Review of the Year

UNITED STATES
Intergroup Relations

OBJECTIVE INDICES OF ANTI-SEMITISM in America remained relatively low in 1989, but anti-Semitism, in one form or another, in one place or another, weighed heavily in the communal concerns of American Jewry. Extremism on the Right was a source of uneasiness, as were various episodes of tension between the United States and Israel. Catholic-Jewish relations were marked by ups and downs; the most serious instance of the latter was the controversy around the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz, which reached a dramatic climax this year.

Anti-Semitism and Extremism

A continuing increase in the number of anti-Semitic incidents was reported by the Anti-Defamation League’s annual audit for 1989, with more episodes of brutality than in the past and more serious violent crimes—arson, bombing, and cemetery desecration. The overall number of incidents, 1,432, was the highest ever reported in the audit’s 11-year history. This figure included 845 episodes of desecration and vandalism and 587 acts of harassment, threat, and assault against Jewish individuals, their property, and institutions. The report underscored signs of growing neo-Nazi “skinhead” involvement and the troubling rise of incidents on the college campus—the latter up by a third over 1988.

Two especially violent episodes occurred in Brooklyn. In July an elderly Holocaust survivor was stabbed to death after he confronted a neighbor he suspected of painting a swastika and death’s head on his door; in October two Jewish 19-year-old Brooklyn College students were severely beaten as they left a Hillel House party. Since the attack was accompanied by anti-Semitic epithets, the police labeled it a bias incident. The next day, three Brooklyn teenagers were arrested and charged with felonious assault and civil-rights violations.

Several incidents of firebombing took place during the year. The building of the San Diego Jewish Times was firebombed in April and again in August. The building, empty at the time of the attacks, had previously been defaced by swastikas, and anti-Semitic phone threats had been received by the newspaper. Jews and Jewish institutions in San Francisco, California; Columbus, Ohio; and Marblehead and
Wellesley, Massachusetts, were among other targets of vandalism and harassment during the year.

Several well-publicized incidents of anti-Semitic, or alleged anti-Semitic, expressions occurred this year. *New York* magazine drama critic John Simon drew fire (in April) for comparing actor Mandy Patinkin’s appearance in a production of *The Winter’s Tale* to “a caricature in the notorious Nazi publication *Der Stuermer*” and for referring to a black actress in stereotypical terms. Though Simon’s use of vicious and offensive language is virtually a hallmark of his writing, he was accused of racism and anti-Semitism by theater colleagues and Jewish agencies.

On a more serious plane, the State University of New York began proceedings in June to dismiss a tenured faculty member at the Binghamton campus because of alleged anti-Semitic slurs. According to two Jewish students, Assoc. Prof. Sid Thomas of the philosophy department had engaged in a long classroom tirade against Jews for, among other things, always “crying” about the Holocaust, and helping to bring George Bush into office. He said that “the Jews deserve to get it in the nose.”

A black member of the popular rap music group Public Enemy was reportedly fired by the group in June, although rehired in August, after telling the *Washington Times* that “the Jews were wicked . . . [and] have a history of killing black men.” Known as “Professor” Griff, the rap singer said that “the Jews have a grip on America” and were responsible for “the majority of wickedness that goes on across the globe.” Griff, like the other members of Public Enemy, belonged to Louis Farrakhan’s Nation of Islam, and said that he had obtained his knowledge of Jewish history from the Nation of Islam’s historical research department.

Griff’s remarks not only touched on black-Jewish relations but raised the question of how much of the anti-Semitic activity in the country was the product of organized groups.

**SKINHEAD GROUPS**

Indeed, much of the overt anti-Semitic activity during the year was associated with racist “skinhead” groups. In June the ADL issued a 32-page report entitled *Skinheads Target the Schools*. It reported that this loose network of racist and anti-Semitic organizations now had some 3,000 members in 31 states, up from the 2,000 in 21 states that had been reported the previous October. The report also indicated that these groups had become more militant, adding handguns, shotguns, and even semiautomatic weapons to their usual arsenal of knives, bats, chains, and steel-toed boots.

At the beginning of the year, Christopher Cook, a 19-year-old leader of a skinhead group called the Up Starts, was arrested for involvement in the vandalism of an Orthodox synagogue, Kesher Israel, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Anti-Semitic graffiti and swastikas had been spray-painted on the synagogue building, causing a
thousand dollars' worth of damage. Cook had only recently started a Harrisburg branch of the Up Starts, a California-based white supremacist skinhead group. He was charged under the state's new Ethnic Intimidation Act, under whose provisions the desecration of churches and synagogues, as well as other venerated objects and institutions, was subject to felony penalties, regardless of the monetary amount of the damage involved. In announcing the arrest, the Harrisburg Police Bureau noted that most of the other skinhead groups in that area were not racist or anti-Semitic and had denounced Cook's actions.

The leaders of a group identified as a "neo-Nazi skinhead ring" were arrested by New Jersey police in August, after a spurt of anti-Semitic activity around the Middlesex County area. Swastikas and graffiti such as "Six million, why not," "No kikes," and "Niggers out" had been painted on the Rutgers University Hillel building, around a New Brunswick high school, and other buildings in the vicinity.

Police reported that one of the three men, identified as 18-year-old James Donato, was "the only one who looked like a Skinhead. He was wearing punk Nazi boots and his head was shaved. The other two looked pretty much like the boy next door." The Middlesex prosecutor described murals that were found on the walls of the warehouse that served as the group's clubhouse, and even on the walls of Donato's home: "It was incredible. The walls show a progression of the type of activities these neo-Nazis were involved in since 1986. It shows how they started as a heavy metal group, and got into Satanism, sadomasochism and eventually neo-Nazi ideology." The prosecutor, Alan Rockoff, said that the group, consisting of a dozen to two dozen members, was "not highly organized or dangerous," but he was concerned about the neo-Nazi and Ku Klux Klan pamphlets that he found.

A federal case began this year in Dallas, involving 17 men charged with violating U.S. civil-rights statutes by defacing a synagogue, a Jewish center, and a mosque and attacking blacks and Hispanics, in 1988. They were all identified as members of a gang called the Confederate Hammer Skins, which had an estimated 40 to 45 members, with another 60 sometimes becoming involved with their activity. During the grand jury investigation, which began in March, 12 of the accused entered guilty pleas and became witnesses for the government. Five men—the gang's leaders—were indicted in September. One of the five, Daniel Alvis Wood, had already been convicted and sentenced on state charges the previous January. When Wood, a 20-year-old with a Hitler mustache, was sentenced to the maximum by the state judge, he gave the "Heil Hitler" salute.

Other extremist groups were not as prominent in activity as they had been in recent years, thanks to a vigorous period of prosecution by federal authorities. Lyndon LaRouche, Jr., 66-year-old leader of a right-wing group espousing anti-Semitism and various conspiracy theories, a three-time presidential candidate, was sentenced in January to 15 years in prison for tax evasion and fraud. Six codefendants were imprisoned with him. Howard Pursey, a leader of the Church of Jesus Christ Christian-Aryan Nations, which had already been weakened by federal prosecution, surfaced in Canada in March, claiming refugee status.
In public rallies called by organized bigots during the year, predominantly by skinheads, the bigots were typically outnumbered by protesters. Tom Metzger, California leader of the White Aryan Resistance, prepared for thousands of bigots to assemble in March on a farm in Napa, California, leased under false pretenses from a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany. Fewer than 200 of his followers showed up, most of them with hair cut short and swastika jackets. By contrast, 500 protesters picketed the rally, watched by some 200 policemen. In April, when fewer than a hundred skinheads and white supremacists gathered in Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of Hitler's birth, over a thousand protesters were present. Most of the protesters at both the California and Idaho rallies were not Jewish. Jewish agencies generally were of the view that neither small gathering of bigots would have received media attention without the presence of the protesters.

DAVID DUKE

One apparent success story for bigotry concerned David Duke, aged 39, former grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan and president of the National Association for the Advancement of White People (NAAWP), who won a seat in the Louisiana state legislature, representing the virtually all-white 81st district of Metairie, a suburb of New Orleans. He won the February election by a margin of fewer than 250 votes in a district of 21,000 voters. He ran as a Republican, although the national Republican party, President George Bush, and former president Ronald Reagan all denounced and repudiated him.

Duke notably avoided any anti-Semitic or racial statements in his campaign, concentrating on issues of taxes, welfare reform, and affirmative action. However, he remained the head of the NAAWP, whose publication, the NAAWP Letter, carried articles customarily attacking blacks, Jews, Zionism, and Israel. A month after his election, Duke spoke at the Chicago convention of the neo-Nazi Populist party, on whose slate he had run for president in 1988. Irwin Suall, fact-finding director for the ADL, said about Duke that "he continues to represent the racist and anti-Semitic underworld, and his appearance of respectability and mainstream politics is pure deception."

Duke announced in December that he would run for the U.S. Senate as a Republican against incumbent Democrat J. Bennett Johnston. According to a Jewish Telegraphic Agency report (December 7, 1989), Elizabeth Rickey, a member of the Louisiana State Republican Central Committee, visited his state legislative office and found that she could order racist and anti-Semitic material through Duke's mail-order business, Americana Book. She joined in the formation of a bipartisan, nondenominational coalition to fight Duke's bid for the U.S. Senate.
EVALUATING ANTI-SEMITISM

Despite these various manifestations of hostility evidenced toward Jews, the annual survey conducted for the American Jewish Committee by the Roper Organization found no increase in anti-Jewish attitudes among the American people. In answer to the key question touching on anti-Semitic attitudes, only 8 percent of the respondents thought that Jews had too much power in the United States, a smaller percentage than believed that Arab interests, blacks, Orientals, or the Catholic Church had too much power.

Also, mainstream American life offered no evidence of any upturn in anti-Semitic behavior. There were no notable reports of economic discrimination; the annual Forbes Magazine report on wealthy Americans included the same disproportionate number of Jews as in recent years; a disproportionate number of Jewish students and faculty continued to appear in the top universities (the “quota” restrictions that were an issue at the University of California focused on Asians, not Jews); and, while critical comments on Israel seemed to increase in the mainstream political arena (see below), overt anti-Semitic references were carefully avoided.

These facts, viewed in conjunction with the skinhead-type anti-Semitic episodes of the year, suggested that there might be substantially no more active anti-Semites among the American population at large than there had been, but that the fringe anti-Semitic and racist groups, notably the youthful skinhead-type groups, were becoming more militant and violent in their activities. Supporting that proposition was the fact that those fringe gangs and their activities were vigorously condemned in all authoritative quarters of society. Typically, after a synagogue and a Jewish community center had been defaced in Marblehead, Massachusetts, in July, a mass rally of condemnation was organized by clergy of all denominations and a spectrum of community leaders, including top school and police officials, joining with black and Jewish leaders.

Law enforcement agencies, legislators, and other public officials were uniformly active in efforts to stem skinhead-like activities. In November Attorney General Richard Thornburgh announced that the Justice Department had opened a record 41 investigations into racial and anti-Semitic violence, involving 62 defendants. He pledged “to use the full weight of criminal law against hate groups and all those who would deny the civil rights and civil liberties of all Americans.” That “criminal law” included the 1988 federal Religious Violence Act, which imposed criminal penalties for damage to religious property and for the obstruction of persons in the free exercise of religious beliefs. More than 30 state legislatures had already passed hate-crimes legislation of one kind or another.

Effects of Israel-Related Events

In the ADL’s annual audit of anti-Semitism for 1988, 117 anti-Semitic acts of vandalism were specifically linked by identified perpetrators to the intifada, the
uprising in Israel's occupied territories. In 1989, although there was a sharp decline in this specific type of incident, other forms of Israel-related bigotry directed toward Jews, or tensions over Israel-related differences between Jews and others, were clearly evident. It was often difficult to make a distinction between outright bigotry and "mere" intergroup tensions, but both affected the Jewish sense of security.

Much of this ambiguous kind of tension occurred on college campuses around the country. At the University of Michigan, editorials in the student-run newspaper, the *Michigan Daily*, suggested that the Israeli intelligence service was behind the fatal bombing of Pan American flight 103 at the end of the previous year. Another editorial charged that the emigration of Ethiopian Jews to Israel was "a ruse . . . to provide more occupiers of Palestinian land." Jewish students organized a demonstration in front of the newspaper office. Dr. Amnon Rosenthal, chairman of the university's board of publications, said that these editorials were anti-Semitic because they contained "harassment and intimidation that are a form of racism." But the Ann Arbor chapter of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination League argued that "people make a fundamental mistake in that they confuse Zionism with Judaism." The Jewish editor of the *Michigan Daily*, Adam Schrager, said that the newspaper would maintain its pro-Palestinian stance, but would make greater effort to distinguish between Zionism and Judaism, and between Zionism and the policies of a particular Israeli administration.

However, given the relationship between American Jews and pro-Israel feelings, the distinction between attacks on Jews and on Israel often remained difficult to make in practice.

At the same time that the State University of New York began proceedings to dismiss Prof. Sid Thomas because of his anti-Semitic remarks in class (see above), similar proceedings were instituted against Khalil Semaan, a tenured professor of classical and Near Eastern studies at the same Binghamton campus. The university charged that Semaan "intentionally misquoted several sources in such a way as to misrepresent the original statements." This charge related to Israeli-Arab issues; it also reflected the fact that he had had several disputes with Jewish faculty members and students over his charges of "Zionist brainwashing" by instructors.

Hard-core anti-Semites were, of course, more likely to be anti-Israel because they were anti-Jewish than the other way around. But the more potentially ominous Jewish security issue was the possibility of backlash against American Jews because of unpopular political activity on behalf of Israel. Such a backlash would presumably depend on the relative standing of Israel itself among Americans and the popularity of American government acts in support of Israel.

In the annual poll commissioned by the American Jewish Committee, released in June, the Roper Organization found that the sympathy of the American public for the Israeli cause, which had dropped considerably following the outbreak of the intifada at the end of 1987, appeared to have leveled off—and still was substantially higher than sympathy for the Arab cause. In 1986, 53 percent of the respondents said they sympathized with the Israeli cause, as against 36 percent in 1989. In 1989,
13 percent said they sympathized with the Arab cause, only a few percentage points above 1986. In short, it was not that the American public was much more sympathetic to the Arabs, but they were much less sympathetic to Israel. Some observers interpreted this as a sign of growing indifference.

This downward trend was compatible with the conventional theory that the American public’s feelings of sympathy toward Israel were heavily if not exclusively shaped by the signals transmitted by the U.S. government. During the year, those signals were mixed. Among positive signals, the U.S. vetoed three different UN Security Council resolutions condemning Israel for its handling of the intifada—in February, June, and November—although the other 14 members of the Security Council voted for all three resolutions. The State Department also warned in May that the United States would withhold funds from any UN body that gave the PLO full membership. And for its part, Congress passed, and President Bush signed, in November, the 1990 foreign aid bill, which included $3 billion in all-grant to Israel.

On the other side of the ledger, the negative signals from the nation’s capital were more frequent than they had been in the recent past, especially from the administration. (See “The United States, Israel, and the Middle East,” elsewhere in this volume.) In January the State Department strongly criticized Israel’s deportation of 15 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza. In the same month, U.S. representatives continued meeting with the PLO, which drew publicized denunciations from both the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations and the Jewish Students’ Network. In February the annual international human-rights report of the State Department harshly criticized Israel’s handling of the intifada and charged Israel with “a substantial increase in human rights violations.”

In May Secretary of State James Baker made a partly critical and controversial speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) in which he urged that Israelis give up their dream of a “Greater Israel.” In August Senate Republican leader Robert Dole chided Israel on the Senate floor for the “irresponsible” act of seizing a Shi’ite leader, Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid, from his home in southern Lebanon. And there was some initial criticism of this Israeli action by the White House, after it was rumored that U.S. Marine Lt. Col. William Higgins, a prisoner of Shi’ites in Lebanon, had been hanged in retaliation for the Israeli abduction of Sheikh Obeid.

Adding to this atmosphere of increasing official criticism of Israel were the efforts of anti-Israel forces in this country to dramatize a growing tension between the two allies. A full-page advertisement placed in major American newspapers in January by the National Association of Arab Americans was headlined “Who Is Not Complying with the U.S. Position on the Middle East?” and purported to show that the PLO was more in agreement with U.S. policies than Israel.

In the same month, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee—joined by George Ball, former under secretary of state, former congressman Paul Findley, and others—filed legal charges with the Federal Election Commission against AIPAC, 27 pro-Israel political action committees, and 26 of their officers. The main
charge was that AIPAC illegally coordinated the PACs' contributions to political campaigns. AIPAC officials were confident that the charges, being without substance, would be rejected; however, the brunt of the effort was to highlight the strenuous lobbying activities of the American Jewish community on behalf of Israel, which, in other propaganda campaigns, was being cast as a poor ally of the United States.

