:1-John 14:30), 6) Grace (Acts 2:1-Revelation 19:21), Millennium (Revelation 20:1-15).

¹¹ Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 23. This dispensationalist interpretation of God's future redemptive plan is based partly on 2 Timothy 2:15, which requires that Christians "rightly divide the word of truth."

the millennial kingdom. Most importantly to this study, dispensationalism recognizes “the Jewish people as the heirs of the Old Testament Israel and the object of the biblical prophecies for the end of days.”¹³ Before Christ can return and set up his new kingdom on earth a series of events must occur, the return of the Jewish people to a restored Israel, Jewish control of Jerusalem, and the rebuilding of the ancient temple. After these events occur there will be a period of woe on earth as the Anti-Christ will rise with a final battle called Armageddon between Christ and Satan that will lead to Satan’s downfall and the establishment of Christ’s millennial kingdom on earth. Thus, dispensationalism is an eschatology that has its roots in nineteenth-century British sectarianism and maintains that God’s redemptive plan unfolds in a series of seven dispensations, the last of which requires prophecies pertaining to a Jewish resumption of sovereignty over ancient Israel in order for the return of Christ to occur.¹⁴

Two additional concepts must also be identified in order to fully understand dispensationalism: *premillennialism* and the *rapture*. Within Christianity there is a long tradition of millennial beliefs, often described as amillennial, postmillennial, and premillennial.¹⁵ The amillennial view hold that there will be no literal millennial kingdom on earth, while the postmillennial view posits that Christ will return after a millennial kingdom is established on earth by human effort. Throughout much of the history of Protestantism, the postmillennial view has been the traditional approach, but

¹² Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 20.

¹³ Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 16.

¹⁴ In recent years there has been a vibrant discussion about dispensationalism within evangelical circles that focuses less on the issue of land and more on spiritual promises to Israel, although this is not truly reflected in the most politically active dispensationalists, see Craig A. Blaising and Darrel L. Bock, eds, *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church: The Search for Definition* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992).

concurrent with the rise of dispensationalism the *premillennial* view has become prominent, especially among Protestant fundamentalists.¹⁶ *Premillennialism* maintains that Christ will personally return to earth to establish his 1000-year reign.¹⁷ This view was held by Darby and with fundamentalism rose in prominence among evangelical Protestantism in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As many evangelical Protestants became disillusioned with the efforts to establish a godly kingdom on earth during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, premillennialism was the “perfect solution” as Christ would personally come to create a perfect world order.¹⁸

One of the distinctive elements of premillennialism that Darby introduced was the idea of the rapture. The *rapture* refers to an event in which believers are taken up into heaven before the tribulation occurs, thus avoiding the seven years of woe in the tribulation before the establishment of Christ’s millennial kingdom on earth.¹⁹ This idea was unique to Darby’s eschatology, but became part and parcel of the premillennial dispensationalism that flourished among Protestant fundamentalists in Britain and the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thus, dispensationalism maintains a premillennialist interpretation of the second coming of Christ with the unique addition of the rapture to the schema by Darby. The Christian Zionism that is examined

¹⁵ Ibid., 11. For a work that analyzes the entire scope of Apocalyptic/Millennial beliefs in Western culture see: Eugen Weber, *Apocalypses: Prophecies, Cults, and Millennial Beliefs Through the Ages* (London: Hutchinson, 1999).

¹⁶ Middle East Council of Churches, *What is Western Fundamentalist Christian Zionism?* Rev. Ed. (Limassol, Cyprus: MECC, 1988), 5.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Timothy P. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism, 1975-1982* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 102.

¹⁹ Don Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon: A Call to Partnership for Middle Eastern and Western Christians* (Scottsdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1995), 90. The tribulation is based upon an interpretation of Daniel and holds that there will be a seven year tribulation of woe and destruction during which the Anti-Christ will reign before the final battle of Armageddon where Christ will defeat Satan and establish His millennial kingdom.

in this thesis is properly understood as developing out of this premillennialist dispensationalism eschatology.

Also important to understanding Christian Zionism is a clear definition of terms relating to its main group of adherents, Protestant evangelical fundamentalists. Although its influence has gone well beyond Christianity, premillennial dispensationalism's strict adherents are found almost exclusively within Protestantism, specifically within evangelical fundamentalism. The term *evangelical* refers to a religious movement within Protestantism formed in the nineteenth century that holds a few core beliefs: a commitment to Biblical inerrancy; the real historical activities of God's saving work; salvation through Christ; the importance of missions; and the importance of a spiritually changed life.²⁰ *Fundamentalism* can be understood as a movement within evangelicalism that maintains many of the same core beliefs, but more militantly holds to a literal interpretation of scripture and strict separatism. Drawing upon a history of opposition to the modernizing influences within Protestant evangelicalism and mainstream American culture, seen most prominently in the 1920s, fundamentalists have been described as an "[e]vangelical[s] who [are] angry about something."²¹ This differentiation is essential to understand as nearly all Protestant fundamentalists are evangelicals, but the reverse is not necessarily true.

American Protestant fundamentalists cover a wide range of denominational ground, but adhere to some core beliefs: evangelism; the inerrancy of Scripture;

²⁰ George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 1-5.

²¹ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 1. The term fundamentalist comes from a series of works published in the 1910s called "The Fundamentals," which attacked the move to higher criticism in Biblical theology and became the statement of a movement to return to the "fundamentals" of literal Scriptural interpretation and traditional evangelical doctrine.

premillennial dispensationalism; and separatism.²² Of these values, it is the belief in premillennial dispensationalism and the strict adherence to a literal reading of Scripture that most clearly differentiates fundamentalism from the broader category of evangelicalism within American Protestantism. Paul Boyer has argued that “[t]he rise of premillennialism paralleled the fundamentalist movement in U.S. evangelicalism.”²³ Other scholars have gone further to argue that premillennial dispensationalism was the core element that differentiated the fundamentalist movement from the broader evangelicalism of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century America.²⁴ With some clear working definitions of Christian Zionism, its eschatological base, and a basic understanding of its adherents, it is possible to delve into the historical background of Christian Zionism and the activities of its adherents. The end goal of dispensationalism is the return of Christ and the history of Christian Zionism is the story of those believers who worked to bring this about by supporting the return of the Jews to Palestine, a key sign that the return would be imminent.

Christian Zionism in Britain and Europe: From Restorationism to Balfour

The roots of Darby’s dispensationalism are further back in British and American Protestant thought, beginning as early as the sixteenth century. Scholars, such as Barbara

²² Ibid., 5-8.

²³ Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), 93.

²⁴ The key work for this argument is Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1870-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). The Chicago school of religious studies gives precedence to Sandeen’s interpretation, see Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming*, but other prominent scholars of American religious history do not give such prominence to premillennial dispensationalism in the development of fundamentalism, see George Marsden,

Tuchman and Regina Sharif, have traced the development of the British restorationist tradition to argue that non-Jews in Britain were promoting the idea of a restored Israel in modern Palestine three centuries before Theodore Herzl arrived on the scene.²⁵ Donald Wagner has also examined the restorationist ideas of sixteenth century Britain and identified the first Christian Zionist text as Thomas Brightman's *Apocalypsis, Apocalypseos* (1585), which argued that biblical prophecy called for an ingathering of Jews to Palestine.²⁶ This particular view cannot truly be called Christian Zionism; rather it can be understood as a precursor to both Darby's dispensationalism and the Christian Zionism that developed out of it. Paul Merkley identifies John Locke and Isaac Newton as further examples of early expounders of Biblical prophecy and the idea of the restoration of the Jews.²⁷ While Britain was undoubtedly the center of the restorationist tradition, other European countries had elements of this eschatology within their own traditions. Sharif argues that "Non-Jewish Zionism [was] an integral element in Western religious, social, and political history, forming a parallel to and not an annex to the history of Jewish Zionism."²⁸ The importance of this tradition is that it clearly places the origins of Zionism outside of a strictly Jewish history. Indeed, it remains a little acknowledge fact that the first European statesman to propose a Jewish state in Palestine was not Lord Balfour, but Napoleon in 1799.²⁹

Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925 (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

²⁵ Regina Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism: Its Roots in Western History* (London: Zed, 1983), 2. See also Barbara Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* (New York: New York University, 1956), and for further work on non Jewish, Zionism see: Mohameden Ould-Mey, "The Non-Jewish Origins of Zionism," *The Arab World Geographer/Le Geographe du monde arab*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2002), 34-52; and Sharif, "Christians for Zion, 1600-1919," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3/4 (Spring 1976), 123-141.

²⁶ Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon*, 85.

²⁷ Paul Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism, 1891-1948* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 37.

²⁸ Sharif. *Non-Jewish Zionism*, 3.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

In Europe, between the years 1809 and 1830, “a renewal of interest in prophecy... eventually led to a revival of premillennialism within mainstream evangelicalism.”³⁰ In Britain this was most clearly reflected in the development of dispensationalism by the aforementioned Darby and the actions of a prominent British statesman, the Earl of Shaftesbury (1801-1885). Shaftesbury was a firm believer in the doctrine of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine and in the 1830s and 1840s attempted to move British policy toward this goal by lobbying British foreign secretary Lord Palmerston.³¹ It was Shaftesbury who coined the term “A country without a nation for a nation without a country” in describing the possibilities for an ingathering of Jews to Palestine.³² Throughout his life Shaftesbury continued to lobby the British government to support a return of the Jewish people to Palestine. Wagner argues that “[t]hrough his writings, public speaking, and lobbying efforts, Lord Shaftesbury did more than anyone before him to translate Christian Zionist themes into a political initiative.”³³

One of the most influential Christian Zionists was William Hechler (1845-1931), a British Anglican priest who became chaplain to the British Embassy in Vienna in 1885. Hechler had written a booklet, *The Restoration of the Jews to Palestine according to Prophecy* (1894) “that spoke of the need to restore the Jews to Palestine according to Old Testament prophecies.”³⁴ In Vienna, Hechler met Theodore Herzl and enthusiastically endorsed his ideas about how to solve “the Jewish Question” as a major development in

³⁰ Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 32.

³¹ Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 9.

³² Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon*, 92., Wagner notes that this is remarkably similar to Herzl’s famous “A land of no people for a people of no land” phrase in describing Palestine almost a full generation later.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism*, 71, cited in Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 60.

biblical prophecy.³⁵ Hechler saw Herzl as God's instrument in bringing about the restoration of Israel and advised him on how to approach Christian statesmen, most notably Kaiser William II, about his dream of a Jewish state.³⁶ While Herzl's meetings with the Kaiser did not bear any fruit, it helped the Jewish Zionist movement learn valuable lobbying techniques and develop contacts among European leaders that would lead to greater success in Britain under Lloyd George concluding with the Balfour Declaration.

William Hechler remained involved in the Zionist cause throughout his life and after he resigned his position as chaplain in Vienna in 1910, "the Zionist Organization in London provided a pension for his 'loyal' support of Zionism in accordance with Herzl's instructions."³⁷ The Jewish Zionist leadership further recognized Hechler on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Herzl's death by noting in the English memorial volume that "William Hechler [was] not only the first but the most indefatigable of Herzl's followers."³⁸ Hechler's views on biblical prophecy motivated him to become actively involved in the Zionist movement as one of the first Christian Zionists, as he hoped that his efforts to return the Jews to Palestine would hasten the second coming of Christ.

Christian Zionism in Britain reached its summation in the famous declaration regarding a Jewish state in Palestine by Lord Arthur Balfour. Most scholars see the Balfour Declaration as a merging of British imperial interests with the Zionist movement, led in Britain by the famous Chaim Weizmann. Scholars of Christian Zionism see another factor at work, the predisposition of many important British statesmen to the

³⁵ Theodore Herzl, *Diaries of Theodore Herzl*, entry for March 26, 1896; cited by Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 61.

³⁶ Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism*, 33.

³⁷ Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 62.

Zionist cause as a result of their Christian upbringings and convictions. James Saddington argues that “Balfour’s support for Zionism had roots not only in his own theological and political convictions, but also in the specific political and military situation Britain found herself.”³⁹ Stephen Sizer sees a similar factor at work in the Protestant upbringing of British Prime Minister Lloyd George.⁴⁰ The support of major British statesmen George and Balfour was important in making the Zionist dream of a Jewish state ever closer to a political reality, and this support was partly motivated by their Protestant heritage. While Britain remained heavily involved in the politics of Zionism until it withdrew from Palestine in 1947, it was in America that dispensationalism and Christian Zionism would flourish throughout the rest of the century.

Christian Zionism in America: From Puritans to the New Christian Right

Various developments in America paralleled the early development of Christian Zionism in Europe. While many Puritans originally viewed America as a chance for a new Israel, others in colonial America were writing about biblical prophecy that called for the Jews to be ingathered to a restored Israel in Palestine. Carl Ehle Jr. argued that the idea of a Jewish return to Israel was present in America during the seventeenth

³⁸ Merkley, *Politics of Christian Zionism*, 25., other scholars who note Hechler’s importance: Saddington, “Prophecy and Politics,” 124; and Ehle Jr., “Prolegomena to Christian Zionism,” 233.

³⁹ Saddington, “Prophecy and Politics,” 175., see also Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, and Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*.

⁴⁰ Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 63., Barbara Tuchman in *Bible and Sword* interprets Balfour and George as being the point of congruence between the British restorationist tradition and British imperial interests in the Middle East.

century.⁴¹ Ehle Jr. examines the popular writings of Increase Mather (1639-1723) to argue that from this point forward the doctrine of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine “may be said to have become endemic to American culture.”⁴² Faud Sha’ban argues that, “Americans have maintained a continuing involvement with the Holy Land, often amounting to personal identification with the region and an assertion of ownership,” from the founding of America to the present.⁴³ Thus, by the mid-seventeenth century and into the eighteenth century as the doctrine of the restoration of the Jews was spreading throughout Europe, it was also being transported to America.

The nineteenth century witnessed the rise of Darby’s dispensationalism and its transplantation to America, marking the transition from the earlier restorationist tradition to modern Christian Zionism. As Darby was laying the theological foundations of the premillennialist dispensationalism and Lord Shaftesbury was merging prophecy beliefs into an effort to influence foreign policy in Britain, in America there was a rise of prophetic fever. Ideas about the approaching return of Christ and coming millennium kingdom were rampant, most famously seen in the Millerite movement that Yaakov Ariel describes as “the first mass movement of premillennialist expectations in the United States.”⁴⁴ William Miller (1782-1849) developed a system of prophetic interpretation that closely resembled Darby’s approach in Britain.⁴⁵ Miller devised a complex set of calculations of Biblical prophecy and gained thousands of followers when he declared

⁴¹ Carl Ehle Jr., “Prolegomena to Christian Zionism in America: The Views of Increase Mather and William E. Blackstone Concerning the Doctrine of the Restoration of Israel,” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1977), 394 pgs. Increase Mather was the father of the more historically analyzed Cotton Mather and was an early scholar/preacher at Harvard University.

⁴² Ibid., 331.

⁴³ Faud Sha’ban, *For Zion’s Sake: The Judeo-Christian Tradition in American Culture* (Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2005), 12.

⁴⁴ Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 8, and Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 81.

⁴⁵ Saddington, “Prophecy and Politics,” 52.

that 1843 was the date of the second coming of Christ; after an initial disappointment when Christ did not return, he then declared 1844 the new year of Christ's return. Although the Millerite movement was a failure, it was the most visible manifestation of the rise in premillennial beliefs in the United States. An important distinction existed between the premillennialism of Miller and that of Darby; in Miller's chronology there was no time for a literal restoration of the Jews to Palestine so the Old Testament prophecies regarding the Jews were spiritualized.⁴⁶

Between 1859 and 1872 Darby's premillennial dispensationalist views "about a failing church and revived Israel came to have a profound and increasing influence upon American evangelicalism."⁴⁷ It was during these years that Darby toured the United States preaching his unique interpretation of biblical prophecy, which would become the dominant eschatology of Protestant evangelicals by the end of the century. The period of 1860-1920 witnessed the growth of dispensationalism from a minor sectarian interpretation of prophecy to a mass movement influencing millions.⁴⁸ Darby's ideas gained a much greater currency in America than they had in Britain, in part because, "[t]o the English conception of a special responsibility for the rescue of the scattered Jews the American version adds the conviction that America herself has been molded in that experience from her beginnings and that her destiny is embraced by that of Israel."⁴⁹

Two important developments in nineteenth century America greatly aided the spread of Darby's premillennial dispensationalism. First, there was a growing interest in the Orient and especially the Holy Land in the nineteenth century, evidenced by the fact

⁴⁶ Ehle Jr., "Prolegomena to Christian Zionism in America," 224.

⁴⁷ Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 66.

⁴⁸ Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 25.

⁴⁹ Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism, 1891-1948*, 55.

that from 1800 to 1875 over 2000 American authors wrote about the Holy Land.⁵⁰ Paul Merkley argues that from the 1840s onward “most Americans found it impossible to think of the Holy Land without also thinking of the Jews and their undoubted future possession of it.”⁵¹ Already heavily influenced by the Bible, Americans in the nineteenth century were also encountering the Orient in travel books, missionary activities, archeological endeavors, and settlement activity. Alongside the earliest Jewish settlers in Palestine in the late nineteenth century were evangelical Americans, who formed the American Colony in Jerusalem.⁵² Lester Vogel posits that as a result of Protestantism’s pervasive influence in nineteenth century American culture “...the idea of a Holy Land assumed dimensions of a geographic myth that...played an important role in influencing and directing much of the practical American experience with regard to the actual real place.”⁵³

Secondly, there was a dramatic increase in Bible prophecy conferences and Bible institutes that spread Darby’s ideas. Timothy Weber argues that “[a]lmost without exception the scores of Bible institutes that were founded between 1880 and 1940 taught dispensationalism.”⁵⁴ Evangelical leaders, such as Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899), were overwhelmingly premillennial and quickly adopted Darby’s ideas—giving dispensationalism respectability and currency in “wider evangelical circles.”⁵⁵ Bible

⁵⁰ Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 32-33.

⁵¹ Merkley, *Politics of Christian Zionism*, 57., see also Lawrence Davidson, “Christian Zionism as a Representation of American Manifest Destiny,” *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Summer 2005), 158.

⁵² See: Millette Shamir, “Our Jerusalem”: Americans in the Holy Land and Protestant Narratives of National Entitlement,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (March 2002), 29-60; for missionary activity in Middle East see: Joseph Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Foreign Policy 1810-1927* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971).

⁵³ Lester Irwin Vogel, *To See A Promised Land: Americans and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University, 1993), xv.

⁵⁴ Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 35.

⁵⁵ Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming*, 35., and Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 30.

institutes, such as the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and the Dallas Theological Seminary became mass distributors of dispensationalism as their graduates became the future leaders of evangelical fundamentalism.⁵⁶ Bible prophecy conferences also spread Darby's ideas throughout evangelical circles in the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth century.

From the first International Bible Prophecy Conference, held in New York in 1878 to the final major conference in 1914, the interpretation of Bible prophecy became part of the evangelical and fundamentalist movements. David Rausch extensively examined the proceedings of these conferences and argues that "one finds abundant support for the restoration of the Jewish people to the Land of Palestine and a basic belief that only the Jewish people had a right to Palestine."⁵⁷ These conferences were attended by many preachers involved in the evangelical movement and gave increased attention to Darby's interpretation of Bible prophecy. The early Jewish settlements in Palestine during the 1880s and 1890s was one of the main topics of the Third International Conference in Allegheny, Pennsylvania in 1895 as delegates believed they were witnessing the first stirrings of a restored Israel.⁵⁸ As events on the ground in Palestine stirred dispensationalist hopes, most Christians were content to remain passive observers, but not all.

