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FIFTH BUSINESS OR BIT PLAYER: CANADA AS KEEPER OF THE STONE IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

By Major Andrew W. McGregor

JCSP 47

Master of Defence Studies

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By Major Andrew. W. McGregor

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ABSTRACT

Since 2005, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) mission Operation *PROTEUS* has inconspicuously contributed to the United States Security Coordinator (USSC) to enhance cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) and develop the Palestinian security sector. This paper argues that contributing to *PROTEUS* is a legitimate strategic choice that serves important Canadian national interests. Through a review of Canadian regional engagement, this paper explores the interests upon which successive governments based a predictable and stable Middle Eastern policy between 1947 and 2001. More recently, Ottawa's approach to the Middle East and a narrower Israeli-Palestinian conflict has diverged from its stated policies. Operation *PROTEUS* has grown to be an increasingly legitimate strategic choice that offsets the imbalance in Canadian policy, serves important Canadian national interests, and is the latest incarnation of a consistent regional presence.

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PRELUDE

Those roles which, being neither those of Hero nor Heroine, Confidante nor Villain, but which were nonetheless essential to bring about the Recognition or the denouement, were called the Fifth Business in drama and opera companies organized according to the old style; the player who acted these parts was often referred to as Fifth Business.

– Robertson Davies, *Fifth Business*

Unbeknownst to most Canadians, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) have had a presence in the ancient city of Jerusalem since 2005. Operation *PROTEUS* is Canada's inconspicuous contribution to the “United States Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority” (USSC). The Canadian contingent, known as “Task Force Jerusalem,” fills leadership and staff positions within the US-led coalition. Created in 2005 to fulfill American obligations under the *Middle East Roadmap for Peace*, the USSC aims to enhance cooperation between the Government of Israel (Israel) and the Palestinian Authority (PA), advise the PA on security sector reform (SSR), and marshal international efforts to create a self-sustaining Palestinian security sector.¹ As of 2021, over half of all positions within the eight-member coalition were filled by Canadians. The CAF members and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers of *PROTEUS* have become the most common USSC presence within the various components of the Palestinian Authority Security Forces (PASF). In addition to their USSC duties, *PROTEUS* personnel work closely with Canadian diplomats to develop the PA and promote peace in the region.² This essential Canadian involvement has historical precedent dating back to 1947. At the start of the post-war era, the newly created liberal, rules-based international system granted Canada an unfamiliar prominence in international affairs. While

¹ Department of State, “About Us: United States Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority,” last accessed 29 March 2021, <https://www.state.gov/about-us-united-states-security-coordinator-for-israel-and-the-palestinian-authority/>.

² Department of National Defence, “Operation *PROTEUS*,” last accessed 2 March 2021, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-proteus.html>.

most Canadians are familiar with that legacy, they would not be aware of the extent to which Canada was a regular supporting actor in the Arab-Israeli conflict. *PROTEUS* is the continuation of that recurring role.

For the Middle East, the 2020s have the potential to be either an inspired harbinger for peace or a source of continuous strife. The promise of the Abraham Accords to normalize Israeli and Arab (and Muslim) relations is juxtaposed against serious regional threats: renewed great power competition, periodically violent contests for regional hegemony, and widespread economic, social, and political disorder that incubates violent extremists. The Donald Trump presidency (2017-21) altered the trajectory of America's regional approach. As the Joe Biden administration evaluates its options, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains the defining hindrance to regional peace and stability. Canadian engagement in the region provides Ottawa with an opportunity to be a constructive proponent of peace while simultaneously advancing its own national interests. To that end, this paper argues that contributing to Operation *PROTEUS* is a legitimate strategic choice that serves important Canadian national interests.

Initially, this paper will demonstrate that Canada has legitimate regional interests upon which successive governments based a predictable and stable Middle Eastern policy between 1947 and 2001. Chapter One chronicles the establishment of Canada's strategic approach to the wider Arab-Israeli conflict (1947-67). Chapter Two explores the rebalance of Canada's strategic approach to a narrower Israeli-Palestinian conflict as Canadian governments challenged the meaning of national interests by including emerging economic influences (1967-81), increased moral imperatives (1982-89), and rising multilateral activism (1989-2000). As the paper's epitasis, Chapter Three examines the divergence between Ottawa's Middle East policies and an increasingly partisan and short-sighted *astrategic* approach (2001-present). Offsetting this

imbalance, *PROTEUS* (through the USSC) has continued to serve national interests. This paper concludes with recommendations on the future of Canada's regional engagement. In detailing the intersection of the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict with Canadian interests, this paper intends to serve as a primer for Canadian officials deploying to the region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This paper engages with academic and practitioner literature. The analysis of interests, policy, and history is based largely on academic writing. The practitioner-oriented references are more relevant to recent West Bank SSR activities.

Canadian Academics and the study of Canada's Interests in the Middle East

Historian Asa McKercher has lamented that for a generation, the study of "Canadian Foreign Policy history has been on life support," even while noting the new emphasis on "transnational and cultural" perspectives in analyses of international affairs.³ Attention to Canada in the Middle East has followed this wider trend; however, there remains a dedicated cadre of international historians who focus on Canadian statecraft. Unfortunately, their study of the Middle East is less frequent. The result is that relevant material is often shrouded within the wider study of Canadian foreign policy or interpreted through the lens of political science. Much has been written about the growth of Canadian national interests since the two World Wars. However, the relative consensus on broad national interests has not translated into a common understanding of non-vital interests. The perception of ephemeral Middle Eastern interests has gained popularity more recently. Canadian involvement in the Middle East is inextricably linked to the experiences of the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US), which draws

³ Asa McKercher, "Toward Canada in the World: Thoughts on the Future of Canadian Foreign Policy History," *International Journal* 72, no. 2 (June 2017): 243. <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/scholarly-journals/toward-canada-world-thoughts-on-future-canadian/docview/1911439952/se-2?accountid=9867>.

Canada's regional policy into the "independence" versus "affiliation" debate.⁴ In most periods, the actions of these two allies feature prominently, but they are rarely absolute determinants of Canadian policy. This paper demonstrates how Canadian policy in the Middle East has been influenced by both "quiet diplomacy" and "activist" agendas in ways that have faded from the collective consciousness of Canadians.

With exceptions, Canadian historical analyses of the Middle East are typically published in dedicated volumes of episodic narratives. For the practitioner, this approach often lacks the coherence necessary to garner a genuine appreciation of Canada's unique involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Alternatively, it presents an unwieldy reading list. The first half of this paper seeks to find a balance and address the needs of practitioners while arguing for the importance of the region to Canadian interests.

The attentiveness to socio-cultural matters in recent Middle East studies has come at the expense of diplomatic history's granularity. Constructivist factors are undoubtedly important in a globalized world, as are critical examinations of societal structures and potential dependencies. Taking McKercher's advice, this paper will include cultural and domestic aspects relevant to Canada's impact abroad.⁵ This paper recognizes the impact of socio-economic conditions to conflict termination and the influence of extra-national identity on domestic politics. That being said, the focus of this paper is on diplomacy and governmental efforts because the intractable

⁴ Brian Bow and Patrick Lennox, "Introduction: The Question of Independence, Then and Now," in *An Independent Foreign Policy for Canada?: Challenges and Choices for the Future*, ed. Brian Bow and Patrick Lennox (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), .
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cfvlibrary-ebooks/reader.action?docID=3268221>; Adam Chapnick, "Inevitable Co-Dependency (and Things Best Left Unsaid): The Grandy Report on Canadian-American Relations, 1951-?," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 9, no. 1 (2001): 22-23.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/11926422.2001.9673269>.

⁵ Asa McKercher, *Toward Canada in the World...*, 253.

Arab-Israeli conflict stems from decisions emanating from the international system and has involved generations of Canadian officials.

Security Practitioners in the Middle East

Canada's involvement with the PASF to build Palestinian capacity is ongoing. Analyzing an active mission poses unique challenges. Most relevant documents, previously accessible to the author in the course of duty, cannot be referenced here without questions of security classification and release authority. As such, this paper relies on documents available within the public sphere. Older policy documents concerning the PA's SSR activities⁶ are readily available; however, specific literature on the USSC and *PROTEUS* is limited. As such, this paper supplements academic analysis where appropriate by grey literature, the author's professional observations, and correspondence with practitioners who have agreed to discuss their experiences. This paper is unique in analyzing the linkages between national strategy and tactical output for this specific mission.

As a final point on the available literature, the hyper-vigilance of domestic interests in this conflict has sometimes shaped the narrative. Innocuous phrasing from other contexts becomes charged in this environment, which stymies discussion and risks debasing debate to ad hominem attacks. In quite a few cases, the author has endeavoured to extract relevant points from research influenced by strong personal beliefs. This is a difficult task in an arena where the word "balance" has connotations of bias to both Israelis and Palestinians. Recognizing that the interpretations in this paper will be considered on their own merits, I would like to clarify that my own motivation in addressing this issue is that the ongoing conflict does not serve the

⁶ Additionally, the evolution of SSR theory is relatively well-documented. The advancement in theory and practice of techniques for development of security forces as a component of the SSR has received considerable attention since 9/11.

security and economic interests of any afflicted population.

NATIONAL ENDS

A state's interests are "fundamental, enduring conditions a state chooses to pursue."⁷ After the devastation and disorder of the World Wars, successive Canadian governments have validated the oft-asserted statement that Canada's "defence and economic interests were best secured within the US-led international order."⁸ These same national interests are central to Canadian policies that regulate and prioritize the state's global engagement strategies. With a view to the relevance of the Middle East, this section will describe those imperatives.

Assessing Canadian Interests

Historically, Canada's "core regions" of engagement have been North America and Europe. Since Confederation, Canada has been the benefactor of its external patronage, first from the UK and later from the US. Canada continues to support the US-led international order because it is aligned to Canadian interests of national security, economic prosperity, global stability, and its own international prominence.⁹ Canada's interests are distinct from those of the US; however, the primacy of the US-Canadian relationship cannot be understated. While the relationship is co-dependent, it is far from equal.¹⁰ Canada benefits from membership in North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) and the Canada-United States-Mexico (free trade) Agreement (CUSMA) despite US dominance of the continental security and economic agendas. Canadian foreign relations, including Middle Eastern engagement, reflect American

⁷ Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), *Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 1-18: Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: JCS, 25 April 2018), II-3 to II-4.

⁸ Andrew Pickford and Jeffery F. Collins, *Hard Choices: Why Canada Needs a Cohesive, Consistent Strategy Towards Communist China* (Ottawa: Macdonald-Laurier Institute for Public Policy, 2020), 12.

⁹ Chrystia Freeland, "Address by Minister Freeland on Canada's foreign policy priorities," (Speech to the House of Commons, Ottawa, Canada, 6 June 2017). https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2017/06/address_by_ministerfreelandoncanadasforeignpolicypriorities.html.

¹⁰ Chapnick, *Inevitable Co-Dependency...*, 20.

and British influences. Canada is aligned with other western countries in the belief that a stable international system centred around the United Nations (UN), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) facilitates the peaceful resolution of disagreements and enables economic development. Ottawa, however, pursues its own independent internationalist agenda to maintain its privileged status in the US-led system and to offset its American-dependency. A rules-based system that regulates coercive power benefits Canadian efforts to influence allies and contest competitors. The proliferation of liberal-democratic governance has been seen as central to sustaining that system. Lastly, Canada maintains international prominence through its respectable reputation and good standing in multinational forums. Canada's status as a constructive actor on the world stage gives it credibility, relevance, and influence in multilateral institutions.¹¹ Although not always explicitly stated, Canada advances its own interests first. This approach, according to some scholars, "cloaked in noble terms... a rational pursuit of self-interested national policy."¹²

Categories of Interests

Although successive Canadian governments have been reticent to formally identify national interests as part of a grand strategic vision, there is bipartisan consensus that the current international system has improved the lives of Canadians. In 2017, then Minister of Foreign Affairs Chrystia Freeland described it as having contributed to "the longest period of peace and prosperity in our history."¹³ For this paper, national interests will be classified as vital, important, or peripheral. Vital interests are necessary for the safety and affluence of the

¹¹ Freeland, *Address...*

¹² Pickford and Collins, *Hard Choices...*, 37. An example of Canadian self-interest is the propensity to resource social welfare programs more enthusiastically than international security obligations.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 12.

population, as well as for national unity.¹⁴ For Canada, that means national security, economic prosperity, international stability, and safeguarding Ottawa's international reputation. The domestic security and defence of Canada is only ensured through a continental perspective with the US and globally in cooperation with Canada's NATO allies. Economic prosperity relies on secure access to foreign markets and resources, starting continentally and expanding internationally to select regions. The liberal, rules-based international system is vital to Canada as it provides assurances of security and economic activities with minimal undue coercion. Most controversially, this paper includes a positive international reputation as a vital interest. Since Canada is not capable of unilaterally influencing the international system, Ottawa relies on its stature to leverage its privileged position with the US, its standing with NATO allies, and its credibility with like-minded partners in the international community. As an example, the security of Canadians abroad is a vital interest but requires international support. Also, Canada must maintain US belief in the internationalist system (to achieve American interests).

Importance of the Middle East

As a superpower, the US considers certain interests and alliances in East Asia and the Middle East as vital.¹⁵ Although these interests are not de facto Canadian ones, the co-dependency necessitates that they be integrated into Canada's strategic realm. Similarly, Middle Eastern conflicts that do not directly impact Canada have the potential to escalate in a manner similar to the Balkans in 1914, which would threaten vital Canadian interests. Moreover, even

¹⁴ JCS, *JDN 1-18*..., vii. Important interests can prejudice or have negative consequences for Canada. The stability of the Middle East, while outside Canada's core region, is important to preserve peace, maintain access to markets, and support American interests. Peripheral interests have little direct impact on Canada, but establish favourable circumstances. The promotion of Canadian values abroad, including the advancement of democracy, international law, and human rights, enables the efficacy of the current international system.

¹⁵ Anthony Blinken, "A Foreign Policy for the American People," (Speech by the US Secretary of State at the Department of State, Washington, D.C., 3 March 2021). <https://www.state.gov/a-foreign-policy-for-the-american-people/>.

Middle Eastern conflicts that do not metastasize can upset the world's economic dependency on the Suez Canal and oil production, impacting Canadians.¹⁶

NATIONAL WAYS & MEANS

At the political level, interests should be promulgated through policy – that provides broad direction and guidance – and then strategy, that “orchestrates the instruments of national power in support of policy objectives.”¹⁷ While governments have generally agreed on the desired end-state, differences have typically emerged on the ways and means through which Canada's strategic ends might be achieved.

Assessing Strategic Approaches

Historian Matthew Trudgen argues that “[f]rom 1950s to 1980s, Canada pursued a Cold War grand strategy that was based on support of NATO, a strong defence relationship with the Americans and support for the United States and its allies in international organizations such as the UN and the Commonwealth.”¹⁸ This strategic approach to international relations aligned policies and the application of the instruments of Canadian power to national interests. According to Canadian political scientist Kim Richard Nossal, the relationship between strategically-driven foreign and defence policies and the advancement of national interests has typically led decision-makers to realign behaviours that deviated too far from the norm.¹⁹

¹⁶ Irving Abella and John Sigler, “Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Discussion with Irving Abella and John Sigler,” in *The Domestic Battleground: Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, ed. David Taras and David Goldberg (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 228, 230. <https://www-deslibris-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/ID/400776>.

¹⁷ JCS, *JDN 1-18...*, I-2.

¹⁸ Matthew Trudgen, “A Canadian Approach: Canada's Cold War Grand Strategy, 1945 to 1989,” *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 14, no. 3-4 (2012): 24. <http://search.ebscohost.com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=poh&AN=90461575&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁹ Kim Richard Nossal, “An ‘Astrategic’ Power: Canada, China, and Great Power Transitions”, in *Beyond Afghanistan: An International Security Agenda for Canada*, ed. James G. Fergusson and Francis Joseph Furtado (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 151. <http://search.ebscohost.com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1294416&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

Trudgen's analysis supports this assertion in demonstrating that the Cold War strategy survived challenges during Progressive Conservative and Liberal governments of the 1960s and 1970s.²⁰

Despite the predominantly strategic approach to the Cold War, Nossal contends that Canada's approach has not always been consistent. At times, it has been what he describes as astrategic:

...foreign and defence policy not informed by the sustained, logical, or interrelated ideas that one normally finds at work in strategic thought and international relations. Instead, it is grounded in a mixture of personal and idiosyncratic ideas about the world, electoral gamesmanship, and ad hoc responses to external pressures.²¹

Business analyst Andrew Pickford and political scientist Jeffrey Collins connect Canada's astrategic inclinations to "narrow domestic political and commercial calculations... buoyed in this approach by a small but influential circle of business and political elite."²² Nossal suggests that Canada's astrategic inclinations stem from an apathy towards world politics enabled by the US security blanket.²³ Pickford and Collins are more critical. They suggest that Canada habitually veils astrategic pursuits of "economic self-interest" in "deluded" Pearsonian justifications of spreading values.²⁴ Research suggests that astrategic tendencies have fewer constraining forces outside vital interests.²⁵ This strategic-astrategic dichotomy is a useful analytical tool for Canada's Middle Eastern engagements. A strategic approach establishes a long-term regional vision that connects national interests with national power means and resources. An astrategic one seeks to achieve short-term political and economic wins.

²⁰ Trudgen, *Canada's Cold War Grand Strategy...*, 24.

²¹ Nossal, *An 'Astrategic' Power...*, 151.

²² Pickford and Collins, *Hard Choices...*, 13.

²³ Nossal, *An 'Astrategic' Power...*, 152.

²⁴ Pickford and Collins, *Hard Choices...*, 14.

²⁵ Adopting a similar astrategic approach, the EU "struggles to prioritize competing foreign policy goals, to identify the situations where it may have a decisive impact and to focus attention and resources... [such that it] avoids difficult foreign policy choices and is unable to translate its potential fully into impact." Andrew Cottey, "Astrategic Europe," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 58, no. 2 (2019): 288, <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/jcms.12902>.

A Functional Perspective

Canada is often criticized for misjudging its influence and not approaching vital interests seriously. Eschewing the vague middle power concept, historian Adam Chapnick has labelled Canada a “functional power” with the ability to make a difference in areas outside great power purview when it has the interest, capacity, and willingness to do so.²⁶ Canadian capacity can be understood as comprising diplomatic, informational, military, and economic power.²⁷ With its large geography, low population density, relative wealth, and respectable reputation, Canada has advantages and limitations as a global player. There are times when contributions to global affairs are immaterial given Canada’s relative power. At other times, Canada might not engage internationally because of its alignment with the US or loyalty to international institutions.²⁸ Moderated by these functional realities, Canada has political choice in strategically applying its limited capacities to support its interests. The alternative is an ad hoc astrategic approach which prejudices or injures Canadian interests, but does not directly risk Canadians’ safety or economic prosperity. Throughout the Cold War, successive Canadian governments demonstrated the importance of the Middle East to national interests through a consistent strategic approach.

²⁶ Chapnick, *The Middle Power...*, 78.

²⁷ Department of National Defence (DND), *B-GJ-005-000/FP-001, Canadian Forces Joint Publication (CFJP) 01 – Canadian Military Doctrine* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2011), 2-1 to 2-2. The CAF uses the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME) power instruments framework. Others exist: MIDFIELD (military, informational, diplomatic, financial, intelligence, economic, law, and development) and DIME-FIL (financial, intelligence, law enforcement) are common outside of Canada (see JCS, *JDN 1-18...*, vii-viii). Diplomacy is about persuasion and includes policies, treaties, and sanctions. Informational power is intelligence, public affairs, and information operations, but governments can leverage the “Canadian brand” enhanced by Canadian institutions (universities, media, NGOs). Military power can be coercive although capacity building, peace support, and stability operations are more common. Economic power includes trade policy and investment. Instruments applied in tandem as part of a government strategy form a “Whole of Government” (WoG) approach. When public sector activities are aligned with the private and non-profit sectors, they enable a comprehensive “Team Canada” approach. A “Comprehensive Approach” is when WoG activities are synchronized with international organizations, foreign governments, NGOs, and local populations. WoG and comprehensive approaches can be nested with allied, coalition, or other multilateral strategies (DND, *CFJP 01...*, 2-2, 6-4, GL-2, GL-8).

²⁸ Chapnick, *Inevitable Co-Dependency...*, 24; Adam Chapnick, “The Middle Power,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 7, no. 2 (1999): 75-76. <https://www-tandfonline-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/doi/ref/10.1080/11926422.1999.9673212?scroll=top>.

CHAPTER ONE: STRATEGIC CHOICE IN CANADA'S INITIAL MIDDLE EAST FORAY

In his series covering Canada's early engagement with Israel, political scientist Zachariah Kay argues that Canada's approach during the periods of British Mandatory Palestine, 1948-1958, and 1958-1968 was non-committal, prudent, and impartial.²⁹ In 1947, direct involvement in the partition of "Mandate Palestine" set the course of Canada's Middle Eastern policy and approach to post-war international relations.³⁰ Moreover, that engagement has resulted in some of Canada's most notable international contributions. Canada has remained implicated in the Arab-Israeli conflict ever since: "Notwithstanding its traditional position and consistent support for the State of Israel, Canada has been one of the few states that took a position in support of comprehensive peace in the Arab-Israel conflict."³¹ This chapter argues that Canada's strategic approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict during the governments of Prime Ministers William Lyon Mackenzie King, Louis St-Laurent, John Diefenbaker, and Lester B. Pearson is evidence of Canada's legitimate Middle East interests.

KING AND THE UN PARTITION PLAN (1917-48)

The Sinai and Palestine Campaign of the First World War that ended Ottoman rule and created British Mandatory Palestine (1920-48) was of little consequence to Canada. The Zionist movement of the late 1800s, born as a means of escaping an increasingly anti-Semitic Europe, was amplified by the UK's 1917 Balfour Declaration that supported "the establishment in

²⁹ Zachariah Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality: Canada and Israel, 1958-1968* (Waterloo ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010), preface. <https://www-deslibris-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/ID/433870>.

³⁰ Anne Trowell Hillmer, "'Here I am in the Middle': Lester Pearson and the Origins of Canada's Diplomatic Involvement in the Middle East," in *The Domestic Battleground: Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, edited by David Taras and David H. Goldberg (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 139. <https://www-deslibris-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/ID/400776>.

³¹ Kamaran M. K. Mondal, "Canada's Role in the Arab-Israel Peace Process through the United Nations and Beyond," *IUP Journal of International Relations* 12, no. 3 (07, 2018): 37. <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/scholarly-journals/canadas-role-arab-israel-peace-process-through/docview/2105001334/se-2?accountid=9867>.

Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.”³² The UK could not stem the ensuing nationalism of Arab and Jewish factions, despite several commissions.³³ The Second World War further fueled the cycle of sectarian violence, Arab revolt, and Jewish insurrection. The horror of the Holocaust and American-British disagreement on post-war Jewish immigration led the UK to terminate its Mandate and put Palestine’s future before the UN. Prior to the Second World War, Canadian interests in the Middle East were negligible.³⁴ Shortly thereafter, however, the region became part of Canada’s strategic realm. This section will cover Canada’s resistance to involvement in Mandatory Palestine, reluctant participation in the UN’s Palestine deliberations, and Ottawa’s vital role in partition negotiations.

Canada during the British Mandate

Canadian Zionism emerged in the 1890s. In the 1920s and 1930s, Zionist lobbying efforts were “quiet, unobtrusive, and deferential.”³⁵ Absent “forceful protest and action,” the advocacy failed to alter the “deliberate neglect [of] and discrimination” against Jewish refugees in the inter-war years.³⁶ During the war, Canadian Zionists led a robust national campaign to influence British policies through Canadian officials. Ottawa was aware that the 1939 British white paper, which demanded that Jews and Arabs in Palestine work cooperatively, was attempting to forestall a post-war quagmire. In her 1943 report, Department of External Affairs

³² David Taras, “From Passivity to Politics: Canada’s Jewish Community and Political Support for Israel,” in *The Domestic Battleground: Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, edited by David Taras and David H. Goldberg (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989), 38-39, 41. <https://www-deslibris-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/ID/400776>.

³³ Mondal, *Canada’s Role...*, 36. These commissions include: Shaw (1929), Simpson (1930), Peel (1937), and White Paper (1939).

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ David J. Bercuson, “The Zionist Lobby and Canada’s Palestine Policy 1941-1948,” in *The Domestic Battleground: Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, edited by David Taras and David H. Goldberg (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989), 17. <https://www-deslibris-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/ID/400776>.

³⁶ Taras, *From Passivity to Politics...*, 42.