The ultimate direction of these efforts was to place the loyalty of American Jews in question, such disloyalty being the foundation stone of most anti-Semitic belief systems. In fact, the 1989 Roper survey found that there had been no rise in the belief of Americans that “most American Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the United States.” However, a substantial 21 percent of all Americans did subscribe to that proposition, and another 36 percent did not choose to offer an opinion one way or another. The potential danger in these figures lay in a hypothetical backlash that might follow any seriously growing tensions between the United States and Israel.

Soviet Jewry

The new liberal emigration policy of the Soviet government created new problems and led to some policy differences between American Jews and their government. Until this year, Soviet Jews left the USSR on Israeli visas and were flown to Vienna, where they decided to go on to Israel or else “dropped out” and applied for visas to other countries. Many of those in the latter group were sent to Rome to apply for refugee status in the United States. As the number of Soviet Jewish émigrés swelled—to an unprecedented 71,000 in fiscal 1989—the administration began to reject an increasing number of refugee applicants. The government contended that given the improvements under President Mikhail Gorbachev, it was no longer valid for all Soviet Jews to claim a “well-founded fear of persecution.”

Administration officials indicated that those denied refugee status could enter the United States under public-interest parole status, but doing so would deny them a variety of benefits. Growing numbers now congregated in way-stations, particularly in Ladispoli, outside of Rome, where they publicly criticized the U.S. government for rejecting their refugee status. In August, according to Mark Talisman, Washington representative of the Council of Jewish Federations, 22 percent of Soviet Jewish families in Rome seeking refugee status were refused it.

In September, when President George Bush’s coordinator for refugee affairs, Jewel Lafontant, said that Jews denied refugee status by the United States “can always return to Russia in these days of glasnost,” protest from the Jewish community was swift; so were reassurances by Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger who called her remarks “insensitive.” Attorney General Dick Thornburgh, in response to criticism of the government’s immigration policies, issued a directive ordering Immigration and Naturalization personnel in Rome to “immediately reevaluate” cases in which refugee status had not been granted.
The Bush administration, seeking a more comprehensive plan to deal with the huge numbers of applicants, drafted and subsequently implemented a plan to limit the number of Soviet Jewish refugee slots to 40,000 per year, roughly equaling the number who had first-degree or closest relatives in the United States. The plan called for an end to the processing in Rome, which would save money for both the U.S. government and U.S. Jewish philanthropies and would also stop the practice of Soviet Jews leaving on Israeli visas but dropping out in Europe (which the Israelis objected to). Beginning October 1, Soviet citizens seeking to enter the United States would have to apply for refugee status at the U.S. embassy in Moscow.

Most American Jewish groups which had fought for the principle of “freedom of choice” (Israel or the United States) felt that while the plan had problems—among them the length of time it would take to process refugee applications and the closer scrutiny of refugee applicants—it was basically fair. According to David Harris, Washington representative of the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish groups recognized that because of the “sheer numbers” of Jews permitted to emigrate, limitations were inevitable. He also noted that, unlike other refugee groups, such as the Cambodians, Soviet Jews had the alternative of Israel to go to.

With the overall improvement in conditions for Soviet Jews, traditional forms of advocacy, i.e., rallies and demonstrations, declined. Most Jewish communities agreed to a moratorium as long as conditions for Soviet Jews continued to improve. Thus, for the second straight year, the Coalition to Free Soviet Jewry voted to cancel “Solidarity Sunday” in May because of “an increase in emigration, the release of political prisoners and progress in human rights,” according to Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, the coalition’s chairman. Advocacy in the form of meetings between Jewish organizations and Soviet officials grew. In addition, only muted concern was expressed about the U.S. decision to participate in an international human-rights conference in Moscow in 1991.

Amidst the positive developments, increasing attention was paid to growing popular anti-Semitic expression in the USSR. Concern focused in particular on the apparent growth of nationalist organizations with anti-Semitic platforms, such as Pamyat; anti-Jewish vandalism; threats and even reports of individual cases of violence that were aimed at intimidating the Jewish community.

The Carmelite Affair

This year, American Jews became more actively involved in the controversy that had occupied European Jews for several years over the existence of a Carmelite convent on the site of the former concentration camp at Auschwitz, in Poland. European Jewry, which had learned of the convent’s existence in 1985, had protested it vigorously, seeing it as a denial of Auschwitz’s special significance to Jews, for whom it was the primary symbol of Jewish losses in the Holocaust. Two meetings on the subject were held between European Jewish representatives and members of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in July 1986 and February 1987; the latter produced
an agreement for creating a center for “information, education, meeting and prayer” outside the Auschwitz-Birkenau camps, to be completed by February 22, 1989. It was understood, although not explicitly spelled out, that the nuns would be housed in the new facility. The written agreement on the new center emphasized that it would focus on the Jewish tragedy, the Shoah, and also on the suffering and martyrdom of the Polish and other peoples during World War II and that it would be a place for dialogue and encounter.

In February, when it was evident that ground had not even been broken for the center, American Jewish groups complained that the Polish Roman Catholic Church was not living up to the terms of the agreement. A conference between representatives of the Vatican Commission on Catholic-Jewish Relations and representatives of Jewish organizations—already postponed once to February 23, 1989, because of uncertainty over the convent’s relocation—was now canceled.

Catholic authorities blamed technical difficulties for the delay in relocating the Carmelite convent. However, the addition of a 23-foot cross on the grounds of the convent—after the agreement was signed—added fuel to the controversy. Demonstrations were held at the site of the convent and throughout the world. In May, with the issue unresolved, the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith canceled a scheduled audience with the pope. One protest, in particular, led to considerable Jewish-Catholic tension and ultimately helped force a resolution of the issue. On July 14, a group of seven New York Jewish activists, led by Rabbi Avraham Weiss, climbed over the fence surrounding the convent and sought to speak with the nuns. They were beaten and dragged away by workingmen.

In the aftermath, Cardinal Franciszek Macharski, archbishop of Krakow, whose diocese encompassed the convent—announced that the promised relocation had been indefinitely postponed. He based the decision on “a violent campaign of accusations and defamation, and offensive—not only verbal—aggression, which echoed up to Auschwitz” and went on to say that the campaign was the work of “certain Western Jewish circles.” Jewish groups responded strongly, insisting that the original agreement be honored. Three Roman Catholic cardinals, including Cardinal Albert Decourtray of Lyons, who had signed the original agreement, criticized Macharski’s decision. Decourtray, who was joined by Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, archbishop of Paris, and Cardinal Godfried Danneels, head of the Catholic Church in Belgium, stated that the original agreement “is mandatory and binding on those who signed it. Its decisions cannot be re-examined.”

The controversy reached its climax when Cardinal Jozef Glemp, Roman Catholic primate of Poland, called the protests “an offense to all Poles and a threat to Polish sovereignty” and charged that Jews controlled the international news media and were directing a media attack against Poland. In referring to the July 14 protest, he spoke of Jews who “launched attacks on the convent at Oswiecim. In fact, it did not happen that the sisters were killed or the convent destroyed, because they were apprehended. . . .” Responding to the implied accusation of violent intent, one of the protesters, Glenn Richter, said that “to deny that our action, witnessed by a
dozen reputable foreign journalists and hundreds of Polish citizens, was anything but peaceful in intent is incomprehensible.” Rabbi Avraham Weiss retained noted attorney Alan Dershowitz to investigate what legal steps could be taken against Glemp for his remarks. In November Weiss filed suit in a Polish court charging that Glemp had slandered him. Glemp’s remarks also led the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith and the World Jewish Congress, among other Jewish organizations, to boycott a church-organized ecumenical prayer service held at Auschwitz as part of Poland’s ceremonies marking the 50th anniversary of Germany’s invasion.

Roman Catholic cardinals John O’Connor of New York and Bernard Law of Boston and Archbishop Roger Mahoney of Los Angeles, disturbed by the escalation of events, made strong pleas for the agreement to be honored quickly. In the wake of the controversy, Glemp was forced to cancel a September trip to the United States, which would have taken him to Chicago, Cleveland, Milwaukee, and Detroit, cities in which he would have faced certain protests. Confronted by all this opposition, Glemp began to adopt a more conciliatory tone. He may have been influenced by the involvement of a West German Jewish businessman, Zygmunt Nissenbaum, who met with Glemp in mid-September and reportedly offered to help pay to relocate the convent.

A significant breakthrough occurred on September 19 when the Vatican, which previously had announced it would not get involved in the controversy, finally endorsed publicly the 1987 accord calling for the relocation of the convent. A statement issued by Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, president of the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, indicated as well that the Vatican was prepared to help pay for an interfaith center: “The Holy See is convinced that such a center would contribute in a significant manner to the development of good relations between Christians and Jews. In order to support the realization of this important but costly project, the Holy See is prepared to make its own financial contribution.”

A day later, following informal meetings in London with Sir Sigmund Sternberg, chairman of the International Council of Christians and Jews, and other Jewish leaders, Glemp retreated from his former position. In a letter to Sir Sigmund, he wrote that the accord “should be implemented. . . . It is essential not only to move the convent outside the perimeter of the site, but also to set up the new cultural center. This will help us to continue the dialogue which is so dear to us. . . . The best solution to the dispute involving the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz would be for work to start as soon as possible.” This development was praised by American Jewish organizations. The World Jewish Congress recommended “that the freeze be lifted in the formal dialogue with the Vatican that was instituted in February at the time of the failure to carry out the Geneva agreement on removal of the convent at Auschwitz.”
Other Holocaust-Related Events

A controversy ensued early in the year when Education Secretary Lauro Cavazos refused to fund a Holocaust education program for high schools prepared by the educational group “Facing History and Ourselves.” The program had reportedly been rejected partly because of pressure from right-wing groups, which said it was not balanced, that it did not adequately include the Nazi point of view. Phyllis Schlafly, conservative author and activist, criticized the program as constituting “psychological manipulation” of students. However, it was strongly endorsed by Rep. Ted Weiss (D., N.Y.) and 65 other members of Congress. In September, Cavazos reversed his decision and announced that the program would be funded.

The trial of John Demjanjuk in Jerusalem became a back-page story following the guilty verdict and death sentence handed down in April of 1988. The one development this year was the decision of Israel’s High Court of Justice, in February, to postpone a hearing on his appeal until November. An American congressman, Rep. James Traficant, Jr. (D., Ohio), accused the Office of Special Investigation of discarding documents requested by Demjanjuk; the OSI denied the charge. The memos in dispute dealt with whether Demjanjuk was identified by former Nazi prison guard Otto Horn after looking at Demjanjuk’s photographs for the first time, as he had testified, or only after looking at those photographs for the second time.

The OSI continued to process other cases. Neal Sher, director of the office, stated that there were nearly 600 individuals under investigation. In March it was revealed that a former Nazi collaborator, George Theodorovich, who had been living in Troy, New York, fled to Paraguay in December 1988. He had been stripped of his American citizenship and ordered deported because he had persecuted Jews in Lvov, in the Ukraine. In April the OSI began deportation proceedings against Anton Baumann of West Allis, Wisconsin, who was alleged to have been a member of the Nazi Death’s Head Battalion guard at Stutthof and Buchenwald concentration camps. In August proceedings began against Anton Tittjung of Greenfield, Wisconsin, who allegedly served as a guard at the Gross Raming subcamp of Mauthausen concentration camp. In October, Bruno Karl Blach, an alleged Nazi war criminal living in Los Angeles, was arrested by the Justice Department following an extradition request by West Germany. He was accused of “having killed three persons in Austria en route from Wiener Neudorf to Mauthausen... in a cruel manner and acting from base motives.” Finally, in December, Jakob Frank Denzinger of Akron, Ohio, was stripped of his citizenship for having concealed his membership in the Death’s Head Battalion of the Nazi Waffen-SS. It was believed that he had fled to West Germany.

Austrian president Kurt Waldheim appeared less frequently in the news in 1989, although in December a CIA document came to light indicating that the intelligence agency had known about Waldheim’s past as a German army intelligence officer since its establishment in 1946. The document was obtained by the World Jewish Congress.
Finally, a Las Vegas casino owner, Ralph Engelstad, was fined $1.5 million by the Nevada Gaming Commission for harming the image of Las Vegas as a result of his birthday celebrations for Adolf Hitler and his collection of Nazi memorabilia.

**Interreligious Matters**

In early September the American Jewish Committee announced that it would withdraw from the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC), the organization that officially represented world Jewry in its discussions with the Vatican. Rabbi James Rudin, AJC's director of interreligious affairs, had been serving as IJCIC's chairman. The move came about at the time of the Auschwitz controversy, but was primarily motivated by long-standing differences over approaches to Jewish-Christian relations, chiefly with the World Jewish Congress and the Synagogue Council of America. Meanwhile, the American Jewish Committee announced that an alternative organization would be formed by the Committee, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith—which had withdrawn from IJCIC three years earlier—and the American Jewish Congress, which had never been a member of IJCIC.

An important development of this year was a statement on the Middle East by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The lengthy statement, which was prepared following a period of consultations between Catholic leaders and representatives of various communities, including the Jewish and Arab, was ratified in November. Generally, the organized Jewish community praised the statement's language with respect to Israel's need for security, continued American support, and the need for the Arab states to "enter into full diplomatic relations with Israel," while expressing concern about its language calling for the establishment of a "Palestinian homeland with its sovereign status recognized by Israel."

In other Catholic-Jewish news, a mini-controversy erupted over remarks made by Pope John Paul II at a weekly public audience that were interpreted to deny God's covenant with the Jews. In his discourse on August 2, the pope said that "we consider the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as the fulfillment of the new and everlasting covenant between God and humanity." He added that, under the Sinai covenant, God would continue to view Israel "as his special people" as long as they remained faithful to God's law. "But the history of the Old Testament shows many instances of Israel's infidelity to God. Hence God sent the prophets as his messengers to call the people to conversion, to warn them of their hardness of heart and to foretell a new covenant still to come."

When the Anti-Defamation League expressed deep concern about the implications of the remarks, Vatican officials responded by saying that they had been misinterpreted. Dr. Eugene Fisher, secretary for Catholic-Jewish relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, said the pope was "affirming positives about Christianity" and had not "even taken up the question of God's continuing
relationship with the Jewish people.” However, following two more weeks in which similar homilies were delivered by the pope, the American Jewish Committee’s Rudin said that “the time has come for a high-level clarification from the Catholic leadership,” adding that the pope’s remarks could be interpreted as doubting “the validity, the authenticity, and the legitimacy of Judaism.”

Amidst the various Catholic-Jewish controversies of 1989, there were also some bright spots. In February the Vatican released a strong statement on racism entitled “The Church Confronting Racism—For a More Fraternal Society,” which included the statement: “Anti-Zionism, which consists of opposition to the policies of the State of Israel, sometimes serves as a cover for the anti-Semitism which nurtures and provokes it.” The Vatican’s statement also held that “never in history was there a form of racism more serious than Nazism, whose homicidal madness above all, and to an unheard of degree, struck the Jews, but also other peoples.” The report was generally well received by Jewish groups.

In the summer, 21 Polish Catholic priests and one Polish Orthodox theologian came to the United States to take courses in Judaism at the Spertus College of Judaica in Chicago for six weeks. Father Waldemar Crotowski, one of the participants, said, “Our purpose is to see Judaism with the eyes of its believers—Judaism as living Judaism.”

In other interreligious news, the New York Supreme Court dismissed a lawsuit brought by the Jews for Jesus against the New York Jewish Community Relations Council, alleging that the JCRC sought to interfere with its programs. The court stated that the Jewish community had a right to fight missionary activities as an exercise of free speech.

**Church-State Issues**

In the arena of church-state separation, menorahs and child care were perhaps the biggest stories of the year. In February the Supreme Court heard arguments in its first case involving the display of a Jewish religious symbol (menorah) on public property. The case (*ACLU v. County of Allegheny and City of Pittsburgh*) involved separate public displays of a Christmas nativity scene and a Hanukkah menorah—the latter owned by a Chabad-Lubavitch organization—on government property in Pittsburgh.

The plaintiffs, the American Civil Liberties Union and the Anti-Defamation League, asked the Supreme Court to uphold a 1988 U.S. Court of Appeals decision barring such public displays. The American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, and the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council filed friend-of-the-court briefs in support of the plaintiffs. The plaintiffs argued that the placement of a menorah on the steps of the Pittsburgh City-County Building and a crèche in the Allegheny County Courthouse violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment. Samuel Rabinove, legal director of the American Jewish Committee, said, “The constitutional separation of religion and government means
the government should not become involved with religions unless there is a religious need that cannot otherwise be met. . . . There is no religious need to place sacred symbols of any faith in government buildings.”

A divided court ruled in July that the nativity scene was unconstitutional (5 to 4), but upheld the menorah (6 to 3). The majority opinions appeared to stress the importance of context: the crèche, standing alone, gave the impression that the county endorsed its religious message; the menorah, which stood next to a Christmas tree, was in a seasonal holiday display that had secular connotations.

