

THESIS

THE CHALLENGES OF TRANSNATIONAL PALESTINIAN
TERRORISM TO THE ERA OF DÉTENTE: 1970-1973

Submitted by

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY NICHOLAS EARL SWAILS ENTITLED THE CHALLENGES OF TRANSNATIONAL PALESTINIAN TERRORISM TO THE ERA OF DÉTENTE: 1960-1973 BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

THE CHALLENGES OF TRANSNATIONAL PALESTINIAN TERRORISM TO THE ERA OF DÉTENTE: 1960-1973

United States Diplomatic historians have understood Henry Kissinger as the twentieth century's grandest statesmen. His realism and free reign over U.S. foreign policy during two presidential administrations was drawn from his life experiences and historical understandings of the limits of state power in the postcolonial world. He is understood to be an intellectual who drew his realist worldview from the history of nineteenth century concert of Europe and the grand statesmen of the period. His ability to draw lessons from history allowed him to achieve some of the most important foreign policy victories of the twentieth century. His realism recognized the limits of U.S. power in the Vietnam era, but he fell back on the nineteenth century model of interstate diplomacy as the way forward. However, his realist worldview drew exactly the wrong lessons from history in terms of his ability to address the new problem of Palestinian terrorism. In the postcolonial world, and the Middle East in particular, non-state actors such as the PLO and its militant factions became some of the most important elements in Cold War era diplomacy.

The transnational terrorism by Palestinian nationalist organizations in the early-1970s (beginning in September of 1970 and ending in March 1973) challenged the Nixon

administration's, and most importantly, Henry Kissinger's pursuit of détente in the region, which was based on détente between the U.S. and Soviet Union. Détente was sought for three reasons: in order to maintain the U.S.-Soviet balance of power in the region, to restrict Soviet influence on radical Arab governments, and to ensure important U.S.-Soviet cooperation in a peace process as outlined in "the Rogers Plan." This thesis argues that President Nixon and Kissinger's response to the terrorism proved unsuccessful because it was rooted in Kissinger's realism of interstate diplomacy and the limits of state power. Understanding how the administration did not (and could not) understand the transnational nature of Palestinian terrorism provides a window into how Kissinger's life experiences and historical knowledge shaped his realist worldview during the era of détente.

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PERSONS

Arafat, Yasser, Chairman, Central Committee, Palestinian Liberation Organization
Brewer, William D., Country Director, Office of Arabian Peninsular Affairs, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Department of State, until May 1970; Ambassador to Mauritius from June 29, 1970
Brezhnev, Leonid, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
Bundy, McGeorge, Dean of Arts and Sciences at Harvard (1954-1961); President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs
Bush, George H. W., Representative (R-Texas) until January 1971; U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, February 1971-January 1973
Dayan, Moshe, Defense Minister of Israel
De Gaulle, Charles, President of France
Dobrynin, Anatoly F., Soviet Ambassador to the United States
Eban, Abba, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel
Ehrlichman, John D., Counsel to the President, January-November 1969; thereafter Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs
Elliot, William, Professor of Government, Harvard University
Eshkol, Levi, Israeli Prime Minister until 1969
Flanigan, Peter, Assistant to the President
Gromyko, Andrei A., Soviet Foreign Minister
Habash, George, Secretary General, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
Haig, Alexander M., Jr., Senior Military Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, January 1969-June 1970; Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, June 1970-January 1973
Haldeman, H. R., Assistant to the President
Helms, Richard M., Director of Central Intelligence
Hussein ibn Talal, King of Jordan
Jarring, Gunar, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General to the Middle East from November 1967
Khalid, Leila, Hijacker
Kissinger, Henry A., the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs from January 1969 to October 1973; Secretary of State from October 1973 to January 1977
Kleindienst, Richard G., Deputy Attorney General, January 1969-June 1972; thereafter Attorney General
Kosygin, Alexei N., Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union
Kraemer, Fritz Gustav Anton, mentor of Henry Kissinger
Laird, Melvin R., Secretary of Defense
Lodge, Henry Cabot, II, Head of the U.S. Delegation to the Paris Peace Talks on Vietnam, January 20-November 20, 1969
Meir, Golda, Prime Minister of Israel from March 1969
Nasser, Gamal Abdel, President of the United Arab Republic

Nimeiry, Jaafar (Gaafar Muhammad an-Nimeiry), President of Sudan from 1969 to 1985
Nixon, Richard M., President of the United States
Qadhafi, Muammar, President of the Revolutionary Command Council of Libya from January 1970
Rabin, Yitzhak, Israeli Ambassador to the United States
Rockefeller, Nelson A., Governor of New York
Rogers, William P., Secretary of State
Saunders, Harold H., Member, National Security Council Staff, 1969–1971
Sonnenfeldt, Helmut, Member of the National Security Council Operations Staff (Europe) from January 1969
Thant, U, Secretary-General of the United Nations
Toon, Malcom, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs
Volpe, John A., Secretary of Transportation, January 1969–February 1973
Waldheim, Kurt, United Nations Secretary–General from 1972
Wright, W. Marshall, member of the National Security Council Staff, June 1970-April 1972; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations, April-December 1972
Ziegler, Ronald, White House Press Secretary

ABBREVIATIONS

BSO, Black September Organization
CCCT, Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism
CIA, Central Intelligence Agency
DCM, Deputy Chief of Mission
DIA, Defense Intelligence Agency
DOD, Department of Defense
FAA, Federal Aviation Administration
FBI, Federal Bureau of Investigation
ICAO, International Civil Aviation Organization
ICRC, International Committee of the Red Cross
NEA, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Department of State
NSC, National Security Council
PFLP, Peoples' Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PLO, Palestine Liberation Organization
UN, United Nations
WSAG, Washington Special Actions Group

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INTRODUCTION: “America’s Introduction to Global Terrorism”¹

The late 1960s and early 1970s was an era of détente—a time when President Nixon and Henry Kissinger sought to bring a realist approach to the Cold War, Vietnam, and relations with China. During this era of détente four Palestinian terrorist events beginning in the Summer of 1970 and ending in late-spring 1973 revealed a mismatch between Henry Kissinger’s “great power” approach borrowed from nineteenth century Europe, and the realities of a postcolonial world. These four events: 1) the Labor Day weekend hijackings of four airliners by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP); 2) the ‘Black September’ crisis in Jordan under the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO); 3) the Munich Massacre in May 1972 by the Black September Organization (BSO); 4) the Khartoum Incident in March 1973 by the BSO posed challenges to Kissinger’s “great power” approach and the Nixon administration’s “realist” foreign policies.

The challenge these four events placed on Kissinger and the administration was that it challenged their pursuit of détente in the Middle East. These Palestinian nationalist organizations used terrorism and guerilla warfare as their means to disrupt the Middle East peace process, to articulate their agenda of bringing the voice of the Palestinian people to the world’s attention, and to free the Palestinian hostages held by

¹ “4 Jets Hijacked; One, a 747, Is Blown Up,” *New York Times*, 7 September 1970, 1.

Israel, the U.S. and other states.² By attacking other nations across many boundaries with multi-national forces the Palestinian organizations and their terrorism became transnational. The transnational nature of the organizations and their terrorism challenged the realist approach of the administration because it would undermine the three reasons the administration pursued détente in the region: 1) in order to maintain the U.S.-Soviet balance of power in the region; 2) to restrict Soviet influence on radical Arab governments; and 3) to ensure important U.S.-Soviet cooperation in a peace process as outlined in the Rogers Plan. In addition, the transnational nature of these events challenged the interstate diplomacy which Kissinger and détente relied on in the region.

Before this thesis can address the administration's struggle to understand the transnational nature of the Palestinian terrorism it is important to define the analytical lens this thesis will use. A starting point for our discussion of transnational history we will use Thomas Bender's understanding of transnational as "various types of interactions across national boundaries" by various peoples, institutions, goods, and capital.³ Akira Iriye argues that transnational history is characterized by a "global interconnectedness" that involves nations who interact "cross-national[y]" with other groups, institutions, nations, etc.⁴ Ian Tyrrell, David Thelen, and other historians argue that transnational history focuses on the relationships between the nation and "factors beyond the nation."⁵

² Mohammed K Shadid, *The United States and the Palestinians* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 120; for a discussion of "the Rogers Plan" see; Steven L Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

³ Thomas Bender, *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Thomas Bender, "Wholes and Parts: The Need for Synthesis in American History," *The Journal of American History* 73, no. 1 (June 1986): 120-136.

⁴ Akira Iriye, "The Transnational Turn.," *Diplomatic History* 31, no. 3 (June 2007): 375.

⁵ For a broader discussion of what is transnational history see; "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History.," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (December 2006): 1440-1464; Ian Tyrrell, "American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History," *The American Historical Review* 96, no. 4 (October 1991): 1031-1055; Ian Tyrrell, "Making Nations/Making States: American Historians in the Context of

These interconnected relationships can be economic, cultural, social, political, or for the purpose of this thesis involve relationships between terrorist organizations without a formal state that were supported by other liberation movements and which chose to use guerilla warfare and terrorism against foreign and domestic targets.

Matthew Connelly's *A Diplomatic Revolution* is an example of how transnational history can be used as an analytical tool to understand transnational liberation movements. Connelly argues that the Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) in Algeria was very successful in internationalizing its fight for independence with the French in such a way that it not only involved Algeria and France, but also other nations and international institutions.⁶ The FLN used their fight to gain support from various nations, peoples, and institutions across many national boundaries. The FLN worked remarkably well at developing "bureaus" and "delegations" in "Cairo , Damascus, Tunis, Beirut, Baghdad, Karachi, Djakarta, and New York" to promote talks and negotiations which made possible the maneuvering the FLN hoped for in the United Nations General Assembly.⁷ It is important to point out that while the FLN used the U.N. General Assembly during the late-1960s and into the 1970s, the PLO and PFLP did not use the body in 1970. The transnational history and nature of the FLN is important to this chapter because it illustrates the FLN's success in internationalizing its nationalist movement outside the borders of Algeria and involved not just the French colonial

Empire," *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (December 1999): 1015-1044; David Thelen, "Of Audiences, Borderlands, and Comparisons: Toward the Internationalization of American History," *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 2 (September 1992): 432-462; David Thelen, "The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History," *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (December 1999): 965-975; Michael McGerr, "The Price Of The "New Transnational History".," *American Historical Review* 96, no. 4 (October 1991): 1056.

⁶ Matthew James Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 110.

government, but the U.S., Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia. Also, Connelly and others argue, Yasser Arafat witnessed the celebration of the FLN in Algiers and later modeled Fatah—the militant faction of the PLO—on the FLN.⁸

Understanding transnational history as the “global interconnectedness” between the nation and factors outside the nation and taking into account Connelly’s transnational history of the FLN allows this thesis to show how the Palestinian organizations can be understood as non-state actors that initiated terrorist attacks across national boundaries which focused on domestic or foreign targets. These attacks triggered relationships between the Palestinian organizations, the international system, and the U.S., Soviet Union, Israel, and Jordan.⁹ The use of a transnational perspective allows the argument that the transnational Palestinian terrorism of the early-1970s challenged the Nixon administration’s, and most importantly, Henry Kissinger’s pursuit of détente in the region. Understanding how the administration did not (and could not) understand the transnational nature of Palestinian terrorism provides a window into how Kissinger’s life experiences and intellectual pursuits shaped his realism during the era of détente.

Chapter I of the thesis will provide the biographical and historical background of Henry Kissinger. The primary goal of the chapter is to show how Kissinger’s experiences as a Jewish-American immigrant shaped his realist worldview through his family’s experiences with violence and intolerance in interwar Europe and his historical knowledge of interstate diplomacy and the limits of state power. The chapter will also

⁸ Ibid., 279-280, see also, Alan Hart, *Arafat: A Political Biography*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 7 and 10; Barry Rubin, *Revolution Until Victory? The Politics and History of the PLO*. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994), 10-104, and 112-113.

⁹ For a brief discussion of transnational terrorism in the international system see: Quan Li, “Does Democracy Promote or Reduce Transnational Terrorist Incidents?,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 2 (April 2005): 278-297.; and _____, “Economic Globalization and Transnational Terrorism,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 2 (April 2004): 230-258.

address how his academic work shaped his realism and opened up doors of opportunity in Washington, D.C. Lastly, the chapter will address how his virtual free reign to shape the Nixon administration's foreign policy apparatus allowed him, through the NSC and the secret U.S.-Soviet back channel, to implement his realist foreign policy of détente.

Chapter II will cover two topics: the transformation of Palestinian nationalism from the rise of Zionism in the nineteenth century to 1970s and the four terrorist events of the early-1970s. This chapter will emphasize the change over time of Palestinian nationalism from local skirmishes and a reliance on other Arab states to a distinctive Palestinian movement based on armed struggle after the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The first section will also address the importance of the organizations' reliance on other Third World liberation movements and the adoption of their rhetoric and tactics to their nationalist struggles. The second part will provide the story of the four events that challenged Kissinger's pursuit of détente.

The goal of the description of the four events is to provide the day-by-day accounts of how the Nixon administration made decisions and how those decisions shaped the diplomacy between the U.S., Soviet, Israeli, Jordanian, and Sudanese governments. Also, how the administration's reliance on the State Department as the principle actor in all of the indirect multilateral negotiations proved unsuccessful because it did not negotiate directly with the Palestinian organizations. Most importantly, the description will demonstrate how Kissinger's use of interstate diplomacy—a lesson that he drew from nineteenth century Europe—proved how incapable his realist worldview was for understanding the transnational nature of the Palestinian organizations.