Middle East expert Elizabeth P. MacCallum recognized the competing interests of Arab and Jewish nationalism and of Jews wishing to remain in Europe.³⁷ Although Canadians were “ignorant about, and apathetic towards, the Palestine question,” they did take note of insurrectionist violence against the British from the new Yishuv.³⁸ At the United Nations founding conference in San Francisco (April 1945), Arab and Jewish stakeholders sought to influence the establishment of the UN Trusteeship Council that was likely to assume responsibility for Palestine. Zionist lobbies focused on the specific rights of Jews in Palestine. Arab efforts for the rights of majority populations were futile, as the British, French, and Americans protected their colonial interests.³⁹ Throughout this diplomatic manoeuvring, Canada remained focused on its vital interests: institutionalizing world affairs and cementing its privileged position as a functional power in that system.⁴⁰ To that end, Zionist lobbying was extraneous; the Canadian delegation demonstrated no interest in trusteeship debates or the Palestinian Question.⁴¹

United Nations Deliberations over Palestine

In the 1940s, King was “largely insensitive to Jewish concerns and decided matters at his own pace and based on international factors.”⁴² His government was practical and sought to maintain its close relations with Great Britain while solidifying ties with Washington through the UN.⁴³ In 1945, King was briefed about a potential anti-Semitic backlash in Europe upon the

³⁷ Bercuson, *The Zionist Lobby...*, 20-22.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 24. Yishuv refers to Jewish residents of Palestine. The “Old Yishuv” were the pre-Zionist Jewish communities while the “New Yishuv” were the product of Zionists immigration.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

⁴⁰ Denis Stairs, “Founding the United Nations: Canada at San Francisco, 1945,” *Institute for Research on Public Policy: Policy Options*, 1 September 2005, <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/the-un-at-60/founding-the-united-nations-canada-at-san-francisco-1945/>.

⁴¹ Bercuson, *The Zionist Lobby...*, 27.

⁴² Taras and Goldberg, *Influencing Canada's Middle East Policy...*, 7-8.

⁴³ Mondal, *Canada's Role...*, 37.

reconstitution of Jewish property and livelihoods. While there was a compelling rationale to welcome Palestinian immigration, MacCallum's 1943 observations persisted: Canadian support for Zionism could undercut the ability of Jews to rebuild in Europe while inflaming British-Arab tensions. From 1945-47, Canada avoided the Palestine question to leave no ambiguity in its relationship with the UK, even obstructing the sale of decommissioned Canadian warships for use in support of illegal Jewish immigration.⁴⁴ In April 1947, Britain ceded the future of Palestine to the UN and the General Assembly's First Committee, which elected former Canadian Ambassador and future Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson as Chair.⁴⁵ Subsequently, Canada reluctantly accepted membership on the 11-member UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP):

But that had nothing whatever to do with Zionist lobbying efforts in Canada; rather it was due to the determination of the United States to draft Canada for this special and somewhat hazardous duty. The United States wanted a committee composed of small countries which had relatively weak Jewish communities and which had had nothing to do with Palestine.⁴⁶

King and then Secretary of State for External Affairs Louis St-Laurent appointed Supreme Court Justice Ivan C. Rand to UNSCOP "as an independent observer who was not bound by, and who would not bind, the Canadian government."⁴⁷ With Rand's support, UNSCOP recommended the partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states with Jerusalem administered by the UN through the Trusteeship Council.⁴⁸ Although Zionist

⁴⁴ Bercuson, *The Zionist Lobby...*, 25, 28.

⁴⁵ Mondal, *Canada's Role...*, 37. Pearson was Canadian Ambassador to the US (1945-46), Under Secretary of State for External Affairs (1947-48), Secretary of State for External Affairs (1948-57), and Prime Minister (1963-68),

⁴⁶ Bercuson, *The Zionist Lobby...*, 28.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*; Hillmer, *Here I am in the Middle...*, 129-131. During its visit to Mandatory Palestine, UNSCOP was boycotted by the Arab population so it met extensively with Jewish representatives. The minority recommendation was an independent bi-national federal state in Palestine.

lobbying intensified, particularly in several Toronto, Montreal, and Winnipeg constituencies, the Canadian delegation was free to support any realistic solution.⁴⁹

After several weeks of UN discussions, Canada announced tentative support for partition at the UN's Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine.⁵⁰ MacCallum had urged the government to delay the announcement pending the failure of direct Arab-Jewish conciliation and questioned the partition's morality when nearly all Arabs and a minority of Jews had rejected it. Once the Ad Hoc Committee had voted in favour of partition, Pearson as the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, who had personally favoured partition, took over the Canadian delegation to help draft the final plan for Palestine.⁵¹

Partition & the First Arab-Israeli War

In final negotiations, partition was the most likely outcome as it was supported by the superpowers. For the US, a Jewish state was a potential regional partner. However, the Arabs refused to accept any option where Jews controlled their own immigration and land regulations. Similarly, the Jewish Agency (representing Palestinian Jews) rejected a unitary-Arab state, satisfying Jewish extremists whose renewed violence could further compromise UN-British relations. The Canadian imperatives, outlined in a secret External Affairs report, were to maintain the new internationalist system and Canada's ability to operate within it. In November 1947 at the UN General Assembly (UNGA), the partition proposal narrowly carried despite Arab opposition, receiving the required two-thirds majority.⁵² Canada voted in favour of Resolution 181 (II) to create a Jewish homeland at the expense of the majority Arab population.⁵³ At the

⁴⁹ Bercuson, *The Zionist Lobby...*, 29.

⁵⁰ Mondal, *Canada's Role...*, 36.

⁵¹ Hillmer, *Here I am in the Middle...*, 129-131.

⁵² Bercuson, *The Zionist Lobby...*, 30-31.

⁵³ Mondal, *Canada's Role...*, 36.

UN and in Canadian deliberations, Pearson was central to calls for partition. Pearson stated that in the negotiations Canada was the “best able to be objective.”⁵⁴ However, others suggest Pearson was pragmatic in finding a solution despite his discontent with the plan and its consequences.⁵⁵ Regardless, approval of the partition plan preserved the budding world order while enhancing Canada’s standing as a functional power and emerging status as an honest broker.⁵⁶

British obstinacy to UN involvement in Palestine quickly resurfaced. Pearson lamented the UK’s petulant attitude, especially the British unilateral decision to exit in May 1948 regardless of the state of affairs in the region. Equally ominous was the lack of Arab support and the growing disputes among Jewish and Arab Palestinians. Pearson had believed that Arab opinion would be swayed by the UNGA vote; however, MacCallum’s prediction that Arab resolve would not waiver proved prescient.⁵⁷ In January 1948, as Canada assumed its inaugural two-year seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), ethnic violence in Palestine escalated and the UN floundered. On 14 May 1948, Israel proclaimed its statehood. War was instigated the following day by its Arab neighbours and continued until January 1949.

In November 1948, St-Laurent succeeded King. Newly elected to Parliament, Pearson held the External Affairs portfolio. Canada was worried about the potential degradation of UN credibility.⁵⁸ The St-Laurent government supported UNSC resolutions on the 1948 war and the 1949 armistice that “stabilized the ceasefire borders” between Israel and its neighbours “without

⁵⁴ Hillmer, *Here I am in the Middle...*, 125.

⁵⁵ Taras and Goldberg, *Influencing Canada’s Middle East Policy...*, 10.

⁵⁶ Hillmer, *Here I am in the Middle...*, 126.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁵⁸ Adam Chapnick, *Canada on the United Nations Security Council: A Small Power on a Large Stage* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019), 35. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cfvlibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=5849547#>.

accepting them as final.”⁵⁹ Since May 1948, the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) military observers have monitored the regional ceasefires.⁶⁰ With the armistice, Israel secured 40% more territory than it had been allocated under the partition plan, Egypt occupied the Gaza Strip, and Transjordan gained control of Jerusalem’s Old City and the West Bank of the Jordan River.⁶¹ Meanwhile, Palestinian society was fractured.⁶²

Throughout this period, Canada was focused on maintaining American-British harmony. Ottawa’s two most significant allies were negotiating what became the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and NATO’s future was threatened by differences over Palestine.⁶³ Canada’s High Commissioner in London, Norman Robertson, lamented the opposing positions of Canada’s allies to Israel. President Harry S. Truman immediately recognized Israel for “domestic political considerations” while the UK refused recognition in line with its “strategy and oil” interests.⁶⁴ Canada deferred recognition of Israeli statehood to retain its privileged position with the UK. In a December 1948 UNSC vote on the matter, Canada’s abstention helped defer Israeli independence even as Ottawa conceded that recognition was inevitable (bridging the UK and US

⁵⁹ Mondal, *Canada's Role...*, 39.

⁶⁰ The observers “monitor ceasefires, supervise armistice agreements, prevent isolated incidents from escalating and assist other United Nations peacekeeping operations in the region.” United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, “Mandate,” last accessed 15 March 2021. <https://untso.unmissions.org/mandate>.

⁶¹ Egypt exercised control of Gaza via the All-Palestine Government with approval of the Arab League except Transjordan. By 1953, this body was subsumed into the Egyptian polity. After the December 1948 Jericho conference named Transjordan’s ruler “King of Arab Palestine,” Transjordan attempted to annex the West Bank but was opposed by the Arab League. The West Bank or, more commonly, the territories, is known to Israelis as the biblical lands of Judea and Samaria.

⁶² Keith A. Casey, “Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: Department of Defense Role in a Two-State Solution” (master’s thesis, United States Army War College, 2013), 4-8. <https://apps-dtic-mil.cfc.idm.oclc.org/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a589103.pdf>. At partition, the Palestinian Jewish community had the necessary structures of government. The Jewish Agency functioned as the government with various organizations assuming responsibility for economics, social, agricultural, and security matters. In comparison, there was no single authoritative represent the interests of Arab Palestinians. The war fragmented Palestinian local government, economy, and society and “Palestine” ceased to exist. To Palestinians this event is known as the “Nakba” (catastrophe).

⁶³ Bercuson, *The Zionist Lobby...*, 32.

⁶⁴ Zachariah Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence: Canada and Israel, 1948-1958* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 4-5. <https://www-deslibris-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/ID/400509>.

positions). Ottawa eventually supported Israel's application for UN membership at the UNSC and co-sponsored the UNGA resolution that admitted Israel in May 1949.⁶⁵ Although NATO was successfully founded in April 1949, Canada experienced the limits of its influence in the new international system, the realities of Cold War politics, and the necessity to maintain distinct yet correlated policies with its allies.⁶⁶

From no involvement in Palestine to intimate participation with timely influence on the UNSC, Canada's approach to the creation of Israel was consistent with its national interests. Ottawa prioritized its functional power towards managing American-British relations to create the UN and NATO while ensuring its standing within the modern international system.

ST-LAURENT AND THE SUEZ CRISIS (1948-57)

Throughout the 1950s, St-Laurent's government pursued a liberal internationalist approach to foreign relations.⁶⁷ The so-called Golden Age of Canadian foreign policy reflected that "the times were extraordinary, the actors exceptional, and the environment inspiring."⁶⁸ Throughout this period, Canada remained a vital player in the Middle East. Ottawa attempted to maintain the Israeli-Arab equilibrium through prudent diplomatic initiatives, humanitarian aid, controlled arms sales, and limited military intervention during the Suez Crisis.

Balanced Diplomacy

From 1949-53, Canada cautiously broadened diplomatic relations with Israel, offsetting advances with similar privileges to Arab states. It also addressed the Jerusalem question: whether Jerusalem should become an internationally administered city-state or whether Israel

⁶⁵ Bercuson, *The Zionist Lobby...*, 32.

⁶⁶ Hillmer, *Here I am in the Middle...*, 139-140.

⁶⁷ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 4.

⁶⁸ Adam Chapnick, "The Golden Age: A Canadian Foreign Policy Paradox," *International Journal* 64, no. 1 (Winter, 2008-2009): 209. <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/scholarly-journals/golden-age-canadian-foreign-policy-paradox/docview/220851072/se-2?accountid=9867>.

and Jordan should have jurisdiction over areas they controlled. The Holy See advocated full internationalization, which mobilized Canada's francophone media in the largely Catholic province of Quebec. St-Laurent resisted. Canada opted for a "functional internationalization" of the religious sites with Jordan and Israel retaining areas they controlled. The UN created the Palestinian Conciliation Commission to settle the matter, but it proved incapable of forcing Israeli and Jordanian concurrence. Both states announced Jerusalem as their capital. Ottawa responded largely in concert with the US and UK. Although supporting Israel's call for direct negotiations, Canada did not recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Nor did it recognize Transjordan's West Bank annexation nor Egypt's control of the Gaza Strip, positions Ottawa maintained for decades.⁶⁹

Humanitarian Aid & Weapon Sales⁷⁰

Canada's limited diplomatic posture did not prevent Ottawa from engaging more actively on other files. The First Arab-Israeli War created Arab and Jewish refugees. After Israel's victory, Middle Eastern and North African states expelled their Jewish occupants, most of whom moved to Israel. UNGA Resolution 194 called for the return of the refugees to their homes and compensation for those not wishing to return. In December 1949, the UNGA took responsibility for Arab-Palestinian refugees in the surrounding Arab states through the newly created UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Canada was the

⁶⁹ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 9-20. In 1949, Israel, Egypt, and Lebanon were permitted to open Consul Generals in Ottawa. By 1953, Israel was allowed a non-reciprocal legation, which was upgraded to an Ambassador and Embassy the following year with the appointment of a non-resident Canadian Ambassador to Israel in Athens and a chargé d'affaires in Tel Aviv. Simultaneously, Canada announced missions to Beirut and Cairo as well as an Egyptian Embassy in Ottawa and an additional Lebanese consulate to manage Iraqi interests in Canada. The Vatican was already incensed by Canada's rejection of its diplomatic overtures while approving consular ties with Israel. Only the UK and Pakistan recognized Transjordan's West Bank annexation.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 24-66, 101-104. The entirety of the "Humanitarian Aid & Weapon Sales" section of this paper is derived from this source.

fourth largest contributor to the UN's Palestinian refugee program. Ottawa also provided UNRWA's first director, Howard Kennedy, and Canada was appointed a member of the agency's donations negotiation committee. Canadian officials recognized the refugee issue as a significant hurdle to peace on par with recognition of Israel's right to exist. In his January 1956 comment to the House of Commons, Pearson articulated Canada's Palestinian refugee position:

As I see it, some compensation should be paid these refugees by Israel for loss of land and home. But it is clear that so large a number cannot return to their former land... A limited amount of repatriation might be possible such as that which would be involved, for example, in the reuniting of families. For the rest, resettlement as an international operation, to which Israel among others would make a contribution, seems to be the only answer.⁷¹

Canada was increasingly disheartened by Israeli and Arab apathy towards Palestinian refugees to the point of politely chastising both at the UNGA's Special Committee after the Sinai-Suez conflict in February 1957.

In addition to humanitarian aid, Canada cautiously increased arms exports to the Middle East. Ottawa initially supported arms embargoes, fearing renewed conflict and to signal displeasure with Israel's defiance of the UNGA's Jerusalem resolution. The May 1950 "Tripartite Declaration" by the UK, France, and the US, however, guaranteed the territorial status-quo and permitted the limited purchase of self-defence weapons. Despite a campaign of "quiet diplomacy" by Israel and its Canadian stakeholders, the St-Laurent government approved only minor purchases, generally in coordination with the tripartite allies. The 1950-53 Korean War refocused Canadian industry on its own needs. By 1953, cabinet policy was more flexible:

It is not the Government's policy to permit the export of military equipment to areas of unrest or possible conflict. Although Israel is technically at war with several of the Arab states, Cabinet decided that an exception was warranted in the case of Israel, as the country is rapidly becoming the one stable state in the Middle East and military supplies are required to maintain its security against internal and external pressures.⁷²

⁷¹ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 26.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 33-34.

While generally supportive of sales to Israel, cabinet deliberations reflected deference to Canada's great power allies, as well a commitment to maintaining the regional balance.

In 1954, Gamal Abdel Nasser took power in Egypt determined to see his country play a greater role internationally. Egypt's agreement to buy arms from the Soviets in 1955 further heightened fears of an Egyptian-Israeli conflict and increased Israeli demands for Canadian weapons. Canadian officials demurred. Major-General E.L.M. Burns, the Canadian commanding UNTSO, and MacCallum, now the chargé d'affaires in Beirut, disputed the extent of Canadian sales to Arab states. However, in January 1956, it became public that Canada had sold fifteen Harvard aircraft trainers to Egypt, with three already delivered. Meanwhile, an Israeli request for a squadron of 24 Canadian-manufactured F-86 Sabre interceptor aircraft remained in bureaucratic limbo. As had been the case during previous arms sales, Canada served as a proxy for the US which sought to preserve its relations with the Arab states by not selling directly to Israel. In Parliament, the Progressive Conservative opposition, especially future prime minister John Diefenbaker, grilled the government and adopted pro-Israel rhetoric. In response, Foreign Minister Pearson reiterated Canada's regional policies: Israel was owed recognition by the Arab nations, but it also had responsibilities for Arab refugee compensation and resettlement, as well as an agreement on permanent borders.

Internationally, Canada was hesitant to sell F-86s, not wanting to appear as an American client state or provide the Arabs with a justification to remove Burns from his UNTSO Command. This fear was substantiated by a Syrian threat to that effect. In response, Pearson asked Robertson in London to investigate: "It seems to me that we have had about enough of these Arab threats of which this is only the most recent and most offensive."⁷³ Burns, who the

⁷³ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 66.

Israelis found unsympathetic, was not supportive of the sale. Canada's Ambassador to Cairo conveyed Burns' position "that the Israelis in their truculence might be encouraged to settle the issue by force" and his own claim that "Egypt had no aggressive intentions."⁷⁴ The almost year-long political and diplomatic drama ended with Canada agreeing to the sale, but almost immediately rescinding authorization when Israel colluded with the Anglo-Franco alliance to attack Egypt during the Second Arab-Israeli war, commonly called the Suez Crisis of October-November 1956.⁷⁵ On the whole, despite the political manoeuvring in Parliament, at the onset of the war, Canada had retained the appearance of balance in regional engagements.

Creating the United Nations Emergency Force⁷⁶

The attack on Egypt served the limited interests of the French, British, and Israelis but was opposed by the Americans.⁷⁷ In 1955, the US strategy to leverage Egypt as a bulwark against communism was already under pressure from Israeli and Egyptian cross-border raids when Nasser announced an arms deal with the Soviet satellite-state of Czechoslovakia. In July 1956, the US withdrew funding for the Aswan Dam Project and Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. In attacking Egypt, the French were protecting their economic investment and aiming to limit Nasser's influence in Algeria. The British sought unfettered canal access to maintain their empire. The Israelis believed that Egypt's procurement of Soviet weapons was a direct security threat and that a military assault could reopen the Straits of Tiran, and the Gulf of Aqaba, to Israeli shipping.⁷⁸ The Israeli invasion of the Sinai and the combined Franco-Anglo occupation of the canal led to global condemnation. In the midst of an election campaign, President Dwight

⁷⁴ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 59-60.

⁷⁵ The Suez Crisis is also called the Tripartite Aggression in the Arab world and Sinai War in Israel.

⁷⁶ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 44-48, 80-82, 96, 106. Unless stated otherwise, the majority of "Creating the United Nations Emergency Force" section is derived from this source.

⁷⁷ Mondal, *Canada's Role...*, 39; Trudgen, *Canada's Cold War Grand Strategy...*, 11-12.

⁷⁸ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 80; Trudgen, *Canada's Cold War Grand Strategy...*, 11-12.

D. Eisenhower was particularly incensed.⁷⁹ With Canada caught between the interests of its allies, the future of NATO threatened, and the Middle East destabilized, Pearson proposed the first modern peacekeeping force. After the French and UK vetoed UNSC efforts to end the illegal invasion, the UNGA authorized the UN Emergency Force (UNEF).⁸⁰ Led by promoted Lieutenant-General Burns and including a Canadian contingent, the UNEF marked the first modern peacekeeping mission, which “would come to occupy a prominent place in Canadian grand strategy into the 1960s.”⁸¹

Pearson’s idea allowed all combatants to save face by withdrawing their own forces and allowing the peacekeepers, while not having to admit defeat at the hands of the other side. Pearson won the 1957 Nobel Peace Prize for his contribution to both resolving the Suez crisis and the development of UN peacekeeping force.⁸²

The UNEF and Suez fallout was not without controversy. On the world stage, Israel was victorious militarily, Egypt commanded the Arab world, and the “United States effectively ended Britain and France’s imperial careers in the Middle East.”⁸³ For Canada, the St-Laurent government retained Canada’s reputation for measured neutrality despite Egypt’s objection to the Queen’s Own Rifles of Canada Regiment’s deployment as part of UNEF.⁸⁴ For its part, Israel refused UNEF deployments on its side of the armistice line and opposed Egyptian military rule in Gaza. During speeches to the UNGA in early 1957, Pearson stressed the need for regional change, noting that “a return to the status quo ante would be a return not to security but to terror, bloodshed, strife.”⁸⁵ He called for Israeli withdrawal, freedom of navigation, regional

⁷⁹ Trudgen, *Canada’s Cold War Grand Strategy...*, 11-12.

⁸⁰ Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 47.

⁸¹ Trudgen, *Canada’s Cold War Grand Strategy...*, 12.

⁸² Mondal, *Canada’s Role...*, 39.

⁸³ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 80.

⁸⁴ Egypt stated that “the name and similarity in military dress between British and Canadian forces could confuse the Egyptian public.” The UN Secretary-General and Burns ultimately negotiated a compromise that saw Canadian transport and administrative units deploy instead, after a subsequent Egyptian roadblock. Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 81.

⁸⁵ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 84.

security, and an administrative role for the UN force in Gaza. His proposal to make the overcrowded Gaza an UNRWA-administered UN enclave for refugees showed the limits of Pearsonian diplomacy and compromise. Ultimately, the “Eisenhower model” forced Israel’s withdrawal from Gaza under the threat of UN expulsion and an end to aid. With Egypt’s refusal to relinquish control of Gaza, Ottawa pledged to revisit Palestinian refugees’ plight after the Canadian elections in mid-June 1957. Domestically, the opposition had chided the government’s “gratuitous condemnation of the United Kingdom and France ... [for following] the unrealistic policies of the United States ... [and having] placed Canada in the humiliating position of accepting dictation from President Nasser.”⁸⁶

The June 1957 election brought John Diefenbaker’s minority Progressive Conservative government to power. Eight months later, Diefenbaker secured the largest majority since Confederation. While the victory was based largely on the new government’s initial domestic performance, it also marked an overwhelming repudiation of a twenty-two-year Liberal government that had shepherded Canada to a central position of functional power in international affairs. Under St-Laurent, Canada had reaffirmed its important regional interests through a refined strategic approach, which positioned the country as a vital contributor to regional affairs. Pearson and his advisors maximized Canada’s functionality in the Suez Crisis to “an apex from which it was to recede in subsequent decades.”⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 81. The Progressive Conservatives defended Israel as a “bastion of freedom in the Middle East” (Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 91). Further Israeli support emanated from the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) who found common ground with the democratic socialists leading Israel’s government.⁸⁶ Even the Social Credit Party, which generally supported the Liberal government and were beset by whispers of anti-Semitism, questioned St-Laurent’s approach

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, xiv.

DIEFENBAKER AND INTERNATIONAL DECLINE (1957-63)

Suez had “poisoned British and French attitudes towards global governance institutions more generally and had divided the Commonwealth... [and] Canadians over foreign policy along partisan lines for the first time in a generation.”⁸⁸ Diefenbaker initially controlled his government’s foreign policy. In a memorandum prepared for Israel’s Ambassador to Canada, the Jewish Agency accurately predicted that Diefenbaker’s pro-Israeli and anti-Nasser views were likely to shift Canada’s approach, but not policy, while tilting Ottawa closer to British interests over American ones.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, Diefenbaker’s government advanced relations with Israel where private interests were already active.⁹⁰

In September 1958, Diefenbaker appointed career diplomat Margaret Meagher as Canada’s first resident ambassador to Israel (in Tel Aviv).⁹¹ In 1960, Israeli-Canadian diplomatic cooperation resulted in a secret channel that fed regional developments from Canada’s ambassador in Cairo to Israel’s ambassador in Ottawa. Israeli-Canadian relations reached their zenith with Israeli Prime Minister Ben Gurion’s visit to Canada in 1961. Despite the cordial relationship between Diefenbaker and Ben Gurion, however, Canada maintained its delicate balance in policy positions.⁹²

⁸⁸ Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 48.