In the history of Christian Zionism in America there is one figure that stands above all others, William E. Blackstone (1841-1935). Blackstone was an evangelical preacher for the Methodist Episcopal Church and first became famous for his book *Jesus*

⁵⁶ David Rausch, *Zionism within Early American Fundamentalism, 1878-1918: A convergence of two traditions* (New York: E. Mellen Press, 1979), 193-194, Saddington, "Prophecy and Politics," 142, Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 70.

is Coming (1878). A clear summary of Darby's premillennial dispensationalism, *Jesus is Coming* connected current events to biblical prophecy and by 1935 had sold over one million copies and been translated into thirty-six languages.⁵⁹ Blackstone's writings and preaching also reached numerous evangelical leaders through his involvement in the Bible prophecy conferences and the Bible institute movement.⁶⁰ As one of the most influential promoters of Darby's premillennial dispensationalism, Blackstone's importance within evangelical circles was secure. In 1891 he moved outside the religious sphere and became the first Christian Zionist lobbyist.

In response to the oppression of the Jews in Russia, a petition, now known as the Blackstone Memorial, was sent to President Benjamin Harrison on March 5, 1891. This appeal called for an international conference on the restoration of the Jews to Palestine.⁶¹ Signed by 413 prominent Americans, including John D. Rockefeller and William McKinley, this petition was the first lobby effort to restore the Jews to Palestine in U.S. history. Ironically, however, the major opposition to the petition came from Orthodox and Reform American Jews.⁶² The petition was not a success as Harrison made no move to convene an international conference; but Blackstone's effort is remembered by both Jews and Christians as the first lobby effort on behalf of the Zionist cause in America. Timothy Weber points out that Blackstone's Memorial was written

⁵⁷ Rausch, *Zionism within Early American Fundamentalism*, 132, on prophecy conferences see also: Saddington, "Prophecy and Politics," 87.

⁵⁸ Saddington, "Prophecy and Politics," 94.

⁵⁹ Ehle Jr., "Prolegomena to Christian Zionism," 305, and Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 71.

⁶⁰ Ehle Jr., 272, 280-281.

⁶¹ Ibid., 240, Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 72, and Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 55.

⁶² Lawrence J. Epstein, *Zion's Call: Christian contributions to the origins and development of Israel* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), 110. The 1880s witnessed a series of pogroms against Jews in Russia; the Reform and Orthodox Jews opposed Blackstone's Memorial because they viewed the restoration of Israel in spiritual terms when the Messiah would return, not a literal return of the Jews to a restored Israel in Palestine.

“one year before the first Love of Zion societies were formed in the United States, five years before the publication of Herzl’s *Der Judenstaat* (1896), and six years before the first Zionist Congress was convened in Basel.”⁶³

As Zionism gained ground in America at the turn of the century, Blackstone befriended many Jewish leaders of the movement, including Louis Brandeis, the first Jewish justice of the Supreme Court. Blackstone fit well within the Jewish Zionist movement because he viewed Zionism as an early stage of the biblical prophecy of restoration and he supported the movement with large amounts of money.⁶⁴ In 1916 a second Blackstone Memorial, “interwove with other efforts to persuade President [Woodrow] Wilson to favor the ideal of a Jewish national home in Palestine and to support the Balfour Declaration of 1917.”⁶⁵ Wilson viewed the petition privately and later gave support to the British to publicly announce the Balfour Declaration, but there is little evidence that Blackstone’s petition was influential. In assessing the importance of Blackstone, Yaakov Ariel notes that “[t]he idea of the role assigned to America in restoring Israel to Zion was Blackstone’s original innovation and contribution to the premillennial hope.”⁶⁶ Although largely forgotten by the time of his death, during his lifetime “Blackstone was honored by official Zionists more than any other American Christian friend.”⁶⁷ Blackstone’s efforts on behalf of the Zionist movement were motivated by his belief that the return of the Jews to Palestine would lead to the return of

⁶³ Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 104., for another work that echoes the importance of Blackstone preceding the Zionist movement, see: Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 55-56.

⁶⁴ Ehle Jr., “Prolegomena to Christian Zionism,” 307, and Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 72. Blackstone viewed the restoration as a political event, thus becoming aligned with the secular Jewish Zionists rather than the previously mentioned Reform or Orthodox Jews who saw Jewish restoration as a spiritual event.

⁶⁵ Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 55.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 93.

⁶⁷ Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism*, 60.

Christ, and he is properly understood as one of the most prominent figures in the history of Christian Zionism.

The next major figure in the development of American Christian Zionism was Cyrus I. Scofield (1843-1921), the editor and commentator of the influential *Scofield Reference Bible*, first published by the Oxford University Press in 1909. Numerous scholars have identified this text as the most influential in spreading dispensationalism in America during the twentieth century.⁶⁸ This Bible included commentary that was heavily influenced by Darby's dispensationalist schema of biblical prophecy.⁶⁹ It was used by many of the Bible Institutes that were the foundation of evangelical fundamentalism as a movement, most particularly seen in the Dallas Theological Seminary, founded in 1924.

Also deserving mention as a promoter of dispensationalism is Arno C. Gaebelin (1861-1945). Gaebelin is acknowledged as the source of the prophetic notes in the Scofield Bible and helped to spread dispensationalist ideas his widely distributed periodical entitled *Our Hope*.⁷⁰ While Gaebelin gave support to the Zionist cause by informing Christians of the Zionist cause, he also displayed an anti-Semitism at times that has made him a controversial figure in the history of Christian Zionism.⁷¹ As advocates of dispensationalism, both Scofield and Gaebelin had an enormous impact on the fundamentalist movement in America, but remained largely outside the secular Zionist movement and did not have a significant influence on American policymakers.

⁶⁸ Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 48, Saddington, "Prophecy and Politics," 120, Rausch, *Zionism within Early American Fundamentalism*, 71, Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 74, and Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 39.

⁶⁹ Stephen Sizer even goes so far as to suggest that Scofield plagiarized Darby's works, never citing them and often using direct quotes, see Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 74-75.

⁷⁰ Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 77.

As premillennial dispensationalism was spreading in America during the first part of the twentieth century, three events were about to dramatically affect the history of Christian Zionism: World War One, the Balfour Declaration of 1917, and the fundamentalist controversies in 1920s America. Timothy Weber argues that “[n]o event in the fifty years after 1875 did more for the morale of American premillennialists than World War I.”⁷² Having long argued that the world was coming to an end and the postmillennial view that Christ’s earthly kingdom would be established by human effort was a fallacy, many premillennialist found the destructive nature of the war as validation.⁷³ When Lord Arthur Balfour’s famous declaration calling for a “national home for the Jewish people” was made public on November 2, 1917 all of the signs seemed to be falling into place for dispensationalists.

In a congruent argument to that made about the Protestant influences on the support for the Zionist movement by prominent British statesmen, Paul Merkley argues that Woodrow Wilson’s Protestant background was a factor in his decision to endorse the Balfour Declaration. Both Louis Brandeis and Stephen Wise, leaders of the American Zionist movement, stated that “what guaranteed the victory for the Zionists was not their greater skill in playing the political or diplomatic game, but their success in appealing to Woodrow Wilson’s biblically based Christian faith.”⁷⁴ For dispensationalists, the Balfour Declaration made the possibility of a restored Israel seem just around the corner, and when the British army took Jerusalem just five weeks later it seemed that God’s prophecies were falling into perfect place.

⁷¹ For the arguments about Gaebelin’s anti-Semitism, see especially Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, and Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*. James Saddington argues that Gaebelin was not an anti-Semite because of Gaebelin’s overall efforts for the Jews, this is clearly a minority view.

⁷² Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming*, 105.

During this same period American evangelicalism was experiencing massive changes. George Marsden explains that while American evangelicalism was externally successful by the end of the nineteenth century, internally it was experiencing a crisis.⁷⁵ The rise of higher criticism of the Bible in mainline Protestantism and the modernizing influences of American culture were creating a split among evangelicals. Many conservative evangelicals felt their faith was being attacked when the Bible's inerrancy was questioned and they sought to preserve a literalist approach to the Bible. Between 1910 and 1915 twelve volumes of a work entitled *The Fundamentals* received widespread support among conservative evangelicals and became the tome of the new fundamentalist movement.⁷⁶ Marsden notes that it was in 1920 that "the word fundamentalist was first used to describe the coalition of militantly conservative Protestants who were trying to preserve the nineteenth century revivalist Protestant establishment."⁷⁷

As mainline Protestant Christianity was associating itself with the Reform movements of the 1920s, fundamentalists increasingly felt themselves under attack by modern American culture. The best-known controversy of the period was the Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925 where fundamentalist interpretations of the Bible and its account of the origins of life met head on with modern science.⁷⁸ By the end of the 1920s fundamentalists had lost their evangelical denominations and American culture at large to the modernists, but these losses "did not break the spirit of American premillennialists."⁷⁹

⁷³ Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 47.

⁷⁴ Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism*, 88-89.

⁷⁵ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 16.

⁷⁶ Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 49.

⁷⁷ George Marsden, *Religion and American Culture*. 2nd ed. (New York, London, and Tokyo: Harcourt College Publishers, 2001), 193.

⁷⁸ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 59. Marsden identifies biological evolution as the symbol of fundamentalist fears of the demise of American culture.

⁷⁹ Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming*, 177.

As fundamentalism became marginalized in America so too did premillennial dispensationalism and prophecy interest waned greatly.⁸⁰ The Balfour Declaration had not immediately led to a restored Jewish state and the defeated fundamentalists largely stayed out of the Jewish Zionist movement in the United States until 1967. During the 1930s and 1940s it was in liberal Protestant Christianity that the Zionist movement found support for a Jewish state.

The Zionist movement in America had undergone a radical change by the late 1930s and early 1940s. At the turn of the century both Reform and Orthodox Jews opposed Zionism and it seemed that dispensationalists, like William Blackstone, were more committed to the idea of a Jewish state than American Jews.⁸¹ As anti-Semitism was on the rise in Europe, American Jews became more involved in the Zionist movement. Among American Christian fundamentalism, anti-Semitism hindered further attempts to aid in the Zionist movement.⁸² Sizer argues that “[d]uring the 1930s and 1940s, both prior to and after the founding of the state of Israel, the principle allies of Zionism were liberal Protestant Christians, such as Paul Tillich, William F. Albright, and Reinhold Niebuhr, who founded the Christian Council on Palestine in 1942.”⁸³ After World War Two and the tragedy of the Holocaust, the Zionist cause gained momentum both on the ground in Palestine with Jewish military actions against the British, and in Western capitals as the Jewish Question demanded an answer.

For modern American Christian Zionism, 1948 was a pivotal year as Timothy Weber notes, “[n]othing would tempt the dispensationalists to leave the stands like the

⁸⁰ Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 104.

⁸¹ Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 101. On Zionism in America, see: Laquer, *A History of Zionism*, and Lawrence Davidson, *America's Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2001).

founding and survival of a restored Jewish state.”⁸⁴ In the dispensationalist schema the restoration of the Jews to a revived Israel was the key element and by 1948, “all of dispensationalism’s hopes were riding on the Jews.”⁸⁵ When events on the ground outpaced the diplomatic debates within the United Nations, the state of Israel was declared in May of 1948 and promptly recognized by President Harry S. Truman. The recognition, as well as U.S. support for partition in the UN in 1947, is seen by historians as vital to the creation and survival of the state and the foundation of the U.S.-Israeli special relationship.⁸⁶ Truman’s pro-Zionist leanings were against the marked opposition of his State Department, and were the result of a variety of factors. Most historians have noted that Truman’s concerns over the 1948 presidential election and his closely placed Jewish friends of Truman helped the Zionist lobby to persuade him to support their cause.⁸⁷

One factor of Truman’s support of the Zionist movement and Israel that has received relatively minor treatment until recently is the influence that his Protestant upbringing had in his pro-Zionist leanings. Paul Merkley echoes this point and notes Truman’s famous “I am Cyrus” claim after Israel was declared and had the support of the U.S.⁸⁸ In the past few years scholars of diplomatic and Middle Eastern history have also

⁸² Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 81.

⁸³ Ibid., 83.

⁸⁴ Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 95.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 95.

⁸⁶ See especially: Cohen. *Truman and Israel*.

⁸⁷ For a summation, see Peter L. Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc., 2005), 22-24.

⁸⁸ Merkley, *Politics of Christian Zionism*, 192, and Paul Merkley, *American Presidents, Religion, and Israel: The Heirs of Cyrus* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2004), 21-22. Cyrus was a Persian Emperor who supported the return of the Jews to Israel after they had been in captivity in Persia in the Old Testament, biblical prophecy had declared that a Gentile leader would act as a “Cyrus” in the restoration of the Jews to Israel.

argued that Truman's Protestant heritage was influential.⁸⁹ Irvine H. Anderson posits that "[t]he Zionist lobby and Truman's advisors won out over State and Defense, but it appears that Truman's biblical background at least predisposed him to favor prompt recognitions."⁹⁰ Other scholars go further and argue that Truman was a Christian Zionist.⁹¹ While Truman's decision to recognize Israel was the result of many factors, it is clear that his Protestant upbringing played a role in his pro-Zionist leanings. With one of the major prophetic elements now in place with the establishment of Israel, dispensationalists now had the "reference point they had been waiting for," and now had proof that God kept his promises.⁹² This led to a rash of prophetic announcements about the coming return of Christ, but did not lead to dispensationalists re-entering the political sphere on behalf of Israel.

Modern Christian Zionism: From Observers to Participants

With a major sign of the end-times now fulfilled with the establishment of Israel, dispensationalists now began looking for the next major sign of the end-times: Jewish control of Jerusalem. Even more than the forming of the state of Israel, the events of the Six Day War in 1967 motivated Christian Zionists to become actively engaged in political activities in support of Israel in their hope for the coming millenium kingdom. Between June 5 and June 11 of 1967 the dynamics of Middle East power and the Israeli-Palestinian dispute changed forever. After soundly defeating a coalition of invading

⁸⁹ For example, see: Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire*, 23.

⁹⁰ Irvine H. Anderson, *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy: The Promised Land, America, and Israel, 1917-2002* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005), 75. Anderson, an expert on Middle East oil policy, is one of the first mainstream historians of American diplomacy to examine the role of religion.

⁹¹ Saddington, "Prophecy and Politics," 465, and Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism*, 101.

Arab forces, Israel now occupied wide swaths of land well beyond its 1948 borders.⁹³ Most important for the development of Christian Zionism was the capture of Jerusalem. With Jewish control over Jerusalem another key sign of the end-times was fulfilled and dispensationalists began to move from observers to participants in the drama of biblical prophecy.⁹⁴ Timothy Weber argues that “[a]s soon as Bible teachers embraced the results of the Six-Day War as fulfillment of Bible prophecy, the political implications of dispensationalism became apparent.”⁹⁵

After UN Resolution 242, which called for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, a major rift developed between Israel and the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and many mainline Protestant churches in America.⁹⁶ The annexation of the West Bank and occupation of Jerusalem brought the Palestinian issue to the fore and most liberal Protestant organizations, such as the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches, distanced themselves from Zionism.⁹⁷ This split worked to mobilize American fundamentalists to become more active in support of Israel, which they saw not as an occupying power, but a literal fulfillment of

⁹² Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming*, 204, see also: Paul Merkley, *Christian Attitudes Toward the State of Israel* (Kingston and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 5-6.

⁹³ On June 5 Israel attacked Egypt in response to Nasser's removal of UN forces from the Sinai Peninsula and a buildup of Egyptian forces on the Israeli border. After quickly defeating the Egyptian forces, Israel occupied the Gaza strip and Sinai Peninsula. Soon after Jordan and Syria entered the war and were also quickly defeated by Israeli forces leading to the annexation of the West Bank and Golan Heights.

⁹⁴ Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 266, Merkley, *Christian Attitudes toward the state of Israel*, 40-41.

⁹⁵ Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming*, 197.

⁹⁶ Grace Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics: The Secret Alliance between Israel and the U.S. Christian Right* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books: Distributed by Independent Publishers Group, 1989), 147-154. For the Catholic relationship with Israel, which was heavily defined by Jerusalem and issues of access to Holy sites, see Merkley, *Christian Attitudes toward the State of Israel*, Chapter 6.

⁹⁷ Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 84, and Robert O. Smith, “Between Restoration and Liberation: Theopolitical Contributions and Responses to U.S. Foreign Policy in Israel/Palestine,” *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 46, Issue 4 (Autumn 2004), 838.

biblical prophecy.⁹⁸ With Israel receiving criticism from both the international community and from a majority of Christians in the world, some American fundamentalists became politically involved in supporting Israel.

The decade of the 1970s was pivotal for Christian Zionism in America and Israel. The 1971 Jerusalem Conference on Biblical Prophecy, organized by American fundamentalists, "...marked the beginning of a great harvest of evangelical tourism to Israel, which over time became the foundation on which the strong relationship between dispensationalism and Israel was built."⁹⁹ American fundamentalist tourism to the Holy Land became a staple of the Israeli economy and a strong base for the growing relationship between the developing Christian Right in American and the Israeli Right. Ever since the 1967 War, Israeli leaders had sought to gain new supporters among American Christians to fill the void left by the departed mainline Protestant, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox churches. Shortly after the Six Day War the Israeli Department of Religious Affairs sent Yona Malachy to America to study evangelical fundamentalists as a potential ally of Israel.¹⁰⁰ While there is no conclusive evidence that this study directly led to the political alliance between American fundamentalists and Israel, it is representative of the Israeli attempt to court the growing power of American fundamentalists in the 1970s.

⁹⁸ It should also be mentioned that the capture of Jerusalem had a similar effect on religious Jews in Israel, for whom the dream of Eretz Israel (an Israel with borders the same as in the Bible, including what is now the West Bank and Gaza strip, and Golan Heights) seemed ever closer to reality. American Jews, most of whom were secular, were also influenced by 1967 to support Israel.

⁹⁹ Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 214.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 221., for Malachy's findings, see: Yona Malachy, *American Fundamentalism and Israel: The Relation of Fundamentalist Churches to Zionism and the State of Israel* (Jerusalem: Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1978)., what is interesting about Malachy's findings, published posthumously, is that he was skeptical of a political alliance between Israel and American fundamentalists, which he saw as supporting Israel in an abstract way, but not capable of political support.

While many authors point to the election of Jimmy Carter in 1976 as the symbolic entrance of evangelicals into the mainstream of American political life, it was the election of Menachem Begin and the Likud Party in Israel in 1977 that entered modern Christian Zionism into the American political sphere.¹⁰¹ The election of Likud in Israel ended decades of Labor Party power and brought to the political table the expansionist Zionism of the Jabotinsky tradition. While Carter and Begin worked together on the Camp David Accords, Begin was also fostering a relationship with another evangelical Christian of much different political stripes. Jerry Falwell “was invited to visit Israel in 1978 and 1979, shown the royal treatment, and ultimately given a jet aircraft and awarded the Jabotinsky medal for his work on behalf of Israel.”¹⁰² Falwell and the Likud Party shared an important congruence in ideology that was not to be found in Carter and his administration; both believed in retaining all the territory gained in 1967 and shared a “willingness to vociferously promote it in the White House and U.S. government circles.”¹⁰³

The political alliance forming between the Likud Party and the emerging Christian Right in America by the late 1970s was also influenced by two other important developments. In 1976 an American fundamentalist preacher named G. Douglas Young founded Bridges for Peace in Jerusalem. This marked the first American fundamentalist

¹⁰¹ Jimmy Carter was the first American president to be “born-again” and was elected with the help of a strong evangelical vote from Southern Protestants, this led Time Magazine to declare 1976 the “Year of the Evangelical.” Carter was to lose these evangelical voters with the rise of the New Christian Right in the 1980 election, which was heavily tilted towards the Republican Party.

¹⁰² Anderson, *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy*, 113., On the origins of Falwell-Begin alliance, see also: Don Wagner, “Reagan and Begin: Bibi and Jerry: The Theopolitical Alliance of the Likud Party with the American Christian Right,” *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 20, Issue 4 (Fall 1998), 6-7; Gershom Gorenberg, *The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount* (New York, London, Sydney, Toronto, Singapore: The Free Press, 2000), 126.