In related cases, in May the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit upheld a lower-court ruling allowing the state to regulate the placement of a Hanukkah menorah on the grounds of the Iowa state capitol. Lubavitch of Iowa had requested permission to erect its 20-foot menorah for the duration of the eight-day festival; state officials insisted that it be removed following each night of public candle lighting. In August a California appellate court upheld the right of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement to place a menorah at Los Angeles’s City Hall, upholding lower-court decisions that the display had a valid secular purpose and did not represent excessive entanglement of church and state. Unlike in the other cases, the menorah—a 19th-century candelabrum—was there purely as a display item, set near a Christmas tree, and was not used in conjunction with any ceremonies.

On federal child-care legislation, the organized Jewish community continued to support the goals while remaining concerned about church-state difficulties. In June the Senate passed a child-care bill that included provisions allowing funds to go to day-care programs run by sectarian institutions. While Agudath Israel and Torah Umesorah—National Society for Hebrew Day Schools supported the Senate bill, the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, and numerous other Jewish organizations opposed that particular provision. Among other provisions opposed was one that permitted sectarian day-care centers to give preference to hiring workers with compatible religious views and one that allowed preference in admission to children of parents with a “pre-existing relationship” to the facility.

The dilemma felt by many Jewish organizations was expressed by Rabbi David Saperstein, Washington representative of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations: “Do you support this bill now because of the need for child care and then take your chances by challenging the church-state violations in court, or do you oppose it now and risk not getting a child-care bill this year?” By year’s end, the bill remained stalled in a House-Senate conference committee.

In April a large number of Jewish groups, including such diverse organizations as Agudath Israel and the American Jewish Congress, filed legal briefs urging the Supreme Court to strike down a Missouri law that, in effect, banned all abortions. The briefs argued that by finding that human life begins at conception, the Missouri statute established a religious viewpoint as law, which law was a violation of the establishment clause of the First Amendment. Of concern to the Aguda—which, unlike most of the other groups, did not support a pro-choice position—was the possibility that halakhically mandated abortions would not be allowed.
In September the Supreme Court agreed to hear a Nebraska case intended to test the 1984 Equal Access Act. The American Jewish Congress was serving as counsel to lawyers for an Omaha school board in Board of Education v. Mergens. The court would decide whether an Omaha public school had to give official recognition to a student Bible-study club that sought to meet on school grounds, against the wishes of the school board. The American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League filed friend-of-the-court briefs to support the school-board position.

In religious accommodation cases, the Attorney General of New York filed suit in January to collect more than a $1-million fine from two Brooklyn firms accused of selling nonkosher meat in a kosher establishment. It was the largest kosher fraud case in the state's history. The Cook County Circuit Court in Illinois ruled in March that a Jewish man was required to grant his wife a get (Jewish religious divorce decree) as well as a secular divorce, because they had signed a ketubah (a religious marriage certificate) at their wedding ceremony, stipulating that dissolution of the marriage would be according to Jewish law. The client had argued that because he was not Orthodox he should not be bound.

The question of Sabbath observance continued to pose legal challenges. In March the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that an employee could not be denied unemployment benefits because he refused to work on the Sabbath, even though he did not belong to an organized church or denomination. The decision in Frazee v. the Illinois Department of Employment Security reversed an appellate decision to deny benefits to a man who would not work on Sunday. Later in the year, Rep. Stephen Solarz (D., N.Y.) introduced the Religious Accommodation Amendment of 1989, requiring an employer, whenever possible, to allow an employee to accommodate his religious needs—including observance of the Sabbath and religious holidays. In September the American Jewish Congress accused the MCI telecommunications corporation of discriminating against a Sabbath observer and filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Shari Shapiro of New York had been offered a position, but the offer was withdrawn after MCI discovered she was a Sabbath observer.

In March the Supreme Court agreed to hear an Oregon case involving the use of illegal drugs in religious ritual. The American Jewish Congress filed a brief supporting an Oregon supreme court ruling that American Indians who use peyote in religious ceremonies were constitutionally protected. Agudath Israel of America filed a friend-of-the-court brief in a "right-to-die" case (Cruzan v. Harmon), that was heard by the Supreme Court in December. Aguda supported the State of Missouri's right to keep alive a comatose patient over the wishes of the patient and the objections of the family.

In July several members of Congress, including Rep. David Obey (D., Wis.) and Rep. Lee Hamilton (D., Ind.), held up the $35-million American Schools and Hospitals Abroad program, run by the State Department's Agency for International Development, on grounds that three Israeli recipients were in violation of the guidelines prohibiting use of funds for religious purposes. The three controversial projects, all under Orthodox auspices, which were to receive a total of $8.4 million,
were Sha'alvim Teachers College, Machon Alte Institute, and Or Hachayim Girls College. The three were questioned because they allegedly provided only religious training, and one of the programs was reported to have placed teachers in West Bank settlements. Two noncontroversial Israeli grant recipients were the Hadassah Medical Center and the Israel Arts and Science Academy for gifted students. Critics of ASHA charged that it had become "an international pork barrel" for pet projects of key pro-Israel legislators and their supporters.

In July the New York State legislature passed a bill, which the governor signed, permitting the Hassidic village of Kiryas Joel (about 50 miles north of Manhattan) to organize its own school district. The school district was intended solely to provide publicly funded special education for severely disabled children, who, the Hassidim contended, would feel uncomfortable in a public-school setting. The remainder of the village's children would continue to attend private schools organized by the Satmar movement. Among groups protesting the measure were the American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League. They suggested that the measure might be unconstitutional; that at best it was an inappropriate use of public funds and a bad precedent, one that would foster divisiveness.

Finally, in October Sen. Jesse Helms (R., N.C.) introduced legislation to create a "religious issues oversight board" for penal institutions, to rule on grievances from prisoners who felt that they were being denied the opportunity to express their "legitimate religious needs."

Political Affairs

In this electoral off-year, general Jewish political concerns centered primarily around American support of Israel. For Jews, this was a feeling-out period with the Bush administration, which was generally perceived to be less friendly to Israel than the previous Reagan administration. In August Lee Atwater, chairman of the Republican National Committee, addressed himself to this apparent apprehension during a visit to Israel. "After a couple of years," he said, "the people of Israel are going to know that George Bush is their friend. Maybe a couple of times they will be irritated because that's what happens among friends from time to time."

Vice-President Dan Quayle established himself as a strong voice for Israel. In his first appearance after the election before a major Jewish group, the national executive committee of the ADL, in February, he reaffirmed America's lasting commitment to Israel's security and his deep suspicion of the PLO.

In the Democratic camp, despite increasing pressure from Arab-American groups, the Democratic congressional delegation remained firm in its support of Israel. Friends of Israel were cheered when Democrats in the House of Representatives elected Richard Gephart of Missouri and William Gray III of Pennsylvania as their new majority leader and majority whip, respectively. Both candidates had been favored by Jewish groups over their competitors, who were seen as having weaker records on Israel.

Although Israel was a focal point of concern, the most controversial area of
Jewish political involvement was that of black-Jewish relations in general and the issue of Jesse Jackson in particular.

Chicago's Jewish community had been instrumental in electing the city's first black mayor, Harold Washington, in 1983. But in February of this year the Jews were credited with playing an important role in helping make Chicago the first city to unseat a sitting black mayor with a white challenger. Richard Daley, son of the late political boss, received more than 83 percent of the Jewish vote in the Democratic primary, according to exit polls, helping him to defeat Acting Mayor Eugene Sawyer, who succeeded Washington, who died in November 1987.

The background to this turnabout in Jewish electoral behavior was the Cokely affair. Steve Cokely, a follower of Louis Farrakhan, had been an aide to Mayor Sawyer in 1988 when he publicly delivered anti-Semitic remarks, including the charge that Jewish doctors were injecting black babies with the AIDS virus. A week passed before Sawyer fired Cokely, thereby arousing the ire of large numbers of Jews. (See AJYB 1990, p. 223.) Daley went on to win the mayoralty race in April against both the Republican candidate and a black candidate, Timothy Evans, running on an independent Harold Washington party ticket. In this election, Evans won 92 percent of the black vote, while Daley won 90 percent of the general white vote and 79 percent of the Jewish vote.

New York City's mayoral race found the Jewish community more divided than it had ever been and threatened to harm black-Jewish relations not only locally but nationally as well. David Dinkins, a black candidate, was a veteran city politician with a strong record of support for Jewish causes. He received about one-third of the 270,000 Jewish votes in his Democratic party primary race against the incumbent Jewish mayor, Edward Koch, who had become increasingly controversial, especially in the area of race relations. Dinkins won the primary with 51 percent of the vote, to Koch's 42 percent. It was reported that Dinkins's managers had expected only about 20 percent of the Jewish vote, in which case Dinkins would have lost to Koch.

In November Dinkins beat his Republican opponent, Rudolph Giuliani (who had defeated Ronald S. Lauder in the primary), to become New York's first black mayor, but by a narrow margin: 51 percent of the vote to his opponent's 48 percent. Although about 40 percent of Jewish voters, as against 30 percent of the overall white population, cast their ballots for Dinkins, this represented a significant defection to the Republican side from the predominantly Democratic Jewish electorate. Dinkins's friendship with Jesse Jackson undoubtedly hurt him, though it was believed by analysts to be less important than last-minute revelations of improprieties in his personal finances and general questions about his capabilities. However, given the strident anti-Jackson campaign mounted by militant Jewish supporters of Giuliani—denounced by mainstream Jewish leaders—black and Jewish leaders were pleased with the size of the Jewish vote, which actually provided the necessary margin of victory. In his victory speech, Dinkins said, "I want to say a special word about the Jewish community, because tonight that community is again a light unto the nations."
In Florida, a congressional race precipitated some Jewish-Hispanic or Jewish-Cuban tension. One run-off candidate for the seat vacated by the death of longtime Democratic representative Claude Pepper was Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Republican Cuban-American. Her Democratic opponent, Gerald Richman, who was Jewish, used as his original campaign slogan “This is an American seat,” although later he changed it to “a seat for all the people.” Ros-Lehtinen accused Richman of bigotry and issued a brochure saying, “We want Richman to understand . . . we, too, are Americans [even though] we weren't born in Brooklyn.” The Fair Campaign Practice Committee of Dade County criticized both Richman’s campaign theme and his opponent’s brochure. When Ros-Lehtinen won the election, it was hailed as a turning point in the ethnic balance of power in the Miami area as well as a significant Republican victory. All parties talked about “healing” Cuban-Jewish wounds.

Although the stormy relations between Jesse Jackson and the Jews largely subsided in this off-election year, he continued to be a special focus of concern within the Jewish community. Invited to speak to an American Jewish Committee awards dinner in May, Jackson called for reconciliation, citing the common sacrifices of Jews and blacks in the civil-rights struggle. “Tonight we are called to reason,” he said, “to shift from racial and religious backgrounds to economic common ground and higher ground.” But in August, when Jackson called Israel’s capture of Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid “an act of terror,” he was strongly criticized by most Jewish groups. Seymour Reich, president of B’nai B’rith International and chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, remarked, “Mr. Jackson has shown that he continually chooses to fault the State of Israel. Unless he retracts his most recent ill-advised remarks, he will once again burn his bridges with the Jewish community.”

During the New York mayoral campaign in November, Albert Vorspan, a senior vice-president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, said: “We do not have to support Jesse Jackson out of some misconceived Jewish guilt. I could not vote for him. But it is sick to let him become the lens through which Jews see and judge all blacks.”

New York City’s new mayor, David Dinkins, and L. Douglas Wilder, elected in November as governor of Virginia, the first black governor in America’s history, were seen by many Jewish observers as moderate alternatives who might challenge Jesse Jackson’s domination of the black political scene.
The United States, Israel, and the Middle East

The year 1989 was seen by many observers as the start of a new era in Middle East politics, one in which three events or trends were highlighted: the closing of the Reagan presidency, growing tension in U.S.-Israeli relations, and the emergence of a serious Israeli-initiated peace proposal. The closeness and warmth in relations that had characterized the Ronald Reagan–George Shultz years showed signs of evaporating under the tenure of President George Bush and Secretary of State James A. Baker. While it was difficult to point to specific substantive differences between the two administrations, a number of comments from Washington raised hackles in Israel and led to questioning of the Bush administration's depth of commitment to the relationship. Particularly disturbing to Israel were comments by Secretary of State Baker on the inevitability of an Israeli-PLO dialogue and on the need for Israel to give up its dream of a "Greater Israel." At the same time, many of the fundamentals of the relationship—strategic cooperation, U.S. aid, and the willingness of the United States to stand up for Israeli approaches to the peace process, rather than those advocated by the international community—remained intact.

The Peace Process

As the year began, the region was still feeling the impact of the U.S. decision (December 1988) to begin official contacts with the PLO. Indeed, the decision by George Shultz, recognized by Israel as a close friend during his six years as secretary of state, was seen as an effort to make life easier for the new Bush administration, which would have had a far more difficult time taking such a radical step on its own at the very outset of its tenure. The unanswered question was whether this last-minute step by the Reagan-Shultz team would help move the stalled peace process along, as many in the Arab world contended, or whether it would prove a further obstacle to peacemaking, as many in Israel predicted.

Early in January there were reports that the new unity government in Israel might be willing to reassess its opposition to any role for an international conference. On January 10, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir told a visiting European Parliament delegation in Jerusalem that "negotiations can be launched under the auspices of the great powers or the UN, providing they refrain from any involvement in the substance of the talks." Shamir's comments were part of Israel's response to a European Community (EC) Mideast plan, announced on January 2, calling for movement through an international conference, for talks with the PLO, for the Palestinians' right to self-determination, and for Palestinian acceptance of Israel's
basic rights. The following day, Foreign Minister Moshe Arens of Israel, in his first
news conference with foreign reporters, expressed disapproval of the EC plan,
indicating that the Europeans were making peace moves without consulting Israel,
and that Israel was willing to suffer isolation in the world for its own security.

Shamir's comments to the Europeans, while appearing to move him closer to
views expressed in the past by Shultz and Labor leader Shimon Peres, were seen by
U.S. officials—following clarification by Shamir—as merely an attempt to ease
mounting international pressure for Israel to enter negotiations with the PLO.
According to these unnamed U.S. officials, Shamir appeared to be hoping to main-
tain his insistence that any negotiations should be with King Hussein of Jordan
rather than with the PLO, by showing some outward flexibility on the venue and
ground rules for talks.

Citing the election of new governments in the United States and Israel as provid-
ing the right conditions, on January 20, on Israeli television, Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's
defense minister, offered his own proposals for moving things forward. His plan
called for elections by the residents of the territories, following several months of
calm, to choose Palestinian representatives who would negotiate self-rule for an
interim period, which would lead to a confederation with Israel or Jordan. Rabin
indicated that he was “willing to discuss with the inhabitants of the territories a
neutral element to supervise elections, but not the United Nations,” and suggested
that “we will consider favorably the release of those leaders who are prepared to
accept this path.”

Rabin's plan did not have government backing, but he indicated that the govern-
ment would have to draft a peace proposal in the near future and he would submit
his ideas to the cabinet. The plan was quickly condemned by Palestinian leaders in
the occupied territories and abroad as an attempt to bypass the PLO and prevent
the establishment of a PLO state. Meanwhile, Arens told Time magazine that “at
this stage of the game the ball's in our court,” that the “government has got to
enunciate its position,” and that he hoped “the U.S. would support an Israeli
initiative.”

On January 29, Faisal Husseini, regarded as the senior PLO figure in the West
Bank, was freed from prison; he indicated that Rabin’s plan could form a basis for
negotiations between Palestinians and Israel: “I believe the PLO will agree if it will
be a real democratic and free election under the supervision of the United Nations
or another international supervision and no preconditions about what will happen
afterwards.”

On February 1, Shamir presented his own scenario for negotiations. He told
reporters of a two-stage peace process that would include “first an interim condition
and this will include full autonomy, and in the second stage, direct negotiations
without preconditions between Israel, Palestinian Arabs and Arab countries.” He
indicated that he was “deeply convinced that the moment we will get to this stage
and negotiations will start, positive results will come.” Shamir also said that he was
prepared to withdraw Israeli troops from some of the West Bank and Gaza’s
population centers after the residents agreed on autonomy as a first stage. The PLO quickly rejected Shamir's statement, calling on him "to stop digging into his old stock and bringing out these goods which are out of date."

Shamir's comments were widely seen as a response to mounting international pressure to come up with a new peace initiative as a consequence of the intifada and Yasir Arafat's diplomatic moves. Indeed, Shamir's remarks earlier in the month on a possible international conference, Rabin's plan, and Shamir's effort to refresh Camp David were depicted as Israel's varied efforts to regain the diplomatic offensive following Arafat's December successes.