CHAPTER I: *Henry Kissinger: European Realism in U.S. Foreign Policy*

Our deepest challenge will be to evoke the creativity of a pluralistic world, to base order on political multipolarity even though overwhelming military strength will remain with the two superpowers. ~Henry Kissinger¹⁰

The test of a statesman is his ability to recognize the real relationship of forces and to make this knowledge serve his ends. ~Henry Kissinger¹¹

Introduction

Henry A. Kissinger, according to Jeremi Suri, was like “No twentieth-century figure [that] approached foreign policy with a more reasoned, articulate, and informed perspective on international relations.”¹² He was a Jewish immigrant who benefited from his family’s experience with violence and intolerance in Nazi Germany and from the opportunities that were available to him after his immigration to America (i.e., military service, education, and political service) each of which shaped his personal and intellectual worldviews. These experiences shaped his realist worldview that interstate diplomacy, cultural exchanges, military force, and most importantly, that strong leaders could shape Cold War era geopolitics. The influence of Kissinger on Cold War era diplomacy has been the subject of many articles and books by all kinds of academics and journalists. As the man who produced numerous academic papers, taught the best and

¹⁰ Henry Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy* (New York: Norton, 1974), 58; "Essay by Henry Kissinger," United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969-1972*, Department of State publication (Washington, DC: Dept. of State, 2003), 4[hereafter FRUS].

¹¹ Quote by Kissinger in *A World Restored*, cited in; Jussi M Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 8.

¹² Jeremi Suri, “Henry Kissinger, the American Dream, and the Jewish Immigrant Experience in the Cold War.,” *Diplomatic History* 32, no. 5 (November 2008): 730.

brightest at Harvard, and served as a presidential advisor to Presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford (1968-1977) his legacy is of utmost importance to diplomatic historians for understanding how diplomacy was shaped during the 1970s.

U.S. diplomatic historians have studied Kissinger's influence on and implementation of the "Nixon Doctrine," triangular diplomacy, linkage, shuttle diplomacy, and détente as he served as the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (1968-1973) and as Secretary of State (1973-1977) during his tenure. Each has traced the influences of Kissinger's emigration from Germany, his time in the U.S. Army during World War II, his education and teaching at Harvard, and his government service. Some historians have also placed an importance on Kissinger's Jewish identity and his experiences with anti-Semitism both in Germany and America as influences on his diplomacy. This chapter seeks to address all of this on a much smaller scale using many of the same sources as the historians, but with the added benefit of newly available sources from the Office of the Historian's *Foreign Relations of the United States* series. This is not to say that this chapter is another biography of the twentieth century's most well known diplomat, but a more distilled window into how Kissinger's life experiences shaped his realist worldview.

The primary goal of this chapter is to outline the history of Kissinger's life from his family's immigration from Germany in 1938, the beginning of his military career in 1943, his time as a student and professor at Harvard, and his experiences as an ad-hoc advisor to the Kennedy administration, and his appointment as NSC advisor by Nixon in 1968. This narrative of Kissinger's experiences is important on many levels because it will address how his early-life in Europe during the collapse of the interwar balance

between states shaped his academic work that traced the history of Europe's state system. Kissinger drew general lessons about the limits of state power and interstate diplomacy from his experiences in interwar Europe. After his life and intellectual origins are examined the chapter will trace the organization and management of the Nixon foreign policy apparatus, the development of the fabled "back channel," and a conclusion of how everything covered shaped the President and Kissinger's pursuit of détente in the Middle East. By the end of the chapter it will become clear that Kissinger drew the wrong lessons from history—the limits of state power and the benefits of interstate diplomacy—which shaped his realism and pursuit of détente in a region faced with the new menace of stateless Palestinian militancy.

From Heinz to Henry: The Intellectual Evolution of Kissinger's Realist Worldview

Henry Kissinger was born Heinz Alfred Kissinger in 1923 in Fürth, Germany to Jewish-Bavarian parents, Paula and Louis Kissinger. His father, Louis, lost his job as a respected school teacher in 1933 when the Nazis outlawed Jewish school teachers. His father would take a job in a Jewish vocational school, but he would lose his job three years later. In 1935, Jewish children were prohibited from attending public schools, so Kissinger attended a local Jewish school until the family finally left Fürth in 1938 because of their fear of extermination.¹³ The family first arrived in London and stayed for two weeks then continued on to New York City.¹⁴ Once they arrived in New York's Manhattan Heights neighborhood Kissinger changed his name to from Heinz to Henry and enrolled in George Washington High School. After graduation Kissinger enrolled in

¹³ Jeremi Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007); Suri, "Henry Kissinger, the American Dream, and the Jewish Immigrant Experience in the Cold War.," 720.

¹⁴ Walter Isaacson, *Kissinger a Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 17-32.

City College of New York until he enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1943.¹⁵ While at Camp Claiborne in South Carolina, Kissinger witnessed a lively army private, Fritz Gustav Anton Kraemer, give a lecture to the new privates about why the U.S. was a war—this experience was the catalyst for a long mentor relationship that would shape Kissinger’s army career and future aspects of his life. Kraemer was a Prussian born immigrant who was educated at the London School of Economics, and chose to enlist in the U.S. Army and soon found himself working for General Alexander Bolling of the 84th Infantry Division at Camp Claiborne.¹⁶ Kissinger was so impressed by the arrogance and intelligence of Kraemer that we wrote him a letter offering his support.

Kraemer would become so impressed with Kissinger’s intellect—even though Kissinger only completed a year of post-secondary education before enlistment—that he removed him from the infantry and placed him as General Bolling’s personal translator. Kraemer was also responsible for Kissinger’s other appointments: as an administrator of the occupation of captured towns in Germany, a position in the Counter-Intelligence Corps, a position as an instructor of majors and generals on military intelligence.¹⁷ By 1947, Kissinger was no longer in the army and was ready to return to the City College of New York when Kraemer said, ‘A gentleman does not go to a local New York School,’ so Kissinger enrolled in Harvard as a sophomore undergraduate student in 1947.¹⁸

Kissinger’s arrival at Harvard coincided with a period when the U.S. government wanted to promote area studies programs that focused on the education of immigrants

¹⁵ Robert D. Schulzinger, *Henry Kissinger Doctor of Diplomacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 9.

¹⁶ Jussi M Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4.

¹⁷ Isaacson, *Kissinger a Biography*, 39-58.

¹⁸ Schulzinger, *Henry Kissinger Doctor of Diplomacy*, 10.

who were traditionally excluded from public service as “specially qualified personnel.” The government saw the increased numbers of Central European immigrants as an essential part of the Cold War because of their language abilities and cultural understandings. Kissinger like many other returning G.I.s benefited from the U.S. government’s G.I. Bill that encouraged universities, like Harvard, to accept a large number of Jewish war veterans because of their skills and the fact that the government paid for their tuition.¹⁹

While at Harvard Kissinger lived in the separate Jewish dorms (“Jewish ghetto at postwar Harvard”) where he focused on his studies.²⁰ Kissinger met his second mentor Professor of Government, William Elliot, who at their first meeting saw Kissinger as another “tutee” to supervise. Elliot made Kissinger read twenty-five books on Immanuel Kant and write a paper comparing the critiques of practical reasoning. Within three months, Kissinger had completed the paper which impressed Elliot, who later wrote to the Phi Beta Kappa selection committee, “I have not had any students in the past five years, even among the summa cum laude group, who have had the depth and philosophical insight shown by Mr. Kissinger.”²¹ Their relationship shaped the rest of Kissinger’s undergraduate time at Harvard, as he assisted Elliot in grading papers and research.

Kissinger’s time at Harvard was spent in passionate academic study where he used his political experiences from his military service to develop the notion that to combat violence and extremism a state must have strong leaders and avoid

¹⁹ Suri, “Henry Kissinger, the American Dream, and the Jewish Immigrant Experience in the Cold War.,” 721-726.

²⁰ Ibid., 723.

²¹ Isaacson, *Kissinger a Biography*, 62-63.

appeasement.²² He completed his massive senior thesis (nearly 400 pages) “The Meaning of History: Reflections on Spengler, Toynbee, and Kant”—his thesis was so massive that the Government Department would later revise the rules regarding the length of senior theses. His thesis was not just on the meaning of history, but also personal reflection on life and death, a man’s responsibilities, and the power of freedom.²³ Although the thesis was full of flaws and quotations from his three main characters it earned Kissinger summa cum laude in 1950.

After graduation Kissinger considered his options between finding a job, or continuing his education when Elliot convinced him to apply to the graduate program in the Government Department. In 1951, under the encouragement of Elliot, Kissinger became the executive director of the Harvard International Seminar, which brought the best and brightest minds from abroad to the university for the summer. It was during the six week sessions that Kissinger shaped the minds of powerful and important future statesmen, and established valuable political contacts for the future.²⁴ During the seminar’s seventeen-year history, 1952-1969, he met with hundreds of important domestic and foreign individuals who would be shaped by Kissinger’s lectures on history and politics. The most important factor was through Kissinger’s interactions with these individuals he was able to develop his notions of the role of the statesmen and the role and image of America in the international system.²⁵ Kissinger’s interactions with the seminar participants shaped his Cold War cosmopolitanism where he found that he, like

²² Suri, “Henry Kissinger, the American Dream, and the Jewish Immigrant Experience in the Cold War.,” 723.

²³ Stephen Richards Graubard, *Kissinger: Portrait of a Mind* (New York,: Norton, 1974), 5-9; Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*, 29-31.

²⁴ Isaacson, *Kissinger a Biography*, 70; Schulzinger, *Henry Kissinger Doctor of Diplomacy*, 11; Robert Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger Partners in Power* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), 43-44.

²⁵ Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger Partners in Power*, 44-45.

other educated immigrants, occupied a place between America and other parts of the world where they could become influential in policy making. He saw himself as the figure who could construct “spiritual links” between individuals and their societies by affirming the importance of American exceptionalism. By doing so he could act as the “spiritual link” between the young foreign policy minds of the seminar and the U.S. This link and cross-cultural exchange was what Kissinger saw as the correct diplomacy that America should pursue against violence and extremism.²⁶

Because of Kissinger’s experiences with the failure of interstate diplomacy and the limits of state power during the interwar period he chose to write his dissertation, “A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh, and the Problems of Peace, 1812-1822,” on a topic which addressed the history of nineteenth century conservative diplomacy. His dissertation focused on the Concert of Europe, a topic that was not typical of the department, when students tended to focus on post-WWII international relations.²⁷ The dissertation was a contemporary parallel to Napoleon’s challenge to the stability of early-nineteenth century Europe, in which the conservatism of Metternich and Castlereagh restored peace and the balance of power to Europe, through interstate diplomacy and *realpolitik*—politics and diplomacy rather than ideology.²⁸ The *realpolitik* of Metternich and Castlereagh reflected the “realism” of Kissinger himself, the conservative diplomat who understood the limits of state power and the fragility of the European balance of power.²⁹ Kissinger also saw the moral aspects of contemporary American foreign policy

²⁶ Suri, “Henry Kissinger, the American Dream, and the Jewish Immigrant Experience in the Cold War.,” 724-725; Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*, 124.

²⁷ Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*, 7.

²⁸ Isaacson, *Kissinger a Biography*, 74-77; Graubard, *Kissinger*, 18-59; Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*, 7; Schulzinger, *Henry Kissinger Doctor of Diplomacy*, 10-12.

²⁹ Schulzinger, *Henry Kissinger Doctor of Diplomacy*, 11.

as the problem and argued that only through the replication of nineteenth century conservative diplomatic processes could a balance of power be established in the international system between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

After the completion of his Ph.D., Kissinger and Elliot expected Harvard to offer Kissinger an assistant professor position, but Kissinger's intellectual views did not match with some of the senior faculty.³⁰ Kissinger debated between an academic future, or a future in diplomacy when the editor of *Foreign Affairs*, Hamilton Fish Armstrong, offered Kissinger the managing editor position in 1954, but it fell through. In 1955, Kissinger became the discussion leader of the New York Council on Foreign Relations' study group on the implications of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's call for a strategy of "massive retaliatory power" against the Soviet Union. This three year appointment led to the publication of his second book *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*—his first was his dissertation published in 1957. The book chided Dulles's call for nuclear weapons as a means to handle the Soviets and insisted that only a direct foreign policy could overcome the naiveté of American policy makers. The book contained Kissinger's realist worldview that massive retaliation was only a short-term solution because the threat of nuclear war did not address the dilemmas that a growing nuclear arsenal placed on the U.S. government's validation of that position. The book earned Kissinger massive political and public acclaim as it became a best-seller.³¹

Kissinger's new celebrity earned him an instructor position at Harvard with the chance of a tenure review in two years. During this period, *Foreign Affairs* published ten pieces by Kissinger on diplomacy, strategy, the organization of American diplomacy,

³⁰ Isaacson, *Kissinger a Biography*, 46.

³¹ Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger Partners in Power*, 48-49; Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*, 8-9; Isaacson, *Kissinger a Biography*, 82-90; Schulzinger, *Henry Kissinger Doctor of Diplomacy*, 12-13.

weapons, and European allies. These successes earned him the patronage of Nelson Rockefeller, whom he had met at a conference in 1955. In 1956, Kissinger was asked to head-up a Special Studies Project sponsored by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund to edit a series of policy proposals that would become the foundation of Nelson Rockefeller's 1960 Republican Presidential campaign.³² Richard M. Nixon's successful bid for the Republican nomination over Rockefeller in 1960 and Nixon's defeat by Kennedy effectively removed Kissinger from any chance of a foreign policy position at that time.³³

While Kissinger served Rockefeller in his bid for the party's nomination, he also served as an ad-hoc advisor on foreign policy for the Democratic Party. After Kennedy's victory, McGeorge Bundy—Dean of Arts and Sciences at Harvard (1954-1961)—became the National Security Advisor and ask Kissinger (one of the “specially qualified”) to serve as his personal advisor.³⁴ Kissinger did not work well with Bundy, especially after Kissinger complained about the Kennedy administration's handling of the Berlin Crisis in the summer of 1961 and the UAR's acceptance of arms from the Soviets. The State Department and Bundy saw Kissinger's complaints and public statements as a burden to the department, so Bundy let Kissinger's advisory role lapse in 1962.³⁵

Kissinger resumed his intellectual pursuits back at Harvard where he revisited the question of massive retaliation in *The Necessity of Choice* (1961) through his support of “flexible response” (the policy advocated by the Kennedy administration) because the U.S. had to recognize the drawbacks of the use of massive retaliation and the

³² Schulzinger, *Henry Kissinger Doctor of Diplomacy*, 14.