¹⁰³ Colin Shindler, “Likud and the Christian Dispensationalists: A Symbiotic Relationship,” *Israel Studies*, Vol. 5, Issue 1 (Spring 2000), 165., see also, Smith, “Between Restoration and Liberation,” 839.

organization that engaged in political support for Israel through raising money and later assisting Soviet Jews to immigrate to Israel.¹⁰⁴ By the 1980s many other organizations similar to Bridges for Peace were active in Israel, forming the core of the political Christian Zionism of the 1980s and 1990s as well as important links between Israeli leaders and the Christian Right in America. In America, dispensationalism reached a mass audience through a best-selling book, Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970).¹⁰⁵ Paul Boyer notes that *The Late Great Planet Earth* was the "nonfiction bestseller of the 1970s, with nine million copies in print by 1978," and had an enormous impact on American culture.¹⁰⁶ With dispensationalism reaching a mass audience and American fundamentalists working in Jerusalem, the stage was set for Christian Zionism to enter the mainstream of American political culture in the 1980s.

The Rise of the New Christian Right: Vehicle of Political Christian Zionism

As the political context within which Christian Zionism rose to prominence in the 1980s and early 1990s, it is important to briefly explain the historical origins of the New Christian Right and the larger New Right conservative movement it was a part of. Further, this will help to explain how moral conservatives, such as Jerry Falwell, aligned with neo-conservatives within a revamped Republican Party that was the vehicle for Ronald Reagan's election in 1980 and became a formidable political bloc thereafter. The New Right was a political movement that on the fringes of American political life in the

¹⁰⁴ Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 100-101.

¹⁰⁵ Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1970). Lindsey, similar to Blackstone's *Jesus is Coming*, connected modern events to Biblical prophecies in the dispensationalist

1950s. A fusion of libertarians and social conservatives, it differed from traditional conservatism by tracing its intellectual tradition not to Edmund Burke, but to George Wallace, Joseph McCarthy, and the opponents of the New Deal.¹⁰⁷ The New Right's political philosophy included a wide array of economic and social issues, but was staunchly anti-communist and distrustful of the federal government.

By the early 1960s a group of scholars recognized a grass-roots conservative movement within America that needed explanation.¹⁰⁸ Heavily influenced by the McCarthy era, this early consensus school "viewed right-wing activists as motivated less by a coherent set of ideas or rational politics than by psychological distress."¹⁰⁹ This explanation did not seem as viable by the 1980s when the New Right exploded onto the political scene with the victory of Ronald Reagan. Later scholars have argued that the New Right should be understood not as a result of "status anxiety," but as a coherent political movement that has survived many challenges to become a potent force in American politics.¹¹⁰ A key element of the New Right as a political movement has been the alliance between libertarians, business conservatives, and religious conservatives.

The origins of the New Christian Right are very similar to that of the New Right, leading one scholar to argue that "the NCR overlaps with a wider conservative movement

model. Thus, the Soviet Union was the evil "Gog and Magog" of Ezekiel that would attack Israel in the prelude to the final battle of Armageddon.

¹⁰⁶ Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 5.

¹⁰⁷ Jerome Himmelstein, *To the Right: The Transformation of American Conservatism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 93, and Alan Crawford, *Thunder on the Right: The "New Right" and the Politics of Resentment* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 303.

¹⁰⁸ The major scholars and works of this early school of thought on the New Right are: Daniel Bell, *The Radical Right: The New American Right*. Expanded and Updated (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1963); Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), and Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, *The Politics of Unreason: Right-Wing Extremism in America, 1790-1977* (New York: Harper and Row 1978).

¹⁰⁹ Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 7.

¹¹⁰ See: Himmelstein, *To the Right*, McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*.

and any measures of influence and impact will relate to the wider movement.”¹¹¹ The social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s, alongside of Supreme Court decisions on prayer in schools, abortion, and sex education, led many conservative evangelicals to enter politics to halt what they perceived as America’s moral decay.¹¹² Also important was the resurgence of evangelicalism in American between 1960 and 1980 that helped make the NCR a mass movement.¹¹³ These moral conservatives were able to align with others in the New Right because of “fusionists” like William Buckley Jr., who tied libertarianism and social conservatism by claiming “that the decline of freedom and pristine capitalism went hand in hand with the decay of belief in God and absolute truth.”¹¹⁴ This alliance formed a strong base for the victory of Ronald Reagan in the 1980 presidential election and the NCR became an important part of the Republican Party thereafter.

The NCR is properly understood as “a social movement located principally among evangelicals dedicated to restoring traditional values in public policy.”¹¹⁵ Its activities have been described as “a conservative brand of interest group politics.”¹¹⁶ This “interest group politics” functioned in the 1980s through groups like the Moral Majority and Religious Roundtable, and in the 1990s under the Christian Coalition. The

¹¹¹ Steve Bruce, *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right: Conservative Protestant Politics in America, 1978-1988* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 92. The term New Christian Right differentiates the post-1960 politicization of American conservative Protestants from similar earlier engagements with mainstream American political life, for further details see: Leo P. Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right From the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1983).

¹¹² William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996), Chapters 4 and 5, see also: James E. Reichley, “The Evangelical and Fundamentalist Revolt, in Richard John Neuhaus and Michael J. Cromartie, eds., *Piety and Politics: Evangelicals and Fundamentalists Confront the World* (Washington D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center; Lanham, MD.: distributed by arrangement with University Press of America, 1987), 76-77.

¹¹³ Marsden. *Religion and American Culture*, 268.

¹¹⁴ Himmelstein, *To the Right*, 59. William F. Buckley Jr. was the founder and editor of the influential, *National Review* and a key player in the New Right as a political movement.

¹¹⁵ John C. Green, et al. eds., *Religion and the Culture Wars: Dispatches from the Front* (Lanham, MD.: Rowan and Littlefield, 1996, 2.

groups functioned as umbrella organizations that could mobilize a wide base of evangelical support through mailing campaigns and media networks.¹¹⁷ Despite the massive amount of media attention the NCR received in the 1980s, culminating with Pat Robertson's bid for the Republican Presidential nomination in 1988, it failed to achieve any of its main legislative goals.¹¹⁸ By 1989 the Moral Majority was bankrupt and disbanding and Pat Robertson was still recovering from his failed presidential bid.¹¹⁹ The height of the NCR's political power came in 1994, when the Christian Coalition played an important role in helping the Republican Party take control of both houses of Congress.¹²⁰ While many scholars have noted the NCR's place in the history of American politics, the influence of the NCR on foreign policy has not yet been extensively examined.

In an essay entitled "An Agenda for the 1980s," Jerry Falwell listed ten core beliefs that inform the Moral Majority agenda. One of these beliefs is stated as, "Support for Israel is one of the essential commitments of the Moral Majority."¹²¹ This foreign policy issue united many of the NCR and had the effect of adding "political backing for the already established U.S. policy of massive support for Israel."¹²² While noting that

¹¹⁶ Michael Liensch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, NC.: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 9.

¹¹⁷ It is no coincidence that Falwell and Robertson, leaders of the Moral Majority and Christian Coalition respectively, both had extensive media empires that enabled them to mobilize support quickly and effectively among evangelicals.

¹¹⁸ Bruce, *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right*, 182.

¹¹⁹ Clyde Wilcox, "Premillennialists at the Millenium: Some Reflections on the Christian Right in the Twenty-First Century," in Steve Bruce, Peter Kristivo, and William H. Swatos, eds., *The Rapture of Politics: The Christian Right and the United States Approaching the year 2000* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1995), 22.

¹²⁰ Marsden, *Religion and American Culture*, 283.

¹²¹ Jerry Falwell, "An Agenda for the 1980s," in Neuhaus and Cromartie, eds., *Piety and Politics*, 113-116.

¹²² Marsden, *Religion and American Culture*, 277., see also, Yaakov Ariel, "American Fundamentalists and the Emergence of a Jewish State," in Jay P. Dolan and James P. Wind, eds., *New Dimensions in American Religious History: Essays in Honor of Martin E. Marty* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1993), 307.

Falwell had defended the apartheid regime in South Africa and Robertson had contributed funds to the Contras in the 1980s, William Martin argues that “[m]ost importantly, and consistently, virtually all segments of the contemporary Christian Right have been staunch supporters of Israel...”¹²³ Many scholars view the NCR as a reactive movement concerned mainly with moral issues, such as abortion and school prayer, but this thesis will argue that the NCR was also concerned with foreign policy issues and influenced by Christian Zionism, played a key role in transitioning pro-Israel support into the Republican Party.

With the rise of the New Christian Right as a political force in the 1980s, Christian Zionism became “connected to political power as never before.”¹²⁴ Yaakov Ariel argues that while Christian Zionism was “on the whole passive, the 1970s and 1980s witnessed an attempt on the part of American premillennialists to use their influence on American politics to promote the cause of the Jewish state.”¹²⁵ Influential leaders of the NCR made support for Israel one of the main foreign policy goals of the movement. The dispensational view that the biblical land of Zion and the modern state of Israel are one in the same was popularized by the televangelism of preachers like Jerry Falwell, Jimmy Swaggert, and Pat Robertson.¹²⁶ The move by the NCR to become politically involved in support for Israel was part of a larger shift in pro-Israel support as “by 1980, it was no longer clear that the Democratic Party was better disposed to Israel

¹²³ William Martin, “The Christian Right and American Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 114 (Spring 1999), 66-80.

¹²⁴ Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming*, x.

¹²⁵ Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 121. For other arguments about political Christian Zionism as a unique development of the 1980s, see: Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 200,

¹²⁶ Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics*, 6 and Bert DeVries, “Modern Israel and Biblical Prophecy,” in Haddad and Wagner, *All in the Name of the Bible*, 44.

than was the Republican Party.”¹²⁷ As a minority movement within Protestant evangelicalism throughout most of the twentieth century, Christian Zionism had a limited impact on U.S. relations with the Middle East. By the end of the 1970s, with the rise of the NCR in America and the Likud Party in Israel, the stage was set for Christian Zionism to become a political force of influence.

¹²⁷ Merkley, *American Presidents, Religion, and Israel*, 151.

Chapter Three: The Rise of Political Christian Zionism, 1977-1998: Two Case Studies of Influence: Jerry Falwell, and the AWACS Battle

Alliance Building: The Rise of Political Christian Zionism in America, 1977-1998

Despite the wealth of information on the historical origins of Christian Zionism, relatively little scholarly work has specifically addressed the political activities of modern Christian Zionists in America.¹ From 1977 to 1989 the NCR became a political force and a vehicle for Christian Zionism's growth as a political force, mainly during the Reagan era. Under the administration of George Bush in the early 1990s Christian Zionism retreated as a political force in America with the fall of the NCR, but by the second term of Bill Clinton again became prominent. The shift of power to the Republican Party under Reagan was a major transition period for the domestic base of pro-Israel support, which had been primarily based in the American Jewish community and the Democratic Party. By 1980 many of the more hawkish liberals had moved out of the Democratic Party to form the base of the neo-conservative bloc within the Republican Party.² These neo-conservatives aligned with the NCR as a political bloc and under Reagan the shifting of pro-Israel support into the Republican Party was an important element in raising the political importance of Christian Zionism.

With the growing power of evangelicals as political actors, both Israeli and American Jews actively sought the support of the NCR in the late 1970s and 1980s. This was seen in high-level contacts made by Israeli leaders with important figures in the

¹ See: Grace Halsell, *Forcing God's Hand: Why Millions Pray for a Quick Rapture and Destruction of the Planet Earth*. Rev ed., (Beltsville, Maryland: Amana Publications, 2003), Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, Merkley, *Christian Attitudes towards the State of Israel*, Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon*, Anderson, *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy*, and Gary Burge, *Whose Land? Whose Promise?: What Christians are not being told about Israel and the Palestinians* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2003)

NCR, like Jerry Falwell. American Jewish organizations, notably the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) shifted to the right in the 1980s and fostered ties with Christian evangelicals and fundamentalists.³ The newfound alliance between evangelicals and Jews was based on a congruence of interest, namely to vigorously support a strong U.S. relationship with Israel.

While the NCR was the main conduit for Christian Zionism becoming connected with political power in the United States, it is important to note that Christian Zionist attitudes and activities also transcended the boundaries of the NCR.⁴ This was seen most prominently in the rise of Christian evangelical organizations, both in America and Israel, who actively promoted Christian support for Israel through a variety of activities. From lobby efforts at the congressional and executive level, ad campaigns to muster Christian support of Israel, and providing financial support for Israel through tourism, these organizations were the most visible manifestations of Christian Zionism and formed the backbone of Christian support for Israel. Often aligning with the NCR on support for Israel, these organizations did not involve themselves in the larger domestic agenda of the NCR and remained independent of it. By the 1980s Christian Zionism was a growth industry in America both through the rising political clout of the NCR and the significant activities of Christian organizations that mobilized support for Israel. This growth occurred mainly during the Reagan administration, but had its roots during the administration of another American president friendly to evangelicals: Jimmy Carter.

² Among the leaders of the neo-conservative movement were influential Jews, most notably seen in the editor of *Commentary*, Irving Kristol.

³ Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 221.

⁴ Richard Stockton, "Christian Zionism: Prophecy and Public Opinion," *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Spring 1987), 234-253.

The origins of modern Christian Zionism as a political movement in the United States can be traced to November of 1977. Two events facilitated this development. First, there was the famous speech by President Jimmy Carter when he became the first U.S. president to speak of a “Palestinian homeland.”⁵ This alienated many of the evangelicals who had supported Carter during the 1976 election; they became further disillusioned when on October 1, 1977 the Carter administration issued a joint communiqué with the Soviet Union calling for a new Geneva conference to address the Arab-Israeli peace process.⁶ Many evangelicals were troubled by these developments and voiced their concerns in a national ad campaign that strongly condemned the direction of U.S. policy in the Middle East under Carter.

The advertisement, entitled “Evangelicals Concern for Israel,” was printed in newspapers and magazines nationwide in November of 1977.⁷ It stated that “We the undersigned Evangelical Christians affirm our belief in the right of Israel to exist as a free and independent nation and in this light we voice our grave apprehension regarding the recent direction of American foreign policy vis-a-vis the Middle East.”⁸ The ad strongly opposed the joint U.S.-U.S.S.R. statement on the Geneva Conference and asserted that “most evangelicals understand the Jewish homeland generally to include the territory

⁵ Carter referred to a “Palestinian homeland” in a speech at Notre Dame University on May 2, 1977, for reference to speech and reaction to it, see: “James Reston, “The Policy of Confusion,” *New York Times*, May 13, 1977.

⁶ For reference to the joint U.S.-U.S.S.R. statement, see: Burton I. Kaufman. *The Arab Middle East and the United States: Inter-Arab Rivalry and Superpower Diplomacy* (New York: Twyane Publishers, 1996), 107.

⁷ The ad appeared in the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Chicago Sun Times*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*, among others, for reference, see: James M. Wall, “Israel and the Evangelicals,” *Christian Century*, November 23, 1977.

⁸ “Evangelicals Concern for Israel,” Paid Advertisement. *Chicago Sun Times*, November 9, 1977. The signers of the advertisement included: W.A. Criswell, a prominent Dallas pastor, Hudson T. Armstrong, the past president of the National Association of Evangelicals, John T. Walvoord, the president of the Dallas Theological Seminary, G. Douglas Young, the president of the Holy Land Studies in Jerusalem, and even the evangelical singer Pat Boone.

west of the Jordan River.”⁹ These evangelicals’ motivation was rooted in their religious beliefs: “The time has come for Evangelical Christians to affirm their belief in biblical prophecy and Israel’s divine right to the land by speaking out now.”¹⁰ For these Christian Zionists, Israel’s rights to its property were based on more than ownership, it was the Jewish peoples by divine right. This ad campaign marked the starting point for political activities by evangelicals on behalf of Israel in the U.S. and became a model for future actions.

As the advertisement received vigorous debate within evangelical circles, it also had the effect of promoting a dialogue between evangelicals and Jews in America.¹¹ Long divided by historical antipathy, religion, geography, and political orientation, many conservative evangelicals and Jews realized they shared a deep commitment to supporting the state of Israel.¹² While American Jewish leaders and organizations were wary of evangelical attempts to convert them, they saw the potential of a political alliance with an estimated 40 million evangelicals who shared the religious beliefs of the first “born again” president, Jimmy Carter. In a December 1977 meeting at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, sponsored by the American Jewish Committee and the Southern Baptists of Texas, evangelical and Jewish leaders discussed religion, politics,

⁹ Ibid., the territory “west of the Jordan River” included the West Bank and East Jerusalem, areas under occupation by Israel since 1967 and not recognized as part of Israel by official U.S. policy, which was based on U.N. resolutions 242 and 338.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ On debate within evangelicalism about the ad campaign, see: James M. Wall, “Israel and the Evangelicals.”

¹² On the historical tensions between Evangelicals and Jews, see: David Rausch. *Communities in Conflict: Evangelicals and Jews* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1991).

and support for Israel.¹³ The connections built in these initial meetings between Jews and evangelicals became a full-fledged political alliance by the 1980 presidential election.

Melani McAlister argues that “[t]he importance of Israel as an issue in the 1980 elections has been overlooked.”¹⁴ Indeed, frustration over Carter’s handling of American policy toward Israel was one catalyst for many evangelicals and Jews to switch parties and join the coalition that elected republican Ronald Reagan to the presidency in 1980.¹⁵ Under Reagan, the growth of Christian Zionism in America would increase rapidly as the Israeli government joined American Jews in aligning with conservative evangelicals. A series of high-profile meetings between evangelical leaders and the Israeli government took place in late 1980 and 1981.¹⁶ The logic for Israel was simple: as an aid to Prime Minister Begin put it, “the evangelicals are a pillar that Israel has in the United States. They number 10 times the Jews in America and they are outspoken...naturally we look kindly on what they are doing.”¹⁷ Despite their many differences, American Jews also recognized the growing political power of American fundamentalists and continued to promote an alliance.¹⁸ In November of 1982 a high-profile meeting between evangelical

¹³ Kenneth A. Briggs, “Christians and Jews Seek New Dialogue,” *New York Times*, December 11, 1977., and, Briggs, “Christians and Jews Seeking New Understanding,” *New York Times*, April 17, 1978. Briggs notes that a major impetus for the increasing contacts between evangelicals and Jews was the 1977 ad campaign in support of Israel.

¹⁴ McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, 196.

¹⁵ Tivnan, *The Lobby*, 134. Tivnan notes that Carter had 68 percent of the Jewish vote in 1976, but in 1980 received only 45 percent, and all-time low for a Democratic candidate. On the evangelical vote, which galvanized by the NCR, went heavily to Reagan with 61 percent of white Protestants voting for the California Governor, see: “Politics and the Pulpit,” *Newsweek*, September 17, 1984.

¹⁶ Megan Rosenfeld, “Prime Minister Meets the Evangelists,” *Washington Post*, April 16, 1980., William Claiborne, “Israelis Look on U.S. Evangelical Christians As Potent Allies in Battle With Arab States,” *Washington Post*, March 23, 1981., Martin Schram, “Jerry Falwell Vows Amity With Israel,” *Washington Post*, September 12, 1981., and David K. Shieler, “Israel Is Cultivating Some Unlikely Friends,” *New York Times*, December 1, 1981.

¹⁷ Claiborne, “Israelis Look on U.S. Evangelical Christians As Potent Allies in Battle With Arab States.”

¹⁸ The most important article on this development is Irving Kristol, “The Political Dilemma of American Jews,” *Commentary*, July 1984, 23-29., where Kristol a Jewish neo-con calls for American Jews to align with fundamentalists because of their shared support for Israel., see also: Majorie Hyer, “Fundamentalist Christians, Jews Plan ‘Solidarity Sabbath,’” *Washington Post*, October 30, 1982., Hyer, “Fundamentalists

and Jewish leaders occurred in Washington with evangelicals pledging to support Israel.¹⁹ A key element in the growing alliances between Israeli and American Jews and Christian Zionists was the proliferation of Christian groups whose sole purpose was to support Israel.