In meetings with Israeli ambassador to Washington Moshe Arad and Egyptian ambassador to Washington Abdel Raouf El Reedy on February 8, Secretary of State Baker indicated that the Bush administration wanted to take a careful step-by-step approach to reviving the Middle East peace process and would not take any policy initiatives until after meetings in the spring in Washington with Shamir and Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. This approach stood in contrast to positions of European and Arab governments calling on the administration to make a bold, early foray into Mideast diplomacy in light of the PLO moves. The administration reportedly wanted to hear what Shamir would bring with him as an alternative proposal to international calls for including the PLO in the process and moves toward an independent Palestinian state.

The administration further sought to reassure Israel when Vice-President Dan Quayle told a meeting of the Anti-Defamation League on February 10, in Palm Beach, that the United States remained deeply suspicious of Yasir Arafat: "Those who believe that American policy is about to undergo a basic shift because we have begun to talk with the PLO are completely mistaken. We need to see real evidence of concrete actions by the PLO—actions for peace, and against terrorism—before changing our fundamental attitude to the PLO." He added, however, that the "status quo" in the territories was "clearly unacceptable," and that "Israelis understand this as well as anyone."

The Bush administration's stress on a go-slow approach was evident again on the occasion of Secretary Baker's 14-country tour of NATO members in February. In the Hague, on February 16, Baker heard Dutch foreign minister Hans van der Broek call for a U.S. Mideast peace mission as early as possible. Van der Broek was reported to have made his recommendation on the basis of a recently completed fact-finding mission for the EC by the foreign ministers of Spain, France, and Greece. Baker's aides reported that the secretary cautioned the Europeans "to be careful on how they proceed," because "one has to till the ground carefully. If you push the level of discussions too high too soon and create too much international attention at the wrong level, you may well preempt the possibility of real movement." Rather than trying to get Israeli leaders to meet with Arafat at an international conference immediately, which had no chance of success, the administration was believed to favor some kind of negotiating process that would begin with Israelis talking to Palestinian leaders from the territories who were not identified with the PLO.
Meanwhile, the Soviet Union, following withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan, sought to enhance its Middle East role through an 11-day tour of the region by Foreign Minister Eduard A. Shevardnadze beginning on February 17. A Soviet Foreign Ministry official indicated at the outset of the trip that "an auspicious moment has come to intensify efforts to create conditions for the holding of a Middle East peace conference. It would be unpardonable to pass it up."

Among the highlights of the Shevardnadze mission were the first visit ever by a Soviet foreign minister to Jordan, the first in 14 years to Egypt, and a meeting in Cairo with Israeli foreign minister Arens on February 22. The Arens-Shevardnadze meeting lasted two-and-a-half hours. Both parties said the talks were constructive but differences remained unresolved. Arens indicated that he and the Soviet foreign minister had expressed opposing views on the PLO—Arens calling the PLO "the major obstacle to peace in the area at this time," the Soviet calling for Israeli contact with the PLO; and on how to convene peace talks—Arens advocating direct negotiations, citing the success with Egypt, Shevardnadze reiterating the Soviet plan for an international conference under the auspices of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Later that evening, Shevardnadze met with Arafat; afterward he reaffirmed Soviet support for full PLO participation in all phases of a peace initiative and made another plea for the Soviet approach: "I think it will take some time for Israel to recognize the changes in the region. We need a common effort to bring them to the understanding that the international peace conference will bring guarantees for the security of Israel, and that country needs that."

On February 23, in a major foreign-policy address in Cairo, Shevardnadze presented his government's approaches to the Arab-Israeli conflict. He warned that "time in the Middle East is working for war, not peace." He called for an end to superpower rivalry to achieve a "historic compromise." He cautioned Israel that by continuing to impede Palestinian self-determination, "Israel is not strengthening but rather undermining both its security as a state and the legitimacy of its own self-determination." But he also said, "We should rule out any attempt to isolate Israel" and noted that Moscow's plans for peace called for on-site monitoring of Arab and Israeli military installations, the banning of nuclear and chemical weapons from the region, and "verification and cooperative measures" to rid the area of terrorism.

On the very same day, President Bush, in Tokyo for the funeral of Emperor Hirohito, met with King Hussein of Jordan and President Mubarak of Egypt. Secretary Baker, briefing reporters following the meetings, reiterated the administration's cautious approach in the face of urging by the king and Mubarak for an international peace conference: "We are concerned that if we act too precipitously we might pre-empt promising possibilities that could surface if we adopted a more reasoned and measured approach." But Baker focused as well on the fact that there was a new "dynamic now in the region," including the U.S. dialogue with the PLO, which could lead to direct peace talks.

King Hussein, who had been openly critical of former president Reagan's reluctance to become more personally involved in the region's problems, told reporters
after seeing Bush that he expected to be more pleased with the new administration.

Back in the United States, the president met with American Jewish leaders on March 1. According to reports, he said that he would not apply pressure on Shamir when he visited Washington in April, but made clear that he expected Shamir to arrive with some “new ideas” on how to advance the peace process. Seymour Reich, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said following the meeting that Jewish leadership had no complaints about U.S. policy, which he described as “very consistent.”

On March 13, Arens, in Washington for his first visit as foreign minister, met with Bush and Baker. Each side presented its perspective on how to move forward. According to reports, Baker told Arens that the administration expected Prime Minister Shamir to bring with him in April specific proposals for improving the atmosphere in the territories, as well as general ideas about how Israel saw the “final status” of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Baker reportedly described a two-tier peace process: Israelis and Palestinians should take immediate steps to reduce tensions between them in Israel and the territories, e.g., Israel reducing its troop presence in certain sectors of the West Bank in return for Palestinian promises not to engage in violent demonstrations in those areas; at the same time there would begin a general discussion of a “final settlement” for resolving Israel’s security concerns and the Palestinians’ quest for self-determination. On his part, Arens was reported to have told Baker that while his government would try to ease tensions in the territories, it would not negotiate with the PLO but would seek talks with King Hussein.

The following day, in an address before the Washington Near East Policy Institute, Arens expounded further on his government’s approach. He opposed talking about visions for a final settlement: “I think that if the parties to the conflict, rather than concentrating on getting the negotiations going, begin to throw out their ideas as to what the final conclusion should be, they will simply subvert the process.” He indicated that Israeli policy was to look for negotiating partners other than the PLO, with Jordan as the target. But he also recognized that because of Jordan’s unwillingness to represent the residents of the territories, Israel would “have to address” the residents as well: “If we can fault ourselves for anything these past 20 years, I suppose it would be for not engaging them in a dialogue.”

On the same day, Baker, in testimony to a House Appropriations subcommittee, suggested that Israel might eventually have to negotiate directly with the PLO: “It is an element of our policy to promote direct negotiations which can be meaningful between Israelis and Palestinians. Now, if you can’t have direct negotiations that are meaningful, that do not involve negotiations with the PLO, we would then have to see negotiations between Israelis and representatives of the PLO. It may be that you can have meaningful negotiations that do not involve the PLO.” Later in the day, Arens was asked about Baker’s comments about the possibility of eventual Israeli talks with the PLO, and he said that Baker “did not say anything like that to me,” but added that “if we are going to make an effort to identify interlocutors
from the population in the territories, it's not helpful to say that if this doesn't work out, we're now going to the PLO."

Several days later (March 21), in testimony before a House subcommittee on international operations, Baker reiterated his comments about the PLO but also called on the PLO to agree to talks between residents of the territories and Israel. Despite rumors that the secretary might use the hearing to back off from his statement of a week earlier about the possibility of an Israeli-PLO dialogue, he indicated that he would not rule out such talks: "It would be wrong for us to categorically, absolutely, totally and completely rule out, under any and all circumstances, any dialogue that might lead to peace."

Late in March, the Israeli press was reporting that Shamir and his aides had prepared a document for his trip to Washington offering a new proposal to move the process forward. According to Ha'aretz of March 27, the proposal would include elections for representation of residents of the territories leading to discussions on autonomy. It was reported that the plan was being discussed by the four main cabinet officials—Shamir, Arens, Peres, and Rabin—and not with the entire cabinet, to avoid damaging leaks.

**MUBARAK-SHAMIR VISITS**

The first week in April brought the Bush administration's most serious attention to the Middle East to date. The month began with a proposal by Shamir to Mubarak that their separate visits in Washington scheduled later that week be turned into a three-way meeting with Bush. The Egyptians refused, according to an Egyptian official, because "all the Israelis are offering now are rehashed formulas that have been tried and failed before." The official added: "If Mr. Shamir will really come up with some meaningful new ideas, Egypt will respond. Shamir wants appearances without substance, and we will not give that."

On April 3, after meeting with Mubarak, Bush provided reporters with an outline of his thinking on the Middle East, the first time he had done so as president. He indicated in blunt language that the United States wanted "the end of the occupation" and suggested that "a properly structured international conference could play a useful role at an appropriate time." He said that Egypt and the United States "share a sense of urgency to move forward a comprehensive settlement through direct negotiations" and he called for "creativity" to look again at old problems and to devise imaginative ways of solving them. Mubarak, for his part, indicated agreement with Bush on most issues, and spoke of "direct negotiations between Israel and all Arab parties within the framework of an international peace conference." It was also reported that Mubarak had told Bush privately that Palestinians would never agree to elections in the territories held under Israeli supervision.

The following day, however, after talks with Baker, Mubarak seemed to be more willing to keep an open mind on what Shamir would bring to Washington. He
indicated that he would withhold judgment on a reported election proposal and also publicly endorsed the Bush administration’s cautious approach toward reviving the peace process, saying he agreed that “a good atmosphere” should be created first before negotiations could begin.

THE SHAMIR INITIATIVE

On April 5 and 6, Shamir met with Baker and Bush and officially presented a peace initiative. As the Israeli prime minister outlined to reporters following his meeting with the president, the proposal consisted of four points. First, it called for making the peace between Israel and Egypt, based on the Camp David accords, a cornerstone for expanding peace in the region. Second, it called on the United States and Egypt to make clear to Arab governments that they must abandon their hostility and belligerency toward Israel. Third, it proposed a multinational effort to solve the Arab refugee problem. And fourth, it proposed free and democratic elections among the Palestinian Arabs of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. Shamir indicated that the purpose of those elections would be to produce a delegation “to negotiate an interim period of self-governing administration.” Shamir’s initiative immediately became the focus of diplomatic attention, remaining so, with variations, for the rest of the year.

The administration’s reaction was positive. Bush gave cautious support for the election plan, indicating that Washington considered such elections “not the end of the road” but the beginning of a process that would lead ultimately to resolution of the territorial dispute and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Meanwhile, Baker characterized Shamir’s ideas as “very encouraging” proposals that might “help move the peace process forward.”

On April 8, the president indicated to reporters that the Mubarak and Shamir visits “have moved things forward a little bit.” He added that “I can’t say I’m elated, but in the Middle East, a little step can prove to be fruitful.” And he noted that “the climate is better than it’s been in a while.” In his comments, the president emphasized that the proposed autonomy period would be a steppingstone toward a final settlement that should follow a land-for-peace formula. He explained his use of the term “the end of the occupation” during Mubarak’s visit: “I do not feel that the provisions of 242 and 338 have been fulfilled. And I wanted to be clear to all the parties in the Middle East that that is my view.”

On April 7, in Brazzaville, Congo, Yasir Arafat dismissed Shamir’s proposal, saying it “was, as usual, inappropriate.” The first reaction of Palestinian leaders in the territories reflected Arafat’s. Some dismissed the Shamir plan outright. “We can accept elections only after there is no occupation of the territories,” said Hanan Mikhail-Ashrawi, professor of English at Bir Zeit University. Hana Siniora, West Bank newspaper editor, said: “Elections today are not part of how to start the process.” While rejection was the order of the day, questions about specifics of the
plan's implementation were raised in the media. Would anti-Israel polemics be allowed in campaigning by Palestinians? Who would draft the election laws? Would residents of East Jerusalem be allowed to vote? Where would the army be during the election campaign? What would be the level of PLO involvement, even in directing the campaign from outside?

On April 12, the State Department dismissed the PLO's initial rejection of Shamir's plan: "It is not unusual in a process for different parties to stake out more extreme positions, especially at the beginning of the process." Margaret Tutwiler, State Department spokeswoman, added that Shamir's idea had "potential," indicating that "there are a lot of questions to explore, and we plan to do so in the days and weeks ahead."

Two days later, Palestinians from the West Bank offered a counterproposal to the Shamir plan. The plan, suggested as an effort to narrow the gap between Israel and the PLO, called for an Israeli withdrawal from population centers in the territories, then elections to pick representatives to the Palestine National Council, followed by negotiations for a two-year interim period, leading to an international conference where Israel and the PLO would negotiate the final status of the territories. It seemed, however, that the plan would go nowhere without Yasir Arafat's approval, not to mention certain Israeli opposition.

Meanwhile, Shamir, back in Israel, was experiencing a backlash among some of his Likud supporters. In the cabinet, on April 16, Deputy Prime Minister David Levy said he was worried that "those responsible for the intifada will be elected, with Israel's permission. This is a path of no return." And Planning and Economy Minister Yitzhak Modai, also of Likud, expressed concern about the future of Jewish settlements in the territories and about whether Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem would be included in the elections. Labor leaders Peres and Rabin backed the plan, pointing out that the party had promoted the idea of elections as part of its campaign platform in the fall of 1988.

Reaction to the plan, which had come to dominate the diplomatic landscape, continued apace. On April 16, Arafat indicated that elections were acceptable only if they were supervised by the UN after Israel withdrew from the territory it had captured in the 1967 war. The next day, Shamir told reporters he would not withdraw troops to pave the way for elections in the territories: "There is no room for any talk about changes in the disposition of the Israeli Defense Forces. Their deployment is necessary to maintain order. Order is also necessary to hold elections." Shamir also indicated that he opposed the participation of 140,000 East Jerusalem Arabs and thought there was "no need for observers or supervision of any kind."

On April 19 and 20, King Hussein spent two days in Washington in meetings with Bush and Baker, and on departure he gave a qualified endorsement of Shamir's proposal: "I believe that the idea of elections might be worth looking at within the context of a whole process that hopefully will come together to get us from where we are now to a final settlement. Otherwise the idea is out of context." An adminis-
tration spokesman indicated that the king had been convinced to give partial support because the United States made clear that "when we talk about elections, we are talking about an idea that is directly linked to a final settlement and not an end in itself."

On the same day, the PLO formally rejected the proposal in a meeting with U.S. representative Robert Pelletreau, saying that elections under occupation would legitimize the Israeli presence and distract from the PLO's campaign for an international conference. On April 26, 83 West Bank and Gaza activists followed Arafat's lead by signing a document that rejected Shamir's plan, calling it "nothing more than a maneuver for the media, to save Israel from its international isolation." It called on Israel to talk with the PLO and to attend an international conference. It stated that the Palestinians' goal was "to establish an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital under the leadership of the PLO." As for elections, the document said, "Palestinians chose their representatives decades ago and have reiterated their choice through the uprising."

The administration continued to downplay the significance of these rejectionist trends, calling them inevitable "background noise" that accompanied any Middle East initiative. These protestations would continue for months, officials asserted, but both sides would eventually conclude that elections were the only realistic option for beginning a dialogue that could lead to a comprehensive settlement. Concerning Israel's seriousness of purpose, administration officials seemed confident that the intifada and the U.S.-PLO dialogue were powerful inducements for Israel to take its own election idea seriously.

As the days passed, each of the parties—the Israelis, the Palestinians, the Americans—continued to weigh the Shamir plan. Early in May, Baker sent a letter to Arens pressing Israel for specifics on the plan. The letter reportedly asked the Israeli government to address the issue of participation in elections of Arab residents of East Jerusalem, to make provision for international supervision of the balloting, and to make a "significant link" between an interim stage of autonomy and a final stage of permanent solution of the conflict.

On May 14, the Israel cabinet, by a vote of 20-6, formally approved the Shamir proposal, but only by choosing to avoid the most difficult questions posed by Washington about how the elections would be carried out: the right of residents of East Jerusalem to vote, international supervision, the possibility of elections while the intifada continued, and whether Israel would make any commitment about the territories' ultimate status. Defense Minister Rabin expressed pleasure at the vote: "After many years of different stages in the national unity Government, there is a unity Government peace initiative that I believe will be received widely and with great support by the Israeli people." Among those voting against the agreement were Ezer Weizman, who argued that Israel should negotiate directly with the PLO, and Ariel Sharon and Yitzhak Modai, who asserted that the plan would lead to a Palestinian state.

Meanwhile, the United States sent a delegation of State Department officials to
the Middle East to sound out the parties. The delegation, including Dennis Ross, the director of policy planning, invited 15 Palestinian leaders to meet with it in Jerusalem to discuss the plan. However, only four showed up, the others apparently trying to tell the Americans that only the PLO was authorized to speak on their behalf. Later, the prime minister reportedly told the visiting delegation that Israel had not lost hope of launching a dialogue with the "large majority" of Palestinians in the territories, which Shamir termed the "moderate majority." And he indicated that the proposed elections constituted the best method of bringing about such a dialogue. Arens, for his part, told the delegation that all four parts of Israel's proposal must be pursued, arguing that progress on the wider peace front or on any settlement of the refugees would improve the atmosphere around elections as well.