³³ Isaacson, *Kissinger a Biography*, 53.

³⁴ Suri, “Henry Kissinger, the American Dream, and the Jewish Immigrant Experience in the Cold War.,” 722.

³⁵ Schulzinger, *Henry Kissinger Doctor of Diplomacy*, 14; Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger Partners in Power*, 54-56.

government's willingness to use the nuclear arsenal. Kissinger argued that after the Korean War it became evident that the U.S. should respond to a Soviet threat with local forces, while at other times the U.S. should send advisors and trainers to help suppress domestic threats. Lastly, the U.S. had to be prepared for the possible use of nuclear weapons.³⁶ Ultimately, Kissinger argued that the U.S. should somehow find a way to demonstrate leadership in the international system other than the use of a nuclear arsenal—a belief that was common beyond the realm of realist thinkers like Kissinger.³⁷ The strategy of flexible response and the role of the U.S. as a leader was in response to the fact that Europe was faced with decolonization, which meant that military intervention was no longer viable because of the increased numbers of independent states which looked for the support of the West or the Soviet Union.³⁸

During the remaining years of the Kennedy-Johnson administrations, Kissinger did not make his way into the Washington policy circles directly, but sent his advice in letters on numerous occasions. Kissinger did not support the administrations' use of economic aid to combat the communist threat.³⁹ He emphasized the importance of working within the alliances of Western powers against the Soviets, especially after French President Charles de Gaulle removed French military forces from NATO and expelled NATO's headquarters from Paris.⁴⁰ In a response to this the Council of Foreign Relations, with the help of a large grant from the Ford Foundation, developed a study group of "Atlantic firsters" to assess the relationships between Washington and the allies. Kissinger joined the cadre of realist academics and produced his own volume *The*

³⁶ Schulzinger, *Henry Kissinger Doctor of Diplomacy*, 14-15.

³⁷ Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*, 11.

³⁸ Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy*, 9-50.

³⁹ Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*, 14.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

Trouble Partnership: a Reappraisal of the Atlantic Alliance (1966). Kissinger advocated for a consensus among the alliance in order to promote a unified front against the Soviets. This did not mean that the U.S. should step out of the way and allow the consensus to take over, but rather to use the consensus to support the unilateralism of the U.S.⁴¹ This unilateralism developed into Kissinger's pursuit of détente during the Nixon administration.

Kissinger returned to government in 1965 when the Lyndon B. Johnson administration began a bombing campaign in Vietnam. U.S. ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge asked Kissinger to go to Vietnam to assess the current situation and determine how long it would take the U.S. to “pacify the country.”⁴² Kissinger visited Vietnam, first for two weeks in 1965, July 1966, and October 1966. After his last visit he told Lodge:

I soon realized that we had involved ourselves in a war which we knew neither hopes to win nor, how to conclude. The enemy's sanctuaries in Laos and Cambodia prevented the achievement of the classic military objective of war—the destruction of the military power of the enemy. In North Vietnam we were engaged in a bombing campaign powerful enough to mobilize world opinion against us but too halfhearted and gradual to be decisive. Thus our adversary was in a position to control the pace of military operations and the level of casualties, both his and ours...I became convinced that in a civil war, military “victories” would be meaningless unless they brought about a political reality that could survive our ultimate withdrawal...no one could really explain to me how even on the most favorable assumption about the war in Vietnam the war was going to end.⁴³

Kissinger understood that the U.S. role in Vietnam was going to determine the role of the U.S. in the world in the future. Kissinger undertook secret negotiations to end the Vietnam War during late-summer and early-fall of 1967 with his French counterparts, Raymond

⁴¹ Schulzinger, *Henry Kissinger Doctor of Diplomacy*, 15-17; Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*, 13-14.

⁴² Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger Partners in Power*, 57.

⁴³ Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), 232.

Aubrac and Herbert Marcovich. The negotiations were code-named “Pennsylvania” and ultimately failed as the U.S. proposal was not accepted by the North Vietnamese.⁴⁴

Kissinger remained an advisor to Nelson Rockefeller during 1967 as he pursued the Republican nomination. He persuaded Rockefeller to criticize Nixon as a hawk and depict Johnson as a bumbling fool. This plan did not work when on March 31, Johnson stunned the nation by his announcement that “I will not seek, nor will I accept the nomination” for another term as president. After Rockefeller lost the party’s nomination to Nixon, Kissinger performed an excellent balancing act between the Democratic nominee Hubert Humphrey and Republican nominee Richard M. Nixon as he served as foreign policy advisor to both candidates.⁴⁵

On November 25, 1968 Kissinger went to Nixon’s transition headquarters at the Pierre Hotel in New York City to discuss the formation of the new administration. Nixon, shy as he always was when he met new people, spoke to Kissinger about how he wanted to bring the foreign policy decision making into the White House to ensure that the State Department and even the CIA could not influence it. Kissinger shared Nixon’s idea and told Nixon that he believed that the administration needed a more formal and systematic foreign policy that could identify the basic principles of national interest—an essential aspect of realism. Kissinger left the meeting unsure if he was offered a position in the administration, until a Nixon staffer discovered on November 27 that Nixon did not formally offer Kissinger the job of national security advisor. Nixon would eventually ask Kissinger to join the administration after the staffer spoke with Nixon privately. Kissinger consulted his colleagues at Harvard and Rockefeller who suggested that he

⁴⁴ Schulzinger, *Henry Kissinger Doctor of Diplomacy*, 18-19.

⁴⁵ Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger Partners in Power*, 70.

accept the position. Kissinger accepted the position understanding that he would act as a middle-man between the White House Chief of Staff, H.R. (Bob) Haldeman, the Secretary of State, and Nixon.⁴⁶ Little did Haldeman, Nixon, and the Secretary of State William P. Rogers know that Kissinger's experience as an academic and advisor in the previous administrations would prove that Kissinger knew how to muscle his way in to the decision making process. After his appointment Kissinger, would become a key player in Nixon's agenda of a reformed foreign policy apparatus with the President and his close advisors at the helm.

Henry Kissinger's Free Reign: The Organization and Management of Foreign Policy

President Nixon's experience in the Eisenhower administration shaped his desires and goals to reform how foreign policy decisions would be made during his administration. Nixon felt as though the "bureaucrats" of the Departments of State and Defense, and the Foreign Service officers did not give him any credit during his time as Vice President.⁴⁷ The President and Kissinger both agreed that the National Security Council—originally established in 1947 by President Harry S. Truman—needed to be reestablished and refashioned along the lines of the Eisenhower NSC since it was in effect absent during the Johnson administration. Kissinger told Nixon that he believed that there was a need for a more formal decision making process based in the White House to ensure that there was a consistent stream of understanding and consensus between the NSC, Departments of State and Defense, the intelligence agencies, the Joint

⁴⁶ Ibid., 78-81.

⁴⁷ Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger Partners in Power*, 80 and 84-85; Isaacson, *Kissinger a Biography*, 152-155; Kissinger, *White House Years*, 10-12.

Chiefs of Staff, and most importantly the White House.⁴⁸ The reason behind this reform was because of the Johnson administration's "Tuesday Lunches" where policy decisions were made over meals and did not involve any follow-up between staff and departments.⁴⁹

The principal factor behind the new decision making process was the reestablishment and reform of the NSC as the primary foreign policy forum and the NSC advisor who would serve as the chairman and intermediary between the Joint Chiefs, State, and Defense. Kissinger recommended that the NSC structure and procedures under the Eisenhower administration be resurrected and reformed to allow the NSC and the advisor to meet regularly, prepare the agendas, sum up all the participants' positions, and present them in a formal document to the President after the meeting for approval. It would be the goal of the NSC to recommend and consider "middle and long-term" policy issues about current crises and provide planning papers on how to resolve them. He also recommended special policy papers and working groups to handle the current crises (i.e., Vietnam, Middle East, Europe, and International Monetary Policy, Strategic Forces, Contingency planning, Japan, and AID).⁵⁰

Kissinger's next plan for the reorganization of the decision making apparatus was his plan to create a divide between the State Department, under William P. Rogers, and himself. This can be seen as a manifestation of Kissinger's personal feelings of being surrounded by enemies, or because of the fact that Nixon and Kissinger saw that Rogers

⁴⁸ Kissinger, *White House Years*, 11.

⁴⁹ Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs-Designate (Kissinger) to President-Elect Nixon, 27 December 1968, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume II, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy, 1969-1972*, Department of State publication (Washington, DC: Dept. of State, 2006), 1; Kissinger, *White House Years*, 11.

⁵⁰ United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume II, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy, 1969-1972*, 1.

was too eager to make decisions.⁵¹ Kissinger saw the State Department as incapable of taking the lead in the managing of interagency affairs because of their lack of capable personnel and their attempts to take charge in Vietnam had failed, evidence of their ignorance, at least to Kissinger. Also if the President wants to listen to all sides of the story he must maintain control over all of his people in the decision making process. Lastly, the structure of the NSC as proposed by Kissinger allowed for the State Department to voice its concerns within interdepartmental review groups.⁵²

Nixon had already accepted Kissinger's plan of the NSC as the primary determinant of foreign policy when on December 28 he called Rogers and the Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird to Key Biscayne, Florida, where Nixon was in the process of preparing his inaugural address. Rogers and Laird voiced their concerns about the importance of their own positions in the process, but Nixon told them that he preferred Kissinger's plan.⁵³ Obviously, the State Department's response to this was that the Secretary of State had historically been the principal advisor to the President with regards to foreign policy concerns and that the new proposed NSC will not permit a streamlined channel to discuss all positions and concerns.⁵⁴

On January 9 Laird told Kissinger that he attempted to re-read Kissinger's plan and felt that it would isolate the President from the intelligence mechanisms and funnel all information through the NSC advisor and his staff. Laird also believed that it would allow the NSC advisor and the NSC to determine what would be on the policy agenda

⁵¹ Suri, "Henry Kissinger, the American Dream, and the Jewish Immigrant Experience in the Cold War.."

⁵² Memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, 7 January 1969, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume II, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy, 1969-1972*, 3.

⁵³ Isaacson, *Kissinger a Biography*, 155.

⁵⁴ Paper Prepared by the Under Secretary of State-Designate (Richardson), undated, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume II, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy, 1969-1972*, 4.

without the consultation of other members of the President's foreign policy team and, thereby, permit the advisor to implement policy without the considerations of others. Lastly, Laird believed that Kissinger's plan would completely undermine the President's goal of the revitalization of the NSC because it would not benefit from the combined influences of the Departments of State and Defense, the intelligence community, the Joint Chiefs, and especially Laird and Rogers themselves.⁵⁵ This effectively placed a divide between Kissinger and Nixon from State, Defense, the intelligence community, and the Joint Chiefs. Kissinger, in a show of sportsman-like conduct, told Nixon that he decided to accept the role of the Secretary of State as the President's primary foreign policy advisor and that the NSC will serve as the forum for all policy discussions.⁵⁶ Kissinger's decision to allow the Secretary of State to remain as the President's principal advisor was a gesture to subdue Rogers's grievances.

President Nixon told Kissinger on January 13 that he had respectively rejected all of Rogers's and Laird's concerns that were voiced to him at Key Biscayne and chose to implement Kissinger's plan. The memo assured Kissinger that he wanted everyone to accept his plan by January 20 and that the President would issue memos that would outline the details of the new NSC.⁵⁷ The NSC's functions, membership, and duties were to follow the model of the NSC that was outlined in the National Security Act of 1947 with some amendments added by the President and Kissinger. The primary amendment was that the NSC would meet regularly as the principle forum to discuss the primary foreign policy issues which involved the President. The CIA would brief the NSC on the

⁵⁵ Memorandum from Secretary of Defense-Designate (Laird) to Kissinger, *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵⁶ Kissinger to Nixon *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁷ Nixon to Kissinger *Ibid.*, 8 for a reference to these Decision Memorandums by Nixon see documents 10-13 in FRUS, 1969-1976, Vol. II.

current agenda items and the NSC advisor would use that intelligence to recommend agenda items and the necessary papers during his consultation meetings with the Secretaries of State and Defense. The membership of the NSC would include the President, Vice President, Secretaries of State and Defense, the Under Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Director of the CIA and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.⁵⁸

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It became clear that Nixon and Kissinger's maneuvers were to rein in control of the NSC inside the White House and to create divides between Defense, State, and the Joint Chiefs. Their decision to use the model of the Eisenhower administration's NSC is a clear indication that both saw the NSC and the advisor as an important tool to shape the President's foreign policy without the influence of the established bureaucracy of political appointees and Foreign Service officers. Kissinger's freedom and ability to decide how the NSC would be structured and how his role in the new administration to shape foreign policy clearly shows the value of his intellectualism and experience. With the NSC reorganized the President and Kissinger pursued the President's wish for a private and secret channel of dialogue between the White House and the Soviet Union.

The Back Channel: Kissinger Implements his Realism

After the Nixon administration took office in January 1969 it was announced that the administration saw U.S.-Soviet relations as no longer based on containment and brute

⁵⁸ National Security Decision Memorandum 2, *Ibid.*, 11.

military strength, but based on “an era of negotiations.”⁵⁹ This era of negotiations was understood to be important first and foremost because of the Vietnam War occupied over a half-million U.S. troops half-way around the world. The war had divided the country with mass demonstrations and marches which caused President Johnson to not seek another term as President.⁶⁰ Congress cut the defense budget and Nixon wanted to end the war soon to restore the credibility of the U.S. in the eyes of the allies and the global community as a whole. In addition, the Soviets continued their military build-up in Eastern Europe, which culminated in the Red Army’s occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the defeat of Arab militaries by the Israelis in 1967 caused the Arab governments to shift their diplomatic relations away from the U.S.⁶¹ It is during this era of domestic and global revolution that the administration wanted to improve U.S.-Soviet relations on the global scale through the use of linkage—the policy championed by President Nixon and Henry Kissinger, which connected political and military issues, thereby establishing a relationship making progress in all areas dependent on each other. This goal by the administration resulted in a secret and private channel of negotiation in early 1971 between Kissinger and Soviet Ambassador in Washington, Anatoly R. Dobrynin—who was no stranger to Cold War era channel talks since he was involved in

⁵⁹ Editorial Note, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969-1972*, 9; Edward C. Keefer et al., eds., *Soviet-American Relations the Détente Years, 1969-1972*, Department of State publication (Washington, DC, 2007), xiii.