The most politically active of American Christian Zionist groups in the 1980s was the National Christian Leadership Council for Israel (NCLCI).²⁰ In October of 1981 the NCLCI sponsored a forum to attempt to develop Christian Zionist pressure groups in each of the 435 congressional districts.²¹ This effort did not lead to any significant alliances between the diverse Christian groups that supported Israel, but did lead the NCLCI to become a leader in pro-Israel activity. In 1982 the NCLCI launched another nation-wide ad campaign for Israel entitled, “Christians in Solidarity With Israel.”²² This came after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which received widespread criticism in America and abroad. The ad called for Christians to support Israel and held that “the Israeli action against the heavily armed PLO and Syrian forces in Lebanon was a justified response of a sovereign state to repeated provocations and attacks against Israel’s civilian population.”²³ In 1985, the NCLCI again engaged in an ad campaign, this time speaking out against the “Zionism is Racism” U.N. resolution of 1975. The ad, entitled “Christians

Join Jews in Strong Support for Israel,” *Washington Post*, November 13, 1982., Paula Herbut, “Evangelicals, Rabbis Joint to Back Israel,” *Washington Post*, February 26, 1983.

¹⁹ “Evangelical-Christian Declaration of Support for Israel and the American Jewish Community,” Evangelical-Christian and Jewish Leadership Encounter, November 11, 1982, Washington D.C. Wagner Personal Collection.

²⁰ The NCLCI founded by David A. Lewis, and was originally called “Christians Concerned for Israel.”

²¹ Majorie Hyer, “30 Diverse Groups of American Christians Mobilize in Support of Israel,” *Washington Post*, October 30, 1981.

²² “Christians in Solidarity With Israel,” Paid Advertisement, *New York Times*, August 1, 1982.

²³ Ibid.

Speak Out On Israel and Zionism” stated that, “We see it as urgent that Christians speak out against the vicious anti-Semitism that hides under the cloak of anti-Zionism.”²⁴

These ad campaigns were only a part of the activities that the NCLCI engaged in on behalf of Israel during the 1980s. Under its early title of Christians Concerned for Israel, the NCLCI lobbied Congress to oppose the sale of the airborne warning and control aircraft (AWACS) to Saudi Arabia in 1981.²⁵ Although the AWACS sale eventually passed in the Senate, this marked one of the first times a Christian organization actively became involved in a lobby effort and signaled growing alliance of the Jewish pro-Israel lobby and Christian Zionists. The NCLCI again was involved in lobbying Congress in 1984 during the contentious debates in the House of Representatives over whether to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, which will be addressed in next chapter.²⁶ Alongside of the ad campaigns and lobby efforts, the NCLCI also supported Israel by promoting and financing Christian tourism to Israel.²⁷ On the advice of Menachem Begin, David Lewis, the founder of the NCLCI, formed Lewis Tours to bring American evangelicals to Israel and continued the strong ties between the Israeli government and Christian tourist dollars.²⁸

In addition to the NCLCI, other Christian Zionists groups organizing in America to support Israel through a variety of activities. Mike Evans Ministries, which was

²⁴ “Christians Speak Out On Israel and Zionism,” Paid Advertisement. *New York Times*, October 24, 1985.

²⁵ Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics*, 178-179. The role of the NCLCI in the AWACS Congressional debate will be treated more fully in the AWACS case study.

²⁶ The Embassy Debate involved the proposed move of the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, seen by most as the first step towards U.S. acknowledgment of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. It was also one of the issues that generated the most lobby activity by Christian Zionists and will be treated more fully in Chapter Four.

²⁷ Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 214.

²⁸ Ibid., On the importance of Christian tourism to Israel in the 1980s, which was the number one industry at the time, see: Ruth Mouly, *The Religious Right and Israel: The Politics of Armageddon* (Chicago: Midwest Research, 1985), 39.

described as an “intercessory arm to the nation of Israel,” produced a television program entitled *Jerusalem DC*, which called for viewers to send money and sign a declaration declaring Jerusalem to be the undivided capital of the Jewish people.²⁹ In 1982, a group called Christians for Israel aligned with U.S. Congressman Mark D. Siljander (R-MI) to raise support for Israel during the criticism it was receiving following the Lebanon invasion.³⁰ Christians for Israel sent out a packet of information, including letters from Siljander and Jerry Falwell, calling for Christians to send a check immediately “to promote, establish, and maintain good relations between the United States and Israel.”³¹ In 1983 Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein formed the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews to foster ties between the two groups and raise funds for various humanitarian efforts in Israel.³² Perhaps the most controversial Christian Zionist group operating during the 1980s was the Jerusalem Temple Foundation. Formed by Terry Risenhoover and Douglas W. Krieger, this organization’s goal was the rebuilding of the Jewish temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, a key sign of the coming return of Christ. There is little known about the details of this group, but it is clear that they received extensive backing from other evangelical Christian Zionists in America.³³

Coinciding with this growth of the NCR and Christian Zionist organizations in America “was the appearance in Israel of bodies of evangelicals who were promoting

²⁹ “Evangelical Christian Zionism in America,” A Special Bulletin Compiled by the Palestine Human Rights Campaign., This document was generously loaned to the author from the personal collection of Dr. Don Wagner of North Park University, a leading scholar on Christian Zionism. Hereafter documents from this collection will be referred to as: Wagner Personal Collection.

³⁰ There is no apparent connection between this group and the British Christian Zionist group by the same name that was founded in 1985.

³¹ “Christians for Israel,” Papers included in the Wilcox Collection, University of Kansas Library, Lawrence, Kansas.

³² Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 227-229.

³³ Louis Rapoport, “Slouching towards Armageddon: Links with Evangelicals,” *Jerusalem Post International Edition*, June 17-24, 1984.

Christian support for the state of Israel.”³⁴ The most important of these groups was the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, which was created in 1980 and supported Israel through a variety of activities, from fundraising to lobbying the U.S. Congress.³⁵ Stephen Sizer has extensively studied the organization and argues that, with a membership of over 100,000 and ‘ambassadors’ in 140 countries, the ICEJ is probably the most influential of all Christian Zionist organizations.³⁶ The ICEJ organized events designed to increase Christian support for Israel, such as the 1985 Christian Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, and was seen by many Israelis as representing millions of evangelicals worldwide.³⁷

The 1985 Christian Zionist Congress issued a series of resolutions: one of the most controversial declared, “All nations should move their embassies to Israel,” which became a focal point of Christian Zionist lobby efforts.³⁸ Throughout the 1980s the ICEJ lobbied the Israeli U.S. governments, continued to promote Christian support of Israel through other Christian Zionist Congresses, encouraged Christian tourism to Israel, and helped foster the growing relationship between Israel’s Likud Party and Christian

³⁴ Merkley, *American Presidents, Religion, and Israel*, 150.

³⁵ ‘Christian Group Plans ‘Embassy’ in Jerusalem,” *Washington Post*, September 23, 1980., “David K. Shipler, “1,000 Christian ‘Zionists’ Rally in Jerusalem,” *New York Times*, September 25, 1980., see also: Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon*, 97. The story of how the ICEJ came into existence is quite interesting as following a 1980 Knesset Law declaring Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel, 13 foreign Embassies left Jerusalem in protest to move to Tel Aviv (the status of Jerusalem was contentious and many foreign countries, including the U.S., kept their embassies in Tel Aviv to not support a solely Jewish Jerusalem as capital of Israel). Begin gave the ICEJ the former residence of the Chilean Embassy, which was also the family home of Edward Said, a well-known Palestinian scholar living in the U.S. in the 1980s

³⁶ Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 101-102.

³⁷ Yaakov Ariel, “A Christian Fundamentalist Vision of the Middle East: Jan Willem van der Hoeven and the International Christian Embassy,” in *Spokesmen for the Despised: Fundamentalist Leaders of the Middle East*, edited by R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 388-389., on the ICEJ see also, Ariel, “Born Again in a Land of Paradox: Christian Fundamentalists in Israel,” *Faith and History*, 28, No. 2 (Summer 1996), 35-49.

³⁸ “Declaration Of The International Christian Zionist Leadership Congress,” Basel, Switzerland, August 27-29, 1985. Wagner Personal Collection. The ICEJ was one of several Christian groups to actively lobby in the U.S. Congress to move the U.S. Embassy from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv.

fundamentalists in America.³⁹ In 1985 some disaffected members of the ICEJ formed Christians for Israel, which later became involved in aiding Soviet Jews to immigrate to Israel.⁴⁰ By 1981 Christian Zionists were even involved in broadcasting pro-Israel messages in southern Lebanon through the “Voice of Hope” radio station financed by American Christians and protected by Major Saad Haddad, a Lebanese Christian militia leader.⁴¹ In 1984, a television station was added, called “Middle East TV,” and run under the auspices of Haddad, the station aired Pat Robertson’s *700 Club* as well as cartoons about the Bible to Lebanese and Israeli homes.⁴² In addition to the activities of these organizations, high-level contacts between American Christian Zionists and Israeli and U.S. government officials also worked to promote the dispensationalist agenda during the Reagan era.

Don Wagner notes that one of the “regular features of the Reagan White House was a series of seminars and briefings the administration gave its Christian ‘right’ supporters.”⁴³ On March 19, 1984 one of these programs featured Jewish and Christian leaders and had a session entitled “The Situation in the Middle East” with Robert McFarlane, the assistant to the President for National Security Affairs speaking.⁴⁴ This briefing was attended by nearly every leader of American fundamentalism and Christian Zionism, including Hal Lindsey, David Lewis (founder of NCLCI), Pat

³⁹ “3,000 Evangelicals Meet in Jerusalem,” *New York Times*, October 18, 1981., Edward Walsh, “Christian Right Embraces Israel,” *Washington Post*, November 21, 1984., on other Christian Zionist Congresses, see: International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, *Christians and Israel: Essays in Biblical Zionism and Islamic Fundamentalism* (Jerusalem: ICEJ, 1996).

⁴⁰ Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 102-103.

⁴¹ William Claiborne and Jonathon C. Randal, “U.S. Christians Beam Religion, Politics, Into Troubled Air of Southern Lebanon,” *Washington Post*, March 18, 1981.

⁴² “TV Diversity Grows in Israel,” *New York Times*, April 4, 1984.

⁴³ Wagner, “Reagan and Begin, Bibi and Jerry,” 8.

⁴⁴ “March 12 Program and Invitation list from the White House, Washington D.C.,” Wagner Personal Collection., see also: “No Absolute Answers,” *Charisma*, June 1984.

Robertson, Jimmy Swaggert, and Dr. John E. Walvoord.⁴⁵ High level contacts between Christian Zionist leaders and Israeli officials also took place at the National Prayer Breakfasts in Honor of Israel, modeled after the National Prayer Breakfasts. At the 1985 National Prayer Breakfast in Honor of Israel, the keynote speaker was the Israeli Ambassador to the U.N. at the time, Benjamin Netanyahu, whose presentation was entitled “Christian Zionism and the Jewish Restoration.”⁴⁶ At the National Prayer Breakfast in Honor of Israel in 1987, the master of ceremonies was Ed McAteer (head of the Religious Roundtable) and featured a keynote speech from Israeli Prime Minister Yitshak Shamir, via satellite from Jerusalem.⁴⁷ While all of these factors played a role in the political rise of Christian Zionism in the United States, it was popular preachers like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson who had both the media empires and political muscle to promote Christian Zionism.

Falwell is a pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church and founder of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. He rose to political prominence in the 1980s as the head of the Moral Majority, whose charter stated that “[s]upport for Israel is one of the essential commitments of the Moral Majority.”⁴⁸ Throughout the 1980s Falwell was engaged in a variety of activities in support of Israel: pressuring the U.S. government on Israel issues, leading tours to Israel, and appealing to Christians to support Israel on his television show *The Old Time Gospel Hour* and newsletter, the *Moral Majority Report*.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Ibid. Other leaders of the Christian Right were also present, including Ed McAteer (President of the Religious Roundtable) and Tim LaHaye.

⁴⁶ “Christian Zionism and The Jewish Restoration,” by Benjamin Netanyahu, Address at the National Prayer Breakfast in Honor of Israel, Washington D.C., February 6, 1985; Wagner Personal Collection.

⁴⁷ “6th National Prayer Breakfast in Honor of Israel,” Wagner Personal Collection.

⁴⁸ Jerry Falwell, “An Agenda for the 1980s,” in Nehaus and Cromartie, *Piety and Politics*, 113-116.

⁴⁹ Falwell’s Old Time Gospel Hour was carried on 392 stations by 1984 and his Moral Majority Report was distributed to over 50,000 subscribers, see: Myra MacPherson, “The Rise of the Falwell Empire,” *Washington Post*, September 26, 1984.

As perhaps the key figure in the alliance between Christian fundamentalists and Israel, Falwell was a significant factor in the growth of Christian Zionism in the 1980s and will receive further attention in a case study in this chapter. Pat Robertson is another key figure in the NCR who promoted the cause of Christian Zionism through his media network and political power. The founder of the Christian Broadcasting Network as well as one of the leaders of the Christian Coalition, Robertson promoted Christian support of Israel based upon his views of Bible prophecy on his popular television program, the *700 Club*.⁵⁰ Sizer notes that “[w]ith the high-profile support of fundamentalist leaders like Falwell and Robertson...Christian Zionism [became] synonymous with American evangelicalism.”⁵¹ With the NCR becoming a political force in the Republican Party during the 1980s, the views of Christian leaders like Robertson and Falwell also played an important role in transitioning support for Israel to the right in American politics.

The activities of Christian Zionists between 1977 and 1989 involved supporting Israel at a variety of levels: financial (tourism), moral (statements of support), and political pressure (ad campaigns, lobby efforts). The Reagan era was one of growth for Christian Zionism in America, as well as for alliances between American and Israeli Jews with Christian evangelicals. These Christian Zionists played a role in the base of support for Israel in America during a period when Ronald Reagan solidified the U.S.-Israeli relationship with agreements to maintain Israel’s security as well as a free-trade agreement during the two countries.⁵² Despite the decline in prestige of the NCR after

⁵⁰ Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 92. Robertson’s *700 Club* is aired in 71 languages today and has an estimated viewer-ship of 7 million. Robertson’s dispensationalist views are distributed to his Christian constituents through his newsletter *Pat Robertson’s Perspective*.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁵² Reagan’s administration enacted the first official agreements explicitly beholding America to maintain Israel’s security, the Memorandum’s of Understanding in 1981, 1983, and 1988, as well as the 1985 Free-Trade agreement between the two nations.

1989—when the Moral Majority disbanded and Pat Robertson’s bid for president failed—the rise of political Christian Zionism continued during the Bush and Clinton administrations.

Christian Zionism in the 1990s would be a continuation of many of the trends established in the 1980s. Israel’s Likud Party made further inroads in gaining support from the Christian Right during a period when American Jewish support for Israel was waning.⁵³ In 1991 President Bush was delaying a proposed 10 billion in loan guarantees to help Israel settle the Soviet Jews flooding into the country because of concerns that the money would be used to settle these new immigrants in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir mobilized Israel’s Christian Zionist supporters to help lobby the U.S. government to push through the loans. This was seen most explicitly in the massive rallies held by the ICEJ in Jerusalem in 1991 and in Washington in 1992 to pressure Bush for approval.⁵⁴ Partly because of this heavy public pressure on Bush, as well as Israeli movements toward the peace process, Bush approved the loans in 1992.

With the election of Benjamin Netanyahu bringing the Likud Party back to power in Israel after a four-year hiatus, Israel’s relationship with the Christian Zionists in America again became prominent. Don Wagner notes that within a few months of Likud’s election victory, Netanyahu convened the Israel-Christian Advocacy Council in

⁵³ Shindler, “Likud and the Christian Dispensationalists,” 155, and Wagner, “Reagan and Begin,” 9. The main drop in Jewish support for Israel in America was in monetary donations, Likud wanted evangelicals to fill the gap of financial support with lowered donations by the United Jewish Appeal and other Jewish agencies., see: Aryeh Dean Cohen, “Evangelical Christians supply major source of UJA donations,” *Jerusalem Post*, November 13, 1997. On the decline of support for Israel within the American Jewish community see: Tony Kushner and Alisa Solomon, eds., *Wrestling with Zion: Progressive Jewish-American Responses to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (New York: Grove Press, 2003).

⁵⁴ On Jerusalem rallies, see: Evelyn Gordon, “Christian Embassy plans support for loan guarantees,” *Jerusalem Post*, September 20, 1991., and Eliyahu Tal, “The Christians who care for Zion,” *Jerusalem Post*, October 6, 1991., on Washington rally, see: Ken Sidney, “For the Love of Zion,” *Christianity Today*, March 5, 1992.

conjunction with the Israeli Ministry of Tourism to continue developing ties with American evangelicals.⁵⁵ Netanyahu saw American evangelicals as allies against the Clinton-led peace process, which Likud opposed because of the land for peace proposals. The relationship between the two was seen most prominently when, in a major snub to President Clinton, Netanyahu met privately with Jerry Falwell and other Christian leaders in January of 1998.⁵⁶

Perhaps the most significant development for Christian Zionism in America was the formation of the Christian's Israel Public Action Campaign (CIPAC) in 1989.⁵⁷ Founded by Cal Hubbard and Richard Hellman, both of whom were tied to the ICEJ and had dispensationalist backgrounds, CIPAC was the first registered Christian pro-Israel lobby and became heavily involved with lobbying at the congressional level as well as fostering ties with AIPAC and other pro-Israel organizations. The aim of CIPAC was stated succinctly by Hubbard: "CIPAC would become a Christian counterpart to AIPAC."⁵⁸ CIPAC engaged in a variety of lobby efforts on behalf of Israel: opposing U.S. peacekeeping roles in the Golan Heights, urging U.S. support for a united Jerusalem, and pressuring Congress to maintain high levels of financial and military support to Israel. As the most active and influential Christian Zionist lobby group, CIPAC will be examined in detail in the following chapter of this thesis.⁵⁹

The International Christian Embassy was heavily involved with assisting the immigration of many Soviet Jews to Israel after Gorbachev had relaxed Soviet emigration

⁵⁵ Wagner, "Reagan and Begin, Bibi and Jerry," 8.

⁵⁶ Steven Erlanger, "Netanyahu, in Washington, Courts Conservatives," *New York Times*, January 20, 1998.

⁵⁷ Haim Shapiro, "Pro-Israel Lobby, Evangelical Style," *Jerusalem Post*, October 20, 1989.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ James H. Noyes, "Does Washington Really Support Israel?," *Foreign Policy*, No. 106 (Spring 1997), 146., and Michelle Rachelle, "Right-Wing Extremists Endanger Israel and the Jews," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, Vol XIV, Issue 5 (December, 1995), 7.

policies. By 1990 the ICEJ claimed to have collected close to one million dollars from Christian donors paying the cost of bringing twelve planeloads to Soviet immigrants to Israel.⁶⁰ Greatly aided by Christian organizations, the ICEJ assisted roughly 40,000 of the 700,000 Soviet immigrants coming to Israel by 1998.⁶¹ Organized by the ICEJ, annual Feast of Tabernacles celebrations brought Christian tourists to Israel in record numbers, including a record 6,000 alone for the 1992 gathering with the highlight being speeches by Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollak and Prime Minister Tizhak Rabin.⁶²

Christian organizations continued to form to support Israel through a variety of activities. The National Unity Coalition for Israel, claiming to be the largest organization of its kind, supported Israel by coordinating Christian fundamentalist efforts, such as lobbying Congress and the president on policies concerning Israel.⁶³ The Unity Coalition for Israel was formed in 1994 and claimed to include over 200 Jewish and Christian organizations, including high profile Christian Zionist organizations like Bridges for Peace, the ICEJ, and Christians for Israel.⁶⁴ The NCLCI remained active in supporting Israel through public statements and forging contacts with Israeli leaders.⁶⁵ The ad campaigns that became a staple of Christian Zionist political activities in the 1980s continued in the 1990s. One such effort was a 1997 ad, “Christians Call For A United

⁶⁰ Greer Fay Cashman, “Christians Raise Funds For Soviet Immigration,” *Jerusalem Post*, October 5, 1990., on ICEJ assisting Soviet Jews, see also: Eliot Zimelman, “Christians sponsor 50th aliya flight,” *Jerusalem Post*, April 12, 1995.