The State Department team next met in Cairo with Egypt's leaders. Egyptian officials said that the Israeli proposal was "the only thing on the table" and would not be rejected out of hand. However, they urged Ross to press Israel to broaden the election proposal as "part of the wider package" of guarantees and concessions to the PLO. At the same time, the Executive Committee of the PLO held a two-day meeting in Tunis, at the end of which a statement was issued dismissing the plan: "The Israeli Government's plan shows that in essence the call for elections is a farce, a means to deceive world public opinion."

BAKER PROVOKES CONTROVERSY

As discussions continued on how to move forward, Secretary Baker delivered a major address before the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), on May 22, in which he said that it was time for Israel to "lay aside once and for all the unrealistic vision of a Greater Israel" and "reach out to Palestinians as neighbors who deserve political rights." He also called for a "constructive Palestinian and broader Arab response" to Israel's proposal, and for the Palestinians to amend the PLO charter.

Shamir, in London, reacted with anger to the Baker speech, rejecting as "useless" the suggestion that Israel give up the Greater Israel idea and Jewish settlements in the West Bank. An Israeli official traveling with Shamir indicated that Baker's comment on settlements "at this stage of the diplomatic game—which is very complicated—is a big surprise." On the other hand, PLO spokesman Ahmed Abdul Rahman reacted favorably, saying that "it was a big step forward for Mr. Baker to say these things to the Israelis and the AIPAC organization." In a May 23 news conference, when asked about Shamir's comments, Baker stood by his remarks: "If you look at the speech in its entirety, you see that it was very balanced." Meanwhile, Rabin in Washington echoed Shamir's critique, if in less blunt language: "The problem today is to start the political process and the only way to do that is to leave open the ultimate solution. We have to work in phases and at this phase the less we deal with the principles of a permanent solution the better."
This was seen to be at the heart of the difference between Washington's and Jerusalem's approaches. Israeli leaders, divided on what the final status should be, were agreed that not talking about it was a way to progress; Washington insisted that only by talking about it could Palestinians be convinced to take up Shamir's proposal.

The administration continued its efforts to get the parties together. Bush and Baker communicated with Arab leaders on the occasion of an Arab summit meeting in Casablanca, May 23–25. The day before the summit opened, Baker called on the Arab world to abandon the economic boycott of Israel, stop challenging Israel's place in international organizations, and repudiate the "odious" line that Zionism is racism. On "Meet the Press" on May 29, Baker said that the United States was actively pressing the PLO in Tunis to give "the green light" to Palestinians in the territories to accept the election plan. Baker praised the proposal warmly, while acknowledging that Washington and Jerusalem still differed over various aspects of it.

Meanwhile, Congress sought to lend a helping hand to Israel. During the first week of June, Senators Rudy Boschwitz and Frank Lautenberg circulated a letter that was signed by 95 senators, calling on Baker to be "fully supportive, both in fact and appearance," of Shamir's election proposal.

On June 11–12, Egyptian minister of state for foreign affairs Boutros Ghali visited Jerusalem, the first time a senior Egyptian official had done so since the beginning of the intifada. Ghali reportedly offered to be an "active postman" between Israel and the PLO. Shamir's spokesman, Avi Pazner, quoted the prime minister as saying: "Israel is not interested in negotiations with the PLO, but if Egypt is prepared to encourage local Palestinians to take part in the elections and the negotiating process, that would be extremely helpful." Simultaneously, Mubarak was meeting Arafat in Cairo, and in his public comments the PLO leader sought to avoid the label of rejectionist. "We have not rejected the idea of elections, but we have specific questions on the subject. Can there be democracy without self-determination?"

On June 18, Arafat announced that in the U.S.-PLO meeting of June 8, the PLO had proposed that prominent Palestinian Americans participate in negotiations with Israel concerning elections. Mentioned as possible candidates by Arafat were Edward Said, professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University, and Ibrahim Abu Lughod, professor of political science at Northwestern University.

THE PLAN FALTERS

In Israel, Shamir faced increasing pressure from within his own party. When Sharon, Levy, and Modai, the plan's leading opponents, forced Likud's 2,600-member Central Committee to convene, in order to consider riders to Shamir's election initiative, Sharon made his purpose clear beforehand: "I will try and bring about a decision which would erase the entire program because it's the most danger-
ous of all the plans the Government has ever formulated in the last 40 years.” On July 5, in a bargaining session that delayed the opening of the convention, Shamir agreed to be bound by the Sharon-Levy-Modai conditions for conducting negotiations with the Palestinians. These were that: the Arab residents of East Jerusalem could not run for office or vote in the elections; no elections would take place unless the Palestinian uprising ended; Israel would not give up any territory and no Palestinian state would ever be established; and Jewish settlement would continue in the territories. Shamir’s acceptance meant that while the actual plan had not been amended, he risked losing a no-confidence vote from his party should he not stick to the agreement.

Reaction by the Labor party and the United States to the Likud decision was mixed. Peres said that the plan had “suffered a very tough hit,” though he indicated no decision about whether Labor would stay in the government. U.S. officials, reportedly angry over the Likud steps, avoided public criticism and tried to distinguish between the government proposal and the Likud decision, saying that the United States was continuing its effort “in support of the Israeli government proposal.” On July 6, PLO official Bassam Abu Sharif said that Likud’s pledge never to return the territories made it impossible for the PLO to consider such elections and “canceled everything.” Abu Sharif added that the PLO understood from its talks with U.S. officials that the administration was committed to ending Israel’s occupation and that by its steps “Likud is telling President Bush to go to hell.”

American reaction intensified several days later. Baker, on a flight from Brunei to Oman before going on to Poland, told reporters that “if things totally bog down, if you can’t make progress with the election proposal, then we would have to look a little bit more closely at the prospects for an international conference.” Baker’s sudden raising of the international-conference theme was interpreted as sending Israel a message: if Israel weighed down the election idea with heavy conditions which stymied the plan, the United States would have no choice but to go in other directions.

On July 9, Arafat said in Tunis that the PLO would not consider the elections plan because of the new conditions. He strongly criticized the U.S. role, saying that the Likud was encouraged to harden its stance by “unconditional” American support and that the U.S.-PLO dialogue had accomplished little.

In Warsaw on July 10, Baker in a news conference raised the level of dissatisfaction. He indicated that he intended to send a special envoy to Israel “to determine the extent to which the Israeli government is still committed to their elections proposal in the aftermath of the Likud party convention.” He added that the conditions “give rise, at least in our minds, to a question about the seriousness of purpose.”

As the days passed, talk increased that Labor might withdraw from the government. Reports circulated that U.S. officials were urging Labor to remain in the government as the likeliest way to aid the peace process. Seymour Reich, chairman of the Presidents Conference, told the press on July 12 that he had told Israeli
leaders that it was "important for the unity Government to stay together." On July 14, the administration abruptly dropped the plan to send a special envoy to Israel. The about-face was explained as a consequence of assurances that Likud and Labor were nearing agreement to preserve the election plan and avert a breakup of the coalition government. Also cited was U.S. reluctance to provide ammunition to opponents of the plan, eager to charge U.S. interference.

The Israeli government coalition crisis formally ended on July 23, some three weeks after it began, when the cabinet voted 24-4 to endorse Shamir's plan as originally proposed. The vote did not force Shamir specifically to renounce the four conditions of Likud, thus leaving him with the room to negotiate with the conditions in mind while arguing that the government as a whole was not bound by them.

With the national unity government intact, attention shifted to the Palestinian side. On July 26, reports appeared in the Israeli press describing a specific list of conditions under which the PLO might allow the election plan to go forward. The terms, which were reported to have been passed on to Israel through the Soviets, included the following: the residents of East Jerusalem should be allowed to take part; election candidates should be assured freedom of speech and given immunity from prosecution; the Israeli army should be withdrawn from population centers to predetermined areas on the day of voting; and before elections, Israel should agree in principle that it was willing to give up territory.

The following day, the New York Times reported that it was told by Khalid al-Hassan, a senior adviser to Arafat, that the Palestinians "accept elections as part of a process," but that the "starting point for any solution is an Israeli decision to withdraw eventually from the occupied territories." On the same day, an Arafat interview in Al Ahram, an Egyptian daily, carried tougher themes. Arafat said elections could happen only if Israel committed itself to withdrawing all its troops from the territories within 27 months after the vote. He also called for return of Palestinian refugees and said Israel must agree on a date for Palestinian independence. On August 3, Arafat continued his negative reaction to the elections proposal. Addressing Fatah's fifth General Congress in Tunis, Arafat said the plan was merely aimed at "perpetuating the Israeli occupation of the occupied territories."

Two tracks dominated U.S. activity by mid-August. First, the administration stepped up efforts to persuade the PLO to agree to the plan. On August 14, Ambassador Pelletreau, meeting for the fourth time with the PLO representative in Tunis, Yasir Abed Rabbo, pressed the plan; an American official afterward said that the meeting "was disappointing." The PLO rejected the plan in the strongest terms to date, Abed Rabbo saying that peace could come only through an Israeli withdrawal and self-determination for the Palestinian people.

At the same time, reports circulated that the United States was backing Egypt in its efforts to circulate a ten-point working paper giving conditions under which elections in the territories would be acceptable to Cairo. The ten-point program was first conveyed by President Mubarak to Israeli officials by a delegation of U.S. congressmen in July.
EGYPT'S TEN-POINT PLAN

By September, frustration with the lack of progress was mounting. Rabin, who had first proposed elections, acknowledged that things were not going well: "I cannot deny that the peace initiative and efforts to bring a political solution between Israel and the Palestinians have lost momentum." Peres offered criticism of the Palestinians from whom in the beginning "we heard a half yes, and now nearly a complete no." Shamir, however, criticized the pessimistic assessments, saying that "we knew this would be a lengthy process" and too little time had passed to evaluate it.

The different approaches of Labor and Likud to the plan were becoming sharper and more open. Labor leaders were seen as focusing on the elections as a means of creating a Palestinian representation with which Israel could negotiate, with the implicit acquiescence of the PLO. Likud appeared determined to structure the elections in such a way that the Palestinian delegation would be independent from the PLO. Consequently, Labor tolerated the U.S. dialogue with the PLO, in the hope that Washington would persuade the PLO to give Palestinians a "green light"; Likud staunchly opposed the talks on the grounds that they only discouraged local Palestinians from breaking with the PLO.

Similarly, Labor reacted more positively to Cairo's ten-point program. The program described a series of conditions under which the elections might be held, including withdrawal of the Israeli army from the territories before election day, a moratorium on new Jewish settlements, and a prior commitment by Israel to the principle of exchanging territory for peace. Labor pointed to the proposals as a possible basis for restarting the election initiative with Egyptian assistance. Likud refused to respond to the Egyptian points, arguing that Israel must first receive an assurance from Palestinians and Arab states that they were willing to join in the proposed peace initiative before engaging in negotiations. Finally, Labor leaders hinted that they could accept some outside representatives in the Palestinian delegation, which Likud staunchly opposed.

On September 11, Peres made clear his differences with Shamir, suggesting that the Cairo points could be the basis for talks: "If the Palestinian delegation will come equipped with these ten points as their position, we should probably come equipped with our position and we can start the preparations for negotiations." Meanwhile, a PLO official told the Washington Post on September 13 that the Mubarak platform was unacceptable because it focused on the Israeli election proposal rather than the PLO's agenda for statehood.

The United States responded cautiously in public to Mubarak's plan, the State Department saying on September 12 that the administration would welcome the initiative "to the extent that the ten points can be helpful" in launching an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. Reports indicated that, behind the scenes, U.S. support for the program was stronger.

On September 15, Egyptian ambassador to Israel Mohammed Bassiouny officially
submitted the ten-point plan to Israel. Since Shamir's own initiative called for an Egyptian role, his government had little choice but to respond. The next day, Israel agreed to send Rabin to Cairo to discuss the proposal. The development was seen by some as the first significant sign of movement since the Shamir initiative was introduced; at the same time, it was clear that the Israeli cabinet remained divided on the Cairo plan, and the PLO was seen as undecided as well. Meanwhile, Cairo indicated that talks about its plan could be held as early as October, if Israel agreed.

On September 18, Rabin and Mubarak met in Cairo. No major agreements were reached. Mubarak, speaking to reporters, indicated flexibility: "The Egyptian ten points are not the Ten Commandments. This is not the permanent solution. All I want is the two sides to sit down for a dialogue and agree on elections and afterward address the problem. Our only aim now is the dialogue." Mubarak spoke of a dialogue "mainly with the Palestinians from the territories," but added "we should not neglect those from outside." Rabin indicated that the Israeli government had "certain problems that we have to discuss among ourselves, like the composition" of a Palestinian delegation.

In the next few days the pace of diplomacy picked up. On September 20, Mubarak made an appeal on Israeli television for Israel to join in discussions with Palestinians, claiming that in meetings with Arafat the PLO leader had approved Cairo's proposal. The following day, Shamir rejected Mubarak's appeal on the grounds that the Egyptian was trying to lure Israel into talks with the PLO.

Talk of a fundamental split within the Israeli unity government increased in light of the growing interest in the Mubarak program. Trying to avoid the appearance of taking sides in the internal Israeli dispute, President Bush, in New York for the UN General Assembly meeting, met on September 25 with Peres in the afternoon and Arens in the evening. Peres, after his meeting, said that he had urged the president to get more aggressively involved in Middle East diplomacy, noting that "no peace settlement has ever been achieved without an active American involvement." Peres also described the Egyptian plan as possibly "the most important single opportunity in a long time." It was reported that Bush emphasized in his talk with Peres the importance of Labor and Likud working together to promote Israel's election plan to the Palestinians. Arens reported that he had called on Bush to try to persuade Mubarak to meet with Shamir. Arens told the press that "if Mubarak were to sit down with Shamir and talk directly about the specific object of how we can set the stage so we can hold free and fair elections amongst the Palestinian population, there's a good chance we will reach that objective."

On September 26, however, Shamir indicated that the Egyptian proposal was unacceptable to Israel. Two days later, Secretary Baker, trying to break the deadlock, met in Washington with Arens and Egyptian foreign minister Ahmad Esmat Abdel-Meguid. Meeting with reporters afterward, Baker focused on the positive. He said that "there may be some potential for progress" in beginning negotiations over the election proposal. He stressed that the United States did not see the Mubarak points "as a competing proposal" with Shamir's initiative, hoping thereby to over-
come Shamir’s objection and to have the Israeli cabinet support the plan in its vote the following week. Baker described the three-way talks that had taken place that day as taking a look at the “general concept of the Israeli election proposal and how we can take practical steps to make that work.”

On October 2, after meeting with Bush for an hour in the White House, Mubarak said that the Israeli government would make “a grave mistake” if it rejected the Egyptian plan. Secretary Baker, speaking to the press before the Mubarak-Bush meeting, strongly affirmed American support for the Egyptian initiative, saying the proposal offered a serious prospect for moving toward peace. Baker reiterated that the ten points “do not represent a competing proposal” to Israel’s initiative, but they represented “a means of getting a dialogue established.” At the same time, the administration urged Mubarak to agree to meet with Shamir to help break the stalemate. Baker also warned that if the Israeli cabinet rejected the Egyptian proposal, the United States would have to “go back to the drawing board” in search for ways to create an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

Meanwhile, comments by Arens on October 2 to Israeli journalists were seen as possibly reflecting a new flexibility toward the Egyptian plan. Arens was quoted as saying that an Egyptian-sponsored meeting could take place, but “the only issue on the agenda at such a meeting should be the elections.” Likud continued to oppose any PLO role or any substantive discussions on the final status.

However, on October 6, after nine hours of debate stretched out over two days, the Israeli cabinet rejected Egypt’s proposal. The vote was 6–6, divided strictly along party lines—Likud against, Labor for. The tie meant defeat: Likud leaders indicated that their negative votes rested on opposition to the “outside” Palestinians included in the Egyptian plan and the fact that it provided for discussing formulas for a final peace settlement in preliminary talks. Labor party officials criticized the decision, warning that it could lead to a government crisis. Peres charged Likud with deliberately trying to block any move toward settling the conflict. In response, Shamir indicated that the government would consider a suggestion by Baker that the United States, Israel, and Egypt conduct three-way consultations on the composition of an eventual Palestinian negotiating delegation.

The administration tried to play down the significance of the cabinet vote. Words such as “temporary setback” were cited and the State Department said that Secretary Baker had talked by phone that day with both Arens and Abdel-Meguid in an effort to bridge differences. U.S. officials sought to explain Baker’s suggestion to Arens of September 27 that the United States, Egypt, and Israel might get together and exchange ideas on which Palestinians could come to a dialogue and on what basis the parties would meet. It was pointed out that this was not a “plan” but simply a vehicle to move forward.