⁶⁰ For a discussion on the domestic impact of the Vietnam War see: Paul Chamberlin, “A World Restored: Religion, Counterrevolution, and the Search for Order in the Middle East,” *Diplomatic History* 32, no. 3 (June 2008): 441-469; Natasha Zaretsky, *No Direction Home: The American Family and the Fear of National Decline, 1968-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Detente* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003).

⁶¹ Keefer et al., *Soviet-American Relations the Détente Years, 1969-1972*, xiii.

private talks with Robert Kennedy during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.⁶² The first initial talks about the channel originated when the President spoke to Dobrynin in February 1969 about his wish to create a line of communication between the White House and the Soviet leadership. This was reiterated a year later to Dobrynin and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, and was accepted by the Politburo that same year.⁶³ The channel had two lines of communication: the first was between the President and the Soviet General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Leonid I. Brezhnev, which acted as a forum for both leaders to exchange their ideas in order to develop a general framework. The second was between Kissinger and Dobrynin in the Map Room of the White House where each thought “out loud” and discussed each side’s specific proposals. The channel resulted in significant agreements: Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (May 1971), a settlement over Berlin (September 1971), the Moscow Summit (May 1972).⁶⁴

The origins of the channel have their roots in a February 4, 1969 letter from the President to Secretary of State Rogers where Nixon told Rogers, very blatantly, that for U.S.-Soviet relations to succeed in negotiations that it was important to establish communication from the very beginning of the administration.⁶⁵ In the afternoon of February 13, Rogers met with Dobrynin to discuss the Ambassador’s request for a private meeting with the President and that the Soviet government was ready to begin discussion on the Middle East. After the President and Kissinger learned of Dobrynin’s request it

⁶² Dobrynin was appointed to his position as Ambassador in March of 1962, Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*, 34.

⁶³ Keefer et al., *Soviet-American Relations the Détente Years, 1969-1972*, 3-113.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, ix and xv.

⁶⁵ Letter from President to Secretary of State Rogers Keefer et al., *Soviet-American Relations the Détente Years, 1969-1972*, 1; also in, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XII, Soviet Union, January 1969-October 1970*, Department of State publication (Washington, DC: Dept. of State, 2006), 10.

was agreed that Rogers should not be present at this meeting because both believed that Rogers would be too eager to work out solutions. The White House Chief of Staff, Bob Haldeman, was asked to speak to Rogers and tell him that he was not wanted at the meeting.⁶⁶ On the evening of February 14 Kissinger went to a reception at the Soviet Embassy in Washington where he met privately, for the first time, with Dobrynin where each expressed their government's wishes to work with each other through a diplomatic channel on major issues, including bilateral talks on the Middle East.⁶⁷

Both the President and Ambassador agreed to meet on February 17 in the Fish Room at the White House (so called because of the nautical theme) and that Kissinger and Malcolm Toon, Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, would take Rogers's place. During the February 17 meeting, Dobrynin echoed the President's inaugural address that it was time for an "era of negotiations" and that the Soviets were willing to work on strategic arms, Vietnam, and the Middle East.⁶⁸ In a memorandum of conversation by Dobrynin after the February 17 meeting he detailed the first private meeting he had with Nixon. In great detail, Dobrynin discussed his boredom with the President's tour of the Oval Office and all of the personal ties to a desk the President used as Vice President and a Presidential emblem embroidered by one of his daughters. He continued on to discuss how he made clear to the President the Soviet desire for

⁶⁶ Editorial Note, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XII, Soviet Union, January 1969-October 1970*, 12; Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*, 36; Kissinger, *White House Years*, 141.

⁶⁷ Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*, 37; Memorandum of Conversation (USSR), 14 February 1969, Keefer et al., *Soviet-American Relations the Détente Years, 1969-1972*, 3; Memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon 15 February 1969, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XII, Soviet Union, January 1969-October 1970*, 13.

⁶⁸ Memorandum of Conversation, 17 February 1969, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XII, Soviet Union, January 1969-October 1970*, 14; Also in, Keefer et al., *Soviet-American Relations the Détente Years, 1969-1972*, 4; Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*, 32; Anatoliy Fedorovich Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to American's Six Cold War Presidents (1962-1986)*, 1st ed. (New York: Times Books, Random House, 1995), 198-199.

negotiations on all of the same issues as the President. Dobrynin also wrote that even though he had come to know Rogers, through previous conversations, that he would not be the individual to deliver the President's messages because the President—through Kissinger's advice—felt that he was surrounded by State Department officials.⁶⁹

Dobrynin agreed to meet privately and maintain the secret channel with Kissinger, which effectively cemented Kissinger's free reign over U.S.-Soviet relations and allowed him to pursue his realist policies on a number of issues.⁷⁰

The day after the meeting between the President and Ambassador, Malcolm Toon prepared a memo of his interpretations of the meeting and the Soviet and Dobrynin's intentions. He understood that Dobrynin's talking points of negotiations were the intentions of the rest of the Soviet leadership (Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Podgorny).⁷¹ Kissinger also prepared a memo for the President where shared the same sentiments with the President that the Soviets appear to not base their decisions on ideology, but on national interests and "mutually perceived threats." This interpretation by Kissinger is important because of the fact that he argued that the Soviets were realists and saw current geopolitical decisions through the lens of national interests and mutual threats—a key tenant behind détente. He continued on to say that he saw the opportunity for cooperative solutions to mutual international situations and peace that could be reached by bypassing détente and using "over Soviet-American cooperation." However, he cautioned that the Soviets may want to cause tensions in order to achieve their interests and that the U.S.

⁶⁹ The fact that Dobrynin told his superiors that Rogers was not going to be the individual to deliver the President's messages proves the points that the President and Kissinger understood Rogers as an inept diplomat and that both wanted to remove the State Department from any form of diplomatic decision making—official or secret.

⁷⁰ Memorandum of Conversation (USSR), 17 February 1969, Keefer et al., *Soviet-American Relations the Détente Years, 1969-1972*, 6.

⁷¹ Memorandum from Toon to Kissinger, 18 February 1969, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XII, Soviet Union, January 1969-October 1970*, 16.

should find a commonsensical way of working with the Soviet interests in areas like the Middle East and Vietnam.⁷² Also, Kissinger suggested that the evaluation of U.S. and Soviet interests in different parts of the world need to be analyzed by the NSC in order to insure that U.S. national interests and national security concerns would be met. The challenge then became how the administration was going to determine what Soviet foreign policy was and how U.S. behavior would influence the Soviet's decisions.⁷³

With the channel in place after February 17, Kissinger and Dobrynin met for the first time on February 21. They had lunch at the Soviet Embassy in Washington where Kissinger was asked to make it clear to Dobrynin that the President's goal for the channel was to ensure that all diplomatic discussion were to be funneled away from the Department of State because they could not insure that they could maintain confidentiality. The President wished the channel to serve as the primary forum for U.S.-Soviet discussion with Kissinger as the principle deliverer of the President's messages. The meeting discussed the wishes of both sides to pursue confidential bilateral talks on the Middle East, European concerns, Vietnam, and nuclear non-proliferation. At the conclusion of the meeting Kissinger asked Dobrynin to meet with him over lunch in his office on March 3 to continue their exchange of ideas.⁷⁴ The channel between Kissinger and Dobrynin was firmly established and would become an essential tool of the President and Kissinger in their pursuit of détente with the Soviet Union.

With the channel formally established, a National Intelligence Estimate was prepared on February 27 by the CIA, which provided valuable conclusions to the

⁷² Memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷³ Paper Prepared for the National Security Council by Interdepartmental Group for Europe, 18 February 1969, *Ibid.*, 18.

⁷⁴ Memorandum of Conversation (USSR), 21 February 1969, Keefer et al., *Soviet-American Relations the Détente Years, 1969-1972*, 8.

President and Kissinger about key factors and tendencies in Soviet policy. It determined that ideology (Marxism-Leninism) no longer played the role of “scripture” for the public in the Soviet Union, but remained as the “prism” through which those leaders would analyze internal and external policy. Tensions remained after the fall of Khrushchev in October 1964 between individual leaders even though “collectivity” was to be part of the system. A decline in economic growth had harmed already strained resources for the military and domestic needs. There was a glimmer of renewed interest in geopolitics with regards to the “southern periphery” of the Soviet Union. European settlement was seen as a necessity to form a united front to isolate West Germany. The Soviets saw the importance in the maintenance of competition with the U.S. in Asia. The leaders no longer saw strategic weapons as the key to a balance of power, but rather a “cautious optimism” for a decline in tensions in specific areas of the globe. With the Soviet arms sale to Egypt in 1955 they continued to assert influence over the Arab governments in hopes of encouraging their movements of national liberation. They continued to maintain a military presence at bases within the United Arab Republic (UAR). However, the Soviets did not see value in joining in the fight against Israel due to the potential threat of intervention of other states on behalf of Israel. They saw the possibility of early acquisition of nuclear weapons by Israel a carrot for easing the Arabs towards a settlement. The benefits of a settlement for the Soviets would be the opening of the Suez Canal to shorten their shipping routes with Asia and the propaganda that could be used to show how the West had to accept the help of the Soviet Union to reach a settlement.⁷⁵

The strategic importance of the back channel cannot be underestimated because

⁷⁵ National Intelligence Estimate, 27 February 1969, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XII, Soviet Union, January 1969-October 1970*, 21.

during the life of the channel (1969-1973) the private meetings catapulted the influence and power of Henry Kissinger in Washington from a former Harvard professor and occasional presidential adviser to the key individual responsible for shaping the administration's U.S.-Soviet relations during the early-1970s. In addition this channel demonstrated the President and Kissinger's desire to keep Rogers and his State Department out of the foreign policy decision making process.

Détente and Middle East Foreign Policy

Even before Kissinger became President Nixon's national security advisor in 1968 he held a realist's worldview of a post-World War II bipolar international community made up of the United States in the West and the Soviet Union in the East. The globe was not the same size, figuratively speaking, as it had been before the war with the mighty British Empire as the single superpower taking the lead in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. Rather, the globe was becoming larger as former colonial powers disappeared and new states emerged. America took the place of the British as a global superpower. As the global system evolved after the war America occupied the prestige of being the only state to possess the nuclear bomb for a short time and was the sole economic power through the Marshall Plan to rebuild Western Europe and Japan. During the decades which led up to the Nixon administration the Soviets developed their own nuclear arsenal and Europe and Japan began to emerge from their economic malaise and became economically independent.⁷⁶

Twenty years after the end of the war Kissinger's realist worldview was no longer made up of two superpowers militarily, economically, and politically as existed at the

⁷⁶ United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969-1972*, 4, 81, and 118.

dawn of the Cold War when the US and Soviet Union were the sole competing powers. The globe twenty years after the end of the war was confronted by three issues: 1) the increased number of states; 2) the number of technological innovations to affect one another other had grown; 3) and the aims had changed and expanded.

During Kissinger's tenure as Nixon's national security advisor (1969-1973) the "official" decision making involving the administration's Middle East foreign policies was left to the State Department. Even though the official decision making was left to Secretary of State Rogers, the President and Kissinger wanted to work around the bureaucracy by moving the decision making to the White House through the reforms of the NSC. With a strong NSC, the President and Kissinger were able to create the Washington Special Actions Group (WSAG) to deal with regional policy decisions without Rogers and the State Department.⁷⁷ With the President's promise that his administration would usher in an era of negotiations, it became the responsibility of Kissinger to pursue détente—the de-escalation of tensions—with the Soviet Union through negotiations and linkages to other national security concerns to assist in primary areas of diplomacy for the administration. The Middle East would occupy a secondary position in the administration after Vietnam, Eastern Europe and nuclear arms treaties. Even though the region occupied a secondary position, the administration wanted to work with the Soviets, among others (the United Kingdom and France) to negotiate a peace between the Arabs and Israelis and understood that the dynamics of Soviet relations with Arab countries (especially Egypt, Syria, and Iraq) could jeopardize U.S. interests in the

⁷⁷ Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*, 24.

region.⁷⁸ The administration's goals for a peace process was colored by the events of the Six Day War in June 1967 when the Israeli forces swiftly and very effectively defeated Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, and gained the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights.⁷⁹

The official peace process framework during Kissinger's tenure as national security advisor was the State Department's framework named for the Secretary of State. "The Rogers Plan" (as it was known) called for a "comprehensive withdrawal from almost all of the occupied territory gained by Israel after the June 1967 war."⁸⁰ Rogers (in office January 1969 to September 1973) saw the need for a traditional state-oriented agreement between Israel and its neighbors, but in Rogers's opinion Israel was the main actor preventing one. In a December 1969 speech Rogers detailed the plan's five major components which were based in part on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 after the June War:

- (1) The continuation of negotiations between Egypt and Israel under the auspices of Ambassador Jarring's UN mission in the region since the June War;
- (2) Israel should withdrawal from territories occupied after the 1967 war;
- (3) Egypt and Israel should live in a "state of peace between the parties;"
- (4) Egypt and Israel should negotiate a demilitarized zone between their borders;
- (5) A solution to the Palestinian refugee concern.⁸¹

These five major components of the plan demonstrated the administration's "official" foreign policy concerns for peace, security, territorial withdrawal, and the Palestinian

⁷⁸ For a better discussion of Soviet relations with Arab governments see; Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945*, 3rd ed. (Chapel Hill: Univ of North Carolina Press, 2008); William L Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 3rd ed. (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 2004).

⁷⁹ Michael Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁸⁰ Salim Yaqub, "The Weight of Conquest: Henry Kissinger and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," in Fredrik Logevall and Andrew Preston, *Nixon in the World: American Foreign Relations, 1969-1977* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), Yaqub, 227.