⁶¹ Merkley, *Christian Attitudes Toward the State of Israel*, 173. The immigration of Soviet Jews was seen by dispensationalists as a fulfillment of the dispensationalist hope that Israel would be solely Jewish and motivated support as the events of 1967 had, for further argument on this line see: Shindler, “Likud and the Christian Dispensationists,” 175.

⁶² Haim Shapiro, “6,000 Christian Zionists here for festival,” *Jerusalem Post*, October 11, 1992., Rabin also was the keynote speaker at the 1995 gathering, see: Shapiro, “Rabin addresses Christian Embassy assembly,” *Jerusalem Post*, October 10, 1995.

⁶³ Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 223. NUCI was originally called Voices United for Israel when it was formed in 1990.

⁶⁴ UCFI webpage, www.israelunitycoalition.org, also see: Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 215.

⁶⁵ “A visit from good friends,” *Jerusalem Post*, January 15, 1992.

Jerusalem” which called for U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel and was signed by Christian leaders Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, and Ralph Reed.⁶⁶ Other organizations, like the Christian Friends of Israeli Communities, were involved in an “adopt-a-settlement” program that tied financial contributions of Christian churches to Israeli settlements.⁶⁷ In much the same way the Moral Majority made support for Israel a part of its mission, the Christian Coalition and Religious Roundtable worked to foster ties with American and Israeli Jews.⁶⁸

One more development of the 1990s deserves mention, in the tradition of Hal Lindsey and William Blackstone, dispensationalism was again popularized by a series of best-selling books in the *Left Behind* series. These books, which by 2003 had sold over 32 million copies, tell a fictional story about a group of people who live through the end-times and exhibits a clear dispensationalist theme.⁶⁹ Melani McAlister argues that these books are influential in the worldview they enact and notes that although Jerusalem is the prime set in this play, no Palestinians are ever mentioned.⁷⁰ With its widespread distribution the *Left Behind Series* promoted a dispensationalist worldview and a Christian

⁶⁶ “Christians Call For A United Jerusalem,” Paid Advertisement, *New York Times*, April 18, 1997.

⁶⁷ Ilene R. Prusher, “Israel’s Unlikely Ally: American Evangelicals,” *Christian Science Monitor*, April 24, 1998., and Sarah Honig, “Adopt-a settlement program to be launched during Succot,” *Jerusalem Post*, October 2, 1995., see also Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 226 and Anderson, *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy*, 45. The best known arrangement of this kind was between the Faith Bible Chapel of Arvada, Colorado and Ariel, a Jewish settlement in the West Bank.

⁶⁸ Haim Shapiro, “Visitor plans to organize U.S. Christians for Israel,” *Jerusalem Post*, January 7, 1994., Evelyn Gordon, “American evangelicals pledge support,” *Jerusalem Post*, March 24, 1992. Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition headed this effort by visiting Israel numerous times and fostering an alliance. The Religious Roundtable organized events to promote Christian support for Israel, see: “The Thirteenth Annual National Christian Prayer Breakfast,” Nashville, February 13, 1995. Wagner Personal Collection. Attendees included prominent leaders of both Republican and Democratic Parties, such as Jesse Helms and Vice President Al Gore.

⁶⁹ Melani McAlister, “Prophecy, Politics, and the Popular: The Left Behind Series and Christian Fundamentalism’s New World Order,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102:4 (2003), 773. To put the 32 million in perspective, in the 1990s the Left Behind Series outsold John Grisham.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 791-792. On Left Behind Series and portrayal of Jews, see: Gorenberg, *The End of Days*, 31.

Zionist perspective to millions of Americans, influencing public opinion on Israel and Palestine.

It is clear from the evidence that Christian Zionism formed an important bloc of support for Israel throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. These Christians were motivated by their beliefs on Bible prophecy and supported Israel because they actively wanted to create the conditions for the second coming of Christ. Through fundamentalist evangelicals like Jerry Falwell, and best-selling books like Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth*, dispensationalism reached a mass audience and entered the mainstream of political life. Christian Zionist lobby groups like the NCLCI and CIPAC actively promoted the cause of Israel in Congress. Despite the wealth of information on the political activities of Christian Zionists: attempting to measure actual influence remains elusive. The prominent historian of American religion, George Marsden, has argued that "although impossible to measure, perhaps evangelicalism's greatest political impact on American policy during the past fifty years has been its role in broadening the popular base for an almost unreserved support for the state of Israel."⁷¹ This thesis will now turn to four case studies to gauge the impact of Christian Zionism on U.S. policy and attempt to offer some preliminary conclusions about its influence.

Jerry Falwell, Power Broker of Christian Zionism

One of the more interesting paradoxes of Christian Zionism in America is that it often brought together alliances of groups that were almost diametrically opposed. Despite sharp criticism from American Jews about his conservative domestic agenda, Jerry Falwell was one of the staunchest supporters of Israel in the 1980s and a key figure

in American Christian Zionism. Falwell was, and remains, pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church and founder of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. During the 1980s he was also at the head of a vast media empire, including the *Old Time Gospel Hour*, and became involved in politics through his organization the Moral Majority.⁷² As one of the key leaders of the New Christian Right in the 1980s, Falwell had unprecedented access to political leaders in America and Israel, which he used to promote a strong U.S. policy in support of Israel.

In his early ministry Falwell shunned politics, but by 1979 he was fully engaged in unifying the fragmented conservative and fundamentalist Christian community into a powerful voting bloc through his organization the Moral Majority. One aspect of the Moral Majority and Falwell's political activities that has received relatively little attention is the foreign policy concerns of the group and its leader.⁷³ Falwell's views on Israel were clearly stated in his political manifesto *Listen America* (1979); "If this nation wants her fields to remain white with grain, her scientific achievements to remain notable, and her freedom to remain intact, America must continue to stand with Israel."⁷⁴ The charter of the Moral Majority included support for Israel as one of its "essential commitments."⁷⁵ In an interview with Jewish lawyer Merrill Simon, Falwell stated that "It is my feeling that every American Christian should be exerting all influence available

⁷¹ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 77.

⁷² Falwell's "Old Time Gospel Hour" was carried on 392 television stations by 1984 and the annual income of Falwell's empire was over 72 million, see: Myra MacPherson, "The Rise of the Falwell Empire," *Washington Post*, September 26, 1984.

⁷³ For the purposes of this work only Falwell and the Moral Majority's political activity on behalf of Israel is examined; another major foreign policy concern of Falwell was support for the apartheid regime of South Africa. Falwell ignited a controversy in 1985 when he called South African Bishop Desmond Tutu a "phony,": for Falwell on South Africa, see: "Mr. Falwell on South Africa," *Washington Post*, August 22, 1985., "The Friends of Mr. Botha," *Newsweek*, September 2, 1985., and John Dillon, "Principles of Foreign Policy: Diplomacy and Scripture," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 21, 1986.

⁷⁴ Jerry Falwell. *Listen America!* (Toronto, London, New York, and Sydney: Bantam Books, 1979), 98.

⁷⁵ Jerry Falwell, "An Agenda for the 1980s," in Neuhaus and Cromartie, eds, *Piety and Politics*, 113-116.

to him in guaranteeing that his government is ever in total support of this land of Israel...”⁷⁶ On controversial issues, such as the borders of Israel, Falwell used biblical references to support his views that “the land” of Israel will include “that area promised to Abraham in Genesis 15:18.”⁷⁷

Falwell’s particular views on Israel and why the U.S. should support it met with a willing ally in Menachem Begin. In an April 16, 1980 meeting at the Blair House, Begin and Israel’s U.S. Ambassador Ephraim Evron met with eight evangelical Christian ministers, including Jerry Falwell.⁷⁸ The meeting was arranged by Falwell and the Israeli Embassy, and was designed to increase the ties between the Israeli government and American fundamentalist evangelicals. Begin stated that he would report the meeting to President Carter “to prove to him that not only the Jewish population supports our stand.”⁷⁹ What is important about this meeting is that it occurred during a time when Israel was receiving widespread criticism from the international community, and Carter, for its increasing settlement program under the Likud government. Falwell made clear what Begin meant when he said “our stand” by reading a letter that stated “We proclaim the Land of Israel encompasses Judea and Samaria as intergral parts of the Jewish patrimony, with Jerusalem its one and indivisible capital.”⁸⁰ Judea and Samaria are biblical names for the West Bank and the Golan Heights areas in the modern world. Begin saw Falwell as a potential ally that would move beyond a general support for Israel

⁷⁶ Merrill Simon. *Jerry Falwell and the Jews* (Middle Village, NY: Jonathon David, 1984), 99.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 62-63., the land promised to Abraham in Genesis would include parts of modern day Egypt, Syria and Lebanon. This view of the Israeli right to the land promised to Abraham is also part of “revisionist Zionism” that is an element of Likud Party philosophy.

⁷⁸ Megan Rosenfeld, “Prime Minister Meets the Evangelists,” *Washington Post*, April 16, 1980. Other evangelical ministers at the meeting included Rev. Adrian Rogers, the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Rev. James Kennedy.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

to support of specific Israeli policies, most prominently with issues of land occupied since 1967 and the final status of Jerusalem.

After Reagan's election brought the New Christian Right to political prominence, Begin and the Israelis continued to nurture their relationship with Falwell. In 1980, Falwell became the first Gentile to receive the Jabotinsky Award from Begin, who also gave him a Lear jet to facilitate his advocacy for Israel.⁸¹ Zeev Chafets, director of Israel's government press office in 1981, summed up the Israel government's view of the support of Falwell and other Christian fundamentalists: "Not only do they support Israel, but they particularly support Begin and the Likud government. How could we be displeased with that kind of friendship."⁸² On June 7, 1981 Begin telephoned Falwell immediately after Israel bombed the Osirak nuclear reactor in Iraq and asked him to help sway public opinion that Israel had acted defensively.⁸³ One of the more intriguing instances of the Falwell-Begin alliance was during the AWACS battle in 1981. The American Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, had received reports that Begin had given Falwell a list of the senators voting for the sale, presumably in an attempt to help sway the vote.⁸⁴ Haig confronted both Begin and Falwell who denied the allegations, and with the AWACS sale going the way of the administration, the issue was dropped.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Hilton Obenzinger, "Zionism woos religious right," *The Guardian*, June 10, 1981, and Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 90. The Jabotinsky Award is named after Vladimir Jabotinsky, an early Zionist leader who advocated sole Jewish control of all the ancient territory of Israel and is recognized as the spiritual father of the Likud Party. The Award recognized Falwell's efforts on behalf of supporting Israel.

⁸² William Claiborne, "Israelis Look on U.S. Evangelical Christians As Potent Allies in Battle With Arab States," *Washington Post*, March 23, 1981.

⁸³ Martin Schram, Jerry Falwell Vows Affinity With Israel," *Washington Post*, September 12, 1981., see also: Melman and Raviv, *Friends in Deed*, 354-355.

⁸⁴ Haig, *Caveat*, 187., and David K. Shipler, "Israel is Cultivating Some Unlikely New Friends," *New York Times*, December 1, 1981.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Throughout the 1980s Falwell continued to engage himself politically in support for Israel, and Israel continued to be happy to receive his support even with American Jews often in opposition to Falwell on domestic issues. Falwell boasted in Jerusalem on November 20, 1983 that “[w]ithin five years it will be impossible for an official to be elected in the U.S. if he doesn’t support Israel.”⁸⁶ In 1984, Falwell publicly called on Reagan to “ask Pope John Paul II to recognize Israel before the United States resumes diplomatic ties with the Vatican.”⁸⁷ In a meeting in Miami with leading Jewish rabbis, Falwell vowed to “mobilize 70 million conservative Christians for Israel and against anti-Semitism.”⁸⁸ When Israel was receiving widespread criticism following its invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Falwell and the Moral Majority spoke out publicly in support of Israel.⁸⁹ In a lobby campaign to oppose the sale of arms to Jordan during 1984 and 1985, AIPAC aligned with Falwell and other religious leaders in a successful effort to block the sale in Congress.⁹⁰ In addition to these efforts, Falwell also gave testimony in Congress in support of the proposed move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, which received extensive hearings in both houses of Congress in 1984.⁹¹

Falwell also supported Israel through a series of sponsored tours to the Holy Land in the 1980s.⁹² These tours not only provided Israel with much needed tourist dollars, but also forged further alliances between the Israeli government and American

⁸⁶ Haim Shapiro, “Falwell: Support for Israel essential for U.S. politician,” *Jerusalem Post*, November 21, 1983.

⁸⁷ “Falwell urges Reagan: Ask Pope to recognize Israel,” AP story, *Chicago Sun Times*, January 16, 1984. The Vatican did not establish diplomatic relations with Israel until 1993.

⁸⁸ Kathy Sawyer, “Falwell Attempts to Mend Interfaith Fences,” *Washington Post*, April 4, 1985.

⁸⁹ Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics*, 75-77.

⁹⁰ On AIPAC and Falwell alliance in opposition to the sale of arms to Jordan see: Steven V. Roberts, “Lobbyists Line Up the Power on Arms for Jordan,” *New York Times*, October 21, 1985.

⁹¹ Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 252. Falwell’s role in the Embassy Debate will be dealt with more fully in chapter four.

⁹² The tourism industry was extremely important to Israel’s economy, as it was the number one industry by the mid-1980s, see: Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics*, 117-118.

fundamentalist evangelicals. In November of 1983 “Jerry Falwell’s Friendship Tour to Israel” featured not only a lunch at the Sea of Galilee, but a banquet with former Prime Minister Menachem Begin and meetings with “top Israeli administration officials and Knesset members.”⁹³ One of these top officials was Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens, with Falwell also promising official visits to military sites to “experience first hand the battle Israel faces as a nation.”⁹⁴ Falwell also held the fifth annual “Summit Conference” of the Moral Majority in Jerusalem in 1983.⁹⁵

In 1985 Israel became the site of another Falwell led venture, the “Israel ’85 Prophecy Conference.”⁹⁶ Leading figures in the dispensationalist wings of American evangelicalism were invited to speak at the conference, including Dr. John Walvoord of the Dallas Theological Seminary and Dr. Tim LaHaye, future co-author of the *Left Behind* series.⁹⁷ But again, the main attraction was the Israeli government officials who Falwell brought in; this time he invited Yitzhak Shamir, Shimon Peres, Ariel Sharon, and Yitzhak Rabin, among others.⁹⁸ The Falwell led tours to Israel became a staple of the Israeli tourist industry and the Christian Right-Israeli alliance. Grace Halsell, a journalist who went on the 1983 and 1985 Falwell led tours agrees: “[t]ourist dollars helped cement the close relationship between Israeli leaders and Falwell.”⁹⁹

⁹³ “Jerry Falwell’s 1983 Friendship Tour To Israel,” *Moral Majority Report*, October 1983; Wagner Personal Collection.

⁹⁴ Ibid. Another of the leaders that tour members would get to meet was Major. Saad Haddad, the Commander of Christian Forces in Southern Lebanon.

⁹⁵ “Moral Majority Fifth Annual Summit Conference, Jerusalem 1983,” Wagner Personal Collection.

⁹⁶ “Israel ’85 Prophecy Conference,” Advertisement, Wagner Personal Collection.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid. Shamir was Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time and a future Prime Minister, Peres was the current Prime Minister, Sharon was Minister of Commerce and Industry at the time and also a future Prime Minister, Rabin was Minister of Defense and another future Prime Minister. Others listed as guests were Moshe Arens and Chaim Herzog, the President of Israel at the time.

⁹⁹ Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics*, 118.

By 1989 the Moral Majority was folding due to a lack of finances, the New Christian Right was reeling from the failed presidential bid of Pat Robertson, and the fundamentalist experiment with politics seemed a failure. Falwell would never again achieve the influence he had in the 1980s, but he continued to be active on behalf of Israel throughout the 1990s. In 1997 he was one of the signers of another national ad campaign, “Christians Call For A United Jerusalem,” that called for the Clinton administration to recognize a united Jerusalem as the sole capital of the Jewish people, and opposed efforts to make Jerusalem part of the Oslo peace process.¹⁰⁰ Falwell’s alliance with the Likud Party was also revived when Benjamin Netanyahu became Prime Minister in 1996. On February 19, 1998 Netanyahu met privately with Falwell and other evangelical leaders in Washington to raise support against the Clinton administration’s peace process efforts, especially on the issue of transferring land to Palestinian control.¹⁰¹ The timing of the meeting was significant as Netanyahu met with Falwell, a major political opponent of Clinton on domestic issues as well as the peace process, before a planned summit with Clinton.¹⁰²

Jerry Falwell was active in supporting Israel at a variety of levels throughout the 1980s and 1990s: financial (tourism), moral (statements of support), and political pressure (ad campaigns, lobby efforts). His political influence was heavily tied to the NCR and in his influence increased during periods when the political power of the NCR

¹⁰⁰ “Christians Call For A United Jerusalem,” Paid Advertisement., *New York Times*, April 18, 1997. Other signers of the ad included many leaders of the NCR: Pat Robertson, Oral Roberts, Ralph Reed, Ed McAteer, and Dr. David Lewis.

¹⁰¹ Steven Erlanger, “Netanyahu, in Washington, Courts Conservatives,” *New York Times*, January 20, 1998., Laurie Goldstein, “Evangelicals for Israel,” *New York Times*, January 21, 1998., and Carlyle Murphy, “Jewish Leaders in U.S. Assail Netanyahu Meeting With Evangelicals Is Scorned As A Mistake,” *Washington Post*, January 22, 1998.

was more prevalent. In assessing the political impact Falwell and the NCR had on foreign policy, Irvine H. Anderson argues that “...there is little evidence of extensive direct lobbying of Congress by Falwell or other prominent members of the Religious Right on the subject of Israel.”¹⁰³ From the evidence available, it is clear that a direct tie between Falwell and U.S. policy in the Middle East is difficult to support with evidence.¹⁰⁴ However, it is also clear that Falwell was an important figure in mobilizing Christian fundamentalist support for Israel and in making connections between the Israeli government and the New Christian Right in America. By making unconditional support for Israel and its policies a Christian obligation, Falwell was influential in affecting the public opinion of an estimated 40 million evangelicals. In a democratic system where public opinion matters, these evangelicals formed an important base of support for the U.S.-Israeli special relationship. Another important development that Falwell did have an impact on was in helping to base pro-Israel support within the Republican Party where, as Camille Mansour states, “fundamentalist support to Israel converges with that of the ‘new right’...which contributed to the electoral success of Ronald Reagan and George Bush.”¹⁰⁵

The period of 1977 to 1998 was a growth era for Christian Zionist groups in America, as well as for the alliances between American and Israeli Jews and fundamentalists. These Christian Zionists played a role in forming the base of support that Israel receives in the United States, but a measurement of its influence on U.S. policy

¹⁰² Goostein, “Evangelicals for Israel.” Clinton was furious at Netanyahu for meeting with Falwell, who had used his television program to sell a videotape that accused Clinton of selling drugs and murdering political opponents.

¹⁰³ Anderson, *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy*, 114-115.

¹⁰⁴ One issue that Falwell did get directly involved in was the Embassy debate, which will be addressed in chapter 6.

¹⁰⁵ Mansour, *Beyond Alliance*, 271.

remains tenuous. The next case study will examine the contentious AWACS debate in 1981 as a case study for the influence of Christian Zionism on a specific foreign policy issue.

The AWACS Debate: History

The proposed sale of airborne warning and control (radar surveillance) aircraft (AWACS) to Saudi Arabia in 1981 was one of the most dramatic confrontations between the pro-Israel lobby and a presidential administration. The proposed sale actually originated in the Carter administration but was left to Reagan to gain congressional approval. In March of 1981 the White House first informed Congress of a proposal to sell AWACS, as well conformal fuel tanks and AIM-9L Air-to-Air Missiles to Saudi Arabia.¹⁰⁶ The key element of the sale, the AWACS system, was described by a State Department official as “essentially, a flying radar platform which can detect and follow the movement of an airborne aircraft.”¹⁰⁷ In response to questions that AWACS would be used against Israel, a Department of State spokesman responded “we characterize it this way, that AWACS would be used primarily to protect Saudi oilfields.”¹⁰⁸

While the Reagan administration was preparing its case for Congress on the AWACS sale, AIPAC and the pro-Israel lobby was mobilizing to oppose the deal. It is important to remember that arms sales can only be blocked if a majority of both houses of Congress vote against the sale. This was a daunting task facing the pro-Israel lobby, but

¹⁰⁶ Department of State, “Administration Proposal to Sell AWACS, Conformal Fuel Tanks, and AIM-9L Air-to Air Missiles to Saudi Arabia,” Statement by Department of State, March 6, 1981. *American Foreign Policy Current Documents, 1981* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1984), 808.