On “Meet the Press” on October 8, Baker said, “I don’t think the vote means things are dead in the water at all.” He indicated that the parties were “going to continue to work to see if we can put this together.” Two days later, the State Department indicated that Baker was seeking to organize a meeting in Washington
between Arens and Abdel-Meguid. The invitation was seen as a last-ditch effort by Washington to give Israel another opportunity to pursue its own initiative, with the implication that if Israel refused, it would demonstrate that it had never been serious.

BAKER'S FIVE POINTS

On October 10, it was reported that Baker had submitted to the Israeli and Egyptian governments five points to help get around the impasse. State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler, trying to make clear there was no American plan, claimed that these points had not been put down in a letter but were rather oral communications. The points, though not publicly released, were said to include assertions that the main purpose of the peace process was the establishment of an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue; that Egypt's participation in the proposed three-way talks would not be seen as a substitute for the Palestinians, with whom Egypt would consult; that the Israeli election plan would be the basis for talks; that Israel would have to approve the composition of any eventual Palestinian delegation; and that a three-way meeting in Washington could be arranged as a way to advance the process. It was reported that Likud leaders objected to Baker's conception because they believed it implied a list would be drawn up by Egypt with the PLO and because there seemed room for the substantive discussions that Israel opposed.

Meanwhile, on October 16, the PLO's 108-member Central Council, meeting in Baghdad, issued a declaration urging "firm confrontation against the American policy," though not issuing a formal rejection of the Baker points. The next day, Shamir told a Likud party gathering that Israel would "stand firm and not give in, even if we face a clash." He asserted that the Bush administration was "trying to get Israel out of Judea, Samaria and Gaza and into negotiations with the PLO." The two reactions of opposition to the Baker plan led to widespread speculation that it would die.

The following day, in an interview reported in the New York Times, Shamir indicated that the peace initiative was still alive, describing how he intended to draw Palestinians into negotiations: "The populace will come to understand from the bitter experience of the intifada violence that this struggle will lead nowhere, and that everything the PLO stands for will produce only disasters. They will eventually grow disappointed both with the intifada and with the PLO and then conclude that they must negotiate with us on the basis of our initiative. I hope that will not take long."

The administration reacted critically to Shamir's comments. Spokeswoman Tutwiler indicated on October 18 that recent statements by Shamir were "unhelpful, and we're disappointed." Her words were seen as an unmistakable rebuke to Shamir, considering the carefully worded language normally used. Baker said in an interview on the same day that if the parties did not get more serious about fundamental compromises for peace, he would have "no alternative but to disengage."
Shamir responded with a conciliatory letter to Baker, calling on Washington to continue its Middle East peace efforts. At the same time, he reiterated his position that a PLO role would "have to lead to a Palestinian state," and indicated that his government was "determined to prevent such a development at all costs."

The weeks of maneuvering among the parties—the Mubarak ten points, the Baker five points—seemed about to yield to progress when Arens sent Baker a telegram on October 24 indicating that Israel would accept Baker's proposal "in principle" but had "reservations" about two important points. On the same day, Shamir said in Israel that his government would "agree to this plan after the changes we suggested are accepted." The reservations were reported to be related to Israel's desire for an American guarantee that the PLO would not be involved, directly or indirectly through Egypt, in shaping the Palestinian list; and assurances that any discussions with Palestinians would not get into matters relating to a final settlement. Arens's letter was seen as an effort by Israel to avoid responsibility for any breakdown in the process.

The continuing impasse highlighted a fundamental difference in approach between the United States and Israel. Israel saw U.S. actions reflecting a conviction that talks between Israel and the Palestinians could not be arranged without at least the tacit consent—and indirect involvement—of the PLO. Likud, on the other hand, saw the election proposal not merely as a means to circumvent direct talks with the PLO, but as an instrument to destroy its claim to represent the Palestinians. Because of U.S. unwillingness to accept Israel's strategy, the Likud-led government was seeking to advance its reservations in a way that would give Israel the power to control the process unilaterally.

On November 1, Baker phoned Arens to discuss revisions in his five-point framework. According to reports, Baker offered slight revisions in response to Israel's two reservations, deleting a section referring to "consultations" between Egypt and unspecified "Palestinians," and adding a phrase making clear that the Israeli-Palestinian talks would concern only elections and "the negotiating process."

Four days later, the Israeli government's inner cabinet passed a resolution—nine to three—that the Baker framework be approved "on the assumption" that Israel's long-standing objections be addressed by written "assurances" from Washington. Those "assurances" would indicate that the PLO would not have any direct or indirect role in the dialogue, that Palestinians taking part would be residents of the territories, and that no issue could be discussed other than the elections. Arens lauded the vote as "an important step," but many wondered how the inner cabinet resolution differed from Arens's letter to Baker, which had been turned down a week earlier. Meanwhile, Sharon, Levy, and Modai voted against the plan, Levy calling the vote "a turning point, and perhaps each of us will have to take account." The cabinet vote was seen as an effort by Shamir to induce the United States to accept conditions that effectively redefined Baker's original proposal, which would bar movement toward a PLO state or put the Palestinians in the position of rejecting elections.

On a flight returning from Australia on November 8, Baker praised the cabinet
vote as "a very positive step," but then indicated that the Israeli conditions were the same that he had refused to accept before the cabinet vote, leaving little doubt that he still opposed the demands.

Through all these goings on, the Israeli media were gripped by reports that Shamir was scheduled to make a private visit to the United States beginning on November 14, but had received no invitation to see the president. On November 8, at a news conference, when asked about a meeting with the prime minister, Bush merely said, "I'm certainly willing to consider it." The Israeli media gave front-page headlines to the Bush response so close to the Shamir visit, which was widely interpreted as linked to U.S. irritation over Israel's position on the peace process. The speculation ended, however, the following day, when the White House announced that the president would meet with Shamir on November 15.

Before leaving for Washington, Shamir told reporters from the Washington Post and the Los Angeles Times that he would seek "mutual understanding" with the president, but acknowledged "clear differences" over how to advance the process. Elucidating, he said that one issue was that of the PLO, which was "not so important" to the United States because it negotiates with the PLO, but Israel was "not willing to negotiate with the PLO" because it would "express our readiness to negotiate about the Palestinian state." Shamir also pointed out that "all over the world you see movement toward more peace, more détente and more democracy," but "unfortunately in this part of the world, in the Middle East, in the Arab part of this world, you don't see it. We have not had any movement toward more peace, more acceptance of the Israeli reality. It's something discouraging."

On November 15, Shamir met with Bush and Baker in Washington and was reportedly told by the secretary that the United States could not give Israel the sort of airtight assurances it was seeking without undermining the entire peace process. Shamir emerged from the White House saying that there was "no more tension." Reports focused on the lack of a sense of urgency surrounding the talks, reflecting the fact that Egypt, acting on behalf of the Palestinians, had not responded to Baker's five points, as well as the administration's preoccupation with the dramatic events in Eastern Europe.

On his return to Israel on November 24, Shamir claimed he had made progress and said Bush and Baker had assured him "in a clear and unambiguous way that the U.S. would not ask Israel to negotiate with the PLO." Peres disagreed, saying Shamir's talks in Washington, Paris, and Rome "did not change anything" and threatened that his Labor party would resign "if the Likud continues to be obstinate."

Meanwhile, the PLO rejected efforts to put it in the background. PLO officials in Tunis told the press early in December that on December 1 the organization had told both the U.S. ambassador in Tunis and Egyptian officials in Cairo that it would accept an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue in Cairo only if it named the Palestinian delegation.

On December 6, the State Department announced that Egypt had agreed, with
some conditions, to Baker’s plan to prepare a dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian representatives. Spokeswoman Tutwiler indicated that the Egyptian reply “is exactly as the Israeli reply was,” described as a “yes, but.” At the same time, State issued an official version of Baker’s five points, which had already appeared in different forms in the Arab and Israeli press:

That because Egypt and Israel have been working hard on the peace process, there is agreement that an Israeli delegation should conduct a dialogue with a Palestinian delegation in Cairo.

That Egypt cannot substitute itself for the Palestinians and will consult with Palestinians on all aspects of that dialogue. Egypt will also consult with Israel and the United States.

That Israel will attend the dialogue only after a satisfactory list of Palestinians has been worked out.

That the Government of Israel will come to the dialogue on the basis of the Israeli Government’s May 14 election initiative. The Palestinians will come to the dialogue prepared to discuss elections and the negotiating process in accordance with Israel’s initiative and would be free to raise issues that related to their opinions on how to make elections and the negotiating process succeed.

That the foreign ministers of Israel, Egypt and the United States meet in Washington within two weeks.

In Jerusalem, Rabin hailed the Egyptian move as a great step forward, adding that he saw little chance that divisions within Israel’s coalition government would hamper progress toward ending the conflict. The Israeli government cautiously welcomed Egypt’s qualified acceptance but was reported to be concerned over the role of the PLO in any form.

As the year moved toward a close, with Washington talking of a meeting of the foreign ministers of Israel and Egypt with Baker in Washington in January 1990, Arafat met with Mubarak in Cairo to discuss the next steps. Meanwhile, in an interview on December 26, Shamir said that he preferred friendship to enmity with the Palestinians and pledged to press his elections proposal despite opposition within his own party and from many Palestinians. Shamir said the proposed foreign ministers’ meeting would “certainly” take place in Washington in the second half of January. He indicated that “we want to have a meeting with some Palestinian people to talk” about how to organize the elections. Shamir said that Israel’s readiness to attend the Washington meetings and hold elections in the territories showed a commitment to peace.

As the year ended, it remained unclear whether real progress had been achieved or whether each side was merely trying to win American approval by appearing to be forthcoming.
U.S.-PLO Relations

From the beginning of the Bush administration, the new element in U.S.-Israeli relations was the dialogue between the United States and the PLO. An inheritance from the last days of the Reagan-Shultz years—an ironic one at that because of the consistently pro-Israel policies of that team—it came to dominate the thinking of both Israel and the United States during 1989.

From the outset, Israel opposed the U.S. decision to deal with the PLO, citing not only the potential threat this posed to Israel, but the negative impact it would have on the peace process as well. Throughout the year, Israel sought to demonstrate that, in fact, the PLO had not changed and that the new U.S. policy was misguided.

The Bush administration was sensitive to Israeli concerns, but not to the point of discontinuing the dialogue. Instead, it sought acceptance by the PLO of an inconspicuous role, while accepting the idea that PLO approval was necessary to get Palestinians in the territories to come forward. The inherent tensions were evident early on, and they continued to surface throughout the year.

The first test of the "new" PLO came in the first days of the year. Late in December 1988, Elias Freij, mayor of Bethlehem, issued a call for a one-year truce between Israel and the Palestinians in the territories. His proposal involved a willingness by Palestinians to stop violent attacks, provided Israel released some 2,000 detainees and halted measures such as expulsions, house demolitions, and administrative detention.

On January 2, in a statement broadcast on Radio Monte Carlo, Arafat gave his response: "Any Palestinian leader who proposes an end to the intifada exposes himself to the bullets of his own people and endangers his life. The PLO will know how to deal with him." Freij got the message. He immediately withdrew the truce proposal. On January 3, Israeli foreign minister Moshe Arens said that Arafat's statement demonstrated Israel's contention that Arafat was a terrorist, and that the U.S. decision to open a dialogue was a mistake: "We are convinced that establishing contacts or, worse yet, extending recognition to the PLO cannot possibly promote peace in the Middle East. It is bound to encourage extremism and further acts of violence."

Meanwhile, the Knesset approved a resolution on January 4 supporting talks with Palestinians who accepted Israel and renounced terrorism, but ruling out negotiations with the PLO. The Left in Israel, however, dissented from this view, as four leftist members of the Knesset announced their intention to attend a conference in Paris in January at which PLO leaders were expected to be present. (The meeting took place in Paris on January 12.) On the same day, another group of left-wing Israelis and prominent Palestinians announced that Israeli legislators and PLO representatives would meet in New York for an "academic" conference.

An Israeli source told the Washington Post early in February that Arafat's Fatah faction had set up a clandestine "army" in early January inside Israel and the
territories to carry out terrorist activities. This was seen as an effort to get around the ban on terrorism imposed on the PLO as a condition for its dialogue with the United States. In fact, there had been reports that cross-border attacks on Israel from Lebanon by Fatah had been curtailed.

On February 5, however, nine armed men were stopped in southern Lebanon from entering Israel; the large amount of arms the men were carrying and the direction in which they were heading indicated they were planning a terrorist attack inside Israel. A PLO representative in Tunis immediately endorsed the abortive raid, saying it was not terrorism because it was “a military mission” aimed at Israeli soldiers. Foreign Minister Arens, on the same day, lashed out at the United States and other Western nations, saying that the raid proved the PLO had not really renounced terrorism and that Israel was “aghast to see the world’s great leaders lining up to pay homage.” At the same time, the Israeli embassy in Washington formally appealed to the State Department to end its dialogue with the PLO.

In Iceland, on February 11, Baker said that the U.S. government had warned the PLO that recent Palestinian guerrilla actions “present us with great difficulty,” but added that no decision had been made “at this time” to break off the two-month-old U.S.-PLO dialogue.

Meanwhile, pressure on Israel grew to enter negotiations with the PLO. On February 23, Shevardnadze said Soviet-Israeli relations could not advance until Israel attended an international conference with the PLO. French president François Mitterrand urged a visiting Yitzhak Shamir to talk to the PLO. And the Japanese Foreign Ministry announced that Prime Minister Noburu Takeshita had the same message for Israel.

Arafat continued his offensive on February 23, when he held a press conference in Cairo with 15 Israeli journalists and made a plea for direct talks with Israeli leaders. However, another abortive terrorist attempt from Lebanon and the killing of an Israeli soldier in Nablus on the same day generated Israeli disbelief.

On February 28, the United States stepped up its pressure on the PLO. State Department spokesman Charles Redman said, “Attacks against Israeli civilian or military targets inside or outside of Israel are contrary to the peaceful objective of the dialogue.” And Redman reported that Pelletreau had told the PLO in Tunis that Washington could not condone recent actions, and that “the PLO cannot escape responsibility for the actions of its constituent elements.” The PLO answered back, a member of the Executive Committee saying in Tunis, on March 1, that the organization “is not prepared to go on with meetings of this kind unless they bring results, unless they are soon translated into a formal meeting and dialogue.”

But the United States continued to attempt to define the terms for continuing the dialogue. Issuing its sharpest rebuke to the PLO, on March 3 the State Department questioned Arafat’s ability to control radical Palestinian factions. He said that if the PLO “cannot or will not exercise such control, it raises questions concerning the commitment undertaken in the name of the PLO—indeed, questions about the PLO’s ability to carry out its commitments.” The same day, Arafat said in Jordan
that the PLO's guerrilla forces would continue to mount raids against Israel's northern border, even though the administration had warned that such operations could jeopardize the newly established U.S.-PLO dialogue.

The next milestone in the shaky U.S.-PLO relationship was Secretary Baker's testimony on March 14 before a House Appropriations subcommittee in which he said that the United States might someday conclude that Middle East peace required Israel to abandon its reluctance to negotiate with the PLO. The next day he repeated his view before a Senate body, saying, "We ought not to rule out categorically, absolutely, and unequivocally" PLO-Israeli talks. The following day, Arens called Baker to complain that his position "was not helpful" because it would only encourage local Palestinians to spurn any Israeli overtures and divert them to the PLO in Tunis.

On March 21, Baker offered further clarification in testimony before the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on international operations, which was widely interpreted as an effort to reassure Shamir, who was scheduled to visit on April 6. The secretary indicated that the administration did not favor establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and that his remarks the previous week did not contain "an inevitable conclusion" that Israel must negotiate with the PLO. And he noted that while there are "some differences" between the United States and Israel, "I don't think that we should equate differences with the conclusion" that the United States would seek to force Israel to deal with the PLO.

The following day, after what was described as the first substantive discussion between the administration and the PLO, Ambassador Pelletreau indicated that he had called on the PLO to take "practical steps to reduce tensions and improve the political environment" for "direct negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis." The PLO delegation's chief, Yasir Abed Rabbo, rejected the plea, saying the uprising would continue "until Israel evacuates our homeland." On the subject of terrorism, Pelletreau said he had reiterated the administration's "very strong views on terrorism and violence," but there was no indication that the United States had decided to consider PLO guerrilla raids against military positions on Israel's northern border as terrorism. The PLO response was seen as a rebuff to Baker, who had sought a reduction in tensions to bring about direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. Abed Rabbo said that an international conference should be the only forum for negotiations. On March 23, in Tunis, Arafat expressed optimism on the talks with the United States, reflecting that there was "a mutual respect and intention to lead this dialogue to success by both the American and Palestinian sides."