⁸⁹ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 2, 96-98. Under the Tory government, these static policies included: the UNEF, UNTSO, arms exports, UNRWA and Palestinian refugees, and in disregarding calls by Canada’s Jewish lobby to extend NATO policy to the Middle East via Israel.

⁹⁰ Taras, *From Passivity to Politics...*, 46. In 1952 Canadian Zionists financed the reclamation of a large area in the western part of the Negev desert, in 1956 a Canada Forest was planted at Ein Kerem near Jerusalem, and in 1962 a Canadian village was established. A significant step was taken in 1960 when, under the direction of Samuel Bronfman, a group of prominent Jewish businessmen founded the Canada-Israel Development Corporation.

⁹¹ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 13. Margaret Meagher was Canada’s first ever female ambassador.

⁹² Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality...*, 20-42, 101. Veterans of World War I, Diefenbaker and Gurion both “served with British Imperial forces: Diefenbaker was deployed with the Canadian forces, while Ben Gurion fought with the Jewish Legion, which was part of Britain’s Royal Fusiliers. Both had taken their basic training in Canada before being sent overseas.” (Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality...*, 22-29). Canadian policies included: UN voting pattern, interpretation of international law, support for entry of Palestinian and Israeli delegations to international forums, equal access/veto of nuclear power proliferation,

Squandered Opportunity at the Security Council

The Diefenbaker government faced no major crisis involving Israel, and the prime minister's personal beliefs did not drive Canada's response to world events.⁹³ In fact, Diefenbaker's government ultimately oversaw Canada's inevitable decline from prominence in the international system.⁹⁴ From 1958-59, Canada held its second UNSC seat, which has been described as diplomatically "ineffective, if not disappointing."⁹⁵ When the council considered the inconsequential Israeli-Syria border dispute (December 1958 to January 1959), Canada was not a material player.⁹⁶

Diefenbaker missed other opportunities well-suited for Canada's functional status, such as the 1958 destabilizations in Lebanon and Jordan. Flexing his post-Suez clout in 1958, Egypt's Nasser founded the United Arab Republic (UAR) with Syria. The move worried Jordan's ruling Hashemites, especially after Iraqi nationalist Brigadier Qassem overthrew Iraq's Hashemite monarchy in a 1958 coup d'état. To prevent a Nasserite insurrection in Lebanon, the US deployed Marines at the Lebanese Prime Minister's request, which was followed by a British military intervention in Jordan. Even though President Eisenhower received Diefenbaker's support for the American unilateral move, in Parliament, Diefenbaker criticized Canada's allies for not going through the UN.⁹⁷ As the object of allied ire and Ottawa's dithering on policy,

and maintaining the Embassy in Tel Aviv. The nuclear "phantom veto" was the understanding that Egypt would need to tacitly approve of any Canadian nuclear technology transfers to Israel.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹⁴ "Europe had recovered economically; the new Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, had altered the Cold War dynamic to the detriment of the smaller states; the domestic political stability provided by the long-governing Liberal party had ended; the Canadian economy was losing strength; morale in the civil service was deteriorating; and popular expectations of Canada's role in the world were growing too great for any leader to manage." Chapnick, *The Golden Age...*, 209-210.

⁹⁵ Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 35.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁹⁷ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 12, 59, 98-99. The UAR was Egypt until 1971 and included Syria (1958-61). Canada did deploy soldiers with the UN Observation Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL).

Canada was sidelined through most of the council deliberations.⁹⁸ When the US and UK abided by a UNGA resolution and withdrew their forces in October 1958, the outcome was beneficial to Canada's interests despite Ottawa not being involved in the solution: the UN's role was reasserted, the Anglo-American relationship was mended, stability in the region was restored, and the Israeli-British tensions over airspace use subsided.⁹⁹ Had events not resolved themselves favourably, Canada was not in a position to influence them in line with its interests.

The Progressive Conservatives lost power in 1963 as Canadians became dissatisfied with Diefenbaker and the government's domestic policies. Despite a temporary deviation from Canada's contribution to international relations, Diefenbaker's government maintained a relatively consistent approach to Israel, validating the importance of Canadian strategy.¹⁰⁰

PEARSON AND THE SIX DAY WAR (1963-68)

The importance of Canada's regional involvement to its national interests was evident in the prelude and aftermath of the Six Day War. Lester Pearson's Liberals governed Canada in successive minority parliaments between 1963 and 1968. As Prime Minister, Pearson's initial engagements with Israel were routine.¹⁰¹ Pearson's government maintained the consistent Canadian approach to the region. The UNEF had given Canadians a vested regional interest; however, "the force's job was to keep what peace there was, not secure it forever, and neither the Israelis nor the Arabs seemed ready to commit to a sustainable regional solution."¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 63-64.

⁹⁹ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality...*, 12-13.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 19, 35. As an interesting historical note, Diefenbaker resumed advocating for movement of the Canadian embassy to Jerusalem once out of office.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 47-48. The issues included arms sales, the 1964 signing of the Canada-Israel bilateral Extradition Treaty, nuclear proliferation concerns, and the perennial Palestinian refugee situation.

¹⁰² Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 80.

Prelude to Regional War

A confident Arab League had threatened to destroy Israel in 1964. By 1966, the region's mounting tensions and cross border raids had become discussion topics in the House of Commons.¹⁰³ The government's regional approach remained extant: "support for any effort to maintain stability, affirmation of Israel's right to exist, impartiality in the face of Israeli-Arab disputes, and a commitment to limit Soviet influence."¹⁰⁴ In 1965, Israel's Ambassador to Canada expressed concern about the Liberal government's, and specifically Foreign Minister Paul Martin Sr.'s, aloofness. Nonetheless, relations with Israel were unaffected by Israeli Air Force fire at a wayward Royal Canadian Air Forces Hercules over Gaza and protests outside Canada's Tel Aviv Embassy against a rush of Jewish emigration from Israel to Canada. In 1966, Canada and Israel signed a trade taxation agreement, although Canada refused to conclude a similar arrangement for air travel. When Israel opened its Knesset in West Jerusalem in August 1966, Canada's Ambassador followed the lead of the US and UK by attending, but noting Canada's Jerusalem policy.¹⁰⁵

In 1967, Canada returned to the Security Council. That April, Israel shot down six Syrian MiGs. Retrospectively, analysts have criticized the inaction of the UNSC President, Canadian George Ignatieff.¹⁰⁶ By the end of May, Egypt's Nasser had responded with a blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba and an order for UNEF to withdraw from his country. The UN Secretary-General, U Thant, obliged, much to Canada's explicit chagrin.¹⁰⁷ The Six Day or Third Arab-Israeli War (5-10 June 1967) was transformative in Middle East relations. In Canada, the

¹⁰³ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality...*, 51.

¹⁰⁴ Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 81.

¹⁰⁵ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality...*, 48-53, 69-70.

¹⁰⁶ Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 81.

¹⁰⁷ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality...*, 5, 58; Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 89. Historians have also suggested that Nasser's demand and the subsequent conflict could have been prevented if Israel had allowed UN deployments on its side of the border.

decisive victory of Israel's pre-emptive assault was formative in the future activism of Canadian Jews who contributed financially to Israel.¹⁰⁸ Pearson and Martin's diplomatic response was cautious. The Canadian position was decidedly sympathetic to Israel, although Pearson lamented the high Egyptian-Canadian tensions.¹⁰⁹ The hasty defeat of the Egyptian-led Arabs forced the Soviets to seek resolution at the UNSC, providing space for Canada to negotiate UN involvement at the behest of the US and UK.¹¹⁰

Aftermath of Peace

Around this time, R. E. Collins at External Affairs remarked: "The Israelis have not in the past shown themselves to be particularly imaginative or generous in dealing with the Arabs—nor indeed have they had much reason to be."¹¹¹ Israel's conclusive capture of the Golan Heights, Sinai, West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem gave Israel "little incentive to be flexible in the forthcoming negotiations."¹¹² Ignoring international denunciation in the UNGA, Israel moved quickly to annex East Jerusalem in June 1967. The Arabs responded with the "three No's" on recognition, negotiations, and peace at the September 1967 Khartoum summit. Canada was not able to achieve a Suez-like diplomatic compromise. One scholar has suggested that Canada's banal policy was increasingly evident prior to the conflict, defaulting to the position of like-minded allies for even benign matters.¹¹³ Foreign service officials worried the government's

¹⁰⁸ Taras, *From Passivity to Politics...*, 46-48.

¹⁰⁹ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality...*, 59-63, 109. Diefenbaker, as opposition leader, went as far to affirm that Israel should retain the entirety of Jerusalem. The New Democratic Party (NDP), having replaced the CCF in 1961, claimed the UN had a duty to support Israel and denounced the newly formed Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The Social Credit Party was more balanced. Only the Cr ditistes viewed Israel the aggressor. All parties agreed that the Palestine refugee issue was disconcerting.

¹¹⁰ Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 85; Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality...*, 1-2.

¹¹¹ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality...*, 85.

¹¹² Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 85.

¹¹³ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality...*, 79-82, 103. Allies here refers to US, UK, France and Australia.

fondness of Israeli positions had cost Canada its ability to influence outcomes.¹¹⁴ Lieutenant-General Burns, now Canada's disarmament adviser, suspected that Israel would never withdraw, advising the government to focus on Palestinian refugees and Israel's boundaries. In November 1967, the UK successfully achieved compromise with UNSC Resolution 242. As facilitators, Canadian diplomats were integral.¹¹⁵ Canada had supported Israel's "right to exist as a Jewish nation, within secure internationally recognized boundaries" while considering the refugee problem "as essentially one of compensation and relocation."¹¹⁶ The ambiguity of Resolution 242 reflected those consistent Canadian views while inaugurating the "Land for Peace" principle for future decades and preserving the UN's role. Although Pearson was personally supportive of Israel, Canada's policies reflected a measure of balance and the diversity of opinions within the mandarins at External Affairs.¹¹⁷

Canada's approach before and after the war reflected its interest in international stability through the UN as well as its intent to preserve its diplomatic capital writ large. In December 1967, Pearson announced his retirement from politics. His outsized influence on Canadian foreign policy, and the Arab-Israeli conflict in particular, cannot be understated. He espoused a belief of "diplomacy as reliability,"¹¹⁸ which enabled Canada to promote and preserve its national interests.

Conclusion

From 1947-67, Canada was more than a bit player in Middle Eastern affairs. Successive governments recognized important Canadian interests in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Canada's

¹¹⁴ Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 85-86. Canadian goals in negotiations were Arab recognition of Israel, Israeli withdrawal, refugee management, freedom of movement, and a UN role in mediation.

¹¹⁵ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality...*, 77, 84.

¹¹⁶ Abella and Sigler, *Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict...*, 231.

¹¹⁷ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 102-103, 110. Years prior, MacCallum commented that Pearson had a "blind spot" when it came to Israel.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*..., 96.

functional power enabled Ottawa to make notable contributions while supporting its allies and nurturing its positive reputation by playing a mediatory role at the UN. Kay argues that in the 1950s Canada did not have a clearly defined national policy in the Middle East, which enabled a form of flexibility.¹¹⁹ However, historian Adam Chapnick summarizes Canada's more general foreign policy strength in the 1940s and 1950s as the "willingness of the leading political parties to forsake partisan differences in their conduct of foreign policy" based on a "cohesiveness of the internationalist vision."¹²⁰ The fairly consistent approach across Liberal and Conservative mandates suggests the latter's analysis has more credence. The social change of the 1960s was reflected in a changing of the guard at External Affairs while the bipolar world altered the conduct of international affairs.¹²¹ The post-war sympathy with Jewish Holocaust survivors and the resulting pro-Zionist inclinations were increasingly contrasted by MacCallum's "prescient warnings" from the 1940s: "that our efforts to solve one refugee problem at the expense of the indigenous Palestinian population would involve us in a severe moral dilemma which would poison the politics of the region for a very long time."¹²²

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, abstract, 99.

¹²⁰ Chapnick, *The Golden Age...*, 216.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 215-216, 219.

¹²² Abella and Sigler, *Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict...*, 229-230.

CHAPTER TWO: REBALANCING CANADA'S APPROACH

From 1968 onwards, the Arab-Israeli conflict would focus on Israeli-Palestinian relations, and the steady approach of the Pearsonian era would be increasingly challenged. The expansion of Canada's interests globally undermined Ottawa's international perception as an honest broker.¹²³ Although support for Israel continued, a more "even-handed" strategy developed, which in some quarters was interpreted as pro-Arab.¹²⁴ Nonetheless, the rebalancing of policy in specific domains did not dramatically alter the trajectory of Canadian policy. This chapter argues that Canada's continued strategic approach towards the conflict as new interests were introduced indicates the importance of underlying vital interests. From 1968-80, the governments of Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Joe Clark privileged economic interests. Between 1981 and 1989 Prime Ministers Trudeau, John Turner, and Brian Mulroney were faced with a conflict that was increasingly framed in terms of moral imperatives, as the rights of a distinct Palestinian peoples became central. Lastly, between 1989 and 2000, the governments of Prime Ministers Mulroney, Kim Campbell and Jean Chretien introduced multilateral activism to Canada's strategic approach alongside efforts to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

PRIMACY OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS

Trudeau's first term (1968-72) deliberately shifted away from Pearson's brand of internationalism.¹²⁵ A focus on economic interests took precedence over previous priorities in the Arab-Israeli conflict.¹²⁶ This approach was realigned to a wider interpretation of interests in

¹²³ Chapnick, *The Golden Age...*, 215-216.

¹²⁴ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 109.

¹²⁵ Trudgen, *Canada's Cold War Grand Strategy...*, 20-21. Articulated in "A Foreign Policy for Canadians."

¹²⁶ Abella and Sigler, *Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict...*, 229.

the latter half of the 1970s, but the economic and business calculations in foreign policy persisted. By the 1980s, the intervention of Canadian corporations in foreign policy, especially as it pertained to the Middle East, was no longer uncommon.¹²⁷ This section will demonstrate the importance of Canada's regional interests through the realignment of an astrategic economic approach during the Yom Kippur War, the Arab economic boycott, and the embassy affair.

Trudeau, the October War, and an Astrategic Approach (1968-73)

Trudeau and External Affairs Minister Mitchell Sharp initially sustained extant Canadian regional policies while altering their methods. They were concerned that recent policies had jeopardized Canada's influence with the Arab states. Trudeau sought a rebalance with less emphasis on the UN and more on Arab commercial interests.¹²⁸ As regional hostilities festered, Canada had a mixed voting record in its last year on the UNSC (1967-68), although it was more supportive of Israel than the non-aligned countries.¹²⁹ Israel annexed East Jerusalem in 1967 and Canada's Ambassador in Beirut warned that Canadian interests in the wider Islamic world could collide with limited ones in Israel, especially if Israel annexed additional territories.¹³⁰ From 1967-70, the so-called War of Attrition¹³¹ smoldered along Israel's new boundaries with Egypt and Jordan. The cross-border hostilities temporarily subsided when the Nixon administration in the United States negotiated a ceasefire in August 1970 and Jordan, fearing a Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) insurrection, violently expelled the fedayeen fighters to Lebanon

¹²⁷ Howard Stanislawski, "Canadian Corporations and Their Middle East Interests" in *The Domestic Battleground: Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, edited by David Taras and David H. Goldberg (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 63. <https://www-deslibris-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/ID/400776>.

¹²⁸ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality...*, 95-96.

¹²⁹ Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 86.

¹³⁰ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality...*, 92-94.

¹³¹ The "war" was characterized by cross border artillery barrages, aerial attacks, and ground raids, such as the 1968 Battle of Karameh where Jordanian and PLO fedayeen forces repulsed an Israeli incursion. Canada condemned Israel's attacks at Karameh and the Beirut Airport while abstaining in criticizing Israel's annexation of Jerusalem.

in the “Black September” war (1970-71). The mission to reach a peaceful settlement by UN Special Representative Gunnar Jarring, authorized by Resolution 242, continued to struggle.¹³² Future conflict appeared inevitable. Increasingly, Trudeau looked to the region to diversify Canadian trade (his 1972 Third Option strategy).¹³³ In the early 1970s, the Middle East became a critical export market and source of capital.¹³⁴

In the middle of Trudeau’s second mandate (1972-74), the 6-25 October 1973 Yom Kippur, or Fourth Arab-Israeli War, began with a surprise attack by Egypt in the Sinai and Syria, shattering Israel’s 1967 illusion of invulnerability. It also re-awakened the political activism of Canadian Jews who provided record financial support to Israel.¹³⁵ Although Canada’s Jewish lobby did not convince Ottawa to condemn the Arab attack, they did ensure that Ottawa remained neutral in the conflict despite the pressure of Arab oil embargos.¹³⁶ Unlike previous Arab-Israeli wars, Canada was not on the UNSC and played no part in the ceasefire. In fact, Resolution 338 was designed and enforced directly by the US and USSR which themselves were brought to the brink of joining the conflict. Resolution 338 is notable for adding legal force to Resolution 242. From this point forward, Israel would be subjected to heightened pressure to

¹³² Hilde Henriksen Waage, and Hulda Kjeang Mørk, “Mission Impossible: UN Special Representative Gunnar Jarring and His Quest for Peace in the Middle East,” *International History Review* 38, no. 4 (2016): 844-846. <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/07075332.2015.1091783>.

¹³³ Mary Halloran, John Hilliker, and Greg Donaghy, “The White Paper Impulse: Reviewing Foreign Policy Under Trudeau and Clark,” *International Journal* 70, no. 2 (June 2015): 313-315. <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/scholarly-journals/white-paper-impulse-reviewing-foreign-policy/docview/1692916641/se-2?accountid=9867>. The Third Option typically refers to trade with Europe and Japan. Middle East trade was another avenue in the broader search for alternate markets.

¹³⁴ Abella and Sigler, *Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict...*, 227.

¹³⁵ Taras, *From Passivity to Politics...*, 53-55. \$54 million in aid, \$50 million worth of Israeli bonds purchased.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

return its 1967 territorial gains and resolve the Palestinian question.¹³⁷ Over the next five years, Resolutions 242 and 338 would form the basis for the Camp David Accords.¹³⁸

Canada was not immune to the war's impact on widening superpower tensions and the global energy crisis.¹³⁹ Peacekeeping was again given priority. Canadians deployed with UNEF II in the Sinai the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights in 1973 as well as to Cyprus in 1974.¹⁴⁰ Participation in UNEF II (1973-79) can be understood as a means of retaining Canadian credibility with the Arabs.¹⁴¹ Politicians and officials displayed renewed interest in the Arab-Israeli conflict, which reflected the energy ties among Canada's business sector, the media's captivation by the Palestinian question, and the implications for domestic Jewish and Arab interest groups. The experience would contribute to a realignment of priorities from the mid to late 1970s; however, the direction and momentum of the government's initial policy enabled corporations to contend that their profits were consistent with the national interest.¹⁴² For Trudeau, the Yom Kippur fallout was another rebuke of his foreign policy approach that attempted to ignore the Cold War realpolitik. Reflecting in the late 1980s, two historians noted:

We erroneously believed for a moment after the 1973 Middle East war and oil boycott that we would come out on top because of our greater energy autonomy and the greater premium put on trade and investment in a politically stable area such as Canada. It was an illusion; the world recession that accompanied the oil price rise cost us more because of the general reduction in international trade that followed. So conflict in such an important strategic area as the Middle East affects Canadian economic security as well as threatening escalation to general war. If we are to

¹³⁷ David Goldberg, "Keeping Score: From the Yom Kippur War to the Palestinian Uprising," in *The Domestic Battleground: Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, edited by David Taras and David H. Goldberg (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 103-104. <https://www-deslibris-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/ID/400776>.

¹³⁸ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality...*, 85.

¹³⁹ Goldberg, *Keeping Score...*, 103-104.

¹⁴⁰ Trudgen, *Canada's Cold War Grand Strategy...*, 22. Canada reinforced its Cyprus mission after the 1974 Turkish invasion.

¹⁴¹ Goldberg, *Keeping Score...*, 107-108.

¹⁴² Stanislawski, *Canadian Corporations...*, 64.

promote our trading interests, we must also promote the expectation that we have international institutions and effective diplomacy that will ensure that conflict can be managed without resort to war.¹⁴³

Trudeau and the Arab Economic Boycott (1974-1979)

With a refreshed majority government (1974-79), Trudeau ordered a review of Canada's Middle East and UN policy.¹⁴⁴ Vindicating recent policy reversals, the 1974 process rejuvenated the importance Canada placed on the UN for global comity and Arab-Israel relations.¹⁴⁵ This overlapped with the pivot towards the pre-1967 Cold War strategy.¹⁴⁶ Canada's policy on the Palestinian question shifted substantively, and in line with revised European, African, and Latin American positions: "Any enduring peaceful settlement," noted the Secretary of State for External Affairs, would have to "take account of the legitimate concerns of the Palestinians."¹⁴⁷ Since 1974, Canada has interpreted the Palestinian people under Resolution 242 "as a viable, independent political community" and not as the refugees envisioned in 1967.¹⁴⁸ In years prior, only the United Church had made such a case, and its evolving position had generated heated internal division and a legal battle with B'nai Brith Jewish lobby group.¹⁴⁹

In the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, the Arab countries expanded their boycotting efforts to place economic pressure on Israel. Foreign corporations conducting business with

¹⁴³ Abella and Sigler, *Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict...*, 230.

¹⁴⁴ Halloran, Hilliker, and Donaghy, *The White Paper Impulse...*, 316. Trudeau's review was in response to assertiveness by the non-aligned members at the UN and his dissatisfaction with how his External Affairs minister handled the Palestinian question.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 316-317. External Affairs desired a "broad restatement of the government's major foreign policy priorities," but the document was never published as a white paper. It was initially not published because of Canada's upcoming UNSC tenure. By 1976, the government was overcome by domestic concerns.

¹⁴⁶ Trudgen, *Canada's Cold War Grand Strategy...*, 24.

¹⁴⁷ Abella and Sigler, *Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict...*, 231.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ David Taras, "A Church Divided: A.C. Forrest and the United Church's Middle East Policy," in *The Domestic Battleground: Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, edited by David Taras and David H. Goldberg (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 98-99. <https://www-deslibris-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/ID/400776>.

Arab states were forced to renounce their economic interests in Israel or denounce Zionism.¹⁵⁰ Canadian banks and corporations came under increasing Arab pressure as they attempted to access the explosion of Arab wealth. The Canadian-Israel Committee (CIC) pressured governments to enact legislation making the Israeli boycott illegal but stopped short of directly pressuring corporations. Despite success in Ontario in 1978, their federal efforts were stymied by “an informal alliance of major corporations, high-ranking trade officials, and Arab diplomatic representatives”¹⁵¹ Federal officials found the boycott “offensive and contrary to traditional Canadian values and practices” and conceptually opposed “extraterritorial application of foreign law to Canadians engaged in international commerce,” but yielded to economic pressures.¹⁵²

The Palestinian question would continually resurface. The government was subject to the first serious lobbying attempt by the Canadian Arab community when the PLO planned to attend Canadian-hosted UN conferences on Law Enforcement and Terrorism in September 1975 and Housing and International Settlement in May 1976. Ottawa indefinitely postponed the Crime conference while committing to the Habitat conference, which officials perceived as “wise from the standpoint of domestic politics but a dangerous precedent in the international context.”¹⁵³ Fortunately, Ottawa was well-prepared for Middle Eastern matters prior to its 1977-78 UNSC seat. In addition to Israeli settlement construction in the occupied territories, cross-boundary hostilities with state and non-state actors persisted. In March 1978, Israel invaded Lebanon. Operation Litani intended to curb PLO fighters conducting cross-border raids. The UNSC

¹⁵⁰ Stanislawski, *Canadian Corporations...*, 65.

¹⁵¹ Taras, *From Passivity to Politics...*, 55-56. The CIC was created in 1967 as the sole liaison between the Jewish community and Ottawa. It was initially sponsored by prominent Canadian Jewish and Zionist organizations. The divergent goals of these founders would often hinder the organization.

¹⁵² Stanislawski, *Canadian Corporations...*, 68.