¹⁰⁷ Department of State, “Reasons Why Sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia Would Not Threaten Israel,” Department of State Daily Briefing, April 23, 1981. *American Foreign Policy Current Documents, 1981*, 809.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

with Democratic majorities in both houses, AIPAC director Tom Dine was ready to test his theory of how Congress might check and balance a president's enthusiasm for foreign policy.¹⁰⁹ The strategy of AIPAC during the 1981 Saudi arms fight was to induce "the Administration to abandon" its policy, and the efforts of the pro-Israel lobby allowed Israel to remain silent on the issue.¹¹⁰

As the Reagan administration was working on its AWACS sale proposal for Congress and AIPAC was revving up its engines to oppose it, events in the Middle East had a profound impact on the debate. On June 7, 1981, Israeli aircraft bombed an Iraqi nuclear facility at Osirak, claiming it was developing nuclear weapons that threatened Israel's security.¹¹¹ Israel was found to have used American military equipment to carry out the raid, including the F-15 planes that were used, which violated the 1952 Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement between the U.S. and Israel.¹¹² Of major importance to the AWACS debate was the fact that Israel had flown over Saudi territory to conduct the raid, resulting in the Saudi's increasing their own lobby efforts to complete the AWACS sale.¹¹³ Secretary of State Alexander Haig argues that after Israel had admitted to flying over Saudi territory "[o]ur effort to downplay the significance of AWACS in the Arab-Israeli conflict became a casualty of the raid."¹¹⁴

After the raid the Reagan administration continued to have to portray the AWACS sale as not upsetting the balance of Middle East power between Israel and her

¹⁰⁹ Tivnan, *The Lobby*, 146-147.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 147, 152.

¹¹¹ Department of State, "Israel's Raid on Iraq's Nuclear Facility," State Department Press Release, *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. 81, No. 2053 (August 1981), 79.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ On fight between the Saudi lobby and pro-Israel lobby over AWACS, see: Frasor, *The USA and the Middle East since World War 2*, 162.

¹¹⁴ Haig, *Caveat*, 184.

neighbors.¹¹⁵ Reagan first sent a letter to Congress notifying them in principle of the administration's proposed sale of AWACS and other military equipment to Saudi Arabia on August 5, 1981.¹¹⁶ The official notification of the Reagan administration's proposed AWACS sale to Saudi Arabia went to Congress on October 1, 1981 with the provision that "[I]t poses no threat to Israel now or in the future."¹¹⁷ The White House pulled out all the stops to get the AWACS sale passed in Congress, even releasing statements from former national security officials, like Harold Brown and Henry Kissinger, in support of the sale.¹¹⁸ Despite the efforts by Reagan and his administration to sell the AWACS package to Congress, on October 14, 1981 the House of Representatives voted 301 to 111 in favor of House Resolution 194, which disapproved of the AWACS sale.¹¹⁹ The issue now went to the Senate, where Reagan was hopeful that he could still get the sale through.

After meeting stiff resistance early in the Senate debate, Reagan changed his strategy and added some important changes to the proposed sale of AWACS and other military equipment to Saudi Arabia. In a letter to Senate majority leader Howard Baker, Reagan stated that the AWACS deal would not occur until a series of conditions were met by the Saudis: this was designed to ease Senate fears about the AWACS sale

¹¹⁵ Department of State, "The Case for the Sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia," Statement by Secretary of Defense Weinburger before the Senate Armed Forces Committee, September 28, 1981. *American Foreign Policy Current Documents, 1981*, 812-815., see also: "Saudi Arabia and U.S. Security Policy," September 25, 1981. *Department of State Current Policy, No. 320*, (October 26, 1981), 1-4.

¹¹⁶ "Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Sale of AWACS and Other Air Defense Equipment to Saudi Arabia," *Public Papers of the President, Ronald Reagan 1981* (Washington D.C.: G.P.O., 1989), 694.

¹¹⁷ Department of State, "Congressional Notification of Administration Intent to Sell AWACS and F-15 Enhancement Items to Saudi Arabia," Statement by President Reagan, October 1, 1981. *American Foreign Policy Current Documents*, 815.

¹¹⁸ "Remarks Following a Meeting With Former National Security Officials on the Sale of AWACS Planes and Other Air Defense Equipment to Saudi Arabia," *PPP Reagan, 1981*, 889.

¹¹⁹ Department of State, "Administration Reaction to House Disapproval of AWACS sale," *American Foreign Policy Current Documents, 1981*, 823., on House disapproval of sale, see also: Reich, *Securing the Covenant*, 82.

threatening Israeli security.¹²⁰ After lacking the required votes, the White House lobby effort appeared to be paying off when nine senators decided to support the sale.¹²¹ These included four Republicans and four Democrats, notably Senator Roger W. Jepsen (R-IO), who after months of leading the no-sale camp switched his position to one of support.¹²² In a vote late on October 28, 1981 the Senate approved the AWACS sale by voting down a resolution to disapprove the sale by a vote of 52 to 48.¹²³

In describing the effort by the Reagan administration to get the AWACS sale passed in the Senate, Alexander Haig calls it “one of the most successful lobby efforts by a presidential administration.”¹²⁴ AIPAC’s powerful role in Congress was made clear by the difficulty Reagan and the White House had in passing an arms sale to Saudi Arabia that was part of a bilateral relationship between the two countries.¹²⁵ Despite the fact that the AWACS sale eventually went through, the pro-Israel lobby and AIPAC gained an even greater reputation in Washington. George Ball argues that after the narrow victory, neither Reagan nor Congress dared to again cross swords with AIPAC.¹²⁶ This was seen especially in 1984 when Congress voted down a proposed arms package to Jordan, under heavy pressure from Israel and the pro-Israel lobby.¹²⁷ In 1986, a White House request to

¹²⁰ Department of State, “Assurances on Sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia,” *American Foreign Policy Current Documents, 1981*, 824-826.

¹²¹ Charles Mohr, “9 More Senators Support President On Sale of AWACS,” *New York Times*, October 28, 1981.

¹²² Ibid. The Democrats were David L. Boren of Oklahoma, J. James Exon of Nebraska, Walter D. Huddleston of Kentucky, and John Melcher of Montana; in addition to Jepsen, the Republicans were: Bob Dole of Kansas, Charles E. Grassley of Iowa, Frank H. Murkowski of Alaska, and Harrison Schmidt of New Mexico.

¹²³ Department of State, “Senate Approval of AWACS Sale to Saudi Arabia,” *American Foreign Policy Current Documents, 1981*, 826-827.

¹²⁴ Haig, *Caveat*, 190.

¹²⁵ For the influence of AIPAC in the AWACS debate, see especially: Tivnan, *The Lobby*, Chapter 5.

¹²⁶ Ball, *The Passionate Attachment*, 110., see also: Melman and Raviv, *Friends in Deed*, 196.

¹²⁷ See: Bernard Gwertzman, “Cancellation of Jordan Arms Sale: U.S. Policy Adrift?,” *New York Times*, March 22, 1984., and Gwertzman, “Path to Mideast Failure Blazed with Mistakes,” *New York Times*, March 25, 1984.

sell advanced military equipment to Saudi Arabia was opposed by resolutions in both the House (356-62) and Senate (73-22), and it took a presidential veto and narrow Senate support of veto to get the arms sale passed.¹²⁸ While the role of AIPAC in the AWACS debate is well-known, Christian Zionists were also engaged in opposing the sale and were a part of the pro-Israel lobby that AIPAC headed.

Christian Zionism and AWACS

Throughout the AWACS debate, Christian Zionists were engaged with other elements of the pro-Israel lobby, notably AIPAC, in opposing the sale. Christian groups were formed specifically to lobby against the sale, such as Christians Concerned for Israel and the National Christian Congress.¹²⁹ Another group called Christians United for American Security placed a full-page advertisement in the *Washington Post* calling the arms package to Saudi Arabia “a grave danger to our country.”¹³⁰ Major Christian fundamentalist organizations, such as the Moral Majority, strongly opposed the sale and called on its constituents to write their senators and congressmen.¹³¹ Menachem Begin was accused by Secretary of State Alexander Haig of giving Jerry Falwell a “hit list” of Senators who were in favor of the sale.¹³² Despite the activities of Christian Zionists,

¹²⁸ See: Steven V. Roberts, “Senate Rejects Saudi Arms Sale, 73-22,” *New York Times*, May 7, 1986., Roberts, “House Turns Back Saudi Arms Sales,” *New York Times*, May 8, 1986., On the presidential veto and narrow Senate vote to sustain the veto (34-66), see: Department of State, “Congressional Resolution Banning Arms Sale to Saudi Arabia,” *American Foreign Policy Current Documents, 1986* (Washington D.C.: G.P.O., 1987), 395.

¹²⁹ Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics*, 178-179.

¹³⁰ Majorie Hyer, “30 Diverse Groups Of American Christians Mobilize Support of Israel,” *Washington Post*, October 30, 1981. One of the signers of the ad was Jerry Falwell.

¹³¹ Steven Spiegel, “Religious Components of U.S. Middle East Policy,” *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 36 (Fall-Winter 1982), 243.

¹³² Haig, *Caveat*, 187. Both Falwell and Begin vigorously denied that this had ever occurred.

many of the senators who voted for the AWACS sale were Republicans with ties to the New Christian Right and the Moral Majority.¹³³

Perhaps the most interesting case involves Republican senator Roger W. Jepsen of Iowa, who in an April 1980 speech to AIPAC announced that the AWACS sale threatened the security of Israel and pledged his “efforts and ...vote to block this sale.”¹³⁴ Jepsen held true to this pledge throughout most of 1981, but on October 27, Jepsen switched his position to support the president because of “overwhelming” support from his Iowa constituents in favor of AWACS.¹³⁵ The factors that influenced Jepsen to switch his position undoubtedly are more complex than pressure from his constituency, support for a Republican president and pressure from the White House also played a role. What is interesting about Jepsen’s case is that if there was a Christian Zionist senator, it was Jepsen. In 1979 he joined the board of one of the signal organizations of the New Christian Right, the Christian Voice in California.¹³⁶ In a 1981 AIPAC policy conference, Jepsen explicitly stated that one of the reasons for his “spirited and unfailing support” for Israel was his Christian faith.”¹³⁷ It is clear that Jepsen’s religious beliefs about supporting Israel were trumped in the end by political considerations.

The AWACS case was a loss for both Christian Zionists and the pro-Israel lobby headed by AIPAC. There is no direct evidence in the *Congressional Record* of extensive lobbying of Congress by Christian Zionists. The lobby efforts of Falwell and other Christian Zionists individuals and organizations played a small part in the pressure put on

¹³³ See: Spiegel, “Religious Components of U.S. Middle East Policy,” 243. Spiegel notes that although the Moral Majority strongly opposed the AWACS sale, no senators with ties to it voted against it. Senators included Jesse Helms (R-NC), and Roger W. Jepsen (R-IO), among others.

¹³⁴ Mohr, “9 More Senators Support President On Sale of AWACS.”

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Joel Kotkin, “Ready on the Right: Christian Soldiers are on the March,” *Washington Post*, August 25, 1979.

Congress by AIPAC and others in the pro-Israel lobby, but did not determine the result. However, in much the same way that the AWACS battle raised the stature of AIPAC and helped to forge its reputation as a powerful force within the U.S. Congress, the AWACS battle offered a chance for Christian Zionists to cut their teeth in a lobby effort and helped to establish them as a part of the pro-Israel lobby. The efforts of Christian Zionists in America during the AWACS debate let both Israel and the American Jewish Lobby know that American fundamentalists could be mobilized on behalf of Israel. Saudi Arabia received the AWACS as Reagan had hoped, but the ties between Israel and conservative legislators were considerably strengthened.

¹³⁷ Findley, *They Dare Speak Out*, 239.

Chapter Four: Christian Zionism in Action: Jerusalem and the U.S. Embassy Debate; the Case of the Christian's Israel Public Action Campaign (CIPAC)

The Embassy Debate

At the heart of Christian Zionist efforts to support Israel and influence U.S. policy is the status of Jerusalem.¹ As the symbolic and emotive center of three world religions, Jerusalem's final status is one of the most contentious issues in the Arab-Israeli dispute. The original U.S. policy on Jerusalem in 1947 assumed that it would remain an international city under Jordanian control, belonging neither to Arab or Jew.² By 1949 this policy was made obsolete by the Israeli takeover of West Jerusalem and the move of most government offices there by 1950. Most countries did not recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and maintained their embassies in Tel Aviv.³ In the aftermath of the Six-Day War in 1967, when Israel took over East Jerusalem, President Johnson abandoned the old policy "in favor of a formula stating that Jerusalem should remain unified and that its future should be determined by the parties themselves."⁴ This policy was formalized in U.N. Resolution 242 and remains the U.S. policy on the status of Jerusalem to this day.

¹ Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 231.

² Donald Neff, "Jerusalem in U.S. Policy," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Autumn 1993), 129.

³ Anderson, *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy*, 121. Some countries established their embassies in Jerusalem, including many Latin American countries: Bolivia, Chile, Columbia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Netherlands, Panama, Uruguay, and Venezuela, Costa Rica, and Zaire.

⁴ Neff, "Jerusalem in U.S. Policy," 20.

The dynamics of the status of Jerusalem changed dramatically under the Likud government of Menachem Begin. On July 30, 1980 the Israeli Knesset passed a law formally annexing East Jerusalem and declaring the entire city the capital of Israel.⁵ In 1980 the Knesset formally annexed East Jerusalem and declared all of Jerusalem the capital. The reaction to the declaration was condemnation in the international community, resulting in a U.N. call for all nations to move their embassies from Jerusalem in protest.⁶ The U.S. has refused to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and maintains its embassy in Tel Aviv to this day. After 1980 the issue of the U.S. Embassy began to receive increased attention in Congress as Israel and her allies pushed to get the embassy moved to Jerusalem.⁷ This was seen as an important step in gaining U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Christian Zionists also were interested in establishing Jerusalem as the united and eternal capitol of the Jewish state. One of the important elements of the dispensationalist schema is that Jerusalem must be the capitol of a restored Israel in order for the second coming of Christ to occur.⁸ These interests coalesced in a lobby effort to achieve this goal that culminated in the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 calling for the embassy to be moved to Jerusalem no later than 1999.⁹

⁵ See: Christopher S. Wren, "Israel Enacts a Law making All of Jerusalem the Capital," *New York Times*, July 31, 1980., and "Text of Israeli Law on Jerusalem," *New York Times*, July 31, 1980.

⁶ Anderson, *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy*, 122. The only embassies that remained in Jerusalem after 1980 were Costa Rica and Zaire.

⁷ One of AIPAC's main policy goals in the 1980s was getting the U.S. Embassy moved to Jerusalem, see: "AIPAC's 1985 Policy Statement," in Documents and Source Material, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Summer 1985), 220.

⁸ Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 231.

⁹ "Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995," 104th Congress, 1st session, *Congressional Record*, 141, no. 165 (October 24, 1995): H 10680.

The origins of the 1995 Act can be traced back to 1984 when bills were introduced in both houses of Congress to transfer the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem.¹⁰ These hearings were introduced in the House by Tom Cantos (D-CA) and in the Senate by Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) and received testimony from many prominent Christian Zionists. For the House hearings AIPAC invited Jerry Falwell and Richard A. Hellman of the International Christian Embassy to testify.¹¹ Falwell strongly advocated the move and in closing cited the ancient king of Israel, David, in Psalm 128:5, “The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion, and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.”¹² AIPAC director Tom Dine followed Falwell’s testimony stating that, “[l]ocating our diplomatic emissaries to the government of Israel in Jerusalem will, at last, bring U.S. policy into line with the 35-year reality that Jerusalem is the capital of the Jewish state.”¹³ Despite the different motivations and rationalizations for their support of the embassy move, both Falwell and AIPAC were again able to join forces to lobby Congress.

Falwell was not the only Christian Zionist to give testimony at the House hearings; Richard A. Hellman spoke on behalf of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem and the Rev. Isaac Rottenberg represented the National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel. Both cited biblical references in their support for the Embassy move, with Hellman going as far to say “this is an issue of principle which is based upon

¹⁰ House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. *Legislation Calling for a Move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the House of Representatives*, 98th Congress, 2nd Session, April 10-October 2, 1984., and: Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. *American Embassy in Israel, Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate*, 98th Congress, 2nd session, February 23, 1984.

¹¹ Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon*, 52.

¹² *Legislation Calling for a Move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the House of Representatives*, 98th Congress, 2nd Session, April 10-October 2, 1984, 83-90.

the Holy Scriptures.”¹⁴ What is interesting about the House hearings is that Christians also testified against the proposed legislation. Raymond J. Bakke testified for the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, “on behalf of the many evangelical and fundamentalist American Christians who do not support a policy of Israel right-or-wrong.”¹⁵ Representatives from the United States Catholic Conference, the National Council of Churches, and Rev. John T. Walker, the Episcopal Bishop of Washington spoke out against the proposed move.¹⁶ Other Christian organizations sent prepared letters opposing the embassy move, including the Presbyterian Church, the Church of the Brethren, and the Mennonite Central Committee.¹⁷ This contest in the House debate between Christian Zionists and representatives from a wide range of mainline Christian denominations continued in the Senate hearings.

On behalf of the Christian Zionist position were: Calvin Thomas, vice president of the Moral Majority, David A. Lewis of the NCLCI, and Richard Hellman of the ICEJ. Lewis argued that hundreds of verses in the Bible referenced Israel’s right to the land and that Jewish control of Jerusalem was the will of God.¹⁸ Thomas repeated a refrain of Falwell’s, “Tel Aviv is the brainchild of man. Jerusalem is the heart throb of God.”¹⁹ In opposition to the move were the U.S. Catholic Conference, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, and the Episcopal Bishop of Washington.²⁰ What the Senate and House

¹³ Ibid., 91.

¹⁴ Ibid., 197-207, 221-246.

¹⁵ Ibid., 207.

¹⁶ Ibid., 127-136, 457-463. The U.S. Catholic Conference was represented by Rev. J. Bryan Hehir and the NCC was represented by Charles A. Kimball, the director of the Middle East and Europe office of the NCC.

¹⁷ Ibid., 484, 490.

¹⁸ *American Embassy in Israel, Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 98th Congress, 2nd session, February 23, 1984.*, 114-117.

¹⁹ Ibid., 113.

²⁰ Ibid., 57, 78, 89.

hearings revealed was the deep divide between American Christians when it came to Israel. Functioning as competing lobbies, Christian Zionists and their opponents battled in the U.S. Congress not just over foreign policy, but over the meaning of the Bible. While Christian Zionists cited the Bible in support of Israel's right to Jerusalem, Christians opposing the move cited biblical references to justice and human rights in their opposition to the move and support for the Palestinians.

The proposed legislation never made it to the floor of the House or Senate for a vote. This was due in large part to strong opposition to the proposed legislation by the Reagan administration. Secretary of State George Shultz sent a letter to Senator Charles Percy, the head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, opposing the move.²¹ Shultz argued that the move would hurt the search for peace in the Middle East and was a challenge to "the President's executive constitutional power."²² A non-binding and watered down version of the resolution was later approved by two House subcommittees calling for the embassy to be moved "at the earliest time."²³ Although the proposed embassy legislation did not result in a move, Christian Zionists played an important role in the lobby effort to get the legislation considered. However, their influence was mitigated by an organized effort by other Christian groups in opposition to the resolution.