Meanwhile, an Israeli poll conducted late in March revealed mixed attitudes toward the PLO. On the one hand, an overwhelming majority of Israeli Jews opposed peace negotiations with the PLO at that time; only 7 percent of those polled believed that the PLO had done enough to prove that it was interested in peace with Israel. On the other hand, more than half said they would favor talks later if the PLO were to moderate its behavior. The survey was seen as particularly instructive
because, while it indicated a hardheadedness among the Israeli people concerning alleged PLO change, it reflected as well a certain potential flexibility in Israeli attitudes for the future, contrary to the stated position of the Israeli government on the subject.

U.S.-Israeli differences surfaced again in comments made in April. Shamir, in a speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors on April 13, said that Arafat and his aides had repeatedly made clear that the PLO “intended not to coexist with Israel, but to achieve in stages what the Arab states had tried a number of times and failed to achieve all at once: the destruction of Israel.” Baker, on April 14, again in Senate testimony, said that certain PLO statements were not helpful, but that the administration was satisfied that to that point “the PLO is committed to what it has told us: that is, that it recognizes Israel's right to exist and has repudiated terrorism in all its forms.”

In late June, word spread that the administration had secretly expanded its contacts with the PLO, meeting in Tunis with the PLO's second-highest official, Salah Khalaf. On June 29, Israeli ambassador Moshe Arad expressed Israel's “anger” and “disappointment” to the administration over these new contacts. Khalaf was a founder and leader of the Black September terrorist organization that carried out the massacre of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic games in 1972 and that was implicated in the 1973 killing of American ambassador to the Sudan Clio A. Noel, Jr. At the same time, members of Congress entered the fray. Sen. Connie Mack (R., Fla.) said in a letter to Baker, made public, that it was “incomprehensible to me that the administration would escalate its contacts with the PLO without any consultation with Congress or any improvement in PLO behavior.” The letter further called for suspension of U.S. contacts with the PLO until Congress had a chance to review U.S. policy. Three members of the House—Mel Levine (D., Calif.), James Scheuer (D., N.Y.), and Benjamin Gilman (R., N.Y.)—held a news conference to express dissatisfaction with the expanding U.S.-PLO relationship. Levine said the Pelletreau-Khalaf dialogue was an example of “the PLO tail wagging the U.S. dog.” The State Department, in turn, defended its decision to elevate its dialogue with the PLO, saying that the move was part of its overall effort to convince the PLO to approve an Israeli election proposal. However, reports, unconfirmed, soon surfaced that the United States had quietly discontinued contacts with Khalaf, so as to keep the focus on Israel’s election proposal.

The split between Israel and the U.S. administration concerning the PLO appeared to grow in July. As stories circulated that the Bush administration had offered to upgrade contacts with the PLO if the organization reacted favorably to the election plan, Israel stepped up efforts to persuade Washington to break off the dialogue. Arens said in Jerusalem on July 17 that it would be impossible to hold free elections in the territories while the U.S.-PLO talks continued, because any Palestinian who sought to run independently of the PLO “would probably be dead in 24 hours.” And Israeli officials made public a previously classified report by Israeli security forces asserting that the mainstream Fatah faction of the PLO,
headed by Arafat, had been responsible for ten bombings as well as other attacks on civilian targets in Israel since Arafat's renunciation of terrorism in December 1988. The report said that while cross-border attacks by Fatah had ceased, cells based in the West Bank had launched at least 70 other attacks in the past six months. The ten incidents of Fatah violence inside Israel, cited in the report, included five bomb explosions, two attempted bombings, two attempted firebombings of Israeli vehicles, and a grenade attack on an Israeli civilian bus, in which the grenade did not explode.

In reaction to the news that the United States was talking with Salah Khalaf, a number of senators sponsored legislation intended to put sharp new restrictions on U.S.-PLO discussions. It was introduced by Sen. Jesse Helms of North Carolina. Helms's amendment would not have allowed the United States to negotiate with any PLO representative unless the president first certified to Congress that the Palestinian had not taken part or conspired in terrorist activity that resulted in "the death, injury or kidnapping of an American citizen." On July 19, the president expressed strong opposition to the congressional move. According to White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater, Bush told a meeting of congressmen that he was opposed to the legislation because "at this point in the peace process, fragile as it may be, these kinds of limitations would not be helpful." Instead, the administration sought a compromise that reportedly would have the effect of barring talks with PLO figures like Khalaf, but not with PLO leaders whose involvement in violent attacks was less clear.

The following day the administration, in alliance with bipartisan Senate leadership, easily defeated the Helms amendment, the Senate voting 75-23 against it. A far less restrictive amendment, which the administration had worked out with the leadership, was then passed, 97-1, which barred contacts with the PLO only if the president knew that a participant had been involved in terrorism and informed Congress of the fact. Helms, the only senator to vote no, contended that the alternative was a "fig leaf to permit the State Department to continue to do what they've been doing." On July 22, Helms's concerns seemed to be confirmed by reports from unnamed State Department officials that the legislation did not bar future meetings with PLO officials, even Khalaf. One official, to buttress the view that it was important to talk with high-ranking PLO leaders, said that Pelletreau, in two June meetings with Khalaf in Tunis, had produced "the best response that we've had" to U.S. pressure on the PLO regarding the Israeli plan.

On August 3, Fatah began a five-day congress in Tunis; it ended by issuing a "political program" that proposed to "intensify and escalate armed action" against Israel. On August 10, the administration criticized the PLO for the Fatah declaration and warned that such militant attitudes undermined the quest for a negotiated settlement. The State Department stated that Fatah's "derogatory rhetoric on Israel, its tone of confrontation and violence and its preference for unrealistic principles and solutions instead of practical ideas for peace are unhelpful," and raised questions about the group's "commitment to accommodation, understanding and
peace." Among Fatah's objectives as stated in its program were the guarantee of a "right to repatriation" for all Palestinians wishing to return to the territory they view as their homeland and the establishment of a committee to "oppose the Zionist immigration to our homeland."

The next day, Fatah rejected the U.S. criticism of its program as indicative of U.S. bias in favor of Israel. This reaction was seen as part of the PLO's internal struggle, with Arafat under pressure at the Fatah congress from military commanders and guerrilla fighters who believed the leadership had made too many concessions to Israel and the United States without getting anything in return.

The struggle between the Israeli government and the administration regarding the U.S.-PLO dialogue continued until the end of the year without any new policy developments. A study by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), reported in September, seemed to buttress the position of the administration. Studying PLO statements to the Arab world and abroad since the December 1988 change, it rejected Israel's contention that the PLO put out contradictory views to Arab and Western audiences. It concluded that comments have "for the most part been consistent, regardless of the media in which they appear."

Israel, for its part, continued to disseminate information that put into question the PLO's commitment. Thus, for example, Yosef Ben Aharon, chief of staff of the prime minister's office, asserted on October 23 to the New York Times that Israel had counted 100 attacks —79 against Israelis and 21 against Palestinians—by Fatah operatives since Arafat renounced terrorism in December 1988. Ben Aharon indicated that these terrorist activities "arouse our suspicions" and made Israel unwilling to participate in Egyptian or American peace proposals that gave the PLO a role, even deep in the background.

The year ended with the dialogue intact, Israel still urging the United States to reconsider, and the PLO vacillating between satisfaction that the dialogue was "positive," although it had produced nothing concrete (Khalaf) and criticism that one year later the United States was "doing its best to find an alternative to the PLO" in the peace efforts (Nayef Hawatmeh).

**Terrorism**

During the Shultz years in the State Department, Israel's handling of terrorism had become a key element in the deepening of relations between the two countries. Shultz saw terrorism as a major problem facing the democratic world and regarded Israeli policies—finding ways to counter the terrorists while holding on to democratic values—as a model for the United States and the West.

The first year of the Bush administration brought the first major challenge to the new president in dealing with a hostage situation. It quickly became clear that in this area, as in others, the Bush team was less willing to view Israel as a positive element and less willing to be sensitive to the difficult choices facing Israel in dealing with terrorists.
The episode began on July 28, when Israeli commandos abducted Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid, a leader of the Shi'ite fundamentalist Hezbollah (Party of God), from his home in southern Lebanon and brought him to Israel. The Israeli Defense Forces said that the sheikh had been “arrested” as a “preacher, inciter,” and at times “a planner of attacks against Israel.” Obeid was believed to have been involved in the kidnapping of Lt. Col. William R. Higgins of the U.S. Marines, who was captured near Tyre, Lebanon, in February 1988, while serving with the UN Truce Supervision Organization. Israel described the sheikh as the principal person “responsible for Hezbollah activities in southern Lebanon.” There was also immediate speculation that the sheikh might be used in a hostage trade for three Israeli soldiers who had been held in southern Lebanon since 1986, apparently by the Party of God or its affiliates.

Upon learning of the Israeli action, President Bush said, “I don’t think kidnapping and violence help the cause of peace.” He indicated that the freeing of Colonel Higgins was “very much on my mind” but added that he did not know if the kidnapping “would benefit the Higgins case or not.” Immediately, a senior Party of God official dismissed the possibility of a trade and said Israel would “bear severe and dangerous consequences for the kidnapping.”

Criticisms of Israel came from other sources as well. Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar of the UN called the Israeli raid a “violation of Lebanese sovereignty” and demanded that Israel return the sheikh. Egypt accused Israel of state terrorism. Israel dismissed the criticism, saying that people would understand “that this act was taken against one of the leaders of one of the most fanatical groups in Lebanon.” The episode escalated in seriousness the following day when Hezbollah warned that it would hang Colonel Higgins on Monday, August 1, unless Israel freed the sheikh. The White House responded by issuing a statement warning that the United States would hold the kidnappers of American hostages “fully responsible for their safety.” State Department spokeswoman Tutwiler, in Paris with Baker, called the threat to kill Higgins “outrageous and uncivilized” and “an affront to the entire international civilized community.”

On July 31, the Organization of the Oppressed on Earth, a group linked to the Party of God, announced that it had hanged Higgins; it distributed a graphic videotape showing a figure identified as the American twisting at the end of a rope. Five hours later a second group, the Revolutionary Justice Organization, threatened to kill Joseph James Cicippio, former acting comptroller of the American University of Beirut, who had been kidnapped on September 12, 1986. The message from the group to An Nahar, a Beirut newspaper, said: “The organization announces its quick resolve to execute the death sentence against the American-Israeli spy Joseph Cicippio if the struggling sheikh is not released by 6 p.m. Tuesday. Then the deadline will be set for the execution, which will be broadcast on all the screens in the world.”

The dual messages provoked strong reactions and much speculation. Immediately, questions arose concerning the time that the videotape was shot. There were reports on several occasions that Higgins had died some time earlier—perhaps after
the USS *Vincennes* shot down an Iranian jetliner on July 3, 1988; or of maltreatment after a failed escape attempt. Sen. David Boren (D., Okla.), chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, indicated that the United States had “no way of knowing when he was killed,” but it was “very, very likely that he has been executed.”

Abruptly cutting short a cross-country trip, President Bush said that the American people had been “shocked right to the core” by the reported hanging of Higgins. He also issued an “urgent call to all parties who hold hostages in the Middle East to release them forthwith, as a humanitarian gesture to begin to reverse the cycle of violence in that region,” which was read as aimed at Israel as well as Muslim fundamentalist factions in Beirut.

Although members of Congress generally expressed outrage and frustration at the reports of the hanging, Sen. Robert Dole, Republican minority leader, was critical of Israel’s seizure of Sheikh Obeid. He urged the president to seek “some understanding with the Israelis about future conduct that would endanger the lives of Americans.” And he continued his criticism on the Senate floor, saying, “We can’t continually apologize for Israeli actions in this country when it endangers the lives of Americans in some far-off country. Perhaps a little more responsibility on the part of the Israelis one of these days would be refreshing.” Lee Hamilton, Democratic congressman from Indiana and chairman of the Middle East subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee, criticized Israel’s lack of consultation before kidnapping Sheikh Obeid: “We like to see Israel bring us in. If we are going to be in on the crash landing, we would like to be in on the takeoff as well.”

Other legislators were critical of Dole. Rep. Charles Schumer (D., N.Y.) charged that Dole was “making night day” and “making black white” and said that “Israel does not share any blame.” And Sen. Alphonse D’Amato (R., N.Y.) said U.S. policy should be “more like that of Israel and the Soviet Union” in retaliating against terrorism.

Further complicating matters were comments made by Yitzhak Rabin soon after the release by the Islamic fundamentalists of the videotape. He indicated in Jerusalem that Israel had decided to seize Obeid as part of an effort to free three captive Israelis in Lebanon and had acted without consulting Washington. Now Israel offered to release Obeid and all other Shi’ite prisoners in exchange for all Western hostages as well as Israelis, because the other captives “are also threatened in the wake of Israeli action.” Rabin also noted that Israel differed with the U.S. policy of not negotiating with terrorists holding hostages. He indicated that Israel preferred rescue attempts, in the manner of Entebbe in 1976, but in the case of Israeli soldiers held in Lebanon, “we are also prepared for negotiations to bring them home.” Therefore, he said, the decision to offer an exchange of Shi’ite prisoners for Western hostages “is ours and ours alone.” Concern mounted in Israel that the country would be blamed by Americans for Higgins’s death at a time when Israel’s image was already suffering because of the *intifada*.

On August 1, the kidnappers of Cicippio announced that they were postponing
his killing for two days, but that the new deadline was firm if Israel did not free Obeid. Israel repeated its offer of a prisoner exchange but said it would not release the cleric for, in the words of Arens, "If we free this criminal we will only encourage additional terrorist activities."

Meanwhile, Senator Dole, trying to clarify his remarks, said that he did not directly blame Israel for the death of Higgins. However, he reiterated that Israel had "struck out alone, freelancing, apparently in the interest of gaining leverage to win the release of some of its citizens held hostage," without regard for the effect on innocent citizens of other countries. And White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater added fuel to the fire when he said that "many people" in the administration shared the disappointment with Israel expressed by Dole.

On August 2, the *New York Times* reported that the CIA had told the White House that Higgins had probably been killed before July 5, thus lessening the focus on Israel's holding the sheikh. The president indicated that the administration was "leaving no stone unturned" to free U.S. hostages but expressed frustration at the lack of hard information.

The crisis eased the next day when the group holding Cicippio, the Revolutionary Justice Organization, announced in Lebanon that it was "freezing" a threat to kill him. This development, together with comments by Iranian president Hojatolislam Rafsanjani the following day, offering the United States help in resolving the hostage crisis, were seen as responses by Iran to U.S. diplomatic efforts, which reportedly offered an improvement in relations if progress were made with regard to the hostages.

On August 4, Shamir expressed guarded optimism about the possibility of negotiating an exchange with Shi'ite Muslim groups in Lebanon, telling reporters that "we hope we will get some proposals" through the Red Cross "and it will be the end of the crisis." This hope for an opening stemmed from the Revolutionary Justice Organization's statement surrounding the postponement of the threatened execution of Cicippio, in which it said that Israel must release Obeid, as well as the Shi'ites and "intifada stragglers."

The media noted that Israel would face a serious dilemma if Hezballah agreed to release either the Western hostages or the three Israeli soldiers but not both groups. It was considered unlikely that Israel would agree to either proposition, since it would find itself in great difficulty either with its own public or with the Americans. When asked whether Israel was seeking the release of all hostages and not only its own soldiers, Shamir replied, "Well, if it will happen, we will be very happy." On August 6, Rabin told a U.S. television network that no proposal excluding the three Israelis would be acceptable.

For several days stories were reported about Iranian and pro-Iranian groups rebuffing overtures from the United States and Israel, thus lowering the hopes raised days before, and of an offer to free Cicippio if Israel released Obeid and 450 Arab prisoners. Notably absent was any offer to free the three Israeli prisoners. Israel refused to comment. An administration official told the *New York Times* that while
the United States was pleased that the Shi'ites were no longer talking about deadlines for executing Cicippio but about ways to arrange his release, the goal was “ending the whole episode of the hostages.” Toward that end, the unnamed official added, the administration would not publicly analyze and weigh each new offer, but would instead pursue a policy of “trying to devalue the hostages.” Meanwhile, Secretary Baker, in Mexico, said that the United States was “consulting very, very closely” with Israel, but was “not suggesting to Israel what they should or should not do.”

While this latest threat to U.S.-Israel relations had diminished, Israel’s initial hopes that the abduction of Sheik Obeid might lead to a quick and dramatic resolution of the hostage problem had been smashed. As Shamir adviser Avi Pazner put it on August 7, the array of threats, offers, refusals, and wildly conflicting statements coming from a variety of Shi'ite Muslim groups in Lebanon indicated that a solution “was going to take a long time.” And Marlin Fitzwater echoed these sentiments the next day, indicating that “none of us expect a quick solution.”