¹⁵³ Goldberg, *Keeping Score...*, 110.

demanded Israel's withdrawal and created the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) peacekeeping mission to which Canada contributed.¹⁵⁴

Indicative of the times, neither Canada nor the UNSC were involved in the secret US-brokered Camp David Accords of 1978 that led to the 1979 Egyptian-Israel Peace Treaty and the current borders in the Sinai. By 1978, public opinion had rejected Trudeau's approach to foreign affairs and Canadians were questioning the apparent decline of Canada's international standing.¹⁵⁵ External Affairs had launched a third foreign policy review in the late 1970s. The review and legislation concerning the Arab boycott were scuttled by the election in May 1979 of Joe Clark's minority Progressive Conservative government.¹⁵⁶

Clark's Interlude and the Embassy Affair (1979-1980)

Any expectations of a tougher stance towards the Arab boycott were quickly dashed by Clark's Jerusalem embassy affair. International reluctance to move embassies in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem challenged Israeli claims in negotiations.¹⁵⁷ During a November 1978 visit by Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to Canada, Trudeau had adamantly rejected the notion. However, during the election, Clark included the move as part of a foreign policy overhaul. Once in government, the promise to follow through unleashed a political tempest.¹⁵⁸ The Arab League and Islamic Conference applied immediate and sustained pressure. Bell Canada was at the vanguard of commercial opposition and the Royal Bank of Canada warned about the flow of investment capital.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 100-107. This was Canada's last non-competitive UNSC seat.

¹⁵⁵ Chapnick, *The Golden Age...*, 210-211.

¹⁵⁶ Halloran, Hilliker, and Donaghy, *The White Paper Impulse...*, 317-318. This review was entitled "Foreign Policy for Canada in the 80s."

¹⁵⁷ Stanislawski, *Canadian Corporations...*, 67-68, 74.

¹⁵⁸ Halloran, Hilliker, and Donaghy, *The White Paper Impulse...*, 319.

¹⁵⁹ Stanislawski, *Canadian Corporations...*, 68, 75-76, 77-79. Arab and Islamic states threatened to sever diplomatic and economic links, although the potential impact of actions remains contested. In 1978 Bell Canada had competed a five-year telephone system modernization contract worth \$1.1 billion with Saudi

Clark's rationale for the decision was a demonstration of astrategic thinking. In Conservative circles, it was widely believed that the previous Progressive Conservative government under John Diefenbaker had intended to move the embassy but had been stymied by partisan officials.¹⁶⁰ Clark's personal leanings and desire to assert authority were reinforced by his principal staff.¹⁶¹ Additionally, the CIC had conducted a surprisingly effective public relations campaign on the embassy issue.¹⁶² Clark thus instigated the promise with encouragement from the CIC to clinch "Jewish votes in several closely contested ridings in Toronto" and now both suffered politically from the self-inflicted wound.¹⁶³ Interestingly, Arab states were comfortable overlooking unkept election promises, as seen in the rhetoric of US Democrats, which makes the unforced error even more perplexing. The blunder is probably best summarized as "a mistaken wish by a new and inexperienced government to assert authority over the bureaucracy than from the substantive merits of the question... [and that] Clark himself feels considerable sympathy for Israel."¹⁶⁴

After meeting with Ambassadors from the Arab states and from Israel, Clark appointed the former Progressive Conservative leader, Robert Stanfield, to advise on Canada's Middle East policy, including the embassy question.¹⁶⁵ Clark hoped the commission could find a way to proceed with the move while his Foreign Minister and the Department of External Affairs were

Arabia, and its Northern Telecom subsidiary was considering a bid to supply the Emirates Telecommunications Company. The Royal Bank of Canada warned about the flow of capital investment after the Abu Dhabi based Arab Monetary Fund announced a boycott of all Canadian banks and financial institutions, despite having no liquidity in Canada.

¹⁶⁰ Takach, *Clark and the Jerusalem Embassy Affair...*, 152.

¹⁶¹ Goldberg, *Keeping Score...*, 112.

¹⁶² George Takach, "Clark and the Jerusalem Embassy Affair: Initiative and Constraint in Canadian Foreign Policy," in *The Domestic Battleground: Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, edited by David Taras and David H. Goldberg (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 146. <https://www-deslibris-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/ID/400776>. CIC used the "education campaign" to satisfy the competing interests of its sponsor organizations. Its effectiveness was not anticipated or a priority for all sponsors.

¹⁶³ Taras, *From Passivity to Politics...*, 56-57.

¹⁶⁴ Abella and Sigler, *Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict...*, 233.

¹⁶⁵ Stanislawski, *Canadian Corporations...*, 80.

looking for graceful exits.¹⁶⁶ At a summit in Tokyo, President Jimmy Carter impressed upon Clark the risk the move posed to the Camp David peace process.¹⁶⁷ In October 1980, Clark received the interim report and announced that the Embassy move “could be seen as prejudging negotiations... [and impeding] a just and lasting peace.”¹⁶⁸ Shortly after, a December non-confidence vote ended the Conservative government. Stanfield submitted his final report in February 1981 just before Trudeau reassumed office with a majority mandate. His report and engagements were effective in strengthening Canada’s frayed regional ties.¹⁶⁹ While criticized by contemporaries as pro-Palestinian, his report weighed Canadian interests and options:

While Stanfield began by writing “that while Canada has important economic interests in the area, our most fundamental goal there is to contribute to a just and lasting peace,” his report was in fact a clear reflection of the policies he believed Canada should pursue to maximize its economic interests. He recommended that Canada not transfer its embassy from Tel Aviv and suggested that anti-boycott legislation need not be pursued. Stanfield proposed that if clear proof of discrimination was found, then some consideration should be given to broadening the powers of the Canadian Human Rights Commission.¹⁷⁰

Stanfield’s observations were ahead of their time. His reported captured the importance of economic, corporate, and other narrow interests during the Trudeau and Clark governments that temporarily resulted in astrategic approaches while indicating the future direction of Canadian policy refinement. He saw diplomatic opportunity for Canada in the Middle East if it maintained “a policy of scrupulous even-handedness.”¹⁷¹ Stanfield articulated that judgement of the PLO’s morality was different from recognition that the organization was in practice the voice of Palestinians.¹⁷² Stanfield endorsed the vision of a Palestinian homeland and self-

¹⁶⁶ Takach, *Clark and the Jerusalem Embassy Affair...*, 158-159.

¹⁶⁷ Takach, *Clark and the Jerusalem Embassy Affair...*, 161.

¹⁶⁸ Stanislawski, *Canadian Corporations...*, 81.

¹⁶⁹ Takach, *Clark and the Jerusalem Embassy Affair...*, 159.

¹⁷⁰ Stanislawski, *Canadian Corporations...*, 81.

¹⁷¹ Takach, *Clark and the Jerusalem Embassy Affair...*, 163.

¹⁷² Abella and Sigler, *Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict...*, 234-235.

determination while retaining Canada's strong friendship with Israel, which included the obligation to oppose Palestinian terrorism and criticize Israeli activities that prevented peace.¹⁷³

CLARIFICATION OF VALUES AS INTERESTS

After being expelled from Jordan, the PLO's movement into the Palestinian refugee population of southern Lebanon contributed to the ensuing Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). In June 1982, Israel again entered the conflict to remove the PLO from southern Lebanon but this time pushed beyond the Litani River, along the coast towards Beirut and eastwards into the Syrian held regions. These manoeuvres and the ensuing occupation of southern Lebanon catalyzed Israeli-Canadian relations. The Trudeau and Mulroney governments of the 1980s refined Canada's Middle East policy to include a moral component concerning the rights of the Palestinians as distinct peoples. The consistent trajectory of Canada's Middle East policy during Israel's invasion of Lebanon, the Palestinian uprising, and in the waning years of the Cold War highlights the important interests upon which this policy was founded.

Trudeau, Lebanon, and the PLO (1981-1984)

Israel's invasion of Lebanon shifted domestic perceptions of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Trudeau was at the forefront of international criticism, exchanging terse letters with his Israeli counterpart.¹⁷⁴ In the summer of 1982 it became apparent that Israel's operations had been condoned by the US and Ottawa's position was increasingly criticized. The Liberal caucus was attuned to the media portrayal of the conflict, which had recently covered the destruction of the Canadian Ambassadorial residence in Lebanon by Israeli forces. In August, the government

¹⁷³ Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "Pro-Palestinian Policy Recommended," in *JTA daily news bulletin*, 3 March 1980, <https://www.jta.org/1980/03/03/archive/pro-palestinian-policy-recommended>.

¹⁷⁴ John Kirton and Peyton Lyon, "Perceptions of the Middle East in the Department of External Affairs and Mulroney's Policy 1984-1988," in *The Domestic Battleground: Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, edited by David Taras and David H. Goldberg (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 196. <https://www-deslibris-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/ID/400776>.

announced a review of its regional policies.¹⁷⁵ Within External Affairs' Mideast cadre, Israel was increasingly seen as obstructionist.¹⁷⁶ Canada's External Affairs Minister called for Palestinian "self expression within the territorial framework... and a homeland within a clearly defined territory, the West Bank and Gaza."¹⁷⁷ The CIC was alarmed by the increased focus on Palestinian rights over terrorism in northern Israel.¹⁷⁸ The Lebanon War removed "the constraining force of the usual pro-Israel sentiments," such that the government was free to give greater consideration to Arab claims, including PLO recognition.¹⁷⁹ Although falling short of recognition, the change in approach was noted by the Palestine Information Office: "It is no longer a sin in Canada to talk about the Palestinians and the PLO."¹⁸⁰ The war marked a new low in Israeli-Canadian relations.¹⁸¹ Meanwhile, the Canadian Jewish community was splintered on how to balance its traditional support for Israel and genuine disagreement for its policies.¹⁸²

Mulroney, Clark, & The Palestinian Uprising (1984-1989)

Elected in the fall of 1984, Mulroney's majority Progressive Conservative government came to office with a Diefenbaker-esque approach to Israel, but would shift substantially to the approach of more recent governments. Mulroney's team avoided an official position on the Middle East peace process in its 1985 foreign policy review and in other Parliamentary business. However, in 1985 Canada did contribute soldiers to the Camp David Accord mandated Multinational Observers Force (MFO) in the Sinai, a mission the Trudeau government had side-

¹⁷⁵ David Dewitt and John Kirton, "Foreign Policy Making Towards the Middle East: Parliament, the Media, and the 1982 Lebanon War" in *The Domestic Battleground: Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, edited by David Taras and David H. Goldberg (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 168-169, 179-180. <https://www-deslibris-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/ID/400776>.

¹⁷⁶ Goldberg, *Keeping Score...*, 116.

¹⁷⁷ Abella and Sigler, *Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict...*, 231.

¹⁷⁸ Goldberg, *Keeping Score...*, 114-115.

¹⁷⁹ Taras, *From Passivity to Politics...*, 58.

¹⁸⁰ Goldberg, *Keeping Score...*, 115-116.

¹⁸¹ Abella and Sigler, *Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict...*, 232.

¹⁸² Taras, *From Passivity to Politics...*, 58-59.

stepped. Subsequently, Mulroney's government demonstrated balance in criticizing both Israel and Arab nations over proactive and escalatory actions while adjusting its UN voting record closer to the median Western position.¹⁸³ The CIC made accusations of imbalance, which contrasted with prevailing thoughts of foreign service officials. Canada's former UN ambassador commented:

The Canadian government went to great lengths to find reasons for voting against or abstaining on resolutions which... were justified by the facts... we were generally identified, along with Costa Rica and the U.S.A. as being the most pro-Israeli delegations in the UN... most of our delegates felt that this was not in the best Canadian interest.¹⁸⁴

Canada expanded its economic and diplomatic footprint in Arab countries while showing displeasure with Israel. The admonishment of Israel manifested in a new aid package for West Bank Palestinians that circumvented Israeli authorities, rejecting Israeli financial support designs, and refusing to accredit Israel's military attaché who had led the 1982 Lebanon invasion.¹⁸⁵

Mulroney remained staunchly pro-Israel. At the 1987 la Francophonie summit, Canada refused to support a resolution on Palestinian recognition.¹⁸⁶ In December 1987, Israel announced plans to double Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, sparking a Palestinian Uprising that was eventually recognized as the start of the First Intifada. Israel's militarized response shocked Canadians.¹⁸⁷ Canada continued to offer Israel support even as President Reagan was critical.¹⁸⁸ Mulroney commended Israeli restraint and refuted analogies to apartheid

¹⁸³ Kirton and Lyon, *Perceptions of the Middle East...*, 197-199.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 193.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 196, 198-199.

¹⁸⁶ Jeremy Wildeman, "Assessing Canada's foreign policy approach to the Palestinians and Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding, 1979–2019," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* (2021): 7. <https://www-tandfonline-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1080/11926422.2020.1850488?needAccess=true>.

¹⁸⁷ Kirton and Lyon, *Perceptions of the Middle East...*, 199.

¹⁸⁸ Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 7.

South Africa despite diplomatic communiques to the contrary. In March 1988, his External Affairs Minister Joe Clark joined the growing chorus of public condemnation during a presentation to the CIC, which to the Jewish community was anathema.¹⁸⁹ Clark cited flagrant human rights abuses and the weaponization of food while implying Israel was impeding peace.¹⁹⁰ Mulroney never openly contradicted his Minister, but engaged Canadian Jewish leaders directly to indicate that Clark's comments were the Minister's own beliefs.¹⁹¹ In a presentation to the Edmonton Jewish community, Clark "changed the tone but not the substance of his remarks... reiterat[ing] Canada's long-standing support for Israel and blamed both sides in the Arab-Israeli conflict for feeding the cycle of violence."¹⁹²

The difference in views between Mulroney and Clark characterize the rebalance of Canada's moral interests. Mulroney arrived in office with a superficial interest in foreign affairs. He considered Israel as a friendly country on par with the US, Britain, and France, reflecting "early political support he had received from prominent Jewish Canadians, the pro-Israeli views of leading policy advisers in his office... and his generally pro-American perspective on world affairs."¹⁹³ He tempered his personal views through statements recommended by officials, especially in 1988 as Canada pursued a UNSC term. Meanwhile, Clark approached the foreign affairs with caution and considered the Middle East an American sphere of influence. His 1988 speech was a middle position between that of his prime minister and the department.¹⁹⁴

Canada's traditional defence of Israel as a democracy with shared values was challenged by

¹⁸⁹ Goldberg, *Keeping Score...*, 116-117.

¹⁹⁰ David Goldberg, and David Taras, "Collision Course: Joe Clark, Canadian Jews, and the Palestinian Uprising," in *The Domestic Battleground: Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, edited by David Taras and David H. Goldberg (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 212. <https://www-deslibris-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/ID/400776>.

¹⁹¹ Kirton and Lyon, *Perceptions of the Middle East...*, 200.

¹⁹² Goldberg, *Keeping Score...*, 117.

¹⁹³ Kirton and Lyon, *Perceptions of the Middle East...*, 201.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 201-203.

Israel's visible disregard of civil rights towards its Arab minority and in the occupied territories.¹⁹⁵ As Mulroney began his second term, Canada's approach reached a healthier balance, which the CIC only moderately forestalled.¹⁹⁶ Canada's Arab community, which had previously depicted criticism of Israel as "too little, too late," was optimistic.¹⁹⁷

Canada and the end of Cold War Stability

These domestic shifts coincided with Canada-US free trade negotiations that dominated Canada's foreign policy agenda and reduced Ottawa's willingness to expend diplomatic capital with the Americans on Middle Eastern affairs.¹⁹⁸ Although the reality of Canada's rebalance was more symbolic than substantive, Canadian-Israeli relations reached their nadir.¹⁹⁹ Canada continued to contribute soldiers to the various peacekeeping missions along Israel's borders, but only occupied a minor presence in the peace process.²⁰⁰ Canada's increasingly continental focus, comfortable in the stability of the bipolar order, could not survive the ensuing paradigm shift as Canadian functional power would be required at UNSC and in the Middle East. Canadian diplomats in the late-1980s ranked Canada's regional importance with Libya. However, this demonstrated Canadian functionality as:

...the only extra-regional power on the list without superpower status, colonial involvement in the region, or a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council... Nonetheless, it should be recalled that Canada's effectiveness in 1947-8 and 1956 did not derive from its proximity to the area, or even its wealth or military strength, as much as it did from its reputation, its commitment to peace in the area, and its diplomatic finesse.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁵ Abella and Sigler, *Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict...*, 228-229.

¹⁹⁶ Kirton and Lyon, *Perceptions of the Middle East...*, 203-204.

¹⁹⁷ Goldberg, *Keeping Score...*, 117.

¹⁹⁸ Kirton and Lyon, *Perceptions of the Middle East...*, 189.

¹⁹⁹ Abella and Sigler, *Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict...*, 232-233.

²⁰⁰ Kirton and Lyon, *Perceptions of the Middle East...*, 199.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 189.

At the end of the 1980s, Canada's approach moved closer to the Europeans, recognizing Palestinians and the PLO as fundamental to peace. Politicians and officials observed the changing public attitude towards Israel due to its actions in Lebanon and the occupied territories.²⁰² Starting with the overlooked Stanfield report, Canadian policy from Trudeau to Mulroney continued its trend of including values as interests.²⁰³ Manifesting as an "evenhanded" policy in the Canadian Senate's report of June 1985 and Clark's 1988 speech.²⁰⁴ The commercial interests that dominated the 1970s were dormant, satisfied if their activities were not impacted.²⁰⁵ Foreign service mandarins and diplomats during this period considered Canada's position balanced, despite a persistent inclination to favour Israel.²⁰⁶ The new voice of Canadian Arabs still paled to that of the Jewish community who led in "numbers, wealth, roots in Canadian society, and cohesion."²⁰⁷ However, unwavering support for Israel highlighted internal divisions with the Jewish community.²⁰⁸ Overall, the introduction of values was correlated to the increased agency of various domestic interests and a focus on the Israeli-Palestinian struggle.

WINDS OF CHANGE & MULTILATERAL ACTIVISM

Indicative of societal changes in the 1980s, Western statecraft trended from "enlightened liberal internationalism to unilateralism."²⁰⁹ Mulroney's efforts to democratize foreign policy formulation during his first mandate enabled the multilateral activism of the next decade. Much

²⁰² "[Canada's 1989] position on the Palestinians is somewhat different from the American position, and that's because we didn't have to negotiate in 1975, as Mr Kissinger did, a second withdrawal agreement from the Sinai, in which he put in a secret protocol that the United States would not negotiate with or recognize the PLO." Abella and Sigler, *Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict...*, 232-234.

²⁰³ The brief premiership of John Tuner was inconsequential to these affairs.

²⁰⁴ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 110.

²⁰⁵ Goldberg, *Keeping Score...*, 118.

²⁰⁶ Kirton and Lyon, *Perceptions of the Middle East...*, 190-191.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 196.

²⁰⁸ Goldberg, *Keeping Score...*, 104.

²⁰⁹ Abella and Sigler, *Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict...*, 227-228.

of that engagement was focused on continental economic interests.²¹⁰ Chretien applied that activism more globally. In the Middle East, Canada supported US activities as the narrower Israeli-Palestinian conflict took primacy over regional tensions. However, the unipolar moment proved fleeting as the “anticipated ‘peace dividend’ was replaced by turmoil and conflict across the globe.”²¹¹ Both leaders were initially disinterested by foreign affairs but succumbed to domestic pressures and the need to temper American unilateralism. Canada’s increased participation in multilateral forums expanded the government’s peripheral interests, but further restricted Ottawa’s manoeuvrability in foreign affairs.²¹² The importance of the Middle East to Canadian interests was clear during the First Gulf War and in the rise and fall of the multilateral peace process.

Mulroney, War, and Peace (1989-1993)

Upon re-election in 1988, Mulroney continued to engage in Middle Eastern affairs in support of Canada’s vital interests. Especially important, Canada reinforced the primacy of the UNSC in security matters for an America no longer constrained by Cold War bipolarity. Concurrent with the fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of the Soviet Union, the Middle East featured prominently at the UNSC with emphasis here on the legitimacy of the PLO and Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait.

²¹⁰ Nelson Michaud, “Setting the Canadian Foreign Policy Agenda, 1984-2009: Prime Ministers as Prime Actors?,” in *In the National Interest: Canadian Foreign Policy and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1909-2009*, ed. Greg Donaghy and Michael K. Carroll (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011), 184-186. <https://www-deslibris-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/ID/443721>.

²¹¹ David Dewitt and Bessma Momani, “Canada in the Middle East: Working within Multilateralism”, in *Beyond Afghanistan: An International Security Agenda for Canada*, edited by James G. Fergusson and Francis Joseph Furtado (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016) 163. <http://search.ebscohost.com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1294416&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

²¹² Michaud, *Setting the Canadian...*, 184.

The debate over the PLO's diplomatic status ensnared the UNSC during Canada's 1989-90 tenure. Canada's election to the council at the body's functional zenith was aided by the government's rebalance of its Middle East posture to overcome perceptions of a pro-Israel tilt.²¹³ Throughout the 1980s, Israel had rejected negotiations with the PLO so long as the organization refused to recognize Israel's existence. Israel argued that a moderate organization could only emerge absent PLO political agency.²¹⁴ In November 1988, the Palestinian National Council, the PLO's legislative body, recognized the legitimacy of UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338, a tacit approval of Israel's existence. This recognition was timed deliberately so as to enable the organization to leverage the UNSC to validate Palestinian statehood shortly thereafter. Canada had low-level diplomatic contact with the PLO at the time, but abstained on a resolution that would have increased the organization's standing at the council. Increasing pressure to mediate between the PLO and the US led Ottawa to formalize its relationship with the Palestinian group. Canada was instrumental during the subsequent UNSC negotiations. Although Ottawa's moderate position angered Israel, it reflected Canada's traditional role of managing matters that its superpower ally was unable to arbitrate directly, a demonstration of functional power. Historian Adam Chapnick suggests that the effort did little for the immediate concerns of Israeli and Palestinians civilians, but was significant in sustaining the longer-term peace prospects.²¹⁵

In August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait, triggering the First Gulf War (January-February 1991). While initially tangential to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, it reaffirmed the region's

²¹³ Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 117-118, 126, 133.

²¹⁴ Abella and Sigler, *Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict...*, 235; Casey, *Palestinian-Israeli Conflict...*, 5. In 1974, the Arab League designated the PLO (the Palestinian "government in exile" located in Tunisia) the sole, legitimate representative of Palestinians, wherever they lived. In 1977, the PNC called for an independent state of Palestine – implying alongside a State of Israel. Egypt relinquished any control over Gaza in the 1978 Camp David Peace Accords and Jordan similarly in the West Bank in 1988.

²¹⁵ Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 139-142.

instability.²¹⁶ Furthermore, Canada protected its interests and flexed its functional power when it forcefully suggested the US receive UNSC authorization to counter Iraqi aggression. In discouraging unilateral military action, Canada validated the legitimacy of the international system.²¹⁷ Ultimately, the war's aftermath was an impetus for new Middle East peace negotiations.²¹⁸ On 6 March 1991, President George H.W. Bush declared that "the time has come to put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict."²¹⁹ The US and Russia co-chaired the Madrid Conference from 30 October to 1 November 1991. With delegations from Israel, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian team, the Conference was the first international peace consultation to include all parties in direct talks. Madrid was followed by bilateral meetings in Washington (December 1991) and multilateral discussions in Moscow (January 1992).²²⁰ The bifurcation of the peace process intended to:

...facilitate progress at the bilateral level by involving neighboring Arab states and the expertise of the international community where they could discuss what are technically considered non-political issues of mutual concern that would serve as confidence building measures between the parties. Whereas the bilaterals would deal with the problems inherited from the past, the multilaterals would focus on the future shape of the Middle East. It included the issues of water, refugee issues, environment, economic development and other subjects of mutual interest.²²¹

In Moscow, Canada chaired the Refugee Working Group (RWG) as part of the overall Middle East Peace Process (MEPP). Ottawa was fully aware of the file's complexity, but took the role upon US insistence and Israeli agreement. To Israel, the refugee issue was a humanitarian problem. For Palestinians, half of whom lived in exile, the focus was political:

²¹⁶ Iraq fired missiles at Israel to draw them into the war and undermine the US coalition.

²¹⁷ Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 151.

²¹⁸ Andrew Robinson, "Canada's Credibility as an Actor in the Middle East Peace Process: The Refugee Working Group, 1992-2000," *International Journal* 66, no. 3 (Summer, 2011): 696. <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/scholarly-journals/canadas-credibility-as-actor-middle-east-peace/docview/1924588129/se-2?accountid=9867>.