The debate over the location of the U.S. Embassy did not end with the failure of the 1984 House and Senate resolutions. The 1984 Democratic national platform called

²¹ Department of State, "Administration Opposition to Relocation of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem," Letter from Secretary of State Shultz to Senator Percy, February 13, 1984., *American Foreign Policy Current Documents, 1984* (Washington D.C.: G.P.O, 1986), 493.

²² Ibid.

²³ See: Bernard Gwertzman, "2 House Panels Approve a Resolution to Move U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem," *New York Times*, October 3, 1984., and "Summary of Major 1984 Congressional Action: Foreign Policy," *Congressional Quarterly*, October 20, 1984, 2711.

for the U.S. Embassy to be moved to Jerusalem.²⁴ Jesse Helms (R-NC) added an amendment to the Department of State Appropriations Act in 1988 calling for “the construction of two separate diplomatic facilities, one in Tel Aviv and one in Jerusalem.”²⁵ In 1990 both the House and Senate passed non-binding resolutions calling Jerusalem Israel’s capital and supporting the move of the U.S. Embassy there.²⁶ Despite the continuing congressional efforts to move the embassy, the White House position on U.S. policy toward Jerusalem remained firm. Both the Reagan and Bush administrations maintained that the embassy would remain in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem’s status would be resolved through peaceful negotiations.²⁷

Donald Neff argues that it was the 1994 Republican sweep of Congress that again brought the embassy issue to the forefront.²⁸ Led by Republican Senator Robert Dole (R-KS), the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 was quickly passed by votes of 93 to 5 in the Senate and 374 to 37 in the House.²⁹ With only one day of debate on the proposed legislation in the House and two in the Senate, the legislation was passed without

²⁴ For text, see: *New York Times*, July 18, 1984.

²⁵ Neff, “Jerusalem in U.S. Policy,” 38. Helms is an interesting cases study of the influence of Christian Zionism as some authors contend that he was converted by Falwell to a pro-Israel position. Before his 1984 Senate race Helms was considered one of the most anti-Israel Senators in Congress, mainly because of his opposition to foreign aid. In 1984 he was challenged by Jim Hunt in the most expensive Senate race in history to that point. Helms was supported with money from the Christian Right, notably Falwell, and remained a Senator tied to the Moral Majority throughout the rest of his career. Whatever the reason, after 1984 Helms became a pro-Israel leader in Congress and exhibited considerable influence in his position as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (1995-2001).

²⁶ Senate Congressional Resolution, 106, March 22, 1990. Document located through Lexis-Nexis Congressional.; on the House resolution supporting the Senate move, see: “Israel: House Votes Jerusalem Measure With Some Notable Dissents,” *Congressional Quarterly*, April 28, 1990, 1283.

²⁷ See: Department of State, “Location of U.S. Embassy in Israel,” Daily press briefing by Department of State, December 29, 1988, *American Foreign Policy Current Documents, 1988* (Washington D.C.: G.P.O., 1989), 419., and Department of State, “Reaffirmation of U.S. Position on Jerusalem,” Statement by Department of State, May 12, 1989, *American Foreign Policy Current Documents, 1989* (Washington D.C.: G.P.O., 1990), 404.

²⁸ Donald Neff, *Fallen Pillars: U.S. Policy Towards Palestine and Israel since 1945* (Washington D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1995), 148-149.

significant testimony from lobbyists or organizations interested in the embassy issue.

The only significant Christian Zionist lobby effort on the embassy issue leading up to the 1995 Act involved the Christians' Israel Public Action Campaign (CIPAC), but actual influence on the legislation is difficult to establish.³⁰ The legislation called for the embassy to be moved by 1999, but contained an escape clause by providing the president the ability to "suspend the provisions of the law in six-month intervals if such suspension was deemed necessary" to protect U.S. national security.³¹ President Clinton used the clause to avoid enacting the move of the embassy throughout the remainder of his second term and the embassy remains in Tel Aviv to this day.³² In assessing the influence of Christian Zionism on the embassy debate it is clear that it was not the sole factor in the passing of the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995. However, Christian Zionists played an important role in lobbying for the embassy move in 1984 and keeping the issue alive despite a lack of widespread public support for the move and executive opposition to it. In passing the act Congress directly challenged the White House on a foreign policy issue that was core to the U.S. led peace efforts based on U.N. Resolution 242. The embassy case also offers insights into the opposition to Christian Zionism by other Christian groups and a questionable assertion of congressional authority. A concerted lobby effort by a broad range of Christian groups opposing the embassy move mitigated the effects of

²⁹ Carroll J. Doherty, "Foreign Relations: Bill to Relocate Embassy Head to President," *Congressional Quarterly*, October 28, 1995, 3318., on Act, called Public Law 104-45, see: "Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995," 104th Congress, 1st session, *Congressional Record*, 141, no. 165 (October 24, 1995): H 10680.

³⁰ CIPAC and AIPAC made the embassy move one of their main legislative goals during the 1990s., on CIPAC efforts, see: "Christian pro-Israel lobby ends visit," *Jerusalem Post*, March 23, 1994., and Barton Gellman, "At the Crossroads [Part 2 of 2]," *Washington Post Magazine*, May 26, 1996.

³¹ Anderson, *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy*, 126.

³² On White House Policy towards Public Law 104-45 (Jerusalem Embassy Act), see: CRS Report RS20339, *Jerusalem: The U.S. Embassy and P.L. 104-45*. Despite the fact that the embassy remains in Tel Aviv, there remains controversy over the land purchased by the U.S. government for a potential embassy site in Jerusalem, see: Walid Khalidi, "The Ownership of the U.S. Embassy Site in Jerusalem," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (Autumn 2000), 80-101.

Christian Zionist influence, but ultimately was inconsequential in opposing the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995. The next case study will examine the only registered Christian Zionist lobby group in America, the Christians' Israel Public Action Campaign (CIPAC).

The Case of the Christian's Israel Public Action Campaign (CIPAC): Formalizing the Alliance Between AIPAC and Christian Zionism

One of the most important developments in the rise of political Christian Zionism during the 1980s was the formation of an alliance between the prominent American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and evangelical Christians. This relationship was most clearly seen in the formation of the Christians' Israel Public Action Campaign (CIPAC) in 1989. These two groups joined forces after 1989 to lobby Congress on a variety of issues relating to Israel. As the most visible representations of the alliance between the Jewish pro-Israel lobby and the Christian Zionist lobby, the story of AIPAC and CIPAC offers insights into how the pro-Israel lobby became a joint endeavor of Jews and Christian fundamentalists. As the Christian Zionist organization most active in direct lobbying at the congressional level throughout the 1990s, CIPAC was an important partner of AIPAC in maintaining the strongly pro-Israel stance of Congress.

The most powerful representative of the pro-Israel lobby, AIPAC is the foundation of lobby efforts at both the congressional and executive levels to promote U.S. policies that are favorable to Israel. After the successful lobby effort to gain U.S. support for the formation of Israel in 1948, American Jews continued to organize to promote the interests of the fledgling state. In 1954 the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations met to unite the activities of the American Jewish

community on behalf of Israel.³³ This was an important step in the development of an organized pro-Israel lobby in America and was continued in 1959 when I.L. Kenan created AIPAC as a registered lobby whose goal was to pressure Congress on issues relating to Israel.³⁴ While initially operating under a small budget and having limited influence during the first eight years of its existence, AIPAC grew in stature after 1967 and by the 1990s was considered the second most effective lobby group in the country, ranking only behind the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).³⁵

Just as the 1967 Six-Day War and the resulting territorial gains motivated evangelical Christians in America to enter the political realm in support of Israel, the event also had a seismic effect on the American Jewish community. In early 1967 AIPAC was nearly broke and Kenan was uncertain of the future of his organization, but after the Six-Day War American Jews responded with emergency contributions to Israel totaling over 100 million dollars, nearly double the amount raised in a typical year.³⁶ AIPAC was heavily involved in raising funds during the campaign and was the recipient of increased financial support thereafter that enabled it to continue its lobby efforts. In the 1970s the idea of Israel as a strategic asset gained currency under Nixon and Kissinger with the result being a dramatic increase in foreign aid, both financial and military.³⁷ With Israel threatened by two major wars from 1967 to 1973, and suffering

³³ Tivnan, *The Lobby*, 41.

³⁴ Frasor, *The United States and the Middle East since World War Two*, 88. On the birth of AIPAC and its early development, see: I.L. Kenan, *Israel's Defense Line: Her Friends and Foes in Washington* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1981).

³⁵ Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Role of Lobbies and Special Interest Groups*, 72. This list was compiled by an independent research team that did extensive interviews with congressmen and congressional aids. AIPAC's strength was gauged in terms of positive legislation achieved as well as the high-level connections between the organization and leaders in Congress and the Executive.

³⁶ Melman and Raviv, *Friends in Deed*, 132-33.

³⁷ On rise of U.S. aid, see Reich, *Securing the Covenant*, 93., and Organski, *The \$36 Billion Bargain*, 134. U.S. aid to Israel, in terms of grants and loans, by 1965 totaled 94 million. By 1975 this total amount had increased to almost 800 million.

from economic instability, U.S. aid was a vital asset to Israel and her supporters in America made it the cornerstone of their lobby efforts. Maintaining and increasing the high levels of aid to Israel became the primary goal of AIPAC by the 1970s, and it was Congress that controlled the purse strings for such aid. Edward Tivnan remarks that “with U.S. aid becoming Israel’s military and social lifeline, there was no variable more important in the U.S.-Israeli relationship than Congress.”³⁸

Bernard Reich notes that “Israel has been the recipient of the largest share of annual U.S. financial assistance since 1976.”³⁹ Increasing throughout the 1970s, U.S. assistance to Israel became formalized into an annual 3 billion of direct aid per year by the mid-1980s.⁴⁰ AIPAC was the headpiece of a concerted lobby effort by American Jewish organizations to maintain and increase this aid, and the issue became a focal point of the pro-Israel lobby by the 1980s. The effect of the pro-Israel lobby and AIPAC on Congress was clear: “Congress’s pro-Israel sympathies have assured a steady flow of foreign aid to Israel, in spite of opposition by the U.S. public to foreign aid for any nation.”⁴¹ In addition to lobbying Congress to support Israel with high levels of aid, by the 1980s AIPAC was involved in a wide range of activities; from lobbying to block arms sales to Arab countries to sponsoring trips to Israel for members of Congress and their staffs.⁴²

³⁸ Tivnan, *The Lobby*, 83.

³⁹ Reich, *Securing the Covenant*, 93.

⁴⁰ The annual aid of 3 billion was divided into military and economic aid: 1.8 billion for military and 1.2 billion in economic aid. Conservative estimates of total U.S. aid to Israel by 2000 ranged from the official 91.6 billion total calculated by the Congressional Research Service, to other estimates as high as 97.5 billion, see: CRS Issue Brief, Israel: U.S. Foreign Assistance, FY 2000., received through CRS WEB, January 2005, and Shirl McArthur, “A Conservative Tally of Direct U.S. Aid to Israel: 97.5 Billion-and Counting,” *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (May 2003), 32-33.

⁴¹ Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Role of Lobbies and Special Interest Groups*, 79.

⁴² Although AIPAC remained primarily focused on Congress during the 1980s, it also attempted to make inroads with the Executive, evidenced most clearly in the speeches of Secretary’s of State George Shultz and James Baker at AIPAC Policy Conferences in the 1980s. Bill Clinton became the first U.S. president

It was during the Reagan era that AIPAC became a powerful force in influencing U.S. Middle East policy. When Thomas A. Dine became the executive director of AIPAC in 1980 the organization had 8,000 members and an operating budget of 1.4 million annually; within seven years membership was at 50,000 and the annual budget was over 14 million.⁴³ This increased muscle helped AIPAC achieve considerable successes in its policy goals. During the Reagan administration AIPAC led the charge to increase Israel's foreign aid, which was raised to 3 billion dollars a year and was changed from loans to grants.⁴⁴ AIPAC also was involved in the strengthening of economic ties between the two countries, seen most prominently in the 1985 U.S.-Israeli Free-Trade Agreement.⁴⁵ The strategic relationship was enhanced by the first agreements formalizing America's commitment to Israel's security, the Memorandum's of Understanding in 1981 and 1983, as well as a formalizing of U.S.-Israeli military cooperation with National Security Directive 111.⁴⁶

to speak at a policy conference, see: Department of State, "The United States and Israel: Partners for Peace and Freedom," speech by George Shultz at AIPAC Annual Policy Conference, April 21, 1985 *Current Policy*, No. 690 (Washington D.C.: G.P.O., May 21, 1985), Department of State, "Principles and Pragmatism: American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict," Address by Secretary James Baker before AIPAC, May 22, 1989 *Current Policy*, No. 1176 (Washington D.C.: G.P.O., June 22, 1989), and "Remarks to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee Policy Conference," *PPP, Bill Clinton, 1995* (Washington D.C.: G.P.O., 1999), 489.

⁴³ Melman and Raviv, *Friends in Deed*, 308. Bernard Reich puts the estimate of AIPAC members at over 55,000 by the 1990s, see: Reich, *Securing the Covenant*, 73.

⁴⁴ Reich, *Securing the Covenant*, 92.

⁴⁵ Secretary of State George Shultz thanked AIPAC for its support of the Free-Trade Agreement at the 1985 AIPAC Policy Conference, see: George Shultz, "The United States and Israel: Partners for Peace and Freedom," Speech at AIPAC Policy Conference, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 14. No. 4 (Summer 1985), 122-128. For text of the 1985 Free-Trade Agreement, see: Department of State, "U.S.-Israeli Free Trade Area Implementation Act," *American Foreign Policy Current Documents, 1985* (Washington D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1986), 264. The Act called for the elimination of all trade tariffs between the two nations by 1995.

⁴⁶ Reich, *Securing the Covenant*, 41-43. The original MOU of 1981 was cancelled during the widespread criticism Israel was receiving following the Lebanon invasion of 1982, but was soon re-instated in a new MOU in 1983. NSD 111 established an official joint cooperation program between the U.S. and Israeli military.

After failing in the 1981 AWACS battle, AIPAC successfully led lobby efforts that resulted in Congress blocking the Reagan administration's attempts to sell arms to Jordan in 1984 and to Saudi Arabia in 1986; although the Saudi sale eventually passed it took a presidential veto to accomplish it⁴⁷ Perhaps the most vivid demonstration of the power of the pro-Israel lobby, and AIPAC, in the 1980s was the defeat of Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Charles Percy (D-IL) in the 1984 elections. Percy had been a moderate on Israel issues and was defeated in his Senate race with the help of campaign contributions from Jewish political action committees (PACs) and AIPAC claimed credit for Percy's defeat "holding the race up as an example to any member of Congress contemplating the criticism of Israel."⁴⁸ AIPAC continued to lead the pro-Israel lobby in the 1990s and remains a significant force in the shaping the pro-Israel stance of Congress.

In assessing the role of AIPAC in the influencing U.S. policy toward the Middle East, and Israel specifically, a few relevant conclusions can be made. Although AIPAC is only a part of the pro-Israel lobby, it acts "as a clearing house and coordinator for Jewish organizations to push a pro-Israel agenda in the White House and Congress."⁴⁹ On policies relating to Israel, Washington views AIPAC as the leader and spokesperson

⁴⁷ Bernard Gwertzman, "Cancellation of Jordan Arms Sale: U.S. Policy Adrift?," *New York Times*, March 22, 1984., and Steven V. Roberts, "Senate Rejects Saudi Arms Sale, 73-22," *New York Times*, May 7, 1986. Reagan eventually was able to get the Saudi sale through with a narrow Senate vote supporting his veto of the Senate resolution blocking the sale.

⁴⁸ Tivnan, *The Lobby*, 191., and Ball, *The Passionate Attachment*, 221. Thomas A. Dine, executive director of AIPAC brought up the defeat of Percy during the 1986 AIPAC policy conference, see: Dine, "The Revolution in U.S.-Israel Relations," Text of Speech at 27th Annual AIPAC Policy Conference, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Summer 1986), 134-143. It is important to note that as a registered lobby, AIPAC cannot solicit campaign contributions to support electoral candidates, but it has been accused of controlling PAC campaign contributions. In 1989 an official complaint was filed by a group of former U.S. officials, led by George W. Ball, claiming that AIPAC acted illegally by informing various PAC's to endorse candidates. AIPAC was found not guilty of the charges, see: "Israel Lobbying Group Found to Comply with Law," *New York Times*, December 22, 1990.

⁴⁹ Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Role of Lobbies and Special Interest Groups*, 71.

of the American Jewish community; and “in terms of direct effect on public policy, it is clearly the most important.”⁵⁰ In assessing AIPAC as a lobby, it is important to note that it operated “within the context of an electorate generally supportive of the Jewish state.”⁵¹ Although AIPAC has attempted to make inroads in lobbying the White House, it remains primarily influential in Congress. The importance of Congress in the U.S.-Israeli relationship is made explicitly clear in a speech by Thomas A. Dine at the 27th Annual AIPAC Policy Conference: “Congress is the bedrock of the U.S.-Israeli relationship,...[h]ere U.S. support for Israel is built, maintained, and advanced.”⁵² In judging the influence of AIPAC on U.S. policy, critics of AIPAC argue that it controls and distorts U.S. policy in the Middle East.⁵³ This position is a minority among scholars of the U.S.-Israeli relationship, most of who note the importance of AIPAC and the pro-Israel lobby but do not see it as determining U.S. policy.⁵⁴ While AIPAC clearly does not “control” U.S. policy, it exhibits influence through pushing pro-Israel initiatives at the congressional and executive level and constraining the behavior of foreign policy officials by working to defeat, modify, or prevent policies that are seen as hostile to the lobby’s agenda.⁵⁵ One element in the story of AIPAC during the 1980s and 90s that has received relatively scholarly attention is the alliance that was formed with Christian Zionists.

⁵⁰ Findley, *They Dare to Speak Out*, 25., see also: Tivnan, *The Lobby*, 215.

⁵¹ Anderson, *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy*, 116.

⁵² Dine, “The Revolution in U.S.-Israeli Relations,” 134.

⁵³ See especially: Cheryl A. Rubenberg, *Israel and the National Interest: A Critical Examination* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Role of Lobbies and Special Interest Groups*.

⁵⁴ The leader of this school of thought, which argues that U.S. foreign policy is an executive prerogative and sees Congress as acting as a constraint on policy, but not formulating or enacting it, see: Steven L Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America’s Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

⁵⁵ Mitchell Bard, *The Water’s Edge and Beyond: Defining the Limits to the Domestic Influence on United States Middle East Policy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Press, 1991), 289.

Traditionally the strongest supporters of AIPAC in the American public came from Jewish supporters; and in Congress from the Democratic Party. Throughout much of the twentieth century the American Jewish community formed an important political bloc of support for the Democratic Party, which was often repaid in Congress with strong support for Israel among Democratic congressmen. However, with the rise of the New Right and the Republican Party, culminating in the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, AIPAC “started re-aligning itself with the rising right-wing within the United States.”⁵⁶ This was partly political pragmatism, as even though most American Jews vote Democratic AIPAC is officially bipartisan and as a single issue lobby group must function within the constraints of electoral politics.⁵⁷ It was also a response to the growing power of the Republican Party, not only in the White House but within Congress as well. Although Democrats maintained a majority in the Senate, important posts like the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were filled with Republicans during much of the 1980s.⁵⁸ One other development fueled this shift; although the Jewish community remained supportive of Israel, there was a rise in liberal Jewish criticism of Israeli policies, notably the Lebanon invasion and Likud settlement policies in the Occupied Territories, with a resulting lessening of Jewish support for AIPAC.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Phyllis Bennis, “Of Dogs and Tails: The Changing Nature of the Pro-Israel Lobby, the Unchanging Nature of the U.S.-Israeli Alliance,” in Tony Kushner and Alisa Solomon, eds. *Wrestling with Zion: Progressive Jewish-American Responses to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. 5th ed. (New York: Grove Press, 2003), 128.