On August 9, Shamir called Bush. In the ten-minute conversation, the Israeli prime minister reportedly praised the president for his handling of the hostage situation and said Israel would work for the release of all hostages. Shamir reportedly reiterated that Israel would free Obeid only in exchange for the three Israeli soldiers and “all the hostages.” The president, to counter reports that the administration was trying to “devalue” the issue, told reporters that he had a hard time pretending the hostages were not a national preoccupation. “No American is going to be content until these people are free. And I would not be doing my job if I didn’t approach it in that manner.”

As the days passed, it became clear that while the crisis over terrorist threats to kill American hostages had evaporated, with it had gone any hope of immediate movement on the hostage matter. As commentators noted, too little was still known about the Shi'ite terrorists, and the prospective roles and attitudes of Iran and Syria were still uncertain.

As for American-Israeli relations, the crisis had heightened the sense on each side that the other wasn’t listening to its needs. For the United States, Israel’s decision to seize Sheikh Obeid without consultation and the apparent disregard of the implications for American hostages, spoke volumes. To Israel, U.S. willingness to equate, even indirectly, Israel’s taking Obeid with Shi'ite holding of hostages and the lack of understanding for Israel’s concerns about its soldiers, also spoke volumes. While the crisis soon passed, the differences emphasized some of the new tensions in the relationship.

The Intifada

The decision by Yasir Arafat in December 1988 to utter the “magic” words about Israel that led the United States to start talking to the PLO was widely attributed to the impact of the intifada on that organization. Seeing the residents of the
territories taking their destiny into their own hands, the PLO leadership found itself under increasing pressure to prove its value anew to the increasingly assertive population of the territories.

Once the U.S.-PLO dialogue began, it seemed to give a shot in the arm to the intifada, which at the end of 1988 had shown signs of losing its vitality and sense of purpose. As January came in, there was a strong revival of confidence and euphoria among the residents, reflected in a new willingness to challenge Israeli forces. The violence grew and with it tougher Israeli reactions, new orders by Defense Minister Rabin allowing soldiers, under certain circumstances, to shoot plastic bullets at any Palestinian observed throwing a stone, erecting a roadblock, or burning a tire, and new criticism of Rabin's tactics.

Caught between his need to protect Israel against violence and the realization that no Israeli tactics could bring an end to the uprising, Rabin looked anew to the political arena. On January 30, Rabin indicated that he no longer demanded an end to the Palestinian uprising as a condition for peace talks with residents of the territories. Searching for ways to induce Palestinians to accept political proposals, he told his party's parliamentary faction that he was "ready to speak now, to reach agreement on the process." He said that when such an agreement was achieved, "the calm will begin because, in my opinion if they want free elections, they cannot be held in an atmosphere of violence, not only between Arabs and Jews, but between Arabs and Arabs."

Early in February, the State Department issued its annual report on human rights practices around the world. It said that Israel's response to the uprising "led to a substantial increase in human rights violations" in the territories during 1988, and that Israeli troops had caused "many avoidable deaths and injuries," that "soldiers frequently used gunfire in situations that did not present mortal danger to troops." At the same time, the survey noted that it was possible to report on conditions in the territories "by virtue of Israel's open and democratic society."

Israel reacted bitterly to the report. On February 7, Deputy Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu indicated that there was no merit to the criticism, saying that Israeli troops "maintain as best they can, apart from a few exceptions, the standards of proper conduct that no country in the world could maintain." The next day, Shamir said that Israel was "sorry about any loss of life, but there's no chance to put an end to violence without taking forceful means." The cabinet issued a statement noting that the army would continue to act as it had "to insure the peace and security of all the residents and travelers" in the territories, "and will act intensively to prevent any disturbances of law and order." And the Foreign Ministry, in a long cable to Israeli diplomats, pointed out that the State Department "did not, unfortunately, give full consideration to the actions of local extremist elements and the major dilemmas which these cause for Israel."

Soon after the report appeared, the PLO introduced a resolution at the UN deploiring Israel's treatment of Palestinians in the territories. It did so against the urging of Arab and European countries, which called for the PLO to give the Bush
On February 17, the United States vetoed the measure on the ground that it lacked balance. America's deputy representative to the UN stated that the United States had "made clear to the Government of Israel our opposition to certain Israeli practices," but said the resolution "does not take into sufficient account the context in which they occur or the excesses of the other side."

On April 5, Israel freed about 250 Arab prisoners arrested for participating in the uprising. It was widely noted that the release coincided with Shamir's critical visit to Washington, and that Washington had been asking Israel to make such a move to promote movement toward peace. Israel denied that the move was a response to U.S. requests, however, describing it as a gesture on the eve of the Muslim holiday Ramadan. Several days later, in Chicago, Shamir once again defended his government's handling of the intifada. He said that quelling the uprising "doesn't depend on the Israeli government," but the moment the violence would "stop or be reduced, then the tension will disappear."

By early May, a new phenomenon of the uprising began to receive attention: this was the killing of Palestinians by Palestinians for alleged "collaboration" with the Israeli authorities. Israeli officials made a connection between this violence and Shamir's elections proposal of April, Foreign Minister Arens telling U.S. ambassador to Israel William Brown that this could be an effort to prevent the emergence of candidates to participate in the elections.

As the weeks passed, it was widely noted that Israel was pursuing two different approaches to the Palestinians in the territories at the same time. One was Shamir's elections proposal, which was seen as a response to international clamor for concessions. The other was the imposition of harsher restrictions on Palestinian movements, for example, requiring all Gazans to obtain permits to travel to Israel to work, which was seen as an effort to cope with rising anger among Israeli Jews over Arab attacks inside Israel.

June brought another UN Security Council resolution condemning Israel's policies in the territories and with it, on June 9, a second veto by the Bush administration. Thomas Pickering, American representative to the UN, said that the resolution was "unbalanced" in its condemnation of Israel, "without any reference to any of the serious acts of violence by the other side."

The issue of deportations—which in 1988 had led to U.S. support of a Security Council resolution criticizing Israel—surfaced again late in June. On June 29, Israel deported eight Palestinians to Lebanon, accusing them of leading the uprising or being active in various arms of the PLO. The State Department denounced the expulsions, saying they were "harmful at any time and particularly right now when we are seeking international and Palestinian support for Israel's election proposals."

On July 6 and again on August 30, the Security Council passed resolutions criticizing Israeli deportations. On both occasions, the United States abstained.

Another aspect of the intifada that had generated U.S. criticism from the beginning was the closing by Israel of schools in the West Bank. On July 12, Israel
announced that the schools would reopen "gradually in the near future." Israeli radio reported that before classes resumed, Israeli officials would meet with Palestinian educators and students to "explain policy" and seek guarantees against disturbances. The move was seen as a gesture to the United States, since Secretary of State Baker had indicated in his policy address to AIPAC in May that reopening of schools was a step sought by the administration. It was also seen as an effort to keep the door open to West Bank Palestinians whom the government hoped to engage in negotiations on the elections proposal.

The UN General Assembly joined in the international criticism of Israel's conduct against the intifada on October 6. Only the United States and Israel voted against a resolution introduced by the Arab countries on behalf of the PLO. It called on Israel to halt violations of Palestinian human rights and asked UN secretary-general Javier Pérez de Cuéllar to report on the situation in the territories as soon as possible. It also asked the Security Council to consider "with urgency" measures to "provide international protection to the Palestinian civilians" in the occupied territories. The United States called the resolution "one-sided" and said it served only to "deepen divisions, harden positions and poison the atmosphere."

In November the issue of Israel's treatment of Palestinians received attention from an unusual source, the organized American Jewish community. At a news conference in Jerusalem on November 23, Seymour Reich, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, warned Israel that it must deal with charges of human-rights abuses which, he said, were the subject of great discussion in Congress and throughout the country. Reich added that he believed U.S. support for Israel was undiminished, despite some differences between the governments.

December 9 marked the second anniversary of the uprising. It was widely commented that, unlike the first year, which had brought new attention to the Palestinians and the U.S.-PLO dialogue, the second year saw no significant achievements. A kind of permanent state of war had developed, accepted as a fact of life by both Israelis and Palestinians.

U.S.-Israeli Bilateral Relations

Israel and the United States continued to benefit in 1989 from the deepening strategic and economic ties generated during the Reagan-Shultz years, despite some misgivings among Israel supporters about the different personalities in power in Washington. The one element that threatened to change the relationship was the dramatic developments taking place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

At the heart of the strategic relationship established in the '80s were two perceptions held in Washington: one, that Israel was a strategic asset in the ongoing struggle between the Americans and the Soviets, and two, that the United States could maintain close relations with Israel without weakening its position in the Arab world. As events developed in 1989, with the cold war winding down, questions were
being raised about the long-term value of maintaining strategic relations, particularly if the Bush administration was more concerned about the impact of those relations on the Arab world than the Reagan team had been.

As for Israel's role in helping to maintain regional stability in the Middle East, a key question was whether the administration would obtain cooperation of Arab partners as well, which would result in a surge of U.S. arms sales to the Arabs. If such cooperation were not obtained, Israel's place would probably remain preeminent or even grow. U.S. security interests, in this view, would begin to depend increasingly on a Mediterranean naval presence, and non-European sites would be sought for the possible redeployment and storage of U.S. equipment withdrawn from Western Europe. During 1989, however, no major changes were evident in this regard. Israeli-U.S. strategic cooperation remained intact.

Early in the year, Israel Aircraft Industries announced that it had signed an agreement with Lockheed Corporation to work together on the Israeli-designed Arrow missile. The Arrow was designed to intercept incoming tactical ballistic missiles and would be tested as a possible component of the U.S. "Star Wars" antimissile program. The Defense Department had awarded Israel Aircraft a $158-million contract in July 1988 to develop the Arrow, with 20 percent of the funding provided by the Israeli Defense Ministry. It was projected that the first demonstration test of the missile would take place some time in 1990. On March 1, the administration stated its resolve to continue the process, when Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Edward Gnehm told the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on the Middle East that Defense's "cooperative programs with the Israeli military reflect the U.S. commitment to Israel," and that they "will be continued and built upon in the coming years."

Meanwhile, the various U.S.-Israeli strategic and political committees established during the Shultz years continued to meet. The Joint Political-Military Group met twice, in Israel and Omaha, Nebraska, and it was reported that major progress took place in the key areas of equipment prepositioning, joint exercises, and intelligence cooperation. Particularly significant was an agreement reached in October for the United States to stockpile $100-million worth of military supplies in Israel, available both for future U.S. use or by Israel during crisis situations.

The Joint Economic Development Group, chaired on the American side by Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs Robert McCormack, met as well. Trade volume between the two countries reached a high, following Israel's elimination, in January, of tariffs on many U.S. products, which put the United States on an equal competitive footing in this respect with the European Community.

U.S. military activity in Israel picked up during the year. In the spring, U.S. Marine Corps exercises took place in Israel, growing from the small units of the previous year to battalion-size training maneuvers. There was as well a continued increase in the number of port visits by U.S. Navy ships to Haifa for repairs and shore leave.

Meanwhile, the U.S. aid package to Israel was maintained at $3 billion in grants,
with congressional support for the bill even higher than in past years. In efforts to maintain Israel’s qualitative military edge, the foreign-aid bill mandated presidential reports on the Middle East arms balance and prohibited the transfer of such weapons as the Stinger missile to certain Persian Gulf countries. On the other hand, the United States did conclude a $3.1-billion sale of advanced M-1A2 tanks to Saudi Arabia, with talk abounding of a multimillion-dollar sale of new fighter aircraft to the Saudis in 1990 or 1991.

**Soviet Jewry**

By year’s end, 62,000 Soviet Jews had emigrated to Israel, reflecting a liberalized Soviet emigration policy and concerns among Soviet Jews of emerging popular anti-Semitism and economic chaos. The prospect of hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews going to Israel in future years inevitably raised the subject of potential U.S. financial assistance to an increasingly burdened State of Israel.

The *New York Times* reported on October 1 that a week earlier Israeli finance minister Shimon Peres had asked Washington for $400 million in loan guarantees to finance the construction of housing for Soviet Jewish arrivals. Such guarantees, under a U.S. program to finance housing projects in developing countries, would allow Israel to borrow money from commercial banks at low interest rates. Israeli officials indicated that without the loan guarantees it could not afford to borrow the money from commercial banks, because the “most favorable conditions we could expect would make the program unfeasible.”

Politics immediately intruded on the issue. When Peres, in Washington, met with members of the House Appropriations subcommittee responsible for foreign aid to discuss the matter, he acknowledged that the current Israeli government would probably build some of the housing on the West Bank. Other Israeli officials indicated that inevitably, some of the Soviet immigrants would want to live in the West Bank, and the notion that the government would bar them was difficult to imagine. The following day, Marlin Fitzwater, speaking on behalf of the administration, said that the Americans “want to be helpful in any way we can,” but added that “we remain opposed to settlements in the West Bank, and also opposed to the use of U.S. aid for that purpose.” Secretary Baker said that although the administration opposed additional settlements, “we are very sympathetic” to Israel’s desire to accept Soviet Jews and to provide adequate housing for them.

Objections also were raised in Congress about how Israel would use such guarantees. Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D., Vt.), chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee responsible for foreign aid, said that “Israel has a legitimate concern on housing for immigrants” from the Soviet Union, but added that we “will not use American foreign aid for settlements in the West Bank.” An unnamed American aid official suggested that even if Israel agreed to use loan guarantees to finance construction within Israel’s pre-1967 borders, that could free other funds to build housing in the West Bank.
The brouhaha over this issue was at least in part a product of the alarm expressed by Arab representatives at the possibility that significant numbers of Soviet Jews would settle in the territories. Clovis Maksoud, the Arab League representative to the UN, called such a migration a "creeping annexation" of the territories that would undermine prospects for peace.

Israel–South Africa Relations

Toward year's end, another long-standing issue with potential to disrupt U.S.-Israeli amity surfaced once again, that of Israel's relations with South Africa. On October 25, NBC reported that Israel and South Africa had test-fired a nuclear missile on July 5 that flew 900 miles from a site in South Africa to the Prince Edward Islands in the Indian Ocean, and that Israel had provided expertise in return for South African enriched uranium. Prime Minister Shamir immediately issued a blanket denial of such cooperation; the Israeli Defense Ministry said merely that "the defense establishment strictly abides by the inner Cabinet decision of March 18, 1987, whereby no new contracts will be signed between Israel and South Africa in the defense realm." Although the ministry declined to discuss continuing work on contracts that existed before 1987, it did say that there was "no truth to the report carried by the NBC network in the United States on so-called relations with South Africa in the nuclear realm."

On October 26, the White House announced that it was "looking into the facts and issues" raised by the report, but "we don't have any conclusions at this point." On October 28, President Bush, in Costa Rica, said that if there was Israeli-South African collaboration on a nuclear missile, such an arrangement would "complicate" relations with Israel. The president said that the transfer of such technology is "taboo" and "we're not going to have that." A day earlier, however, the State Department had said that the United States had "no indication" that Israel had transferred any U.S. missile technology to South Africa, but refused to comment on reports that the two had collaborated to develop and test an intermediate-range missile. Several days later, before leaving for Australia, Secretary of State Baker said that news reports of Israel's military cooperation with South Africa had been "overblown," adding that they would not undermine U.S.-Israeli relations.

On November 11, the Jerusalem Post reported that the CIA had told congressmen and senators behind closed doors that Israel had indeed cooperated extensively with South Africa on ballistic missiles, but could not confirm that Israel was directly involved with South Africa in the area of nuclear weapons. According to the report, Washington had no evidence that Israel had transferred any American military technology or military equipment to South Africa in violation of Israel's commitment to the United States.

Several days later, on November 16, when Shamir was in Washington for his controversial meeting with Bush, he met with congressional leaders to discuss Israeli-South African relations. The group consisted of black and Jewish members
of Congress. Shamir reportedly emphasized during the meeting that Israel was merely honoring pre-1987 contracts with South Africa.

On November 20, 11 influential members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, including some of Israel's best friends, issued a public appeal to Shamir to suspend all remaining Israeli military ties with South Africa immediately. The two-page statement was signed by Dante Fascell (D., Fla.), Lee Hamilton (D., Ind.), four Jewish members—Larry Smith (D., Fla.), Stephen Solarz (D., N.Y.), Mel Levine (D., Calif.), and Howard Wolpe (D., Mich.)—and black members Ron Dellums (D., Calif.), Bill Gray (D., Pa.), Charles Rangel (D., N.Y.), and Alan Wheat (D., Miss.). The statement referred to Shamir's denial of any nuclear cooperation with, or transfer of any U.S. military technology to, South Africa, and said that those denials had been "substantiated by the State Department." But the congressmen made clear that they wanted Israel to terminate its pre-1987 military contracts with South Africa as well. The statement urged the United States to consider new ways to help Israel make up any security-related shortfalls resulting from the complete termination of military ties with South Africa. In releasing the statement, the congressmen said that Shamir had "pledged to review the situation and welcomed the initiation of a dialogue that will seek to address the remaining concerns."

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