⁸¹ William P. Rogers, "The Rogers Plan," in Bernard Reich, ed., *Arab-Israeli Conflict and Conciliation: A Documentary History* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1995), 102-107

refugees. Rogers's plan wanted first and foremost to reach Arab-Israeli peace and saw the involvement of the Soviets as secondary through their involvement of Soviet forces in the "Mideast peace keeping forces."⁸²

Kissinger wanted to "shield" Israel from any pressure to withdraw from all or most of the territory to pre-1967 boundaries.⁸³ Kissinger believed that because of their "support for Arab ambitions" any Soviet involvement would jeopardize the peace process and the balance of power the administration wanted between the US and Soviets in the region.⁸⁴ He believed that Israel was essential to the process and that the Soviets only encouraged the Arab governments' desire to eradicate the state of Israel. Moreover, he believed that maintaining the balance of power between the US and the Soviets was essential to keeping the Arab governments in their places.⁸⁵ Kissinger understood that by giving territory back to Egypt or Syria it would give clout to the Soviets who could demonstrate their utility to the Arabs' cause.⁸⁶ However, Nixon understood the importance of relaxing the tensions between the two superpowers by reaching a détente because both were needed for promoting a peace between the Arabs and Israelis.⁸⁷ Nixon also understood the importance of a public framework that could lure Arab governments away from the Soviets.⁸⁸ Kissinger, as a result of his conflicting policy beliefs with Rogers and the reluctance of the Arabs, Israelis, Russians, and Nixon to the Rogers plan wanted to pursue détente as the means to keep the Soviets on the sidelines of the peace process and to keep the Arab governments under U.S. control.

⁸² Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*, , 216.

⁸³ Yaquib in; Logevall and Preston, *Nixon in the World*, 227.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 227 and 229.

⁸⁵ Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 184-185.

⁸⁶ Yaquib, Logevall and Preston, *Nixon in the World*, 229.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 216-217.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 188.

The President at the same time understood his own and Kissinger's concerns about the dangers of the plan, and sent Rogers to the region to reach an agreement between Egypt and Israel to end the War of Attrition in the fall of 1969. Rogers's plan ultimately failed as the Soviets, Israelis, and Egypt rejected the plan in late 1969. His regional policies were also damaged when Egypt received surface-to-air missiles (SAM-3) from the Soviets to counter act Israeli aggression across the Sinai Peninsula in January of 1970. To counteract this the President sent Rogers on a last ditch effort to end the conflict between Egypt and Israel and to offer the second Rogers Plan, which called for Israel and Egypt to cease all hostilities for three months and to 'refrain from changing the military status quo within zones extending 50 kilometers.' Rogers's involvement in the decision making of Middle East policy was lost when Egypt exploited a loop hole in the hastily drafted plan that allowed Egypt to place missiles on the west side of the Canal. Rogers's stock ultimately plummeted in September 1970 when four hijackings by a Palestinian nationalist organization and hostilities between fedayeen forces and the Jordanian army in Jordan arose.⁸⁹

With the demise of Rogers's influence in the region and the realization that the Soviets were in the "foreground" when it came to making policy decisions in the region, the President and Kissinger took over the official decision making process.⁹⁰ Once Kissinger understood the Soviets place in the region he ultimately sought détente for three reasons:

- 1) to maintain the US-Soviet balance of power in the region

⁸⁹ Salim Yaqub, "The Politics of Stalemate: The Nixon administration and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1969-1973," in Nigel John Ashton, ed., *The Cold War in the Middle East: Regional Conflict and the Superpowers, 1967-73* (London: Routledge, 2007), 38-42.

⁹⁰ Jussi M. Hanhimäki, "An Elusive Grand Design," in Logevall and Preston, *Nixon in the World*, Hanimaki, 33.

- 2) to restrict Soviet influence on radical Arab governments
- 3) to ensure important US-Soviet cooperation in a peace process as outlined in the Rogers Plan.

Kissinger understood that the Soviet Union was attempting to influence the Arab governments to support their presence in the hopes of tipping the balance of power toward the Soviets. He also understood that a Soviet presence was necessary to the peace process.⁹¹ During the four terrorist attacks of the early-1970s, Kissinger's pursuit of détente with the Soviet Union was challenged by the transnational Palestinian terrorism.⁹² Kissinger understood that if he made policy decisions which included direct retaliation against the Palestinian organizations that it could push away the Arab governments from the U.S. and tip the balance in the region towards the Soviets and possibly jeopardize the interstate diplomacy that Kissinger and détente relied on.

Conclusion

The President and Kissinger came to power in the late-1960s in the aftermath of the United States' troubled involvement in the Vietnam War, domestic student protests, and "global revolutions."⁹³ The President and Kissinger wanted to use their realist worldview that a balance of power between the U.S. and Soviet Union would help them address the geopolitical issues facing both superpowers. Kissinger, as a result of his Jewish immigrant experience and intellectual endeavors, believed that diplomacy could be pursued only by a strong state with strong leaders who through humane measures would prevent violence and intolerance. He did not simply place all of his stock in

⁹¹ For references to the concept of détente between the US and Soviet Union in the Middle East see documents: 39, 46,69,78, 81, and 83 United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969-1972*.

⁹² Robert Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in Power*, 1st ed. (New York: HarperCollins Pub, 2007); Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*; a specific discussion of Kissinger's role in Black September and the Munich massacre see: Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*.

⁹³ Suri, *Power and Protest*.

charismatic and enlightened men, like Metternich, but understood that a good statesman, like himself, was able to use his cultural and political life experiences to shape foreign policy decisions under the guise of American exceptionalism. In the militarily bipolar post-WWII world, Kissinger understood the importance of strategic military force, but only as a last resort because of his historical knowledge of nineteenth century interstate diplomacy where strong leaders could work with each other in the new world of political multi-polarity to achieve U.S. national interests.

Through his experiences with violence and intolerance in interwar Europe, where the balance between states was collapsing, Kissinger was able to derive general lessons about interstate diplomacy and the limits of power in his academic work. These lessons could only have been developed because of his immigration to the U.S. and the lifelong mentor relationships he developed in the army and at Harvard where he was able to apply his academic work to the U.S. predicament during the Vietnam era. His involvement in the redevelopment of the NSC with the President illustrated not only his belief that his “spiritual link” between the language and culture of his Central European childhood was beneficial for shaping America’s influence abroad, but the free reign he enjoyed in the shaping of the administration’s foreign policy. The isolation of Rogers from diplomatic decision making illustrates both the President and Kissinger’s fears of disrespect and ignorance of the bureaucracy and the importance of maintaining a divide between the White House, on the one side, and the rest of the foreign policy apparatus. The important back channel between Kissinger and Dobrynin bypassed the State Department’s involvement in the President’s U.S.-Soviet policies and created a relationship that would involve two exceptional diplomats and allow Kissinger to implement his ideas. He

clearly understood that the Soviets saw the region as their “preserve” and through their support of the radical Arab governments the Soviets could tip the balance of power in the region further away from the U.S. It is because of the President and Kissinger’s concern that the balance in the region could be tipped towards the Soviets that Kissinger’s Middle East policy was an extension of the principles that shaped détente. But as the next chapter will show, they were completely unsuited to dealing with the region’s skeleton in the closet: Palestinian statelessness.

CHAPTER II: *Transnational Palestinian Terrorism: 1970-1973*

To this people I say: More firmness, more endurance, more defiance, more pride...because however profound the darkness, the dawn must come. I say to them: We are with you in the pledge we have given, we are with you in a single trench. ~Yasser Arafat⁹⁴

Since the United States could not stand idly by and watch Israel being driven into the sea, the possibility of a direct U.S.-Soviet confrontation was uncomfortably high. It was like a ghastly game of dominoes, with a nuclear war waiting at the end. ~President Richard M. Nixon⁹⁵

I would only suggest this: The nation that compromises with the terrorists today could well be destroyed by the terrorists tomorrow. ~ President Richard M. Nixon⁹⁶

Introduction

⁹⁴ Interview with Yasser Arafat in “Filistin al-Thawra” (Beirut), January, 1 1973 “Documents and Source Material: Arab Documents on Palestine November 16, 1972 - February 15, 1973,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 2, no. 3 (Spring 1973): 168.

⁹⁵ Richard M Nixon, *The Memorandumirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978), 483.

⁹⁶ United States, United States, and United States, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, 1973* (Washington: Federal Register Division, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1974), 71.

Terrorism has been used as a political strategy in the modern era to political concessions since the days of the French Revolution's "reign of terror" when groups of individuals revolted against the established ruling class. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries individuals continued to revolt by throwing bombs in protest against authority and property. During the early twentieth century these bomb-throwing revolutionaries began to call themselves terrorists.⁹⁷ In the waning months of World War II, U.S. intelligence officials were successful in eliminating German efforts in the French and Italian liberation movements.⁹⁸ By the 1940s to the early-1960s terrorism was associated with national liberation movements against Western imperialism, especially in Algeria and Israel/Palestine. The association with national liberation movements by the terrorists after the 1940s is especially true for the FLN and the Palestinian nationalists who saw the successes in Algeria as an invaluable model to adopt.⁹⁹ It is in the late-1960s that terrorism began to take on a new guise from the revolutionary terrorism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to one which involved international terrorism. This internationalization of terrorism would develop into a new wave of hijackings and kidnappings to obtain political concessions.¹⁰⁰

Beginning in 1961, the United States and the Kennedy administration witnessed the first instance of domestic airline hijacking. Each of the more than twenty hijackings

⁹⁷ Brian Michael Jenkins, "Terrorism and Counterterrorism," in; Alexander DeConde, Richard Dean Burns, and Fredrik Logevall, eds., *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (New York: Scribner, 2002), 563.

⁹⁸ Timothy J. Naftali, *Blind Spot: The Secret History of American Counterterrorism* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), xii.

⁹⁹ DeConde, Burns, and Logevall, *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy*, 1:564; Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution*, 279-280; Alan Hart, *Arafat, a Political Biography*, 1st ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 7 and 10; Barry M Rubin, *Revolution Until Victory?: The Politics and History of the PLO* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994).

¹⁰⁰ Brian Michaels Jenkins, "Terrorism and Counterterrorism," DeConde, Burns, and Logevall, *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy*, 1:564.

between 1961 and 1968 involved the hijacking of domestic flights in the southern half of the U.S. and all but one would land in Havana, Cuba. These hijackings became part of the routine U.S.-Cuban relations during this period of the Cold War. U.S. pilots began to carry maps of the Jose Marti Airport in Havana and the Swiss Embassy (the channel used by the U.S. to send official messages to Cuba) in Washington, D.C. had paperwork prepared for the U.S. to formally request the return of crews, passengers, and aircraft. Hijackings were seen more as a nuisance and a financial risk rather than an area of presidential concern at this time. The U.S. was a signatory to the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) convention in 1963 that mandated that a country where a hijacked plane landed had to return it promptly, but the U.S. Senate did not ratify it until after the late-1960s. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) considered the use of armed air marshals on high-threat routes as an option to combat the hijackings, but pilots and crews fearing gunfights aboard the aircraft overruled the idea. The FAA even considered a psychological screening process to identify hijackers and even the possible use of the new technology of metal detectors, but the programs would only see voluntary testing by a limited number of airlines. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Justice Department had jurisdiction over hijacking, but did not have a substantial or even, an existing force of counter-hijacking personnel. After the increased hijackings in 1968 (ten by July 1968) the Lyndon Johnson administration agreed that it was time to adopt the ICAO's convention on hijacking (it would become known as the Tokyo Convention).¹⁰¹

The first instance of a hijacking which involved the taking of hostages occurred on July 23, 1968 when an El Al flight 426 (Israeli's national airline) was hijacked by members of the PFLP in Rome en route to Tel Aviv. The flight was diverted to Algiers,

¹⁰¹ Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 19-23.

where the Johnson administration, who realized that hijackings no longer were U.S.-Cuban issues, worked indirectly through diplomatic channels with Rome, Paris, and Cairo to remedy the situation. Israeli officials called for direct U.S. involvement in the situation, but the U.S. chose to maintain indirect multilateral channels to influence the officials in Algiers to give up the plane and hostages, or lose commercial aviation traffic. The lack of direct intervention in the hijackings and international crisis involving terrorism illustrates the Johnson administration's lack of a defined terminology of terrorism and terrorist. Each would be used interchangeably with guerilla and fedayeen in subsequent intelligence and policy briefings.¹⁰²

The Johnson administration saw the rise of international terrorism as only a "regional phenomena" where a particular insurgent group rises against the political regime in parts of Asia and Latin America. The deaths of U.S. citizens in these insurgencies were a product of the Cold War. The CIA would use counterinsurgency measures in Latin America by providing training and resources to the U.S. allies to combat the insurgencies. However, in the Middle East the administration did not see terrorism as the result of the Cold War, but rather as a tool of Palestinian national liberation movements. Middle East terrorism was understood to be a result of two factors; the struggle between radical and moderate Arab regimes, and a result of the Palestinian problem. The U.S. government understood that with the Israeli's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights after the June 1967 that they needed to maintain a moderate Arab regime in the region. The U.S. supported the Jordanian state under King Hussein after 1967 with \$45 million in support to combat Arab nationalism and the threat of Soviet influence on the radical Arab regimes. The Palestinian problem was

¹⁰² Ibid., 23-28.

exacerbated by the recognition of the PLO as the official voice of the Palestinians in 1964 and the relations between Fatah (the militant faction of the PLO) and the PFLP with the Soviets and other national liberation movements. Even in light of these two factors, the Johnson administration understood Middle East terrorism and the PLO as a regional annoyance that caused “headaches” for Israel and the U.S. President Johnson passed on the challenges of hijackings and Middle East terrorism to the Nixon administration as he chose to devote his last months in office to the Vietnam War.¹⁰³