²¹⁹ Office of the Historian, *Madrid Conference...*

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ Mondal, *Canada's Role...*, 40.

they wanted compensation and the “Right of Return.”²²² The Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Jordanian bilateral discussions were supplanted by secret negotiations that led to the 1993 Oslo Accord and the 1994 Peace Treaty. The multilateral negotiations persisted until 2000.²²³

Chretien, Oslo, and the Refugee Working Group (1993-1996)

The Liberal government of Jean Chretien took office in late 1993 with a promise to strengthen Canada’s international reputation through “a more active, independent, internationalist role.”²²⁴ The Liberals’ foreign policy statement privileged prosperity over its other key pillars of security and the promotion of Canadian values. Chretien’s initial interest in foreign policy was limited to domestic perceptions impacting the 1995 Québec referendum. For example, his “Team Canada” trade missions were a tangible symbol of national unity. Furthermore, Chretien’s laissez-faire approach to cabinet governance offered his foreign ministers considerable flexibility, so long as they could work within a diminished budgetary framework. Other than the Refugee Working Group, the Middle East would not feature prominently in Chretien’s foreign policy.²²⁵

Shortly before Chretien took office, US President Bill Clinton oversaw the 13 September 1993 signing of the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles (DOP) on Interim Self-Government Arrangements. The Oslo Accord (or Oslo I) was signed in the presence of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat. The PLO renounced terrorism and recognized Israel’s right to exist. Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and both agreed to form the Palestinian Authority (PA)²²⁶ to administer the

²²² *Ibid.*; Robinson, *Canada's Credibility...*, 697. 699-700.

²²³ Office of the Historian, *Madrid Conference...*

²²⁴ Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 156.

²²⁵ Michaud, *Setting the Canadian...*, 189-190. “Canada in the World” foreign policy statement.

²²⁶ Officially the PA is the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

West Bank and Gaza Strip for five years, which would lead to permanent status talks on borders, refugees, and Jerusalem. Oslo I enabled a series of other agreements, including the April 1994 Paris Protocol on economic and taxation relationship, the May 1994 Cairo Accords that finalized Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho, the October 1994 Peace Treaty between Jordan and Israel, and the September 1995 Taba Agreement (or Oslo II). Oslo II divided the West Bank into Areas of Palestinian control (Area A), Israeli control (Area C), and Palestinian civil administration with Israeli security control (Area B).²²⁷

The Cairo Accords initiated the first phase of Palestinian autonomy. Ad hoc battalions of Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA) fighters assumed security duties previously undertaken by withdrawing Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) in May 1994. Since 1964, the PLA had been the PLO's conventional military arm. It had fought under the command of its various host governments during the Arab-Israeli wars and was scattered following Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon. The PLO itself was comprised of numerous resistance factions of which Arafat's Fatah were central. In the "Western Sector," the West Bank and Gaza prior to 1994, the PLO's "military" was comprised of terrorist cells, popular resistance committees, and localized officials serving in the Israeli Civil Administration as traffic police and clerks. Oslo I had identified the requirement for PA controlled "Palestinian Police," whose organization the Cairo Agreement defined as 9,000 personnel (7,000 PLA and 2,000 local recruits) with four services (Civil Police; Public Security; Intelligence; and Emergency Services and Rescue) and a distinct Coastal Police. In each district, the four security branches were to ostensibly fall under one central command. With Oslo II, the Palestinian security forces expanded to 30,000 personnel (12,000 in the West

²²⁷ Office of the Historian, *Oslo Accords...*

Bank and 18,000 in Gaza with 40% coming from abroad) and added the Presidential Guard and Preventative Security branches. Israel mandated weapon and personnel selection criteria.²²⁸

In response to Oslo I in 1994, the UN Secretary-General appointed a Special Coordinator to “enhance the involvement of the United Nations during the transition process, and to strengthen UN inter-agency cooperation” as it concerned Palestinians.²²⁹ However, the UN was outside of the main processes of the MEPP, which continued the late Cold War trend of using non-UN structures for peace negotiations. Canada also seized the opportunity to advance relations with the Palestinians and with Israel. Ottawa established an office in Ramallah responsible for coordinating Canada’s regional efforts in the peace process.²³⁰ It has since become the Representative Office of Canada to the Palestinian Authority and continues to manage Canada’s political, economic, and assistance efforts in the West Bank and Gaza. A Palestinian General Delegation office was established in Ottawa in 1995.²³¹ With Israel, Canada increased economic ties: the two states signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Economic Cooperation in 1992 and another on Research and Development in 1994.²³²

Although the RWG was the most strategically important multilateral forum, Canada’s ability to influence the bilateral discussions was minimal. Moreover, the RWG was extremely

²²⁸ Neri Zilber and Ghaith Al-Omari, *State with No Army, Army with No State: Evolution of the Palestinian Authority Security Forces 1994-2018* (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March 2018), 1-5. Fatah has been the principal PLO group since 1969, following Arafat and Fatah’s idolized role in the March 1968 Battle of Karahmeh.

²²⁹ The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO), “About,” last accessed 28 March 2021. <https://unsco.unmissions.org/about>.

²³⁰ Dewitt and Momani, *Working within Multilateralism...*, 165.

²³¹ Representative Office of Canada to the Palestinian Authority (RMLAH), “Canada-West Bank/Gaza Strip Relations,” last modified 9 April 2020, https://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/west_bank_gaza-cisjordanie_bande_de_gaza/bilateral_relations_bilaterales/index.aspx?lang=eng.

²³² Embassy of Canada to Israel (TAVIV), “Canada-Israel Relations,” last modified 25 March 2020, https://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/israel/bilateral_relations_bilaterales/index.aspx?lang=eng. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Research & Development (R&D) provided annual funding of \$1 million per state for industrial R&D, which is managed through the Canada-Israel Industrial Research and Development Foundation (CIIRDF) created in 1995.

susceptible to diplomatic tensions cascading down from the bilateral forum.²³³ Andrew Robinson, Canadian Ambassador to Israel (1992-95) and RWG gavel (1995-2000), establishes how Oslo I handicapped the RWG:

Oslo also strengthened Israel's argument that the refugee working group should not address the fundamental political aspects of the refugee question, identifying the issue of refugees, along with settlements, borders, and Jerusalem as final-status issues to be dealt with bilaterally between Israel and Palestine. The Palestinian argument for a more substantive role for the working group in the refugee negotiations had been substantially undermined... Despite these differences over the mandate, however, the group met in regular plenary sessions, approximately every six months, in the period 1992-94.²³⁴

Although the RWG would eventually fade along with the prospects of a lasting peace, Canada was important to the overall process. The RWG was the only venue to discuss the interests of Palestinians not residing in the occupied territories:

[Canada] became involved in over 100 specific activities including workshops and seminars on various themes, construction of schools and clinics in refugee camps in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. The Canadian government encouraged and supported academic discussion of the refugee issue with conferences in Canada followed by ones in the UK and elsewhere. The purpose of these were to explore the options on the questions related to return, compensation, institutional change, the future of the UNRWA and so forth.²³⁵

Other notable RWG achievements include support to the recently founded Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, a Swedish led UNICEF program for Palestinian children, and the repatriation of Palestinian refugees to Gaza from "Camp Canada" in Egypt.²³⁶ Canada was also involved in ensuring that the term "refugee" was expanded to include both Jews and Arabs

²³³ Mondal, *Canada's Role...*, 40-43.

²³⁴ Robinson, *Canada's Credibility...*, 700.

²³⁵ Mondal, *Canada's Role...*, 40.

²³⁶ "In the early 1970s, some areas of the Israeli-occupied Gaza near Rafah were cleared for road construction. The Palestinian residents of that area were relocated to the then Israeli occupied Sinai to a camp formerly occupied by a Canadian contingent of the UNEF. Hence, the name 'Canada Camp'. After the Egypt-Israel peace treaty of 1979 and the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai, the border with Egypt was restored. Rafah was then divided into two areas. Most of the 'Canada Camp' fell within the Egyptian part of Rafah, leaving 496 Palestinian families effectively stranded and separated from their families and relatives in Gaza." *Ibid.*, 41-42.

displaced by the conflict.²³⁷ Accordingly, Canada's aid to the Palestinians and support to UNRWA benefitted the country's global reputation while the consensus-based decision-making format satisfied most domestic and niche constituencies.²³⁸ Some argued that Canada also played an important supporting role on the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group (ACRS), co-chaired by the US and Russia. Given the importance of maritime trade and Canadian expertise in maritime matters, Canada's capacity as an extra-regional maritime mentor on ACRS activities was a clear functional fit in pursuit of national interests.²³⁹ Robinson specifically noted that Canada's RWG involvement increased its authority on Middle Eastern issues at the G7 and UN while garnering favour in Washington. Additionally, as Chair, Canada's Foreign Minister sat on the steering committee, even as representatives from the UK, France, and Germany did not.²⁴⁰

Chretien, Axworthy, and the Failure of the Middle East Peace Process (1996-2000)

In 1996, the renamed Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) was assigned to Minister Lloyd Axworthy. According to one scholar:

Historically, Canadian foreign policy had always required Ottawa to reconcile national interests – the primary concern – with global ones. Axworthy is the only minister under whom the global order became equally, if not more, important. Canadians, in his eyes, were not just citizens of Canada: they were citizens of the world with obligations to all of humanity.²⁴¹

²³⁷ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Prudence...*, 110.

²³⁸ Mondal, *Canada's Role...*, 42; Robinson, *Canada's Credibility...*, 702.

²³⁹ Derek Mackay, "The Evolution of Canadian Diplomacy towards the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," (master's thesis, Ottawa University, 2015), 32-34. This diplomatic engagement was representative of the "Ottawa Process" employed by the Chretien-Axworthy government to leverage informal and parallel tracks of dialogue in all matters of foreign dialogue through a comprehensive approach. Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canadian Development Agency, and the International Development Research Centre all contributed to these track two diplomatic efforts on the RWG, ACRS and other Axworthy initiatives.

²⁴⁰ Robinson, *Canada's Credibility...*, 695, 702-703.

²⁴¹ Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 156-157.

Axworthy's approach encapsulated the euphoria of the Oslo Accords. Unfortunately, the optimism overshadowed the MEPP's weaknesses. Israeli domestic divisions were pronounced.²⁴² The unproductive Syrian-Israeli negotiations over the Golan Heights in 1995 paused for Israel's 1996 elections. In November 1995, Rabin was assassinated by an Israeli opposed to peace, which led to a series of events that derailed the Oslo process. The terrorist bombings by Hamas (a Palestinian Sunni-fundamentalist faction) throughout 1996 decreased support for Israel's Labour party, leading to the election of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu whose Likud party rejected Oslo.²⁴³ Arab frustration with Israel's April 1996 "Grapes of Wrath" war with Lebanon was compounded by Netanyahu opening the Hasmonean tunnel under the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif (TM/HAS) complex in 1996 and the Har Homa settlement construction in the West Bank. By March 1997, the Arab League had suspended the peace talks. Of the multilateral forums, only the RWG sustained sufficient momentum to survive from 1995 to 2000. The persistence of the RWG speaks to the functional power of Canada but also demonstrates Ottawa's limitations. In 1997, with Axworthy's permission, the Canadian delegation secretly approached Israel, the PLO, and Jordan to open "a discreet direct dialogue on a solution to the refugee issue among trusted interlocutors of the leaderships," but Netanyahu's "reserved" response negated the attempt.²⁴⁴

Sensing the processes' imminent collapse, Clinton became actively involved and negotiated the January 1997 Hebron Protocol that re-established the third and longest lasting

²⁴² Robinson, *Canada's Credibility...*, 699. The interim agreement passed the Knesset by a single vote.

²⁴³ Abrahams, Alexei. "Monopolization of Violence in the Palestinian Struggle." *Defence and Peace Economics* 31, no. 8 (2020): 893, 897-898. <https://www-tandfonline-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1080/10242694.2020.1724398?needAccess=true>; Office of the Historian, *Oslo Accords...* It's worth noting that Hamas maintained a ceasefire during Oslo until Shimon Peres as acting Prime Minister seized an opportunity to assassinate a Hamas bomb-maker in early 1996. Hamas responded with the 1996 terrorist attacks in Jerusalem, Ashkelon, and Tel Aviv.

²⁴⁴ Robinson, *Canada's Credibility...*, 696, 701, 711.

iteration of the civilian observer mission, the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH). The Protocol led to the division of Hebron into areas H1 under PA control and H2 under Israel's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT). In October 1998, Clinton hosted Netanyahu and Arafat, now the elected PA President and PLO Chairman, at the Wye River Plantation. Israel's failure to implement the Wye Agreement led to the downfall of Netanyahu's government in early 1999. The UN expanded the mandate of the Special Coordinator, which became The Office of the UN Special Coordinator for Middle East Peace (UNSCO), but remained outside the process.²⁴⁵ Ehud Barak and Israel's Labour Party came to power with the goal of reaching a peace with Syria, Lebanon, and the Palestinians within one year. Barak unilaterally ended the almost two-decade occupation of South Lebanon by the spring of 2000. However, the Syrian border dispute proved irreconcilable in the short-term and the Palestinian negotiations demanded Barak's attention. In July 2000, Clinton mediated another round of negotiations at Camp David; however, there remained divergent positions on final status issues for which Clinton would blame Arafat. In September, Likud Party leader Ariel Sharon's visit to the TM/HAS complex instigated a pronounced surge of violence that became the Second (Al-Aqsa) Intifada (2000-05).²⁴⁶

During this period, the PA security services expanded haphazardly and obtained military support weapons in contravention of the agreements. Intelligence services for internal monitoring accounted for 75% of all personnel by 1998. Arafat designed this system to retain personal control and dilute the authority of subordinate service chiefs. He also institutionalized systemic patronage to himself and Fatah. Personnel salaries were transferred directly (in cash)

²⁴⁵ UNSCO, *About...* UNSCO is empowered as the UN Secretary-General's personal representative to the PA, the PLO and with the international community in the peace process.

²⁴⁶ Office of the Historian, *Oslo Accords...* In December 2000, Clinton made a final unsuccessful attempt for resolution before the end of his Presidency as the uprising became an Intifada.

by Arafat to the service chiefs who in turn retained redundant staff, including militants, on the payroll. By the late-1990s, the PA was spending \$500 million annually on security. These fiefdoms were inadvertently perpetuated by the international community as governments directly sponsored their preferred organizations. Of note, some European states, particularly the UK and Netherlands, supported the Civil Police and an emergency-response team. Beginning in 1996, the US Central Intelligence Agency supported Arafat's intelligence services with tens of millions of dollars annually.²⁴⁷

US involvement with Palestinian security was meant to prevent terrorism and improve Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation. In pursuing these objectives, Arafat was cautious so as to avoid provoking a Palestinian civil war or being perceived as an Israeli proxy. In the early 1990s, Fatah and Hamas had skirmished intermittently, but the PA's interdiction of Hamas and other "rejectionist" factions was largely symbolic. Later, external pressure and the need to assert internal authority led Arafat to order periodic crackdowns by Preventative Security. The PA reduced West Bank attacks (from 2,400 in 1992 to 140 in 1999); however, the Palestinian militants never disarmed. Overall, the Palestinian-Israeli security relationship was fraught with misunderstandings. Security coordination was facilitated by the Joint Security Committee (JSC) and subordinate District Coordination Offices (DCO) that managed tactical activities. Israel largely abided by Oslo II, remaining outside Area As. Attempts at joint patrols along the boundaries risked confrontation, but introduced a measure of confidence building. Starting in 1994, there were sporadic IDF-PASF clashes. The most serious incidents included several days of fighting across the occupied territories during the 1996 Hasmonian Tunnel riots and exchanges of gunfire near Ramallah during the 2000 Nakba Day demonstrations.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 6-10.

²⁴⁸ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 11-15.

Despite the worsening diplomatic and security situation, Chretien and his government remained apathetic. In 1997, Canada temporarily recalled its Ambassador in Tel Aviv after two Israeli Mossad agents used fake Canadian passports in a failed assassination attempt of Hamas leader Khaled Mashal, but the fray in relations did not persist.²⁴⁹ Canada's 1999-2000 UNSC term was largely devoid of the Israeli-Palestinian concerns, despite Axworthy's personal involvement with the Palestinian question in 1967 and the impending failures of the MEPP and RWG. Throughout the 1990s, the comity of UNSC permanent members had deteriorated and the council faced increasing criticism and challenges. In late 2000, Canada supported UNSC Resolution 1322 that criticized Israel for Sharon's provocative TM/HAS visit and the IDF's subsequent use of excessive force. The resolution also reminded Israel of its obligations as an occupying power under the Fourth Geneva Convention.²⁵⁰ In April 2000, Chretien conducted a full tour of the Middle East that was poorly received.²⁵¹

Ultimately, Chretien's internationalist "rhetoric and spirit" lacked the commitment of resources necessary to renew the Pearsonian legacy in the Middle East.²⁵² The multilateral activism of Chretien's second term (1997-2000) relied on a reputation built during Mulroney's government and sustained by Axworthy. Increasingly, Canada resisted American efforts to channel statecraft through ad-hoc coalitions, which risked the efficacy of the international system

²⁴⁹ Barry Came and Stephanie Nolen, "Canadian Passport Abuse," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, Historica Canada, article published March 17, 2003 (last edited December 16, 2013), <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/canadian-passport-abuse>.

²⁵⁰ Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 154-165. During Canada's term, the main issues were human security, council reform, and the Western coalition actions in Iraq and Kosovo.

²⁵¹ Barry Brown, "Chretien's Mouth is Full of his Foot," *The Buffalo News*, 16 April 2000, https://buffalonews.com/news/chretiens-mouth-is-full-of-his-foot/article_98223a3d-0aca-556c-ab4f-fea230159c87.html; Duart Farquharson, "The Little Guy has Foot-in-Mouth Disease: Chretien's Gaffes Confuse Middle East Adversaries and Embarrass Canada," *Edmonton Journal*, Apr 24, 2000, <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/newspapers/little-guy-has-foot-mouth-disease-chretiens/docview/252787984/se-2?accountid=9867>. Chretien angered Palestinians over Jerusalem, dismayed Israel over unilateral Palestinian statehood, exasperated Syria over water access in the Golan Heights, and prompted policy clarifications in Egypt and Lebanon

²⁵² Brian Bow and Patrick Lennox, "*Introduction...*, 11; Michaud, *Setting the Canadian...*, 193-4.

and Canadian functional power. Chretien's pivot to Asia in search of counter weights mirrored Trudeau's search decades prior in both intent and marginal return.²⁵³ Ottawa continued to negotiate economic agreements with Israel and the PLO despite developments on the ground.²⁵⁴

Conclusion

From 1989-2001, the Mulroney and Chretien governments introduced multilateral activism to Canada's strategic approach without altering the trajectory of its Middle Eastern policies.²⁵⁵ Similarly, economic and moral concerns in the 1970s and 1980s expanded Canadian interests without prejudicing policy. Middle East involvement was necessary to support Canadian interests in an increasingly destabilized international system with a propensity for unilateralism. Although the MEPP circumvented UN structures, it achieved significant breakthroughs with "Israeli-Jordanian peace... the foundations for Palestinian self-rule... [removing] numerous diplomatic taboos and establish a basis for what a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace might look like."²⁵⁶ Canadian functional efforts on the RWG reflected Ottawa's legacy of contribution to international stability and regional peace. Canadian initiatives persisted in a difficult environment after Rabin's assassination. Netanyahu's election on the campaign promise to "slow down" the peace process changed the course of history.²⁵⁷ Canadian efforts were increasingly constructive in the lives of Israelis and Palestinians as the conflict narrowed

²⁵³ Brian Bow and Patrick Lennox, *Introduction...*, 10-13.

²⁵⁴ RMLAH, *Canada-West Bank/Gaza Strip Relations...*; TAVIV, *Canada-Israel Relations...* These economic agreements include the 1997 Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA), which included Palestinian exports under the Paris Protocol, and the 1999 Joint Canadian-Palestinian Framework on Economic Cooperation and Trade with the PLO on behalf of the PA

²⁵⁵ The brief premiership of Progressive Conservative Prime Minister Kim Campbell (June–November 1993) was inconsequential to foreign affairs (Michaud, *Setting the Canadian...*, 200-201.).

²⁵⁶ Office of the Historian, *Oslo Accords...*

²⁵⁷ Mondal, *Canada's Role...*, 40-41.

from its original regional dynamic. However, it was not foreseeable that precedents set in the MEPP could be co-opted in ways that would ostensibly worsen conditions in future decades.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁸ Robinson, *Canada's Credibility...*, 711.

CHAPTER THREE: A DECLINE OF CANADIAN INTERESTS AS A DRIVER OF MIDDLE EAST FOREIGN POLICY

Until the 2000s, Canada's Middle East policy was remarkably stable. A common understanding of national interests in the Pearsonian era (1947-67) established Canadian policy guard rails on controversial matters in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the subsequent decades (1968-2001), the priority and interpretation of national interests fluctuated. Canada's regional approach rebalanced to reflect governmental preferences, including economic interests, moral imperatives, and the rise of multilateral activism. However, the trajectory of Canadian policy in the Middle East remained consistent as the regional conflict evolved into a protracted struggle between Israelis and Palestinians. The stability of Canada's approach reflects a strategy aligned to vital interests. At the end of the millennium, Canada's position was to support a secure Israeli state while advocating for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.²⁵⁹ Subsequently, a shared political understanding of Canadian national interests ceased to exist. Unmoored from interests, Canadian foreign policy lost its sophistication, becoming progressively astrategic. This chapter argues that Canada's increasingly partisan and short-sighted approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has not served the national interest. The strategy shift started in the waning years of the Liberal government under Prime Ministers Jean Chretien and Paul Martin (2001-06). An astrategic approach took hold with Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative governments (2006-15) and to date the Liberal governments of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (2015-present) have chosen to not substantively alter course. Throughout this period, Operation *PROTEUS* has grown to be an increasingly legitimate strategic choice to offset the imbalance in Canadian policy and serve important national interests.

²⁵⁹ Dewitt and Momani, *Working within Multilateralism...*, 165.

PREMIUM ON SECURITY

Political Scientists David Dewitt and Bessma Momani chart the recent path of American Middle East adventurism, noting that “9/11 changed nothing and everything.”²⁶⁰ The Second Gulf War (March 2003 to December 2011), with its lingering American military presence, disturbed the precarious authority upon which Arab and Islamic states were governed. It gave space for the rise of a political Islam that blamed deteriorating conditions in Arab states on secularism and the influence of Western, Communist, and Zionist agendas. Arab Sunni fundamentalism besieged regional leaders to confirm to the ideals of *dar al Islam* and a single Islamic nation-state. Shia populations looked to Iran for support as sectarian violence spiraled. The Canadian approach to security shifted from continental defence to a forward engagement strategy in support of the American-led “global war on terror.” Active support, however, was limited to internationally sanctioned missions, such as Canada’s initial combat operations in Afghanistan.²⁶¹ While retaining the multilateralist ideals of the 1990s, the Liberal governments of Chretien and Martin increasingly placed a premium on security concerns, reducing Canadian involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to narrow security interests.

Chretien, the Global War on Terror, and the Road Map for Peace (2001-2003)

When the twenty-first century began, spiraling Israeli-Palestinian violence, the defeat of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak’s government, and the 9/11 attacks on the US left the Middle East in crisis. Israelis and Palestinians dispute whether the 2000 uprising was an organic response or planned. However, it is certain that Arafat did not attempt to quell the violence, wrongly believing it would improve his negotiating position.²⁶² After failing to secure peace,

²⁶⁰ Dewitt and Momani, *Working within Multilateralism...*, 167.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 167-169.

²⁶² Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 19-20.

Barak lost national elections in March 2001 to Likud's Ariel Sharon. After 11 September 2001, Canada's focus followed the Americans to Afghanistan and the securitization of continental borders. Moreover, new anti-terrorism legislation limited Canadian engagement with Hamas and four other Palestinian factions. Throughout 2002, the US "war on terror" shifted its attention from southwest Asia to Iraq. In 2003, the President George W. Bush administration failed to convince the UNSC and Canada of the existence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. Canada was equally unsuccessful in preventing unilateral American military action. Ignoring external and internal pressure to join the US and British coalition, Chretien doubled-down on the NATO-led and UN-authorized Afghan missions while limiting support in Iraq to reconstruction efforts.²⁶³

The UN re-emerged in the Middle East in the aftermath of the failure of the MEPP and US unilateral attempts to stem the Second Intifada (2000-2005). In early 2002, the European Union, the United Nations, the United States, and Russia formalized their quadripartite cooperation as the Middle East Quartet,²⁶⁴ with a mandate to "help mediate Middle East peace negotiations and to support Palestinian economic development and institution building."²⁶⁵ In March 2002, the UNSC outlined the basis of these negotiations in Resolution 1397. While invoking Resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), it affirmed the two-state solution with secure and recognized borders.²⁶⁶ Regrettably, a Hamas terrorist attack later in March 2002, known as

²⁶³ Dewitt and Momani, *Working within Multilateralism...*, 167-9.

²⁶⁴ The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, "About," last accessed 28 March 2021. <https://unsco.unmissions.org/about>. Also referred to as the Madrid Quartet (established in Madrid recalling the Madrid Conference of 1991). The Quartet's principals are the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, the Foreign Minister of Russia, the UN Secretary-General, and the US Secretary of State. Since 2002, the Special Coordinator has been the Secretary-General's envoy in the Middle East Quartet.