⁵⁷ Mansour, *Beyond Alliance*, 247. The American Jewish community has a strong identification with the Democratic Party dating back to the 1930s and even though Ronald Reagan was strongly pro-Israel, American Jews gave 71 percent of their vote to Walter Mondale in 1984.

⁵⁸ Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) occupied the departed Percy’s place as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (1985-87), later Jesse Helms (R-NC) chaired the committee from 1995-2001.

⁵⁹ On Jewish criticism of Zionism as a phenomenon grew during the 1980s, especially following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and after the 1987 Intifada, which was a response to Israeli settlement policies in the Occupied Territories, especially under the Likud governments of Begin and Shamir., see: Edward Corrigan, “Jewish Criticism of Zionism,” *American-Arab Affairs*, Vol. 35 (Winter 1990-1991), 113-122, and Kushner and Solomon, *Wrestling with Zion*. For an Israeli critique of settlement policies, see: Israel

AIPAC formed alliances with the neo-conservatives of the Republican Party who shared their goal of promoting Israel as a “strategic asset” in the Middle East.⁶⁰

Alongside of this alliance, AIPAC also pursued an alliance with another element of the New Right, Christian fundamentalists. Following the lead of Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, who by the late 1970s was cultivating ties with Christian fundamentalists, AIPAC also began to seek support. In 1981 AIPAC joined forces with Jerry Falwell and other Christian Zionist organizations to fight the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia.⁶¹ Falwell and AIPAC again joined forces in 1984 to lobby for the Embassy move to Jerusalem and in 1985 to block the sale of arms to Jordan.⁶² By 1984 AIPAC had taken on a full-time Christian liaison, whose task was to foster ties with Christian fundamentalists.⁶³ AIPAC also co-sponsored some National Prayer Breakfasts for Israel to foster ties with Christian fundamentalist leaders, such as Pat Robertson, and by the 1990s employed a “Christian Zionist” as its deputy legislative director.⁶⁴ The full flowering of this relationship occurred in 1989 when the alliance between AIPAC and Christian Zionism was formalized with the creation of CIPAC.

Sharak, “Continuing Aims of Zionist Policies,” *American-Arab Affairs*, Vol. 16 (Spring 1986), 68-79. This subtle shift in Israel support was also evident in the non-Jewish American public by 1990, see: William E. Schmidt, “American’s Support for Israel: Solid, but Not the Rock It Was,” *New York Times*, July 9, 1990.

⁶⁰ This development was promoted by prominent Jewish neo-conservatives, such as Norman Poedhertz of the influential periodical *Commentary*., on the relationship between neo-conservatives in the Republican Party and the Jewish pro-Israel lobby, see: Sol Stern, “The Neo-Conning of the Jews,” *The Village Voice*, Vol. 29, No. 5, August 28, 1984.

⁶¹ See Chapter Three, in addition to Falwell, other groups involved in the lobby effort to defeat the sale of AWACS were Christians Concerned for Israel and the National Christian Congress.

⁶² On Embassy Debate, see previous case study. On Jordan arms sale, see: Steven V. Roberts, “Lobbyists Line Up the Power on Arms for Jordan,” *New York Times*, October 21, 1985.

⁶³ Louis Rapoport, “Slouching towards Armageddon: Links with Evangelicals,” *Jerusalem Post International Edition*, June 17-24, 1984., see also: Tivnan, *The Lobby*, 182

⁶⁴ Tivnan, *The Lobby*, 181-183, and Melman and Raviv, *Friends in Deed*, 356. The “Christian Zionist” deputy legislative director is identified as Arne Christenson, an aide with many ties to Christian fundamentalists and later an aide for Newt Gingrich in the 1990s.

In 1989 Cal Hubbard and Richard A. Hellman spearheaded the creation of the first registered Christian pro-Israel lobby, the Christian's Israel Public Action Campaign (CIPAC).⁶⁵ The legislative agenda of CIPAC included “authorization and appropriations legislation, and other legislation on foreign affairs related to Israel” as well as “measures to assess and oppose persecution of the Jews.”⁶⁶ Hubbard and Hellman had ties to major Christian Zionist organizations, such as the International Christian Embassy, with Hubbard acting as the Washington spokesman for the ICEJ in 1989 and Hellman a former ICEJ activist. Hellman also had high-level connections in Congress as a result of his time as an aide to Senator Howard Baker in the 1980s.⁶⁷ The motivation for CIPAC's formation and lobby efforts is clear; “CIPAC grew out of the desires of Dick Hellman, to speak out on behalf of Israel and the Jewish people from a biblical perspective, for Christians primarily, and for official Washington.”⁶⁸ Acting as a clearinghouse for Christian Zionist lobby efforts, CIPAC modeled itself after AIPAC and worked to form alliances with the increasingly conservative Jewish pro-Israel lobby. The aim of CIPAC was stated succinctly by Hubbard: “CIPAC would become a Christian counterpart to AIPAC.”⁶⁹

CIPAC engaged in a variety of lobby efforts on behalf of Israel throughout the 1990s: opposing U.S. peacekeeping roles in the Golan Heights, urging U.S. support for a united Jerusalem, and pressuring Congress to maintain high levels of financial and military aid to Israel. The first major lobby effort that CIPAC engaged in was in support

⁶⁵ Haim Shapiro, “Pro-Israel Lobby, Evangelical Style,” *Jerusalem Post*, October 20, 1989., on CIPAC as a registered lobby, see: “July 1989 Lobby Registrations: Interest Groups,” *Congressional Quarterly* (July 27, 1990), 268.

⁶⁶ “July 1989 Lobby Registrations: Interest Groups.” 268.

⁶⁷ Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 215.

⁶⁸ Information from the official website of CIPAC, <http://users.rcn.com/rahmercl/CIPAC/cipac.htm>. Accessed on February 22, 2006, last updated June 20, 2002.

of a proposed 10 billion in loan guarantees to fund the resettlement of Soviet Jews.⁷⁰

Israel requested the funds in 1991, but the loan guarantees were held up by the Bush administration because of concerns that the funds would be used to settle Soviet Jews in the occupied territories, a violation of international law and official U.S. policy.⁷¹ The stance of the Bush administration on the loan issue followed established U.S. policy, clearly stated in a Department of State press briefing: “We do not provide U.S. government resources or funds for settlement of new immigrants in the occupied territories.”⁷² Bush and Baker also saw an opportunity to use the leverage of the loan guarantees to press Israel to move forward on the peace talks scheduled for Madrid in October of 1991.⁷³ The loans were essential for Israel as by 1991 an estimated 100,000 Soviet Jews were expected to come to Israel as a result of Gorbachev’s relaxed emigration policies.

Christian Zionist organizations joined forces with the Jewish pro-Israel lobby to support the loan guarantees, led by the ICEJ and CIPAC.⁷⁴ Hellman attempted to raise support for his lobby efforts to pass the loan guarantees at an International Christian Prayer Breakfast in Israel and claimed to be getting thousands of calls a day from Israel

⁶⁹ Shapiro, “Pro-Israel Lobby, Evangelical Style.”

⁷⁰ Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon*, 108.

⁷¹ Bush consistently voiced his opposition to settlements in the West Bank or East Jerusalem and in a Press Conference in 1991 voiced his concern over the linkages between the loan issue and settlements., see: “The President’s News Conference in Kennebunkport, Maine,” July 1, 1991, in *PPP, George Bush 1991*, 807.

⁷² Department of State, “U.S. Policy on Settlements in Occupied Territories,” Daily Press briefing by Department of State, January 17, 1990. *American Foreign Policy Current Documents, 1990* (Washington D.C.: G.P.O., 1991), 561.

⁷³ “Exchange with Reporters Prior to a Meeting with Secretary of State Baker,” September 6, 1991, *PPP, George Bush 1991*, 1120-1122.

⁷⁴ Evelyn Gordon, “Christian Embassy plans support for loan guarantees,” *Jerusalem Post*, September 20, 1998. In CIPAC’s 1992 Lobby Registration, the sole issue for its legislative agenda is “Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and Section 226 thereof titled “Loan Guarantee Program for Resettlement of Refugees in Israel.”, see: “July 1992 Lobby Registration: Interest Groups,” *Congressional Quarterly*, October 17, 1992, 3307.

supporters.⁷⁵ Despite the efforts of the pro-Israel lobby, the Bush administration continued to hold up the loan guarantees throughout 1991 and into 1992. With his foreign policy agenda dominated by the Gulf War and the Baker led peace talks of 1991 stalled, it was only the election of a new Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin of the Labor Party, that the loan issue was resolved in August of 1992.⁷⁶ For AIPAC the loan guarantee battle earned the pro-Israel lobby presidential enmity and in August of 1992 Rabin had harsh words for the lobby groups whose efforts had failed “to bring Israel one single cent.”⁷⁷ While Bush’s eventual approval of the 10 billion in loan guarantees was mainly the result of being able to deal with an Israeli government that agreed to freeze settlements in the occupied territories and not the result pro-Israel lobby efforts; the campaign to push through the loans established CIPAC as a viable part of the pro-Israel lobby.

After its initial lobbying effort to secure the loan guarantees in 1991 and 1992, CIPAC continued to work alongside of AIPAC and other Jewish organizations to lobby Congress and the White House on a variety of issues. Following other Christian Zionist campaigns, CIPAC was one of the signers of an ad by the World Committee for Israel that strongly criticized the peace efforts of Rabin and Clinton.⁷⁸ The ad strongly condemned any proposals to send U.S. peacekeeping troops to the Golan Heights and

⁷⁵ Evelyn Gordon, “American evangelicals pledge support,” *Jerusalem Post*, March 24, 1992. Hellman’s campaign was based on his idea that the loans would enable Israeli capital to flow back to the U.S., an estimated 30 billion over the next five years, with his campaign call in number being 1-900-projobs.

⁷⁶ Rabin was elected in June of 1992 and within weeks was informing Baker that settlement activity would be stopped in the occupied territories. On August 11, 1992 Bush announced that he and Rabin had agreed upon the basic principles of the 10 billion in loan guarantees., see: Little, *American Orientalism*, 113., ‘The President’s News Conference with Prime Minister Ytzhak Rabin of Israel in Kennebunkport, Maine,” August 11, 1992, *PPP, George Bush 1992*, 1331-1337.

⁷⁷ Clyde Haberman, “Rabin and Pro-Israel Group Off to Testy Start,” *New York Times*, August 22, 1992.

⁷⁸ “President Clinton, Prime Minister Rabin: You can ignore rabbis. You can ignore generals. But you can’t ignore both!,” Paid advertisement. *New York Times*, November 12, 1993. The World Committee on Israel

argued that by differentiating Israeli settlers in the occupied territories from those within the Green Line, the U.S. and Israel was inviting attacks from foreign foes.⁷⁹ The issue of sending U.S. peacekeeping forces to the Golan Heights was vehemently protested by the pro-Israel lobby because it was seen as a step towards an eventual Israeli withdrawal from the territory. Throughout the 1990s AIPAC and other Jewish groups enlisted the help of CIPAC “to stir up opposition to any U.S. peacekeeping role in the Golan.”⁸⁰ CIPAC also engaged in lobby efforts to get the U.S. Office of General Accounting to audit the PLO, which was accused of having massive hidden resources while “begging” for over a billion dollars in aid from the U.S. and other nations.⁸¹

In 1994 CIPAC listed as its agenda for the upcoming congressional elections approaching every candidate to take a stand on two important issues: defense of Jerusalem as united Jewish capital with U.S. Embassy relocated there, and the U.S. should urge for peace between Israel and her neighbors, not based on “outdated” UN resolutions.⁸² The Embassy issue became a primary goal of CIPAC’s lobby efforts in 1994-95, and was a part of the pro-Israel lobby effort that resulted in the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995.⁸³ The other issue that drove CIPAC’s efforts in 1995 was

claimed to be the voice of over 150 rabbis and 150 career military officers of the Israel Defense Forces, and 100 career U.S. military personnel.

⁷⁹ Ibid., The Green Line refers to the Israel of pre-1967 borders, not including the West Bank, Golan Heights, Gaza, or East Jerusalem. The ad was responding to Rabin’s freezing of settlements and the linkage of the settlement issue with the peace process.

⁸⁰ James H. Noyes, “Does Washington Really Support Israel?,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 106 (Spring 1997), 146. CIPAC was a co-signer of the ads, “No U.S. Troops On The Golan Heights,” Paid Advertisement. *New York Times*, June 7, 1994., and “Architect of Peace Or Catalyst for War?,” Paid Advertisement. *New York Times*, February 9, 1994.

⁸¹ “CIPAC: Christians’ Israel Public Action Campaign,” Paid Advertisement. *New York Times*, November 24, 1994. The ad was designed to raise funds for CIPAC and was sponsored by Jewish Friends of CIPAC.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ On CIPAC efforts to get U.S. Embassy moved to Jerusalem, see: “Christian pro-Israel lobby ends visit,” *Jerusalem Post*, March 23, 1994., Barton Gellman, “At The Crossroads [Part 2 of 2],” *Washington Post Magazine*, May 26, 1996., and Rachelle Marshall, “Right-Wing Extremists Endanger Israel and the Jews,” *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, Vol. 14, Issue 5 (December 1995).

opposition to the post-Oslo peace process. Hellman testified before the House Committee on International Relations that “the Middle East peace process is badly flawed.”⁸⁴ CIPAC voiced its opposition to the planned implementation of self-rule by the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and Jericho called for in the Oslo Accords with Hellman stating: “[h]ow can any U.S. public figure greet and applaud such a vile character as Arafat, much less vouch for his good will or even consider giving him any more tax dollars in foreign aid?”⁸⁵ The testimony ranged over a wide range of issues, including the GAO investigation of the PLO’s assets, but ended in a familiar spot for a pro-Israel lobby: “the annual foreign aid we give to Israel is a good investment in a democratic and strategic ally of this country, and....America’s Christian community supports this aid.”⁸⁶

As with AIPAC, the foundation of CIPAC’s lobby efforts centered on maintaining the foreign aid given to Israel each year by America. From 1994 through 1997 CIPAC joined with AIPAC in lobbying Congress to maintain the 3 billion in aid to Israel. In a 1994 hearing before the House Committee on Appropriations, Richard Hellman states: “Mr. Chairman, I wish to express our strong support for the \$3 billion in economic and military aid to Israel requested by the Administration.”⁸⁷ Hellman argues that Israel deserve the aid because it is a strong ally of the U.S., shares democratic values, and is an economic partner with the U.S.; but also adds, “[w]e believe that America is blessed

⁸⁴ House. Hearing before the Committee on International Relations. *Middle East Peace Process*. 104th Congress, 1st session, September 20, 1995. Document accessed through Lexis-Nexis Congressional.

⁸⁵ Ibid. Statement of Richard A. Hellman, President of CIPAC.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ House. Hearing before the Committee on Appropriations. *Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations for 1995, Part 3: Testimony of Members of Congress and Other Interested Individuals and Organizations*. 103rd Congress, 2nd session, April 25, 1994.

when we bless Israel and her people, in accordance with Genesis 12:3.”⁸⁸ Although Hellman addressed other issues in his testimony, maintaining the levels of foreign aid was the main policy goal. In 1995 and 1997, Hellman again testified before Congress on behalf of Israel’s foreign aid.⁸⁹ What is important about this specific aspect of CIPAC’s lobby agenda is that on foreign aid it became a part of the pro-Israel lobby’s most successful effort: maintaining high levels of financial and military assistance to Israel. In analyzing the power of the pro-Israel lobby, Camille Mansour argues that “[i]t is above all via the budget and the vote on funds for foreign aid that Congress, under the impetus of the lobby, takes part in determining American Middle East policy.”⁹⁰ As an independent actor CIPAC’s influence was limited; but as a part of the AIPAC led lobby effort to maintain and increase U.S. aid to Israel, CIPAC’s efforts bolstered an already powerful campaign. In the post-Cold War era when U.S. expenditures on foreign aid dropped dramatically, the efforts of Christian Zionists like CIPAC helped to maintain the high levels of military and financial support given to Israel.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ House. Hearing before the Committee on Appropriations. *Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations for 1996, Part 4: Testimony of Members of Congress and Other Interested Individuals and Organizations*. 104th Congress, 1st session, March 30, 1995.; and House. Hearing before the Committee on Appropriations. *Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations for 1998, Part 4: Testimony of Members of Congress and Other Interested Individuals and Organizations*. 105th Congress, 1st session, April 24, 1997. Documents accessed through Lexis-Nexis Congressional.

⁹⁰ Mansour, *Beyond Alliance*, 244.

Conclusion

In concluding this analysis of Christian Zionism and its influence on U.S. policy toward Israel from 1977-1998 a series of congruent arguments can be made. This thesis has filled a historical gap regarding the activities of Christian Zionists during the last quarter of the twentieth century. Entering the political scene after decades of withdrawal, the American evangelicals and fundamentalists that made up the majority of the Christian Zionist movement changed the pro-Israel lobby into a joint endeavor of Jews and Christians. A central argument of this thesis is that the power of Christian Zionism and the Jewish lobby was enhanced by the alliance between the two that emerged in the 1980s. Fused together by political expediency, the alliance achieved its greatest success at the congressional level where it played a substantial role in fostering the special relationship between the U.S. and Israel. This relationship was seen most explicitly in the congruence of lobby efforts by CIPAC and AIPAC to maintain the high levels of foreign aid to Israel.

Christian Zionism achieved its greatest periods of growth and influence when the New Christian Right was a powerful political entity in the U.S., notably during the early 1980s with the Moral Majority and after 1994 with the rise of the Christian Coalition. Leaders of the NCR, like Jerry Falwell, made support for Israel one of the foundational principles of the American evangelicalism and were influential in transitioning the Republican Party to a strongly pro-Israel stance. The rise of the Likud Party during the period when Christian Zionism became a political force in American was not a coincidence. While American Jews remained sympathetic to Israel, many do not share the hard-line Likud approach to issues dealing with the Palestinians, especially

settlements in the Occupied Territories. In Christian fundamentalists, the Likud Party found an ally willing to move beyond a general support for Israel to politically supporting Israeli policies.

The case studies reveal that as an independent factor Christian Zionism had limited direct influence on U.S. policy toward Israel and the Middle East in general. The AWACS battle was a loss for both Christian Zionism and the Jewish lobby, but it also formed an alliance that was able to block arms sales to Jordan and Saudi Arabia in the mid-1980s. While the U.S. Embassy was not moved to Jerusalem, the activities of Christian Zionists were a part of the successful effort to get Congress to pass the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995. As an important partner in the pro-Israel lobby and the domestic base of support for Israel, Christian Zionism played a vital role in supporting the special relationship between the U.S. and Israel.

This thesis has also presented the case of Christian Zionism as an example of the primacy of religious beliefs in political attitudes and activities relating to foreign policy issues. As diplomatic history has incorporated tropes, such as gender, race, and culture into its analysis of foreign policy; this thesis offers the case of Christian Zionism as an argument for the inclusion of religion as its own category of analysis.

In explaining the special relationship between the United States and Israel since 1945 mono-causal answers are inadequate. The majority of U.S. presidents have been strongly pro-Israel, with the notable exception of Dwight D. Eisenhower and to a lesser extent George Bush. Congress has been the base of support for Israel, displayed through massive aid and arms packages, as well as actively promoting strong ties between the two countries through a variety of activities. The strongly pro-Israel stance of Congress and

most presidential administrations in postwar American largely reflected overall public opinion. Christian Zionism was able to flourish in American because of the already strong levels of support for Israel found within the American public and the U.S. government. It was through a congruence of interests with a variety of actors, from American and Israeli Jews to pro-Israel Republican congressmen associated with the religious right, that Christian Zionism was able to enter the political fray and become a key cog in the U.S.-Israeli special relationship. At a 1987 AIPAC conference director Tom Dine notes that the special relationship between America and Israel does not happen by accident, “[t]here must be someone with human will who stacks the blocks, often helps located new ones, and applies the mortar to hold them in place for a sound structure.”¹

¹ Thomas A. Dine, “Achievements and Advances in the U.S.-Israeli Relationship,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Summer 1987), 101.

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