The Nixon administration came to office in 1969 in the shadow of the administration’s foreign policy goals of handling the Vietnam War, the pursuit of détente with the Soviets, and nuclear arms treaties. The Middle East was a secondary concern of the administration as it hoped to improve relations with Arab governments after 1967. Hijackings and Middle East terrorism became an even lesser issue in the administration as the President and Kissinger passed the issue off to the State Department. In late-August of 1969, TWA flight 840 from Los Angeles en route to Tel Aviv was hijacked by the Che Guevara Commando Unit of the PFLP who diverted it to Damascus. This TWA flight became the first instance where the State Department took the lead in handling international hijacking. Also, this is the first instance in which an aircraft registered in the U.S. with an American crew and passengers was hijacked and taken hostage by a Palestinian nationalist organization. The President took a silent position on hijackings at this point and allowed the State Department to use indirect multilateral diplomacy to negotiate the return of the plane, crew, and passengers. Kissinger agreed with this position and feared potential Israeli retaliation. The U.S. was successful in earning the release of all hostages and the release of Egyptian soldiers held by the Israelis. This

¹⁰³ Ibid., 29-33.

episode showed how the U.S. could use indirect multilateral negotiations through the Italian government to end the crisis with the Syrian government on behalf of the Palestinians without direct diplomatic relations with the Syrian government. It also shows how the President and Kissinger's busy foreign policy agenda at the time placed hijackings and Middle East terrorism as a secondary matter to be resolved by the State Department.¹⁰⁴

The Palestinians elevated the importance and impact of Middle East terrorism a year after TWA when they simultaneously hijacked four aircraft—an exploit not seen again until September 11th—to make their nationalist liberation agenda known to the global community. The first goal of this chapter is to identify the change over time of the Palestinian nationalist movement from the rise of Zionism in the nineteenth century to the use of transnational terrorism in the late-1960s and 1970s by the Palestinian organizations. Through the analysis of Palestinian nationalism the argument will become clear that the decision by the Palestinians to use terrorism was part of their nationalist agenda to disrupt the peace process, gain the release of Palestinian prisoners, and to bring a voice to their movement. The second goal of this chapter is to make clear how Kissinger's realist worldview drew exactly the wrong lessons from history in terms of his ability to address the new problem of Palestinian terrorism. Kissinger's realism recognized the limits of U.S. power in the Vietnam era, but he fell back on his historical knowledge of nineteenth century interstate diplomacy among states as the way forward. In the postcolonial world, and the Middle East in particular, non-state actors such as the PLO factions were becoming some of the most important elements in the determination of Cold War era diplomacy between the West and the Soviets.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 35-41.

Most importantly it is the goal of this chapter to show how the transnational Palestinian terrorism of the early-1970s challenged the Nixon administration, and most importantly, Kissinger's pursuit of détente in the region. Understanding how the President and Kissinger did not (or could not) understand the transnational nature of the organizations because they were non-state actors provides a window into how Kissinger's intellectual and life experiences shaped his realist Cold War era diplomacy of détente.

The Transformation of Palestinian Nationalism

As mentioned in the introduction the form of the nationalism carried out by Palestinian organizations, under the auspices of the PLO, in the early 1970s transformed into the use of terrorism and guerilla warfare by fedayeen forces. This transformation to the use of terrorism by these guerilla organizations was a major change from the nationalism which existed before the Arab defeat in the 1967 Six Day War. The nationalism before 1967 was characterized by local skirmishes and the struggle of Arab governments and militaries fighting against Israel on the behalf of the Palestinians who were forcibly removed from Palestine—the use of force is contested by the Israelis. It is not until after 1967 that Palestinian nationalism transformed into an armed struggle by the PLO and its militant organizations. The purpose of this section is to outline the historical transformation of Palestinian nationalism from the nineteenth century to the 1970s. The section will trace the four stages of Palestinian nationalism: 1) pre-Mandate; 2) British Mandate; 3) the “lost years” of 1948-1967; and 4) post 1967. It also emphasizes the thematic characteristics of the post-1967 Palestinian nationalism as an armed people's national liberation movement against Zionism and imperialism. The section will end with a section on how the leaders of the movement sought to

internationalize their movement with their adoption of the ideologies and tactics of other Third World national liberation movements during the 1960s.

The origins of the first stage of Palestinian nationalism is rooted in the rise of Zionism in the late nineteenth-century when the Arabs and the Palestinian Arabs¹⁰⁵ in Palestine were affected by the influx of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe who sought to establish themselves in Palestine.¹⁰⁶ The Zionist movement was seen as an attempt by Europeans to establish themselves over the Muslims in Palestine.¹⁰⁷ This anti-imperialism rhetoric against European Jews will play an essential role later on in Palestinian nationalism as it becomes directed first at Britain during their mandate period and then at the state of Israel.

After the outbreak of World War I in 1914, tensions over land purchases and migrations continued to rise as Sharif Hussein of Mecca began to write to the British high commissioner in Cairo, Henry McMahon to illustrate the Arab requests for independence and their opposition to French encroachment after the war. Sharif Hussein in his correspondence to McMahon (July 1915 to January 1916) wanted British support for an independent Arab state, while McMahon and Britain wanted to leave room for French maneuvers after the war. After McMahon had “recognized” Arab independence on

¹⁰⁵ It is important to make a specific distinction between “Arabs” and “Palestinian Arabs” who lived in Palestine during this period due to that fact that the region identified as Palestine was part of the Syrian province of the Ottoman Empire which resulted in a population made up of Arab speaking peoples from all over the region and Palestinian Arabs who were capable of tracing their families presence in the region known as Palestine for generations.

¹⁰⁶ Emile A. Nakhleh, “The Anatomy of Violence: Theoretical Reflections on Palestinian Resistance,” *Middle East Journal* 25, no. 2 (Spring 1971): 180-200; Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); William B Quandt, *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism*, Rand Corporation research study (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); Yazid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); For additional sources see: Helena Lindholm Schulz, *The Reconstruction of Palestinian Nationalism: Between Revolution and Statehood* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

¹⁰⁷ Charles D Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 4th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001), 39.

behalf of Britain, the Sykes-Picot Agreement (May 1916) divided the region into a French sphere of influence over Lebanon and Syria and a British sphere over the area from the Egyptian border in the Sinai through Iraq to the Persian Gulf.

On November 2, 1917 in a letter sent by British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to Walter Rothschild (a leader of the British Jewish community) declared that “His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people” this letter became known as the “Balfour Declaration” and became part of the mandates established at the San Remo Conference in April 1920 where France was given mandates over Lebanon and Syria, the British over Iraq and Palestine.¹⁰⁸ With the creation of the French and British mandates in the region the second stage of Palestinian nationalism began.

During the interwar period it became clear that Britain's and France's intentions to divide up the region into mandates was not in the best interests of all parties involved. The May Day riots of 1921 only cemented Arab and Palestinian Arab dislike of the Zionists in Palestine as 14 Arabs and 43 Jews were killed.¹⁰⁹ Winston Churchill as colonial secretary issued a “White Paper” in July 1922 in which he denounced the Arabs' pleas for repudiation of the “Balfour Declaration” and declared that Palestine will become ‘as Jewish as England is English’. Churchill also disputed the Arab claim that Palestine was excluded from the areas promised to Sharif Hussein in the letter dated October 24, 1915.¹¹⁰ In August 1929 riots broke out at the Western (Wailing) Wall over control of the sacred site.¹¹¹ It is during this time the British government began to

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 59-101.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 109.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 151-153.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 124-126.

understand that Jewish land purchases were the cause of the rise in violence between the Arabs and Jews in Palestine.

The “Passfield White Paper” (October 1930) called for the end of the Jewish land purchases, which caused uproar in the British government as significant Zionists resigned from their respective posts causing Prime Minister MacDonald to contradict the White Paper in February 1931.¹¹² In the shadow of the increased violence and discussion over Jewish land purchases a Palestinian revolt broke out in 1936 against the Zionist encroachment on Palestinian land and against the British mandate policies. The revolt initially began as an anti-Zionist protest and general strike of Arab and Palestinian Arab workers in Jewish owned businesses, but spread to the countryside as a revolt against rural landlords. In response Britain sent 20,000 troops to quell the revolt and in May 1937 the Peel Commission was appointed to determine the origins of the Arab resistance.¹¹³

The Peel Commission reported its findings in July 1937 which found that the mandate was no longer viable and recommended that the mandate be partitioned into two states. This meant that the Jewish state was composed of 20 percent of the territory of Palestine from Galilee and the Jezreel Plain to the coastal region south from Lebanon to Jaffa; the Palestinian state included the remaining territory. The British government retained mandatory control over the territory of Jerusalem and Bethlehem to Jaffa. The Arabs and Palestinians protested the partition because they did not receive the most fertile land because it was given to the Jews even though the Arabs gained 80 percent of the land. Zionist reactions were mixed, but in general were satisfied with the partition

¹¹² Ibid., 128.

¹¹³ Ibid., 135.

except for a desire for more land.¹¹⁴ The British government released another White Paper in May 1939 in which the British government understood its continued role as a mandatory power even though the Peel Commission partition called for two states. The paper declared that Jewish immigration be restricted to 15,000 annually for the next five years in order to maintain a one-third ratio of Jews to Arabs in the total population of Palestine. After the five years Jewish immigration would end unless the Arabs allowed it to continue. Land purchases would be placed under regulation in order to ensure that it would not harm the Arab farmers. Lastly, Britain would remain as the mandatory power during a transition period towards statehood.¹¹⁵

During the 1940s the Palestinians were faced with increasing violence and pressure by Jewish immigrants and their political and militia organizations. With the Holocaust known to the international community it was urgent that a homeland exist in Palestine for Jews fleeing Europe. Numerous attempts were made to bring fleeing Jews to Palestine even though the British government sent them away and upheld the 1939 White Paper. Violence began to spread as the Irgun, the militant arm of the Jewish Revisionist party, wanted to secure a corridor between Tel Aviv and Jaffa. On April 9, 1948 the Irgun killed hundreds of Palestinians when it attacked the Palestinian village of Dayr Yassin because of supposed sniper fire on the road. The massacre at Dayr Yassin spread terror throughout the Arab countryside as the Irgun forcibly removed Palestinians from their homes.¹¹⁶ Two weeks after Dayr Yassin the village of Jaffa was under a storm of mortar fire by the Irgun. The Irgun later moved house-to-house by blasting holes in the walls and by the summer of 1948 750,000 Palestinians had fled Jaffa.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 135-139; and 153-157.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 157-161.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 194.

The third stage of Palestinian nationalism was ushered in by the establishment of the state of Israel on May 14, 1948 by Jewish Labor Party leader David Ben-Gurion. This meant that the ultimate tragedy for the Palestinians was the fact that they were no longer citizens of the Palestinian mandate under British mandatory power, but were refugees in a Jewish state. After the establishment of Israel the Palestinian people were transformed into a Palestinian people who lost their territory, sovereignty and identity.¹¹⁷ The new state of Israel was to fall within the borders of the UNSCOP (United Nations Special Committee on Palestine) partition plan of late 1947—Britain officially notified the UN on August 1, 1948 that they were going to terminate the mandate.¹¹⁸ Soon after Israel was declared, Arab militaries (Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan, and Syria) attacked Israel sparking the first Arab-Israeli war. During the first stage was from mid-May to June 11 Israeli forces were successful in stopping the invasions of the Arab militaries. Between June and July 6 a truce was held between the Arabs and Israelis until Syria and Egypt grew impatient and sparked the second stage of the war (July 6-July 19) when the Israeli forces were able to expand into Galilee. By October the Israelis invaded the Negev Desert to remove the occupying Egyptian forces.¹¹⁹ Israel significantly expanded its territory beyond the borders of the 1947 UN partition to include all but the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank of the Jordan River. The establishment of Israel and the defeat effectively transformed the people known as “Palestinian Arabs” before 1948 into a group of people known as Palestinians who were now refugees in a Jewish state.

¹¹⁷ Baruch Kimmerling, *Palestinians: The Making of a People* (New York: Free Press, 1993), xviii.

¹¹⁸ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 195.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 197-198.

The Palestinians and Arabs in general began to recognize the establishment of Israel and Arab defeat in the first Arab-Israeli war as *al-Nakba* “the catastrophe” because 700,000 Palestinian refugees were created and hundreds of Palestinian villages were lost. This catastrophe meant that the Palestinian people were transformed into a group of people who were once the majority in Palestine, but now were the minority.¹²⁰ Historian Rashid Khalidi understands Zionism and *al-Nakba* as the reasons for the loss of their Palestinian national identity and the transformation in their nationalism. During the thirty years of the British mandate the Palestinians struggled against not just Zionism, but the imperialism of the British. It is during Khalidi’s first stage of Palestinian nationalism that the Palestinians continually used their press to voice their concerns over lack of representation—they previously held a seat in Istanbul before WWI, but were constantly ignored when they asked the British government during the mandate.¹²¹ The Palestinians understood that according to the mandate the British mandatory government was to provide the Palestinians with the ability to form their own government alongside a Jewish government, but Britain consistently ignored this fact.

Khalidi’s final stage of Palestinian nationalism existed after 1948 up until the creation of the PLO by the Arab League at the Cairo Summit in 1964. During this second stage he labels as the “lost years,” Palestinian nationalism effectively disappeared because of the obvious disappearance of Palestine as a territory on the map and the relocation of refugees outside their homeland.¹²² Also, the ideology of pan-Arabism championed by Egyptian President Gamal ‘Abd al-Nasser during the 1950s to 1960s

¹²⁰ Baruch Kimmerling, *The Palestinian People: A History* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003), 169, 214-215.

¹²¹ Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 187.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 177-179.

overshadowed Palestinian nationalism and other Arab nationalist movements at the time. With the humiliating defeat of the Arab militaries in the 1967 Six Days War, pan-Arabism was effectively over as a rallying cry for Arabs and Palestinians who began to seek out refuge in the once overshadowed nationalist organizations like the PLO and its militant factions like Fatah, which meant that that this was the rebirth of a Palestinian national identity and Palestinian nationalism.¹²³

After the Arab defeat in 1967 the fourth stage of the Palestinian nationalist movement was shepherded in and transformed from a movement that relied on local skirmishes and on the Arab governments and their militaries into a movement which emphasized “armed struggle” by the Palestinian guerilla organizations.¹²⁴ In the “Palestine National Charter” adopted in Cairo (June 1964) it clearly states that the Palestinian Arab people who occupied “the boundaries it had during the British Mandate” saw “armed struggle [a]s the only way to liberate Palestine”. The Palestinian nationalist movement under the leadership of the PLO (the acting voice of the Palestinian people after its creation in 1964)¹²⁵ transformed the previous movement from an Arab movement who represented the Palestinians into a “mass movement” which developed a distinctive Palestinian identity of individuals who used armed struggle as their means to liberate Palestine from Zionism and imperialism.¹²⁶ This shift from an Arab movement to an armed mass liberation movement is a significant transformation that used guerilla warfare, adopted from other Third World liberation movements, and transnational

¹²³ Ibid., 181-183.