²⁶⁵ The Office of the Quartet, "About Us," last accessed 15 April 2021, <http://www.quartetoffice.org/page.php?id=4e3e7y320487Y4e3e7>;

²⁶⁶ The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO), "Key UN Resolutions," last accessed 15 April 2021, <https://unsco.unmissions.org/key-un-resolutions-0>.

the Passover Massacre, overshadowed an Arab League proposal to end the Arab-Israeli conflict. The attack triggered Israel's complete reoccupation of the territories, including Areas A and B, and initial construction of a permanent barrier segregating Palestinian areas. Casualties spiked.²⁶⁷

In March 2003, the same month the American-led coalition invaded Iraq, The Quartet endorsed an American draft of the "Roadmap for Peace." The framework suggested a three phase process with "performance-based" and "goals-driven" objectives to fulfill the Oslo Accords. The Quartet would serve as monitor. The plan ambitiously established 2005 as the date to have addressed multilateral and final status issues in addition to reforming Palestinian governance institutions. The Roadmap was short on details and was indicative of the Bush Administration's focus on security during its global war on terror. Like previous initiatives, it did not address the final status issues. Instead, it presumed that insecurity, specifically Israeli security concerns, had caused the previous failures. Accordingly, the international focus shifted to the capacity and willingness of the PA to police Palestinian militants.²⁶⁸ As a first step, the Palestinians had already agreed to amend their constitution, the Palestinian Basic Law, to transfer PASF authority from the President to Cabinet.²⁶⁹ In November 2003, UNSC Resolution 1515 endorsed the Roadmap.²⁷⁰ Nonetheless, the plan floundered as initial requirements to end Israeli-Palestinian violence and freeze Israeli settlement construction went unheeded. Once

Additionally, the Resolution recognized the role of The Quartet and the contributions of the June 2001 Tenet Plan (Israeli-Palestinian Ceasefire and Security Plan by CIA Director George Tenet), April 2001 Mitchell Report (Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee Report by US Senator George Mitchell), the March 2002 Arab Peace initiative (Saudi Initiative endorsed by the Arab League).

²⁶⁷ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 22.

²⁶⁸ Casey, *Palestinian-Israeli Conflict...*, 6-9. These Palestinian militants including Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

²⁶⁹ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 23-24.

²⁷⁰ UNSCO, *Key UN Resolutions...*

again, the inability or refusal of both Israelis and the PA to implement the initial phase conditions effectively killed the initiative.

Chretien's foreign policy in his final years as Prime Minister revolved around managing the bilateral relationship with the US, continental security, and the Iraq and Afghan wars. There was little capacity for concern with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which to the Americans was ancillary to its regional designs. Canada was under intense pressure to adopt a security-oriented approach to foreign policy.

Martin's Shift and the beginning of Security Coordination (2004-2005)

In December 2003, Paul Martin succeeded Chretien as Prime Minister. Martin's government reoriented foreign policy to focus on continental security while still acknowledging Canada's commitment to multilateralism.²⁷¹ "Canada's role in the world is not simply to support a great power,"²⁷² Ottawa explained. To rebrand the Liberal government, Martin promised to invest seriously in Canada's international toolkit: "In order to show leadership," he argued, "we have to back up our rhetoric with resources. The real problem with our foreign policy [is] that we talk a good game but don't deliver."²⁷³ In April 2005, Martin's government released an International Policy Statement that focused on assistance to failing states, improving relations with the US, and increasing military expenditures through diplomacy, defence, and development.²⁷⁴ That spring, Canada redeployed soldiers from Kabul to Kandahar in Afghanistan. The increases in military and security expenditures were framed as a commitment to multilateralism through NATO.²⁷⁵ The hawkish Bush administration was satisfied.²⁷⁶

²⁷¹ Dewitt and Momani, *Working within Multilateralism...*, 169; Michaud, *Setting the Canadian...*, 195.

²⁷² Michaud, *Setting the Canadian...*, 195.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 195.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 195-196.

²⁷⁵ Dewitt and Momani, *Working within Multilateralism...*, 169.

²⁷⁶ Michaud, *Setting the Canadian...*, 193-196. Although Martin was criticized for his lengthy deliberations, he was actively engaged in foreign policy and his awareness stood in sharp contrast to

The focus of Martin's Middle East engagement was on combat in Afghanistan, support to Iraqi reconstruction, and Canada's leading role in supervising the Iraqi parliamentary elections in 2005. Canadian policy also remained consistent through its steadfast support for Israel and commitment to a two-state solution.²⁷⁷ Former Representative of Canada to the Palestinian Authority Douglas Scott Proudfoot (2016-19) noted that the stated Canadian policy on key issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict drafted in the Martin era was still extant (and posted on the government's website) during his appointment to Ramallah, surviving the Harper and initial Trudeau governments.²⁷⁸ However, Ottawa's approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict increasingly diverged from stated policy. In mid-2004, Canada abstained on a UNGA resolution that recognized the International Court of Justice finding that Israel's security barrier violated international law. In late 2004, when faced with resolutions condemning Israel's occupation and violence towards Palestinians, Canada shifted its vote from abstention to opposition, declaring the resolutions unbalanced. In November 2005, Canada changed its position on three additional resolutions it deemed biased. This shift has been linked to internal Cabinet and Liberal party dynamics.²⁷⁹

Chretien's disinterest. This active interests and investment in military capabilities appeased American interests.

²⁷⁷ Dewitt and Momani, *Working within Multilateralism...*, 169.

²⁷⁸ Douglas Scott Proudfoot, conversation and correspondence with the author, April-May 2021.

Generally, this policy remains: support for Israel to live in peace and secure borders; support for Palestinian self-determination and statehood as part of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace (based on UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338); Jerusalem's status can only be resolved as part of a general Israeli-Palestinian settlement (Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem is not recognized); Palestinian refugees must be addressed as part of final status peace agreement (based on UNGA Resolution 194 and UNSC Resolution 242); Canada does not recognize control over occupied territories from 1967 (Golan Heights, West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip) and Fourth Geneva Convention applies to Israel as an occupying power, which is violated by Israeli settlements (based on UNSC Resolutions 224 and 465); Israel is entitled to a barrier to protect its citizens on its own territory but not in (or impacting) occupied territories; and UN Resolutions will be addressed individually in accordance with policy.

²⁷⁹ Donald Barry, "Canada and the Middle East Today: Electoral Politics and Foreign Policy," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (Fall 2010): 196-197. <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/scholarly-journals/canada-middle-east-today-electoral-politics/docview/875100303/se-2?accountid=9867>; Steven Seligman, "Canada's Israel Policy Under Justin Trudeau: Rejecting Or Reinforcing the Legacy of Stephen Harper?" *American Review of Canadian Studies* 48, no. 1 (January 2018): 85-86.

By 2005, the PASF had been dismantled thanks to internal dissent and Israeli targeting. Arafat's structuring of the Palestinian security sector in the 1990s, especially the Fatah-PASF overlap, facilitated its breakdown. In 1995-97, concurrent to founding the Palestinian security services, Arafat had resurrected the Tanzim, Fatah's militia arm, as a proxy to counter the Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) militants. As conflict escalated, the Tanzims again proved useful in shoring-up Fatah's resistance credibility without directly implicating Arafat. Arafat also financially supported an emerging network of Fatah-affiliated militant groups under the Al Aqsa Martyr's Brigade (AAMB) banner. Increasingly, PASF officers joined the Tanzim militias and eventually AAMB. As such, Israel progressively targeted the organization's personnel and infrastructure. After the Passover massacre, Israel's Operation Defensive Shield destroyed most PASF equipment and facilities in the West Bank while disarming its members. Simultaneously, an Israeli siege of Arafat's presidential compound in Ramallah left him isolated in the Muqata. Once Defensive Shield was complete, Israeli forces isolated the Palestinian population centres, creating enclaves where armed militias and militants took control of local security. In Gaza, which had been isolated by a perimeter fence since 2001, Fatah splintered into competing factions (Chief of Preventative Security Mohammad Dahlan emerged on top). Among the militants, Hamas expanded its presence in Gaza.²⁸⁰ In their anthology of the PASF, Zilber and Al-Omari note that the PA and its security apparatus were defeated:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02722011.2018.1434552>. Under Chretien, participation in the 2001 UN World Conference against Racism (in Durban, South Africa) had divided the liberal caucus and opened it to opposition criticism of anti-Israel bias. In contrast to Chretien, Martin's government contained six members of the "Liberals for Israel" caucus according to the *Jewish Independent* media who were supported by Canada-Israel Committee lobbying. Those efforts with the advice from a close Martin advisor and donor overcame the concerns of Liberal parliamentarians with large Arab communities.

²⁸⁰ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 20-23. The Tanzim originated in resistance movements of the 1970s and 1980s and comprised West Bank and Gazan Palestinian "insiders" versus Arafat's PLO "Tunisian" cadre. Israel destroyed tens of millions worth of PASF assets during the Intifada, including buildings, vehicles, and computers.

Most ominously, the years of violence and institutional collapse had taken a toll on the PASF's public standing: by 2005, according to one poll, Palestinians had greater trust in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and al-Quds Brigades—the Hamas and PIJ armed wings, respectively—than the Civil Police or Preventive Security.²⁸¹

In 2003, Arafat chose Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) as the PA's first Prime Minister.²⁸²

The appointment did not have the American's desired effect, as Arafat continued to exercise functional control over the security services until his death on 11 November 2004. Abbas was elected President of the PA and PLO in January 2005 (presenting the Americans an opportunity). As President, Abbas moved quickly to consolidate his control of the security services by forcing the retirement of former chiefs while unifying the security services under a new Minister of the Interior. To overcome the disarray of the Palestinian security situation, Abbas met with Israeli Prime Minister Sharon in February 2005 in Sharm al-Sheikh. The agreed upon truce and release of Palestinian prisoners bought a modicum of stability and political power for Abbas; however, the PA possessed little local authority in the West Bank and was competing against a parallel Hamas authority in Gaza. Also in February 2005, Israel's Knesset approved the Gaza Disengagement plan for execution in September that year, which involved the forced removal of Israeli settlers.²⁸³

The Quartet met in early 2005 to review the Roadmap's benchmarks with emphasis on security sector reform provisions, including:

Implementation, as previously agreed, of U.S. rebuilding, training, and resumed security cooperation plan in collaboration with outside oversight board (U.S.-Egypt-Jordan)... [and] Restructured/retrained Palestinian security forces and IDF [Israeli Defence Force] counterparts progressively resume security cooperation... including regular senior-level meetings, with the participation of U.S. security officials.²⁸⁴

²⁸¹ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 23.

²⁸² Abbas was the PLO negotiator who had signed the 1993 Declaration of Principles.

²⁸³ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 23-26. Note: PASF forces include the National Security Force (NSF); General Intelligence (GI); and internal security: Preventative Security, Palestinian Civil Police (PCP), and Civil Defence (CD). Of note, Abbas retained direct command over the NSF and GI.

²⁸⁴ Casey, *Palestinian-Israeli Conflict...*, 9.

Prior to this meeting there was no indication of US designs to assist with Palestinian security sector reform; however, in March 2005, just days after the Quartet met, the Office of the U.S. Security Coordinator (USSC) was created through a joint Memorandum of Agreement between the US Departments of State, under Condoleezza Rice, and Defense under Donald Rumsfeld. Although the Defense Department supplied the leadership and staff, the USSC's authority and funding came from the State Department.²⁸⁵ In pledging support to the Gaza Disengagement, the Americans were looking to implement a peace process acceptable to both sides. Initially working from offices in the American Embassy in Tel Aviv, the small USSC team saw themselves as the Secretary of State's envoy.²⁸⁶ In fact, the "Coordinator" continues to report directly to the Secretary (while advising the Ambassador and military channels). The mission comprised US military officers, State officials, and several allied military personnel serving six-month to yearlong rotations. Funding for the mission, at least until 2019, was from State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).²⁸⁷ The international efforts to end the Intifada through security sector reform were entrenched although under-resourced in the initial years.²⁸⁸

From March to December 2005, as the Israelis left Gaza, the first Coordinator, General William "Kip" Ward established the mission's original parameters. He oversaw the transfer of the Gaza security mission to the PASF, facilitated the transfer of non-lethal aid to the PASF, assisted in negotiating the Agreement on Movement and Access (AMA) for Palestinians between Gaza and the West Bank, and organized a series of international donor conferences to

²⁸⁵ Casey, *Palestinian-Israeli Conflict...*, 10.

²⁸⁶ Barry Southern, conversation and correspondence with the author, April-May 2021.

²⁸⁷ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 41-42.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 20, 25.

synchronize funding of European and Arab states based on a PASF training and reform needs assessment.²⁸⁹ On 15 November 2005, Israel and the PA agreed to the AMA as negotiated by Secretary Rice, the EU, and Quartet envoy James Wolfensohn. It enabled the opening of Gaza barrier crossing points staffed by PASF officers (under USSC mentorship) as well as provisions on opening the Gazan seaport and airport.²⁹⁰ It was a detailed plan and trust building exercise under US supervision. For the USSC and its Canadian contingent (Operation *PROTEUS*), the AMA and handover of Gazan security to the PA was the *raison d'être*.²⁹¹

As the USSC was being conceived, the US requested a Canadian military officer for the mission. The year prior, US and Israeli officials had become familiar with Colonel Barry Southern, who had been seconded to UNSCO Terje Roed-Larsen in Jerusalem. As aide to the UN Secretary General's Middle East envoy and representative to the Palestinians, Southern had developed a unique understanding of the Palestinian leadership and their relevant organizations, especially in Gaza. The Americans did not have such expertise and were prohibited from entering Gaza. In supporting the USSC, Ottawa gained visibility into the peace process and an opportunity to be productive. As the "Gaza guy," Southern was to become typical of Canada's functional contribution to the USSC, engaging where the Americans could not. Furthermore, Canada consciously decided to contribute discretely so as to not undermine security coordination efforts. This approach increased the faith of the US, Israel, and the Palestinians. Southern sees this Canadian credibility as the key to the mission's longevity, particularly in the early years.²⁹²

²⁸⁹ Casey, *Palestinian-Israeli Conflict...*, 10. The initial non-lethal aid transfer included \$2.3 million worth of vehicles, radios, uniforms, and equipment.

²⁹⁰ Economic Cooperation Foundation, "Agreement on Movement and Access (AMA, 2005)," last accessed 18 April 2021, <https://ecf.org.il/issues/issue/224>.

²⁹¹ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 41.

²⁹² Southern, conversation... Southern recommended naming the mission *PROTEUS* after the "Old Man of the Sea," a Greek mythological deity who changes shape to suit the situation and for its alliteration with Palestine. The Gaza strip was closed to American officials in the aftermath of the October 2003 attack on a US diplomatic convoy in Gaza, which killed three security contractors.

In September 2005, the Martin government announced additional funding for the PA. The press release framed Canada as the “custodian of the refugee issue,” but the government’s priorities were clearly security, governance, and development:

We have a unique opportunity to help Palestinians work toward a lasting prosperity and peace by partnering with the Palestinian Authority to help build a better, more secure society... Support for the institution building and reform efforts of President Abbas is key... Canada and the international community expect the PA to do its utmost to ensure law and order and good governance.²⁹³

In 2005-06, Canadian officials were fairly active in the Middle East supporting the peace process, which translated into broad support for *PROTEUS* as it grew. To encourage the Palestinians to take a fresh approach to responsible government, the Canadians organized a program that produced the first Palestinian security forces white paper. Additionally, the program engaged advisors from South Africa and Northern Ireland who personally advocated to the Palestinians the requirement for non-violence towards Israel as a prerequisite for security autonomy. As part of AMA implementation, Canada (through *PROTEUS*) was prepared to take a lead role in developing a modern Palestinian border services agency. *PROTEUS* hired a retired executive from the Canadian Border Service Agency (CBSA) who spent months putting together a comprehensive plan. Shortly before the initial deployment of CBSA officials, a deterioration in the security situation postponed the initiative indefinitely. Even so, by late 2006, the Canadian commitment was half of the USSC.²⁹⁴

²⁹³ Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs: ReliefWeb, “Prime Minister Martin welcomes Israel's pullout and pledges additional support for the Palestinian Authority,” last accessed 18 April 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/prime-minister-martin-welcomes-israels-pullout-and-pledges>. In September, Martin pledged \$24.5 million for the PA on top of \$12.2 million announced in May. Of those funds, a significant portion was dedicated to security services (the Palestinian Coastal Police) and correlated areas of judicial reform and peace support along Gaza-Egypt border. Following the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip, Israel and Egypt agreed to the deployment of 750 Egyptian border guards in the 13.8-kilometer stretch between Rafah and Gaza, a border area code-named the Philadelphi Corridor by Israel. Canada supplied additional funding and personnel to the Multinational Observer Force (MFO) mission in the Sinai to monitor these forces, included with Martin’s 2005 donations.

²⁹⁴ Southern, conversation...

THE HARPER DIVERGENCE

When Stephen Harper's Conservatives took power February 2006, Canada's approach to the Middle East was transformed. Historically, Conservative leaders have leaned pro-Israel, but have exercised moderation while in power.²⁹⁵ Harper campaigned on shared social values to court voters beyond his base. Harper denounced the Liberals as forsaking Canadian values in foreign policy, especially in terms of their approach to the Middle East. The Conservatives advocated for strong support of Israel, which resonated with Canadian Jews and the Conservatives' evangelical base. Canada's larger Arab community remained fractured and politically ineffective. The tactic's success remains debatable (especially as most ridings flipped back after Harper), but the approach relegated Ottawa to the margins of international influence.²⁹⁶ Harper held deep personal convictions, which were reinforced by his party. Israel was seen as the only democracy in the Middle East, and its values were thought to be aligned with Canadian values. The American anti-terrorism campaign had enabled Israel to frame the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a battle against Islamic militancy.²⁹⁷ This section argues that the Harper government sacrificed much of Canada's functional power for limited partisan interests as evidenced by Canada's pro-Israel approach to Middle Eastern conflicts and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process; nonetheless, *PROTEUS* remained largely immune to the government's change in posture, and strategically aligned with Canadian interests.

²⁹⁵ Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality...*, 109.

²⁹⁶ Barry, *Canada and the Middle East Today...*, 191-197. Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA) "oversees and coordinates the advocacy work" of five agencies: the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), the Canada-Israel Committee (CIC), the Quebec-Israel Committee, National Jewish Campus Life, and the University Outreach Committee. The right-leaning B'nai Brith remained outside the arrangement.

²⁹⁷ Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 9.

Harper's Minority Position on Israel, Hamas, and Hezbollah (2006-2008)

Once elected, Harper used Middle Eastern engagements for domestic gain. Political scientist Kim Richard Nossal and historian Adam Chapnick have argued, separately, that Stephen Harper's early foreign policy was part of a broader effort to displace the Liberals as Canada's natural governing party. Foreign policy engagements were an opportunity to contrast the Conservatives' approach from the Chretien-Axworthy doctrine (effectively ignoring Martin's policy altogether).²⁹⁸ Such political calculations were evident in Canada's response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during the 2006 Hamas election and Israel's 2006 Lebanon War against Hezbollah, even as *PROTEUS* maintained its functional role.

Regional practitioners quip that Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity. During the Gaza Disengagement, the PASF demonstrated their potential by limiting militant provocations and supporting the Israeli withdrawal. Unfortunately, a Hamas rocket accidentally exploded at the Gaza victory parade, killing spectators. To save face, Hamas blamed Israel and resumed its rocket attacks. Perceiving the attacks as a show of bad faith, an embarrassed Sharon already under pressure was unable to proceed with further planned West Bank disengagements.²⁹⁹ Between December 2005 and October 2010, Lieutenant-General Keith Dayton was appointed Coordinator with a modified mandate: "to professionalize and consolidate" the PASF and get the Roadmap back on track.³⁰⁰ However, two events fundamentally altered the situation. First, Sharon was permanently incapacitated by a stroke in early 2006 and replaced by Ehud Olmert, ending hope for a West Bank disengagement. Second,

²⁹⁸ Adam Chapnick, "A Diplomatic Counter-Revolution: Conservative Foreign Policy, 2006-11," *International Journal (Toronto)* 67, no. 1 (Winter 2011/2012): 137-141. <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/scholarly-journals/diplomatic-counter-revolution-conservative/docview/1018566914/se-2?accountid=9867>.

²⁹⁹ Southern, conversation...

³⁰⁰ Casey, *Palestinian-Israeli Conflict...*, 11.

the PA held Legislative Council elections at America's insistence in January 2006 in which Hamas won a parliamentary majority. Hamas then formed a unity government in March 2006.

The Quartet, which had been providing international assistance to the region, demanded that the Hamas-led government commit "to the principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements."³⁰¹ Hamas refused. Prime Minister Harper then deliberately ensured that Canada was the first country to renounce the Palestinian government. Having claimed that he had previously pushed Chretien to declare Hamas a terrorist organization, Harper pledged no contact with Hamas, to withhold direct aid to the PA, and likened Hamas to the Nazis. At the UN, Harper decided "quickly and with little consultation" that Canada would oppose a resolution on the right of return for Palestinian refugee women and children. Although Foreign Minister Peter MacKay denied any shift in Canadian policy, the international community perceived otherwise. A former Canadian Ambassador to Israel highlighted the Hamas policy would limit Canada's regional diplomacy.³⁰² Already restricted, Canadian officials were prohibited from functioning as interlocutors between Hamas and the Americans or Israelis.

Because of President Abbas' restructure of the Palestinian security services, Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh had a degree of influence that was unacceptable to the US, Canada, and other Western states. With international aid suspended, the Hamas government was unable to pay its employees, the PASF included. In protest, Quartet envoy Wolfensohn resigned, warning that the withholding of funds and not talking to Hamas risked the PA's collapse.³⁰³

³⁰¹ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 27-28.

³⁰² Barry, *Canada and the Middle East Today...*, 197-199.

³⁰³ Stephen Farrell, "West 'has to Prevent Collapse' of Palestinian Authority," *The Times*, 03 May 2006, <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/newspapers/west-has-prevent-collapse-palestinian-authority/docview/319516986/se-2?accountid=9867>.

Through Fatah-loyalists, Abbas regained control of the services, but Hamas established a parallel uniformed security force in Gaza (the Executive Force). Dayton restricted USSC activities to the Presidential Guard, which staffed the Gaza border crossings (Rafah to Egypt and Karni with Israel). Fatah-Hamas violence escalated, with 260 Palestinians killed in 2006 and 400 in the first half of 2007. As Palestinian factions brawled in Gaza, Israel responded to Hamas rocket attacks and assaults on its border outposts in kind. As noted by the Popular Resistance Committee (a Gazan militant group): “Fatah leaders will not admit it, but they are in the midst of a war for survival against the new Hamas government and the street, which in the main supports it”³⁰⁴

Canadian policy contributed to the degrading security situation while hindering any diplomatic contribution.

In July-August 2006, Olmert responded to a Hezbollah attack on the IDF by invading Southern Lebanon. At a G8 conference, Harper’s support for Israel was unequivocal.³⁰⁵ While the G8 agreed that Hezbollah initiated the conflict, the US, UK, and Canada were alone in endorsing Israel’s continued offensive, which resulted in 1000 civilians killed, a million displaced, most infrastructure destroyed, and 50,000 Canadians stranded in Lebanon. Eight members of a Montreal family and a Canadian peacekeeper with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) were killed by Israeli forces. Harper deflected blame for these incidents to Hezbollah and the UN respectively, although a Canadian Armed Forces board of inquiry blamed Israel for the latter. Shifting the public focus, the Harper government highlighted its support to evacuating 15,000 Canadians and aid for Lebanon while quietly canvassing for political donations from pro-Israeli supporters.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 28.

³⁰⁵ Mondal, *Canada's Role...*, 42. In the Hezbollah attack, three IDF soldiers were killed and two captured.

³⁰⁶ Barry, *Canada and the Middle East Today...*, 199-201.

Harper framed his government's response to the Hamas and Hezbollah positions as a moral stance in defence of Canadian values. The rhetoric served to divide the Liberal opposition who were under pressure from Arab and Muslim lobbyists. Meanwhile at la Francophonie and the UN, Canada was establishing an increasingly pro-Israel posture, abstaining on UN resolutions concerning Palestinian self-determination and Israeli exploitation of the occupied territories. In January 2007, McKay visited the Middle East to "find a niche where Canada can make a contribution" to the peace process.³⁰⁷ After a meeting with the PA President, a senior Abbas aide stated that Ottawa's new approach had diminished Canada's regional influence. One observer commented that the visit demonstrated waning Canadian influence with the PA, but also with Israel, which had "heard everything they need to know."³⁰⁸ The Harper government had prioritized its domestic political support at the expense of Canada's reputation, regional security, and the safety of Canadians.