¹²⁴ Helga Baumgarten, “The Three Faces/Phases of Palestinian Nationalism, 1948-2005,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 34, no. 4 (6, 2005): 25-48.

¹²⁵ Rashid Hamid, “What is the PLO?,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 4, no. 4 (Summer 1975): 96.

¹²⁶ Bernard Lewis, “The Palestinians and the PLO,” *Commentary* 59 (January 1975): 46-48.

terrorism to disrupt the Middle East peace process, which was a threat to their right of self-determination.¹²⁷

For an example of this transformation, the section will now focus on Fatah, a major militant arm of the PLO to prove that after 1967 Fatah's identity was Palestinian, not Arab, and its ideology was "the liberation of Palestine [as] the way to Arab unity".¹²⁸ Fatah and other militant organizations say their identity was distinctly Palestinian, not Arab because these organizations felt as though the Arab governments and their militaries let the Palestinian people down through their defeats in all the previous Israeli wars. This feeling of neglect developed into an adoption of the idea that armed struggle, "the logic of violence, the calculations of total terror," from other nationalist movements was the only way to make their nationalist agenda known to the international community.¹²⁹

The process of making their movement known to the international community began in October 1964 when the PLO represented Palestine at the Conference of Non-Aligned States in Cairo, where the non-aligned states expressed their wishes for the rights to Palestinian self-determination and the creation of a Palestinian state.¹³⁰ More important to the argument is that they adopted the ideologies and tactics of other movements. In general all of the organizations looked to the socialist liberation movements found in the Third World (e.g., the Soviet Union, China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba) and embraced the various forms of a people's liberation movement revolting against imperialism.

¹²⁷ Shadid, *The United States and the Palestinians*, 120.

¹²⁸ Helga Baumgarten, "The Three Faces/Phases of Palestinian Nationalism, 1948-2005," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 34, no. 4 (6, 2005): 26 and 31-33.

¹²⁹ John W Amos, *Palestinian Resistance: Organization of a Nationalist Movement* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1980), xvi and 144; Judith Apter Klinghoffer, *Vietnam, Jews, and the Middle East: Unintended Consequences* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 79.

¹³⁰ Hamid, "What is the PLO?," 96.

Fatah under the leadership of Yasser Arafat sought the financial and military support of China when Arafat visited the country in 1964.¹³¹ In addition to China's support Fatah earned the support of Vietnam, Cuba, and North Korea.¹³² The PLO under the leadership of Ahmed Shukayri went to China in 1965 where Mao Zedong recommended to Shukayri that "there are many people studying military matters in China" and "to go back and take part in fighting."¹³³ Shukayri learned from Mao that a liberation movement can win against imperialism "bit by bit" and by participating in other violent skirmishes in the region they would be able to distract their enemies in the region.¹³⁴ More astonishing is that Shukayri pledged in 1966 to send some of the PLO guerilla fighters to Vietnam to help support the NLF (Viet Cong).¹³⁵

A good example of the adoption of the ideologies and tactics is found in the Marxist-Leninist organization the PFLP led by Palestinian Christian George Habash who argued that his organization's liberation movement must be modeled on the liberation movements of the socialist Third World.¹³⁶ In a speech to Arab students Habash argued that the success of the Vietnamese liberation movement was that the way a group of "people that wages a just people's war through revolutionary organization, a popular front and the mobilization of the masses, through combat proficiency, support by its alliances at international level, can achieve victory and rub the nose of imperialism in the dust." The duty of the "masses" is to declare:

¹³¹ Klinghoffer, *Vietnam, Jews, and the Middle East*, 26; Yazid Şayigh and Institute for Palestine Studies (Washington, D.C.), *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestiniannational Movement, 1949-1993* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 182.

¹³² Şayigh and Institute for Palestine Studies (Washington, D.C.), *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 102 and 147.

¹³³ Klinghoffer, *Vietnam, Jews, and the Middle East*, 26.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

¹³⁶ Leila S Kadi and Munazzamat al-Taḥrīr al-Filasṭīniyah, eds., *Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement* (Beirut: Palestine Liberation Organization, Research Center, 1969), 202.

that the Zionist, imperialist, reactionary enemy, for all his might, for all his war machine, for all his Phantoms, for all his technological superiority—we must declare to him that he can strike as many blows at us as he likes...but he cannot destroy our will to fight, and it is impossible that he should ever be able to do so.¹³⁷

The liberation movement must “prove to the world that there is a problem of a people that can never, under any circumstances, surrender, in spite of all the conspiracies that have been concocted against its destiny for fifty years.”¹³⁸ He also associated the fedayeen forces in the Palestinian movement with the “fifth columns” found in other liberation movements in China, Vietnam, and Cuba.¹³⁹ Habash called on the masses to support the liberation movement’s efforts to form alliances with liberation movements in the Third World and especially with the Soviets and Chinese.¹⁴⁰ Habash visited China and North Korea in November of 1970 to arrange for joint operations with the Japanese Red Army terrorist group and to secure arms during his armed conflict with the Hashemite regime in Jordan.¹⁴¹ Habash’s notion that liberation movements must prove themselves to the world is essential to understanding how they desired and needed to internationalize their movement.

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Tracing the four stages of the Palestinian nationalist movement is important for understanding how and why the organizations internationalized their movement with their adoption of the ideologies and tactics of liberation movements in the Third World and how those methods were used against Western imperialism. This section allows for a

¹³⁷ Speech by the Secretary-General of the Central Committee of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, George Habash, at the Arab University, Beirut, March 19, 1973. “Documents and Source Material: Arab Documents on Palestine February 16-June 1, 1973,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 2, no. 4 (Summer 1973): 173.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 174.

¹³⁹ George Habash, *The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine*, 11.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 177.

¹⁴¹ *Current Biography Yearbook: George Habash*, vol. 49 (New York: H.W. Wilson, 1988), 218.

clearer picture of why the movement made a change from local skirmishes and a reliance on other Arab governments to resist Zionist imperialism to guerilla warfare and terrorism. The feeling of being let down by the Arab governments after 1967 and the end of pan-Arabism allowed Ahmed Shukayri, Yasser Arafat, and especially George Habash to follow the movements of China, Vietnam, North Korea, and Cuba. Through the leaders' visits to these countries and the training some of their fedayeen received the organizations effectively internationalized their movements. The relationships forged between the Palestinians and the other liberation movements allowed them to gain knowledge, training, and financial and military support from these countries. More importantly they were able to bring their nationalist agenda to the international community through their use of transnational terrorism.

It is important for this section to make clear that the efforts of the Palestinian leaders to internationalize their movements made them transnational because of the relationships the leaders made with the leaders of other liberation movements because it established a transnational network of connections between organizations which wanted to liberate themselves from Western imperialism. This network of relationships is important because these Palestinian organizations were non-state actors who had no choice but to rely on the relationships with other states in order to train, equip, and provide legitimacy to their nationalist struggle against imperialism and Israel.

Understanding the shift after 1967 to the use of terrorism and guerilla tactics makes clear how Kissinger's realist Middle East foreign policy of détente was incapable in dealing with the fact that the Palestinian organizations were stateless and used irrational violent

measures to gain political concessions in an international system that relied on interstate diplomacy and indirect multilateral negotiations to end the crises.

The Labor Day Hijackings

Journalist Marvin Kalb later recalled the events of September 6, 1970 as “America's introduction to global terrorism” when four airliners bound for New York from Europe were hijacked by terrorists from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).¹⁴² Three of the flights were diverted to Jordan and the fourth landed in London after an in flight gunfight killed one of the hijackers.¹⁴³ Kissinger, in his memoir *White House Years*, identified these Labor Day hijackings as a national security crisis where U.S. faced “two problems, the safety of the hostages and the future of Jordan,” which was virtually occupied by the PLO during the period and was threatening the safety and stability of the Jordanian government under King Hussein ibn Talal.¹⁴⁴ At one point the administration determined that the stability and security of King Hussein was more important to U.S. national security than the safety of American hostages.¹⁴⁵ The stability of Jordan was important to the administration because Jordan was allied closer to the US than the Soviet Union. Since the aftermath of the 1967 Six Day war King Hussein had placed his “feelers” out looking for peace between the Arabs and the Israelis.¹⁴⁶

The President was at his western retreat in San Clemente, CA when the hijackings occurred. He released a statement through his press secretary, Ronald Ziegler, and chose to remain “indivisible” on the issue as he did with the TWA hijackings in 1969.

¹⁴² *American Experience: Hijacked* (PBS Paramount, 2006).

¹⁴³ “4 Jets Hijacked; One, a 747, Is Blown Up,” *New York Times*, 7 September 1970, 1.

¹⁴⁴ Kissinger, *White House Years*, 602.

¹⁴⁵ Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 49.

¹⁴⁶ Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 196.

Kissinger agreed with the President's decision to remain indivisible on the issue and understood that more important than the hostages was the maintenance of a Western bloc in the negotiations as he feared that the Swiss, Germans, or British would give into the PFLP's requests and release the prisoners to save their own nationals. Kissinger's concern was based on the administration's experiences in Damascus with TWA 840 when the other Western nations released the prisoners before the Americans and Israelis aboard could be negotiated for.¹⁴⁷

Kissinger recounted that the U.S. and Israeli policy of not giving into blackmail by guerillas gave the Israelis the leverage to hold guerillas in Israel; nevertheless Kissinger advised the National Security team to urged negotiations.¹⁴⁸ The administration understood the negotiation as a potential avenue after the eventual success of their negotiations in Damascus in 1969.¹⁴⁹ In a memo to President Nixon, the Deputy Assistant for National Security General Alexander M. Haig, Jr. wrote that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was willing to negotiate with the hijackers for the release of the fedayeen prisoners being held by Switzerland, Federal Republic of Germany, and the United Kingdom.¹⁵⁰ As National Security Advisor, Kissinger told President Nixon on September 8 that the U.S. government was working with the Embassy in Amman, Jordan to insure that the ICRC was able to negotiate with the PFLP. Furthermore, in the memo Kissinger noted that Secretary of Transportation, John A. Volpe, since February 27 had been investigating possible "sophisticated

¹⁴⁷ Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 43.

¹⁴⁸ Kissinger, *White House Years*, 601.

¹⁴⁹ Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 42.

¹⁵⁰ Memorandum from Haig to Nixon, "Middle East Hijacking Status Report," 7 September 1970, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969-1972*, vol. 1, Department of State publication (Washington, DC: Dept. of State, 2005), 47.

surveillance equipment which might be used to detect explosives and other materials which could be used by airplane saboteurs;” an indication that concerns over the hijacking of airliners was developing into a national security concern.¹⁵¹ However, Kissinger, Rogers, and Laird made no comments about the possibility of expanding the presence of federal surveillance at the airports.¹⁵²

The next day, a memo to the President proposed placing armed guards on American domestic and international flights.¹⁵³ Even though the President took a quite public stance on the hijackings he wanted faster improvement of security on aircraft and wanted armed guards on all U.S. aircraft—this was because the President was impressed by the El Al security on the flight that safely ended the hijacking without harming any of the passengers. The President felt that his advisors were not working hard enough to resolve the issue of air security. On September 9 law enforcement and airline officials came to the White House to discuss the issue and, the administration located 125 sky marshals (100 from Treasury Department and FAA, and 25 from the CIA). These numbers were too low for the President and he understood the fact that it would take time to train the remaining 3,000 civilian personnel, so he wanted to use the armed forces. Defense Secretary Melvin Laird was opposed to the idea of the involvement of U.S. military personnel and the federal government in air security. Laird wanted to revise the President’s statement about the armed guards to state that it should involve local law enforcement and that the President should not even be involved in the issue of

¹⁵¹ Memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, “Your 4:30 Meeting on Hijacking,” 8 September 1970, Ibid., 1:50.

¹⁵² Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 44.

¹⁵³ Memorandum for Nixon, “Aircraft Hijacking,” 10 September 1970, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969-1972*, 1:56 The Memorandum outlines the issues of: 1) how intense the arming of guards would possibly be, 2) the costs of the program, 3) when the announcement should be given of the program to the press, and 4) the possible liability held by the Federal Government; there is no indication of approval or disapproval. .

hijacking—just as in the case of TWA flight 840.¹⁵⁴ The President also raised the possibility of an embargo against states that protected the hijackers; Rogers and Kissinger united against the issue (a very rare occurrence) because it would harm the peace process and the fact that the U.S. had little to trade with Syria, Algeria, and other Arab countries.¹⁵⁵

While the administration debated about how to deter future hijackings, the Washington Special Action Group (WSAG)—the administration’s crisis management group—met to hold a discussion about the involvement of military forces to earn the release of the hostages. The group met (without the President) to discuss contingency plans which involved three different scenarios: “extricating” the hostages, the evacuation of all American citizens from Jordan, or the possibility of intervention on behalf of King Hussein should the PLO gain the upper hand in Amman. This discussion is an indication that the administration and Kissinger struggled to determine whether the safety of the hostages or the stability of Jordan was a greater national security concern. Before the WSAG meeting, Kissinger ordered six C-130 aircraft to be moved and on stand-by in Incirlik, Turkey and the USS *Independence* to move into position just southeast of Crete near the Lebanese coast.