PROTEUS remained Canada's niche role. Under General Dayton, the USSC approached security institution-building more broadly.³⁰⁹ Although the priority would shift, USSC operations encompassed the "training and equipping" of PASF units, "advising and assisting" the PA Ministry of the Interior in security sector governance, and facilitating Israeli-Palestinian "security coordination."³¹⁰ As the USSC solidified its mandate, the mission transitioned from Tel Aviv to the US Consulate General in Jerusalem (CONGEN), commenced PASF training at the Jordan International Police Training Centre (JIPTC) in Amman, and established local training facilities near Jericho in the Jordan Valley (West Bank).³¹¹ At JIPTC, contractors (from

³⁰⁷ Barry, *Canada and the Middle East Today...*, 204.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 201-204.

³⁰⁹ Casey, *Palestinian-Israeli Conflict...*, 11-12.

³¹⁰ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 42-45.

³¹¹ Southern, conversation...

DynCorp International) and Jordanian security officers taught instructional courses under USSC and INL supervision.³¹² Canadian military monitors and instructors became an increasingly important and sustained part of the operation.

By late 2006, Canadian Colonel Michael Pearson was serving as Dayton's deputy. He recalls a divided American administration. Secretary Rice was a "believer" who considered peace attainable and within American interests. Secretary Rumsfeld approached the region as a management problem. He disapproved of Rice's efforts and was loathe to increase the American military presence in the USSC. Accordingly, Dayton sought out allied personnel, especially Canadians. As the "face of the USSC" in Gaza, the mission facilitated a strong rapport between Rice and Minister MacKay. Canadian efforts were valued and the frequency of engagements was such that Colonel Pearson maintained an alternate residence in Gaza City. Following demonstrable progress in opening the Rafah and Karni crossings, Accelerated Benchmarks for the AMA were agreed to in May 2007. Furthermore, in early June 2007, Pearson supervised a PASF anti-smuggling operation that dismantled a Hamas tunnel into Egyptian Sinai. Planned as the first of up to 50 such "strike operations" to build Palestinian-Israeli trust, the effort was negated by the Battle for Gaza a week later.³¹³

From 10-15 June 2007, Hamas and Fatah fought openly for control of Gaza. Hamas was the decisive victor, seizing Gaza as well as all PASF installations and equipment. Hamas claimed they were pre-empting a coup by the USSC and Dahlan's forces; however, the preparations by Hamas' al-Qassam Brigade, their militant wing, undermines such a contention. Hamas fighters were bolstered by Iranian and Qatari funding that greatly outpaced the PASF's

³¹² Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 42-45. As a training facility, JIPTC was critical. Israel strictly limits PASF weapons and ammunition in the West Bank (even for training). Meanwhile, the venue separated trainees from local familial or political influences in a culturally similar environment.

³¹³ Michael Pearson, conversation and correspondence with the author, April-May 2021.

American funding. Although larger, the Fatah-affiliated organizations had suffered from a dearth of leadership, lack of support, and fragmented purpose.³¹⁴ During the fighting, a number of senior PASF officers and generals, as well as two Egyptian generals, sought refuge in Pearson's Gaza apartment to avoid capture and probable execution. From Jerusalem, Pearson attempted to coordinate an Israeli rescue by air or sea, but the efforts were unsuccessful. From Pearson's perspective, the PA blamed Bush for pushing them into the legislative elections that initiated events. Likewise, Israel had felt forced into accepting the AMA and showed disdain for the American attention to Gaza. Elements of the Government of Israel and other enemies of the peace process were pleased that the PA had been embarrassed.³¹⁵

After the PASF defeat, Secretary Rice gave Dayton 48 hours to pivot USSC operations to the West Bank. The task was daunting. Israel had destroyed all of the West Bank's security infrastructure during the Intifada and Israeli-Palestinian distrust lingered. Pearson remarked, "it was the fall of Gaza that got that thing going and it's still going today."³¹⁶ Abbas was anxious to reclaim the PA's control of the West Bank by sidelining Fatah militants and interdicting Hamas. He proclaimed a national emergency and appointed the competent administrator Salam Fayyad as PA Prime Minister to implement American-assisted security reforms. Although he represented neither Fatah nor Hamas, Fayyad had Abbas' political support. The PA were under pressure from West Bank residents who yearned for personal security while the international community, Israel, and Fatah prioritized targeting Hamas. In achieving their security objectives,

³¹⁴ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 29-30. Several PASF leaders had recently been killed by Hamas. Dahlan and his top aides were not in Gaza when the fighting started and Abbas was slow to order a counterattack. Ammunition and reinforcements were notably absent. Hamas had messaged its attacks in a way that several Fatah factions responded late or never. Furthermore, Hamas leaders were singular in purpose, their fighters were battle-hardened, and due to illicit funding were better armed

³¹⁵ Pearson, conversation... During the Gaza Disengagement, the Egyptians had assisted with quelling violence by embedding personnel with Palestinian units. They had set up a joint operations centre and chaired meetings with militant groups. After disengagement, they maintained a presence in the Strip.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

the PA could not appear as collaborators to the Israeli occupiers. However, Fayyad believed that a demonstration of capable governance could advance Palestinian statehood.³¹⁷ As a first step, “Any sincere PASF attempt to assert its monopoly on the means of violence—or, in Palestinian parlance, to ensure ‘one gun, one law, one authority’—would have to address the daunting challenge posed by the AAMB.”³¹⁸

With international backing, Fayyad and the PA took substantive actions to nationalize West Bank security, consolidate the PASF structure, and professionalize its members. To negate the Fatah militias, Fayyad negotiated an amnesty program with Israel that allowed militants to renounce terrorism. After a probationary period, many fighters were incorporated into the PASF. Although AAMB was effectively neutralized, some USSC personnel questioned the suitability of former fighters for community policing.³¹⁹ The USSC focused its efforts on security institutions and the paramilitary forces in a “Security First, West Bank First” approach.³²⁰ An early retirement program cut 30,000 superfluous Arafat security officers, which freed space and funding for new internationally trained personnel. Other international organizations and bilateral arrangements contributed to mentoring the police and building the criminal justice sector and intelligence services. The US increased its funding, with INL allotting \$100 million annually from 2007-13.³²¹ *PROTEUS*’ modest contribution was critical to early Palestinian reform efforts under American supervision and maintained a functional role for Canada in the region.

³¹⁷ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 37.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

³¹⁹ Southern, conversation...

³²⁰ Collette, *Whose Freedom from Fear...*, 35.

³²¹ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 38-42, 46-55. As part of the reform, the USSC focused its efforts on the elite Presidential Guard (PG), the gendarmerie National Security Force (NSF), the Palestinian-Israeli District Coordination Offices (DCO), and several smaller services (Civil Defence emergency services) and supporting commissions (Logistics, Administration, etc). Established in January 2006, the EU Coordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support (EUPOL COPPS) parallels USSC efforts with the “blue uniformed” PA Civil Police (PCP) and criminal justice sector reforms. EUPOL COPPS is supported by 20 EU member states and several non-EU contributors including Canada with several Royal

Harper's Minority Position on the Middle East Peace Process (2008-2011)

In his first government, Harper's Israeli-Palestinian engagements were overshadowed in Canada by combat operations in Afghanistan, including military spending in support of NATO and global security interests.³²² Generally, this would hold true as Harper entered his second mandate (2008-2011). Canada's response to the final Bush administration peace initiative (2007-08) and President Barak Obama's direct negotiations (2010-11) confirmed Ottawa's declining international status and yet also the stability of *PROTEUS* in achieving national interests.

Some observers have remarked that "Palestinians get offered less" in each successive round of negotiations and that they will "never be offered more."³²³ Starting with the Annapolis Conference in November 2007, the Bush administration sought to revive the Roadmap for Peace. At the International Donors Conference for the Palestinian State in Paris that December, Abbas and Fayyad outlined their vision of a Palestinian state.³²⁴ At about the same time, the Arab League reaffirmed its Peace Initiative, former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair was appointed as the Quartet Representative, and Egypt brokered a Hamas ceasefire. Despite the sensitive diplomatic efforts, Harper continued to reinforce his pro-Israel credentials. In January 2008,

Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers. The USSC and EUPOL COPPS purposely refrain from engagement with any of the PA's intelligence services (domestic Preventative Security, external General Intelligence, and internal Military Intelligence); however, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) does maintain a largely clandestine relationship that originated in the mid-1990s (purportedly in addition to other Western intelligence services). Lastly, the PA has numerous bilateral security assistance arrangements with Arab, Islamic and other states. For example, Russia was said to have provided several dozen armoured personnel carriers from 2007-09.

³²² Dewitt and Momani, *Working within Multilateralism...*, 169.

³²³ Southern, conversation...

³²⁴ Jeffrey Monaghan, "Security Development and the Palestinian Authority: An Examination of the 'Canadian Factor'," *Conflict, Security & Development* 16, no. 2 (March, 2016): 127. <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/14678802.2016.1153310>. At the Quartet hosted 2007 Paris Conference, 100 countries supported the PA's Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP). As a means of consolidating PA control over the West Bank, security development was the PRDP focus under the guises of aid for the rule of law and state-building.

only Canada voted against a UN Human Rights Council resolution that Israel end its siege on Gaza and protect Palestinian civilians in accordance with international law.³²⁵ Canada and Israel signed a declaration of intent on national security threats. Harper portrayed opposition criticism of Israel as anti-Semitic to garner domestic Jewish support and highlighted tokenistic engagements with select domestic Arab and Islamic organizations in key ridings.³²⁶ True to form, Abbas rejected Israeli Prime Minister Olmert's offer that included an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and East Jerusalem and placing Jerusalem's Old City under international control in exchange for significant land swaps.³²⁷ At the Paris Conference, the Harper government conditionally pledged \$300 million over five years to "reforming the Palestinian security system, institution-building in the Palestinian Authority and working to stimulate the economy through the private sector."³²⁸ As it had been under Martin, Canadian "aid" to the Palestinians was largely security assistance that also served Israeli and American interests.

During the First Gaza War (Operation Cast Lead, December 2008 to January 2009), the Canadian position was to portray Israel the victim and Hamas the aggressor.³²⁹ Once again, Harper ignored criticism of this approach, which former Conservative Prime Minister Joe Clark had in 2007 described as Harper abandoning Canada's "constructive role," in the region. Only a balanced regional approach, Clark suggested, would allow Canada to support Israeli and American interests without undermining Canadian ones.³³⁰ In spite of the political risk of adopting a relatively radical position during a minority Parliament, the Harper government

³²⁵ Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 11.

³²⁶ Barry, *Canada and the Middle East Today...*, 205-210.

³²⁷ Josef Federman, "Abbas admits he rejected 2008 peace offer from Olmert," *Times of Israel*, 19 November 2005, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/abbas-admits-he-rejected-2008-peace-offer-from-olmert/>.

³²⁸ "Paris conference pledges \$7.4B in Palestinian aid," *CBC News*, 17 December 2007, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/paris-conference-pledges-7-4b-in-palestinian-aid-1.664129>.

³²⁹ Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 11.

³³⁰ Barry, *Canada and the Middle East Today...*, 209.

continued to politicize foreign affairs for domestic gain. The Conservatives had determined that international relations was a legitimate policy area to differentiate themselves from the Liberals. The government argued that Canada was reinforcing words (such as the 2008 Canada First Defence Strategy) with demonstrable action, including combat in Afghanistan (2006-11) and later the NATO-led mission in Libya (March-October 2011).³³¹

The Obama administration's new approach to the Middle East did not dissuade the Harper government from its position. Obama's Cairo Address in June 2009, promised a "new beginning" after meeting with both PA President Abbas and recently re-elected Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Spearheaded by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the Obama administration pressed both parties into direct negotiations. Canada's former Refugee Work Group chair argued that Harper's policies inhibited Canadian involvement in the process.³³² In early 2010, Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister recklessly proclaimed in an interview that "an attack on Israel would be considered an attack on Canada" even though there was no formal defence treaty between the two countries.³³³ In May 2010, Harper was hosting Netanyahu in Canada when Israel raided the humanitarian "Gaza Freedom Flotilla," killing 10 activists and wounding dozens. Canada refused to condemn the incident; rather, Harper said that he was "sorry this has coloured" Netanyahu's visit.³³⁴ The Harper government willingly traded Canada's functional power in the region for short-term partisan gains.

By 2010, Harper's rhetoric had contributed to Canada's second failed bid for a UNSC seat (for the 2011-12 term). The Conservatives, already skeptical of diplomacy, had reluctantly

³³¹ Chapnick, *A Diplomatic Counter-Revolution*..., 142, 146-148.

³³² Robinson, *Canada's Credibility*..., 718.

³³³ Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy*..., 11.

³³⁴ Tonda MacCharles, "Canada Awaits Answers on raid; Israel says soldiers were 'defending themselves,'" *Toronto Star*, 31 May 2010, https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2010/05/31/canada_awaits_answers_on_raid_israel_says_soldiers_were_defending_themselves.html.

committed to the campaign while domestic Arab and humanitarian groups actively lobbied against them. Other contributing factors were European and Arab economic grievances and a poorly timed announcement by Canada's Trade Minister to enhance Canadian and Israeli economic ties.³³⁵ Although not necessarily deterministic, Canada's criticism of the UN and approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were unhelpful as Arab and Islamic states did not provide their expected support.³³⁶ The Harper government brushed off the loss: "Some would even say that because of our attachment to [our] values we lost a seat on the council. If that's [the] case, then so be it."³³⁷ Although a UNSC seat is arguably not critical, the forum allows Canada to protect the post-war international system, safeguard Canadian privilege in that system, and deploy functional power in pursuit of national interests.

By 2010, the USSC had grown considerably with Canadians constituting almost half of the core USSC team, not including augmentees and contractors.³³⁸ During the Bush and Obama peace initiatives, the USSC under Dayton maintained its focus on "training and equipping" new PASF units. The ability of the US to prescribe the PASF agenda created tensions. Some observers have charged that direct American influence (and indirect Israeli influence) has limited Palestinians "ownership" of security reforms. Reportedly, the Dayton and Fayyad relationship began to suffer and militants pejoratively referred to the PASF as "Dayton's Army" and

³³⁵ Chapnick, *A Diplomatic Counter-Revolution...*, 149; Chapnick, *Canada on the UNSC...*, 174.

³³⁶ Mackay, *The Evolution of Canadian Diplomacy...*, 37-38.

³³⁷ Chapnick, *A Diplomatic Counter-Revolution...*, 152.

³³⁸ Casey, *Palestinian-Israeli Conflict...*, 11. The USSC consisted of 45 persons, including 16 Defence Department service members and civilians, and 29 military representatives from Great Britain (8), Canada (20), and Turkey (1). Twenty-two contracted law enforcement experts provide MTT to oversee the JIPTC training program. A 7-man security sector reform team provides on-site training and mentorship within the Palestinian MOI's Strategic Planning Division (SPD), which administers PASF recruiting, force management, and operational planning and deployment.

collaborators to the occupation.³³⁹ Palestinian security operations progressively focused on three key areas: “countering armed militias, opposing Hamas in the West Bank, and engaging in security coordination with Israel.”³⁴⁰ After Gaza’s fall, the PA effectively reclaimed control of Area A except for some refugee camps. Increasingly, Israel and the West measured the success of PASF security cooperation in their own terms, such as their ability to interdict militants.³⁴¹ Still, the USSC enabled the peace process on both occasions through the demonstration of Abbas’ commitment to nonviolent negotiations and laying the foundation for future statehood.³⁴²

Despite the Harper government’s willingness to use other CAF missions as public affairs backdrops, Operation *PROTEUS* received scant political attention. Interest in *PROTEUS* was confined to preserving Canadian-American relations. Then Colonel Steven Whelan (2010-11) recalls a modest and temporary spike in funding and personnel (linked to the Paris conference). His team included a foreign affairs official and CBSA officer plus a dozen augmentee military trainers at a time. In implementing US programs, interaction and consideration of Israeli interests increased with Dayton’s successor. Despite the emphasis on American policy, Canadians conducted parallel binational engagements with the Palestinians. The Canadians coordinated the construction of the West Bank’s only small arms training range in Jericho and

³³⁹ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 42-45. As a training facility, JIPTC was critical. Israel strictly limits PASF weapons and ammunition in the West Bank. Additionally, the venue separated trainees from local familial or political influences in a culturally similar environment.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 55.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 55-64. Criminality (racketeering, drug smuggling, and weapons trafficking) and militants (Hamas, etc) are prevalent in select refugee camps: Balata (Nablus), Qalandiya (outside Ramallah), Jenin, and Dheisheh (Bethlehem). The Tanzims are permitted limited operations, often serving as Fatah’s strategic reserve. A 2007 Presidential decree banning all militias and armed groups was in effect only applied against Hamas as a matter of political survival in the West Bank. Security coordination is an amorphous term that includes dialogue and intelligence sharing, counter-terrorism, deconfliction of operations (generally Israeli incursion into Area A), access and movement of PASF between Area As (and limited activities in Areas B and C), safe return of wayward Israeli citizens, and riot control.

³⁴² Philippe Collette, “Whose Freedom from Fear? Security Sector Reform of the Palestinian Authority” (master’s thesis, Canadian Forces College, 2015), 4-5.
<https://www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/259/290/297/286/collette.pdf>

once again considered the arduous task of professionalizing Palestinian customs. Furthermore, Canada actively preserved its privileged status within the USSC, recommending to up-rank its mission's Commander to Brigadier-General (to match the UK's recent introduction of a Brigadier). Whelan does not believe Canadian rhetoric interfered with *PROTEUS* engagements; however, the Palestinians were distracted by increasing militant activity following the Arab Spring uprisings in early 2011.³⁴³ As such, Canada through *PROTEUS* was an important player in the peace process through security coordination that secured American, Palestinian, and Israeli interests. Meanwhile, Ottawa's foreign policy approach stifled Canadian functional power in other arenas, as evidenced by the failed UNSC bid.

Harper's Majority in the International Minority (2011-2015)

In May 2011, Harper won his long-sought majority government (2011-15). Under his rule, although generally aligned with its principal allies, Canada was increasingly prone to unilateralism and participation in narrower coalitions of the willing.³⁴⁴ On the Israel-Palestinian conflict, Harper's government was defined by its "Canada First" and "zero-sum approach."³⁴⁵ At the 2011 G8 Summit, Harper forced the dilution of an Obama proposal for peace negotiations.³⁴⁶ At the UN, Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird (2011-15), who describes himself as "strongly pro-Israel" and supportive of Palestinian statehood, ignored his

³⁴³ Steven Whelan, conversation and correspondence with the author, April-May 2021. Lieutenant-General Whelan commanded Task Force Jerusalem/Operation *PROTEUS* 2010-2011.

³⁴⁴ Dewitt and Momani, *Working within Multilateralism...*, 162-163, 178; Jonathan Paquin and Philippe Beauregard, "Shedding Light on Canada's Foreign Policy Alignment," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 46, no. 3 (September, 2013): 620, 628-631, 637-638. <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/scholarly-journals/shedding-light-on-canadas-foreign-policy/docview/1474178918/se-2?accountid=9867>.

³⁴⁵ Chapnick, *A Diplomatic Counter-Revolution...*, 137-138, 152-153; Robinson, *Canada's Credibility...*, 696; Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 11.

³⁴⁶ Dennis Gruending, "White hats, black hats: The Harper government's policy toward Israel," in *The Harper Record 2008-2015*, eds. Teresa Healy and Stuart Trew (Toronto: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2015) 407. https://www.policyalternatives.ca/Harper_Record_2008-2015/30-HarperRecord-Gruending.pdf. In support of Netanyahu's position, Harper insisted the motion remove any reference to the 1967 borders as a basis for negotiations and land swaps.

department's warnings against the "biggest foreign policy change" in Canadian history³⁴⁷ and entrenched Canada's pro-Israel voting pattern.³⁴⁸ Ahead of a November 2012 vote on a Palestinian request for observer status in the UNGA, Harper personally warned Abbas against the manoeuvre, which was seen as a precursor to a Palestinian International Criminal Court (ICC) petition. Ottawa threatened the PA with diplomatic and economic consequences and Baird made a point of personally casting Canada's vote against the resolution.³⁴⁹ Baird also refused to criticize Israeli settlement construction.³⁵⁰ In 2014, Harper did the same while visiting the Middle East.³⁵¹ Although Canada's positions became even more pro-Israeli, they did not elicit an Arab backlash.³⁵²

In 2010, Canada ended 62 unbroken years of UNRWA contributions.³⁵³ Baird attributed the decision to incontrovertible evidence that linked the organization to terrorism.³⁵⁴ That evidence has since become a matter of partisan debate.³⁵⁵ Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funding to Canadian non-profit organizations was also cut, ostensibly for promoting anti-Semitism and terrorism. An ecumenical social justice coalition responded that "Criticism of Israel does not constitute anti-Semitism, and CIDA was developed to fund international aid and

³⁴⁷ John Baird, conversation with the author, May 2021

³⁴⁸ Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 9,11.

³⁴⁹ Clark Campbell, "Harper Took Steps to Stifle Palestinian Statehood Bid," *The Globe and Mail*, 26 November 2012, <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/docview/2384181860?pq-origsite=summon>; Mackay, *The Evolution of Canadian Diplomacy...*, 41; Seligman, *Canada's Israel Policy...*, 87. The US, Canada, and Israel, voted against the resolution along with several small states.

³⁵⁰ Seligman, *Canada's Israel Policy...*, 87.

³⁵¹ Adiv Sterman, "Canada's visiting PM Harper pledges \$66 million to PA," *The Times of Israel*, 20 January 2014. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ahead-of-knesset-speech-canadas-harper-pledges-66-million-to-pa/>.

³⁵² Seligman, *Canada's Israel Policy...*, 87; Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 11-12.

³⁵³ Mondal, *Canada's Role...*, 42; Seligman, *Canada's Israel Policy...*, 82-89; Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 11-12. Although Israel criticizes the UNRWA for its relationship with Hamas, Israel understands the organization's role in stabilizing Palestinian refugee communities. Interestingly, Israel privately (and unsuccessfully) lobbied Canada to reinstate the funding.

³⁵⁴ Baird, conversation...

³⁵⁵ Paul Lungen, "Leaders clash over Andrew Scheer's pledge to end funding for UNRWA at debate," *The Canadian Jewish News*, 13 September 2019, <https://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/leaders-clash-over-andrew-scheers-pledge-to-end-funding-for-unrwa-at-debate>.

not to serve political agendas.”³⁵⁶ Notably, the “Track II” organization Jerusalem Old City Initiative (active 2003-12) continued to receive funding, operating inconspicuously from cabinet.³⁵⁷ In April 2013, the remaining Paris conference pledge expired after Baird threatened “consequences” for any Palestinian ICC manoeuvres.³⁵⁸ Of the funds expended, most went to the Palestinian justice and security sector.³⁵⁹ Commenting on the funding, CIDA’s president said that “Israelis have noted the importance of Canada's contribution to the relative stability achieved through extensive security co-operation.”³⁶⁰

In 2012, the conflict in Gaza culminated in two Israeli air campaigns: Operations Returning Echo (March) and Pillar of Defense (October). In the West Bank, significant USSC investment produced tangible results in PASF capacity, infrastructure, and cooperation with Israel. The USSC focus shifted to institutional “advise and assist.”³⁶¹ When briefed on *PROTEUS*, Baird was “very impressed” with the mission, likening progress in that domain to

³⁵⁶ Gruending, *White hats, black hats...*, 409.

³⁵⁷ Jeremy Wildeman and Emma Swan, “What Lies Ahead? Canada's Engagement with the Middle East Peace Process and the Palestinians: An Introduction,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 27, no. 1 (2021): 9. <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/11926422.2021.1888761>.

³⁵⁸ Canadian Press, “You’ll face ‘consequences’ from Canada if you take Israel to International Criminal Court: Baird to Palestinians,” *National Post*, 6 March 2013, <https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/youll-face-consequences-from-canada-if-you-take-israel-to-international-criminal-court-baird-to-palestinians>.

³⁵⁹ Charles Bybelezer, “Reallocating Canadian aid to the Palestinians,” *Jerusalem Post*, 13 April 2013, <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/op-ed-contributors/reallocating-canadian-aid-to-the-palestinians-309715>; Monaghan, *Security Development...*, 128-133. As of 2016, in financial terms the justice sector reform has been the most substantial element of Canada’s development aid to the PA in the West Bank with \$150 million for “infrastructure construction (prisons, court houses, police stations and security installations) as well as programmes to develop policing sciences (forensics, public order policing and administrative management), legal and judicial training.” The courthouses in Hebron and Tulkarem were Canada’s flagship projects. In addition to initiatives already mentioned, *PROTEUS* funded Joint Operations Centres in the Palestinian governorates and increased its permanent staff in 2013-14.

³⁶⁰ Yves Engler, “How Canadian ‘aid’ to the Palestinian Authority is designed to help Israel,” *Rabble*, 22 July 2013, <https://rabble.ca/news/2013/07/how-canadian-aid-to-palestinian-authority-designed-to-help-israel>.

³⁶¹ Casey, *Palestinian-Israeli Conflict...*, 12-15. Through the State Department’s INL, the USSC has received funding under the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) program: \$25 million (FY2008); \$184 million (FY2009); \$100 million (FY2010), \$150 million (FY2011), \$100 million (FY2012) and projected \$70 million in FY2013. In addition to significant tactical infrastructure and training facilities, 2011 had witnessed the first “on-the-ground” tactical coordination between the PASF and Israeli forces since the Second Intifada. By June 2012, the PASF had fielded two elite PG battalions and eight gendarmerie NSF battalions (with a ninth in training).

“running a marathon in a foot of mud.” However, he also challenged the ability and willingness of Palestinians to address “high to mid-level security threats” to Israel, which would never (and should never) concede on security. Baird maintained that the Palestinians would have to accept an enduring IDF presence in the West Bank for many years going forward. Nonetheless, he has described *PROTEUS* as “only positive.” It is a “two for one” and “perfect foreign policy” tool that satisfies Palestinian security development and Canada’s partnership with the Americans in an area where Canada can help.³⁶²

In 2013, US Secretary of State John Kerry initiated another round of peace talks. Baird “thought it was a long shot,” but worthwhile all the same.³⁶³ Canada pledged funding to support the process.³⁶⁴ Returning as a Brigadier-General, Pearson once again commanded *PROTEUS* (2012-14). From his perspective, John Kerry was a believer in the peace process, which stood in sharp contrast to Secretary Clinton’s managerial approach in preserving the status quo.³⁶⁵ Despite Kerry’s dedicated efforts, the negotiations failed. The PA resumed its multilateral recognition attempts and signed a short-lived unity government agreement with Hamas.³⁶⁶ When violence flared again, Israel announced a Shin Bet operation (May–June 2014) that purportedly prevented Abbas’ assassination and a Hamas coup. Subsequently, Israel launched the Second Gaza War against Hamas (Operation Protective Edge, July-August 2014). In the West Bank, the

³⁶² Baird, conversation...

³⁶³ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁴ Adiv Sterman, “Canada’s visiting PM Harper pledges \$66 million to PA,” *The Times of Israel*, 20 January 2014. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ahead-of-knesset-speech-canadas-harper-pledges-66-million-to-pa/>. \$30 million (Fall 2013) and \$66 million (January 2014) as part of a multibillion-dollar investment and aid package to enable the process over the next three to five years.

³⁶⁵ Pearson, conversation...

³⁶⁶ Ben Birnbaum and Amir Tibon, “The Explosive, Inside Story of How John Kerry Built an Israel-Palestine Peace Plan – and Watched It Crumble,” *The New Republic*, 20 July 2014, <https://newrepublic.com/article/118751/how-israel-palestine-peace-deal-died>.

PASF intensified its anti-Hamas activities and power was recentralized under the President as reforms faltered.

Despite the peace failure, Abbas and the PA remained committed to non-violence.³⁶⁷ Through the PASF, the PA had successfully monopolized the use of force in the West Bank.³⁶⁸ However, with no elections since Abbas' term expired in January 2009, the PA had become increasingly authoritarian. The 2014 Fatah-Hamas reconciliation attempt promised new elections, but was opposed by Israel and the West. Concurrently, Palestinians socio-economic conditions worsened while Israel tightened its grip on the West Bank and further isolated Gaza. Satisfying Israeli security concerns through the USSC and EUPOLCOPPS was meant to provide space for good faith negotiations. Observers challenge that the international (and Canadian) focus on security before aid has enabled these developmental regressions.³⁶⁹ In the extreme view, aid securitization has “Accelerated Israeli policies of land acquisition, militarism and the construction of apartheid and ghettoization strategies, [with] the aim of making a Palestinian state practically unfeasible.”³⁷⁰

Meanwhile, Canada strengthened its relations with Israel, signing a wide-ranging Strategic Partnership agreement, which expanded on earlier developmental (2012) and defence (2011) agreements.³⁷¹ In January 2015, a Canada–Israel Joint Declaration of Solidarity and Friendship affirmed both states' shared values.³⁷² When asked why Canada's most pro-Israel government did not move the Embassy, Baird stated that “we didn't need to prove our bona

³⁶⁷ Zilber and Al-Omari, *State with No Army...*, 37-40, 58.

³⁶⁸ Collette, *Whose Freedom from Fear...*, 20-21.

³⁶⁹ Monaghan, *Security Development...*, 125-126, 128.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 125.

³⁷¹ Global Affairs Canada, *Canada-Israel Strategic Partnership – Memorandum of Understanding*, last modified 22 January 2014, https://www.international.gc.ca/name-anmo/canada_israel_MOU-prot_ent_canada_israel.aspx?lang=eng.

³⁷² Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 11. These values were stated as “passionate belief in, and willingness to defend, the principles of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law”

fides.” In defence of his government’s record, Baird highlighted great relations with Arab leadership, which included PA ministers and President Abbas behind closed doors. Fond of Prime Minister Fayyad, Baird and Kerry were unsuccessful in preventing his June 2013 resignation. Alternatively, Baird considered Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat the “barrier to peace” and “a notorious hate monger.” At one point, Baird recalls Erekat berating Harper. Baird says he lost faith in the Palestinian leadership during a January 2015 visit to Ramallah where his delegation was pelted with eggs. Abbas had become “too weathered and tired, too doctrinarian.” Commenting on the lack of Arab backlash, Baird relayed an Arab leader’s statement that the Palestinian issue was “not in the top 100 of their concerns” and contends that the PA must realize the current path is not working. Declaring that peace cannot be imposed from the outside, Baird believes greater Arab support is needed, suggesting a new Quartet with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and the US.³⁷³

Baird’s perspective reveals that Canada’s approach served the narrow interests of Israel and the Arab states while placating the Palestinians. Netanyahu’s 2015 election declaration that there would be no Palestinian state (which he walked back later) demonstrates the duality of his motivations, which Canada accepted without reservations. Harper’s approach was widely rebuffed.³⁷⁴ In support of Canadian regional stability interests, *PROTEUS* discreetly enabled the Kerry peace initiative. However, the government saw *PROTEUS* as a means of satisfying narrow bilateral interests vis-à-vis Israel and the Americans. As one journalist eloquently observed in reference to the region: “In exercising his foreign policy prerogatives, Harper [has]

³⁷³ Baird, conversation...

³⁷⁴ Wildeman, *Assessing Canada’s foreign policy...*, 11-12.

repositioned the country from being a small part of an elusive solution to the centre of an entrenched problem.”³⁷⁵

TRUDEAU AND THE TRAP OF THE LIKEMINDED

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (2015-present) inherited a government out of synch with official policy. The declaration that “Canada is back” spawned optimism for a return to a balanced approach in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on “liberal internationalism, multilateralism and peacebuilding.”³⁷⁶ However, Ottawa’s approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has not deviated substantially from the Harper government. Canada continues to prioritize bilateral relations with Israel on the basis of nebulous shared values. One analyst argues that Western states have become technocrats, focusing on stability interests that sustain the status quo in lieu of transformational progress on the normative values of democracy, rule of law, and gender equality.³⁷⁷ Proudfoot calls the propensity of Western nations to consolidate around comfortable positions based on an echo chamber of limited perspectives the “trap of the likeminded.”³⁷⁸ This section argues that the Trudeau government has thus far fallen into this trap in its regional policy, which continues to strategically serve narrow bilateral interests and domestic concerns.

Trudeau and the Trump Maximum Pressure Campaign (2015-2020)

Trudeau’s milder rhetoric has allowed the Liberal party to differentiate itself from the Harper government without substantively changing strategies that would risk alienating domestic pro-Israel constituencies. The Liberal caucus had been divided on Israel since the start of the

³⁷⁵ Barry, *Canada and the Middle East Today...*, 209.

³⁷⁶ Wildeman, *Assessing Canada’s foreign policy...*, 12-14.

³⁷⁷ Monaghan, *Security Development...*, 137-138.

³⁷⁸ Proudfoot, conversation...

Intifada during the Chretien era. During the Harper years, Liberal leaders Stéphane Dion and Michael Ignatieff struggled to find a cohesive and balanced narrative on Israeli issues and the Conservatives framed that lack of clarity as evidence of the Liberals' allegedly anti-Israeli posture. Trudeau adopted the messaging of interim Liberal leader Bob Rae whose wife was a past vice-president of the Canadian Jewish Congress. Rae himself had left the New Democratic Party over the party's criticism of Israel. Trudeau went as far to say that there was no disagreement between the Liberal and Conservative policies on Israel.³⁷⁹ After the election of US President Donald J. Trump (2017-21), an American maximum pressure campaign on the Palestinians would serve to highlight Ottawa's pro-Israel positions.

Under Trudeau, Canada argued that Israel has been unfairly treated at the UN. Ottawa assisted Israel at the multilateral level, and rejected claims that the ICC had jurisdiction to investigate potential Israeli war crimes. In 2018, Canada's Deputy Prime Minister raised eyebrows when she said Canada on the UNSC would serve "as an asset for Israel." In 2019, Canada refreshed the CIFTA such that goods and services originating from West Bank settlements were treated no differently than those from unoccupied lands. The move contravened UNSC Resolution 2334 (2016) that deemed settlement activity as a "flagrant violation" of international law. Ottawa even appealed a Canadian court ruling that settlement products could not be labelled as "Product of Israel."³⁸⁰ Domestically, Trudeau continued the post-9/11 inclination to stymie public discourse critical of Israel.³⁸¹ His government suppressed

³⁷⁹ Seligman, *Canada's Israel Policy...*, 82-92.

³⁸⁰ Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 12-13-14.

³⁸¹ Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Abigail B. Bakan, "After 9/11: Canada, the Israel/Palestine Conflict, and the Surveillance of Public Discourse," *Canadian Journal of Law & Society* 27, no. 3 (2012): 319-338. <https://heinonline-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/HOL/Page?lname=&handle=hein.journals/cjls27&collection=&page=319&collection=journals#>.

public, private, and third sector pro-Palestinian voices.³⁸² Ottawa protested the appointment of a Canadian as the UN's Special Rapporteur on human rights in the occupied territories while Trudeau has consistently disparaged the "Boycott, Divest, and Sanctions" (BDS) and "Israeli Apartheid Week" movements.³⁸³ Canadian civil groups used this record to actively campaign against Trudeau's UNSC bid, which was again unsuccessful.³⁸⁴

Not every Liberal move was consistent with the previous government. In 2015, Canada restored funding to the UNRWA despite objections from Canadian Jewish lobbyists.³⁸⁵ When the newly elected President Donald Trump cancelled all American UNRWA funding, Canadian support continued.³⁸⁶ In 2017, Trump announced the movement of the American Embassy to Jerusalem. At the UNGA, the decision was largely condemned for effectively recognizing Israel's annexation of the city. Canada abstained on the vote, which many took as a tacit endorsement. In 2019, Canada backed a UNGA resolution supporting Palestinian self-determination. It marked the first vote to go against the Harper era trend and came after an election during which the Conservatives promised to move Canada's Embassy to Jerusalem.³⁸⁷ Notwithstanding these events and the reduced rhetoric, there has been little substantive difference between the Harper and Trudeau approaches.³⁸⁸

To understand the UNGA voting pattern rationale, Proudfoot says the resolutions must be considered as a bloc and not on their individual merits. Starting under Harper, Canada voted

³⁸² Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 13.

³⁸³ Seligman, *Canada's Israel Policy...*, 90; Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 13.

³⁸⁴ Wildeman and Swan, *What Lies Ahead...*, 11.

³⁸⁵ Mondal, *Canada's Role...*, 36-37, 42. ; Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 12. Canadian UNRWA funding: \$25 million in 2016/17, \$35 million in 2017/18, and \$30 million in 2018/19.

³⁸⁶ Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 12-13.

³⁸⁷ Seligman, *Canada's Israel Policy...*, 82; Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 12-13. From 2015-2019, Trudeau's government had consistently voted against Palestinian right to self-determination and the illegality of Israeli settlements.

³⁸⁸ Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 13-14.

against the bloc to protest what was considered an excessive number of annual resolutions that disproportionately targeted Israel. Trudeau's government generally maintained this approach, until it supported a vote on Palestinian self-determination. Proudfoot also explains that Canada was wary of clashing openly with a "vindictive and unpredictable" Trump administration. Ottawa was under tremendous American pressure to move the Canadian Embassy and cease UNRWA funding. The US had hoped that a Canadian withdrawal of funding would have snowballed and killed the organization. However, Canada and other allies held firm and demonstrated the limits of US power.³⁸⁹

In January 2020, Trump released the *Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People* plan. Trump's self-proclaimed "Deal of the Century" was a one-sided proposal to divide the occupied territories into small, semi-autonomous regions and affirm Israeli positions on Jerusalem, refugees, and annexation of the Jordan River Valley and large portions of the West Bank. Palestinians were also promised modest economic benefits in accordance with an earlier economic plan (June 2019).³⁹⁰ The proposal was the culmination of four years of aggressive American and Israeli diplomatic and economic coercion. In 2019, the US withdrew USSC funding, ceased UNRWA support, and recognized Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Israel expelled the TIPH observer mission in Hebron, withheld PA tax revenues, and openly discussed annexation. In Gaza, Israel's response to the "Great March of Return" (from March 2018 to December 2019), which protested US policy, Israel's decade-long Gaza blockade, and the lack of refugee rights, became increasingly violent. There followed several extended barrages of rocket attacks from Gaza and corresponding Israeli air campaigns. The

³⁸⁹ Proudfoot, conversation...

³⁹⁰ Jeremy Wildeman and Emma Swan, "What Lies Ahead? Canada's Engagement with the Middle East Peace Process and the Palestinians: An Introduction," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 27, no. 1 (2021): 2-3. <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/11926422.2021.1888761>.

Trudeau government shied away from any serious criticism of US policy and only meekly responded to Israeli heavy-handedness against the Gaza protestors.³⁹¹ Interestingly, Baird criticizes Trudeau's government for consistently being absent in the region and not having a unified governmental approach. Although not a fan of Trump, Baird approved of his regional policies.³⁹²

Before Trump, Canada's functional contribution to the USSC had demonstrated Canada's reliability as an American ally.³⁹³ As the mission matured, Coordinators gained increasing flexibility to decide the direction and flavour of their approach.³⁹⁴ As integral team members, Canadian officials influenced deliberations. During the Obama administration, Canada's contribution to *PROTEUS* served national interests because the USSC mandate was aligned to an American policy based on the MEPP, overlapping with Canadian policy. Trump's regional policies stood in stark contrast to stated Canadian positions. Increasingly, Canadians on *PROTEUS* found themselves in an awkward situation. The US CONGEN became an annex to the new Jerusalem Embassy, which forced the Canadians to relocate office space so as not to express tacit approval. Palestinians noted the Conservative 2019 election promise to move Canada's embassy to Jerusalem. In response, *PROTEUS* prepared for increased force protection concerns in the event that a new government decided to further realign Canadian regional policy to Trump's. The cancellation of USSC funding halted all infrastructure projects and caused a redesign of the campaign plan to reflect the new fiscal environment. The focus moving forward was on coordination, sustainability, and institutional capacity. Simultaneously, the PASF went

³⁹¹ Amelia C. Arsenault and Costanza Musu, "Canada, the United Nations, and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 27, no. 1 (2021): 110-111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2020.1867596>.

³⁹² Baird, conversation...

³⁹³ Monaghan, *Security Development...*, 133-135.

³⁹⁴ Peter Scott, conversation and correspondence with the author, April-May 2021. Brigadier-General Scott Commanded Task Force Jerusalem/Operation *PROTEUS* 2019-2020.

months without pay as part of an Israeli induced financial crisis. Canadian officials consulted with British and Dutch allies, and drafted contingencies should a US led mission no longer be viable. While it is doubtful that these countries could have filled an American void, it was an interesting exercise of Canadian functional planning. After release of the Trump peace plan, the PA ceased all American contact and threatened an end to all security cooperation. Canada preserved its traditional niche role as an interlocutor with the Palestinians, engaging on a bilateral basis.³⁹⁵

Current Situation and the Biden Future (2021...)

The events of 2020 highlighted the fragility of the current international system and rules-based order. With the 2021 arrival of President Joseph R. Biden, the Americans have signalled a willingness to reverse some Trump era policies. However, a Middle East peace initiative is questionable as the administration remains consumed by domestic issues and renewed great power competition. Also unclear are Israeli and Palestinian intentions. For two years, Israel has been mired in an endless election cycle. Clinging to power, Netanyahu cancelled plans to annex thirty-percent of the West Bank in exchange for regional diplomatic overtures. Through the Abraham Accords (and with American and Saudi support), Israel has begun to normalize relations with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan. Canadian opinion remains decidedly against annexation and supportive of an ICC probe.³⁹⁶ Fully aware of the domestic political risk associated with annexation, the Trudeau government quickly commended the accords.³⁹⁷ That being said, the May 2021 violence could prove to be transformative. The conflict with Gaza has renewed Western popular interest in the region. Meanwhile in Israel, the

³⁹⁵ Scott, conversation...

³⁹⁶ Wildeman, *Assessing Canada's foreign policy...*, 14.

³⁹⁷ Wildeman and Swan, *What Lies Ahead...*, 11.

intensity of clashes between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israeli were unprecedented in recent times and are like to have ramifications for years to come.

Palestinians viewed the accords as a betrayal, especially as settlement encroachment and talk of annexation continued.³⁹⁸ That being said, Abbas has continuously approached security cooperation with Israel as “sacrosanct” since 2014. The PA has successfully deterred West Bank violence with the number of Israelis (and Palestinians) killed in the last decade lower than any decade previous. However, this result has come at the expense of liberal democratic principles, including Palestinian civil liberties.³⁹⁹ Since 2016, Canada has served as the Co-Chair of the Palestinian Justice Sector Working Group (assuming the position from the Dutch). Although not by design, Canadian leadership in the justice and security sectors were mutually reinforcing.⁴⁰⁰ While highlighting that the “Palestinian people need political renewal,” Canada’s Representative to the PA Robin Wettlaufer (since 2019) sees the “security sector as one of the bright lights where the PA has professionalized and Canada exercises an outsized influence.”⁴⁰¹

In agreement with other Palestinian factions (including Hamas), Abbas announced Spring 2021 elections, which he subsequently delayed. As recent polling continues to give Hamas a path to electoral victory, the PA cannot hold elections without risking a repeat of January 2006 when all foreign aid was withheld, nor can it delegitimize the election by forbidding Hamas to participate. The May 2021 Hamas-Israeli conflict demonstrated the still fragile situation. However, prior to those events and forced to govern Gaza, Hamas has monopolized public discourse, increased security cooperation with Israel, and actively interdicted other militant groups (such as PIJ) who risk upsetting the relative stability of the situation. Hamas even

³⁹⁸ Wildeman and Swan, *What Lies Ahead...*, 2-11.

³⁹⁹ Abrahams, *Monopolization of Violence...*, 893, 897-898.

⁴⁰⁰ Proudfoot, conversation...

⁴⁰¹ Robin Wettlaufer, conversation and correspondence with the author, April-May 2021.

amended its Charter in 2017 to indicate support for a two-state solution.⁴⁰² Paradoxically, the West (including Canada) and Israel remain a significant hurdle to Palestinian reconciliation and elections.

Conclusion

Canadians no longer have a shared sense of national interests. The shock of 9/11 placed a premium on security in Martin's approach to the Middle East. Harper redefined Canada's regional interests on a skewed notion of shared values, causing a divergence between policy and approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Trudeau government succumbed to the likeminded trap. Comfortable in the status quo, it was unwilling or unable to alter a Canadian approach that astrategically serves narrow bilateral interests and domestic concerns. Nonetheless, Operation *PROTEUS* became an increasingly legitimate strategic choice to offset the imbalance in Canadian policy and continues to serve important national interests.

⁴⁰² Abrahams, *Monopolization of Violence...*, 898-899.

DENOUEMENT

This paper has argued that Canada has interests upon which successive governments based a predictable and stable Middle Eastern policy. These include economic prosperity and security, secured through a well-functioning international system in which great and small powers find relevance and agency. In the post-war era, Canada's credible reputation privileged Ottawa in the liberal rules-based system. Canada's strategic approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Pearsonian era is evidence of Canada's legitimate regional interests. In subsequent years, governments challenged the meaning of national interests. As interpretations fluctuated and priorities shifted, Canada rebalanced its approach towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; however, the steady trajectory of that strategy indicates the importance of underlying interests. More recently, Ottawa's approach to the Middle East has diverged from its stated policies concurrent to a decline in the shared understanding of national interests. Canada has practiced an increasingly partisan and short-sighted astrategic approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Operation *PROTEUS* has grown to be an increasingly legitimate strategic choice that offsets the imbalance in Canadian policy.

The ability of *PROTEUS* to serve important Canadian national interests is contingent on an overlap of Canadian and American policy. Since partition, American and Canadian policies on the Arab-Israeli conflict have developed in tandem. Ottawa's stated positions were refined over five decades from Pearson to Chretien. They were derived from the primacy of international law and the rules-based international order, tested by the experience of successive governments, and remain grounded in national interests. Canadian even-handedness in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict comes from its commitment to "a comprehensive, just and lasting

peace... achieved through a two-state solution.”⁴⁰³ The USSC mandate is also premised on a Palestinian state. As Canada’s approach diverged from its policy, *PROTEUS* was immune through its USSC affiliation. Nevertheless, the change in US policy under the Trump administration risked the ability of *PROTEUS* to continue to achieve those important interests.

The USSC-*PROTEUS* relationship is one of unequal co-dependency. The US provides the vast majority of diplomatic and financial support. Canada uses its functional power to move freely in the occupied territories and interact with Palestinians where Americans cannot. Canada is a palatable choice for all stakeholders based on its regional reputation and proximity to the Americans. In return, Canada gains access and influence to the peace process. With this power comes national responsibility. First, Canada must preserve its reputational competitive advantage by realigning its approach and sacrificing narrow bilateral interests. Second, Canada should maintain its comparative advantage in access to Palestinians (of all political affiliations), which may necessitate a review of its policies concerning militant organizations. As one diplomat commented, “diplomacy is about turning dictators into ex-dictators and terrorists into ex-terrorists.”⁴⁰⁴ Palestinian elections will depend on reconciliation and Canada may be asked to engage where the Americans or Israelis cannot for practical or political reasons.

Operationally, the Canadian military would benefit from a cadre of personnel with local understanding (history, culture, language) and continuous experience (in the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict). As the military considers options for a regional headquarters, Jerusalem is a natural choice as a vantage point to understand the regional dynamics and its central proximity. Tactically, *PROTEUS* can retain its privileged USSC role through suitable personnel and

⁴⁰³ Representative Office of Canada to the Palestinian Authority, “Canada-West Bank/Gaza Strip Relations,” last modified 9 April 2020, https://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/west_bank_gaza-cisjordanie_bande_de_gaza/bilateral_relations_bilaterales/index.aspx?lang=eng.

⁴⁰⁴ Proudfoot, conversation...

funding. Canada must also maintain its privileged position with the PA/PASF, which requires a wider range of independent bilateral engagements. The opening of a detachment in Ramallah and/or strategic advisors at the Palestinian Ministry of the Interior could prove useful in that endeavour. Unless constrained by policy, the mission should open its public affairs posture so Canadians are made aware of its vital contribution.

Whether US presidents are believers in peace or managers of conflict, Canada can constructively contribute to peace while advancing its own national interests. *As keeper of the stone*, Canada must approach the region with sophistication. Ottawa should deploy functional power to ensure American commitment to the peace process, multilateralism, and if necessary, demonstrate that policy decisions have consequences. Israel and the PA would benefit from a friend who can save them from their worst inclinations. However, this requires a Canadian regional commitment. *As the inevitable fifth*, Canada has an essential supporting role to play in bringing about the denouement of the Israeli-Palestinian drama. While Canada is not the *Hero nor Heroine, Confidante nor Villain* of the story, it is also not a bit player. Operation *PROTEUS* is a legitimate strategic choice that serves important Canadian national interests and is the latest incarnation of a consistent regional presence.

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