The Pentagon advised WSAG that the U.S. military did not have the means to extricate the hostages from the terrorist-held airfield even though a brigade from Europe would be ready within forty-eight hours if necessary. With this news the NSC advised against military intervention because it could elevate the crisis. Kissinger also warned against the encouragement of the Israelis in the freeing of the hostages for the fear that it

¹⁵⁴ Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 44-45.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

may spark another war in the region.¹⁵⁶ By making hijacking a security concern the administration was beginning to understand that the terrorism perpetrated by the PFLP was transnational in that it was aimed at foreigners, especially American and Israeli citizens. Kissinger also understood the complexity of the situation at this time as he and the President struggled to free the hostages in occupied Jordan while they juggled the task of maintaining King Hussein and keeping the Israelis from creating the next Middle East war. Also on September 9, the United Nations Security Council resolution 286 noted concerns for the people aboard the hijacked planes, urged that they should be released, and recommended that states should take the legal actions necessary to prevent future hijackings.¹⁵⁷

In a statement by the President on September 11, 1970—against the wishes of Laird and Kissinger—he outlined his seven point program to deal with “the menace of air piracy.”¹⁵⁸ The proposed program consisted of:

- 1) Placing Government trained armed guards on American airliners
- 2) Ordering the Department of Transportation to ensure that an increase in the use of electronic surveillance performed by American carriers
- 3) That an inter-departmental research program be established to develop new technologies to search for weapons and explosives
- 4) Directing the State Department to work with other governments to combat hijackings
- 5) calling for an international conference to be held at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
- 6) Stating that it was the policy of US government to hold states responsible for allowing the hijackers to pursue blackmail within their borders
- 7) To work with the United Kingdom to bring the issue before the Security Council.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 47.

¹⁵⁷ “United Nations Security Council Resolution 286, 9 September 1970,” <http://un.org/documents/sc/res/1970/scres70.htm>, (accessed 12 November 2008).

¹⁵⁸ Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 47.

¹⁵⁹ United States, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, 1970* (Washington: Federal Register Division, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1971), 291.

This seven point program is an indication that the administration was concerned by the treat of this new transnational terrorism and the effects it could have not just on domestic US airliners, but also international aviation. By calling for an international conference, the administration was working within the traditional international system of gathering states at international organizations (like the UN and ICAO) to solve international crises, but these hijackings were different because they involved non-state actors engaged in international terrorism against many individuals, as opposed to states acting against other states.

On September 12, the PFLP blew up the three planes in the Jordanian desert after all of the hostages were released and escorted to Amman.¹⁶⁰ A memo was prepared in the State Department on September 12 outlining the international efforts to combat hijacking emphasizing that the Tokyo Convention (1963) provided for the immediate return of aircraft, passengers, and crew. The memo also noted the need for future meetings to be held on the convention.¹⁶¹ A telegram sent by the State Department to the embassies outlined Secretary Volpe's statements to be delivered at the ICAO. It also detailed that Nixon had made the decision to use government trained armed guards, to increase the use of electronic surveillance equipment, and that he had directed to Secretary of State William P. Rogers to speak with other governments about how to prevent hijacking.¹⁶²

The U.S. proposal to the ICAO included a section that called on the ICAO to suspend air services in nations which allow for "international blackmail" by detaining

¹⁶⁰ *American Experience*.

¹⁶¹ "Information Memorandum," 12 September 1970, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969-1972*, 1:63.

¹⁶² Telegram 153122 from the Department of State to the Embassy in Lebanon and Other Posts, 17 September 1970, *Ibid.*, 1:71.

aircraft, passengers, and crew and failing to extradite or prosecute the hijackers.¹⁶³ These sanctions indicate that the administration was incapable of determining a way to directly punish the PFLP because they were not formal state actors who could be punished by other states or international organizations. By punishing the states who allowed the “international blackmail” to occur the administration was drawing on its foreign policy experiences of using states to combat national security concerns.

Following the ICAO’s adoption of the U.S. proposal on October 6, Kissinger and his staff prepared a list of possible U.S. sanctions to be imposed on nations which were uncooperative on the issue of hijacking, including: Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, UAR (Egypt continued to use “UAR” as their official name until 1971), Algeria, North Korea, and Cuba. Of importance to the administration’s foreign policies in the region were Jordan (who was the closest Arab ally to working for peace) and Syria and the UAR because of their close ties to the Soviets. Kissinger’s memo detailed the “appropriate sanctions” including: economic sanctions, cessation of the use of specific airports by U.S. airliners, following the ICAO sanctions, and cutting-off loans from the Export-Import Bank.¹⁶⁴

These sanctions represented the complexity of the situation because they were controversial with regards to the fact that they would be against Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and the UAR. If they were applied to Jordan the likelihood that the Jordanian state could

¹⁶³ Briefing Memorandum from Stevenson to Irwin, “Hijacking—US Initiative in the ICAO Council, 28 September 1970, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969-1972*, 1:76; and Telegram 5465 From Embassy in Jordan to the Department of State, 30 September 1970, 77.

¹⁶⁴ Memorandum from Rhineland and Rein to Flanigan, “Air Piracy—Follow on International Action Following Adoption by ICAO of US Resolution,” 9 October 1970, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969-1972*, 1:78; Memorandum from Kissinger to Flanigan, “Possible Actions Against Countries which are Uncooperative on Hijacking,” 31 October 1970, FRUS, 1969-1972 E-1: 79; In order to perform these sanctions the Memorandum recommended the use of the “Trading with the Enemy Act” and the “Export Administration Act” which would sever all financial aid and trade to the states, and possible restrictions on passports and travel.

survive was minimal because the sanctions would jeopardize the stability of King Hussein who was faced with the conflict between his own military and the fedayeen forces in his country. The second problem the sanctions represented was that if they were targeted at Syria, Lebanon, and the UAR it was very likely to alienate those governments to seek additional support from the Soviets. If these Arab governments sought Soviet assistance, the U.S. hopes of a peace negotiation and the balance of power in the region might tip towards the Soviets. Directing these possible sanctions aimed at these states and not the PFLP indicated that the administration did not know how to focus their policies on the organization itself.

Kissinger, on the same day, issued a request to the Chairman of the Under Secretaries Committee John N. Irwin, to develop a list of states uncooperative on hijacking, possible sanctions against them, and to have it ready by November 13. Kissinger based the request on the fact that Nixon had requested on September 11 that the U.S. should hold states where hijacked planes land “responsible.”¹⁶⁵ A detailed report following Kissinger’s request was prepared in a memo to the President on December 13, which outlined in three sections the states that had been uncooperative, possible multilateral sanctions against them, and specific examples of their uncooperativeness.¹⁶⁶

In light of the recent hijackings, the United States pressured the ICAO to draft a convention similar to the Tokyo Convention, but to specifically focus on hijacking and the legal grounds for punishment. In a letter the President thanked Walter Binaghi, the President of the Council at the ICAO for the Council’s concern over the hijackings and

¹⁶⁵ Memorandum from Kissinger to Irwin, “Possible Actions Against Countries which are Uncooperative on Hijacking,” 31 October 1970, *Ibid.*, 1:80.

¹⁶⁶ Memorandum from Irwin to Nixon, “Possible Actions Against Countries which are Uncooperative on Hijacking,” 31 October 1970, *Ibid.*, 1:82.

informed him that he had instructed the U.S. representatives to provide a draft resolution.¹⁶⁷ The seriousness of the situation was evident by the fact that the “Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft” was drafted on December 16, 1970 and entered into force on October 14, 1971.¹⁶⁸ The convention, signed at The Hague, made it clear that it considered:

That unlawful acts of seizure or exercise of control of aircraft in flight [could] jeopardize the safety of persons and property, seriously affect[ing] the operation of air services, and undermine the confidence of the peoples of the world in the safety of civil aviation.

Clearly, hijacking had become a national security concern in the U.S. and abroad. Article 4 and Article 7 are the most important articles of the convention that address the means by which the state determines its “jurisdiction over the offense” and over extradition of the offender.¹⁶⁹ On March 24, 1971 the Executive Secretary of the Department of State, Theodore Eliot, Jr., sent a memo to Kissinger that asked the President to sign off on the Executive branch’s approval of the Hague convention so it could be sent to the Senate to be ratified.¹⁷⁰ The convention was ratified by the Senate on September 14.¹⁷¹

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Just as previous administrations had Nixon’s used indirect multilateral negotiations to resolve hijackings. The President and Kissinger maintained that the State Department was going to take the lead in the negotiations, but only through the use of the

¹⁶⁷ United States, United States, and United States, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, 1971* (Washington: Federal Register Division, National Archive sand Records Service, General Services Administration, 1972), 345.

¹⁶⁸ James LaryTaulbee, *Law Among Nations, An Introduction to Public International Law 8th edition* (Pearson/Longman,2006 8th edition, 2006), 381.

¹⁶⁹ Telegram from the Embassy in the Netherlands to the Department of State, 16 December, 1970, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969-1972*, 1:83.

¹⁷⁰ Memorandum from Eliot to Kissinger, “Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, Recommended for Submission to the Senate,” 24 March 1971, Ibid., 1:84.

¹⁷¹ “Hague.pdf,” <http://www.icao.int/icao/en/leb/Hague.pdf>, (accessed 6 November 2008).

ICRC and the ICAO. The maneuvering by administration's officials in response to news of the hijackings demonstrated that the hijackings on September 6 triggered a momentary national security crisis. Various members from all levels and departments of the Nixon administration met to determine what to do in the immediate future, with respect to the security of civil aviation, but more importantly how to use the international system to deal with transnational Palestinian terrorism. It is clear that the President and Kissinger wanted to use multilateral negotiations to combat the hijackings because the framework allowed for the administration to draft a proposal to punish the states that were uncooperative. Even though the ICAO and the sanctions developed by Kissinger were a form of punishment towards the PFLP for the hijackings they were only capable of punishing the states that were uncooperative because the PFLP was stateless. President Nixon's statement on September 11 shows that he viewed hijacking as a "menace" that must be dealt with and that armed guards and electronic surveillance were a priority for the government to combat the new transnational terrorism. However, the solution was only a domestic solution and did not have the unrelenting support of Kissinger and his NSC, or even the Secretary of Defense. Most importantly and most shockingly, the President and Kissinger's consideration that the stability of King Hussein was a greater national security issue than the safety of the hostages demonstrated the realism of Kissinger's principal foreign policy goal of maintaining a balance of power in the region.

Black September

During the September 6 hijackings of four airliners a crisis emerged in the foreign policy center of the administration as King Hussein's Jordan erupted into a violent crisis between his army and the Palestinian guerilla organization located within the country.

Since the 1967 Six Day war hundreds of thousands of Palestinians had fled to Jordan. One of these Palestinians, Yasser Arafat, the leader of the PLO, effectively set up “Palestinian state within Hussein’s Jordanian Bedouin state.”¹⁷² From the Arafat’s headquarters in the town of Karameh the PLO had carried out guerilla attacks against Israel in the West Bank since 1967 and allowed for small violent skirmishes between the PLO and Israel in Jordan contradicting Hussein’s minute attempts for peace with Israel. By hijacking planes and holding Europeans, Israelis, and Americans George Habash’s PFLP successfully blew flames onto an already simmering fire within Jordan.

In the wake of the hijackings, according to a paper prepared by the State Department’s Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Amman was in a “near-anarchical condition” as shootings, theft, random searches by fedayeen forces (Palestinians and members of the PLO) at makeshift roadblocks, and skirmishes between the “Palestinian commandos” (fedayeen) and the Jordanian army happened on the streets.¹⁷³ In response to this crisis the U.S. administration formed three objectives:

- 1) to maintain King Hussein’s power during the crisis
- 2) to save the hostages
- 3) to prevent the British, Germans, and Swiss from making separate deals with the Palestinian terrorists

WSAG met to work out a strategy using the three objectives. Under the leadership of Kissinger the group met each day of the seventeen day crisis with the Secretary of Near Eastern Affairs, the deputy Secretary of Defense, the Undersecretary of State, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the head of the CIA. The intentional exclusion

¹⁷² Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*, 95.

¹⁷³ “Paper Prepared by the NEA Working Group in the Department of State Operations Center,” 7 September 1970, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXIV, Middle East Region and Arabian Peninsula, 1969-1972; Jordan, September 1970*, Department of State publication (Washington, DC: Dept. of State), 208.

of Laird and Rogers effectively moved the deliberation from those departments to the NSC in the White House—a primary goal of the President and Kissinger since the beginning of the administration.¹⁷⁴ As a result of the WSAG meetings the administration increased the presence of U.S. armed forces in the area and moved the Sixth Fleet to the eastern Mediterranean.¹⁷⁵ In the first few days of the crisis, the WSAG recommended that King Hussein use his army against the fedayeen, but Hussein was reluctant.¹⁷⁶

In a report from Secretary Rogers to embassies in the region, he pointed out that the Soviets could side with the Arabs on the issue of Jordan and that the U.S. should take into consideration Iraq's (and later Syria's) potential support of the fedayeen.¹⁷⁷ Building on this concern of Soviet support of Arab governments and Iraq's possible attack on Jordan, the WSAG discussed possible U.S. air involvement if Hussein asked for it, or whether the Israelis should provide it. The consensus was that either option would jeopardize U.S.-Soviet relations in the region as it was most certain that if the U.S. or Israel got involved the Soviets would support Iraq and ultimately end the peace process for a time.¹⁷⁸ The three remaining planes from the Labor Day hijackings were blown up in the Jordanian desert on September 12, and a tentative and delicate cease fire remained between the fedayeen and the Jordanian army.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 196-197.

¹⁷⁵ Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 197; "Minutes of a Combined Washington Special Actions Group and Review Group Meeting" 9 September 1970, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXIV, Middle East Region and Arabian Peninsula, 1969-1972; Jordan, September 1970*, 214; Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 47.

¹⁷⁶ Telegram from Embassy in Jordan to State Department, 9 September 1970, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXIV, Middle East Region and Arabian Peninsula, 1969-1972; Jordan, September 1970*, 217.

¹⁷⁷ Rogers to Certain Diplomatic Ports, 10 September 1970, *Ibid.*, 220.

¹⁷⁸ Minutes from the WSAG, 10 September 1970, *Ibid.*, 222.

¹⁷⁹ Steven L Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 197.

By the night of September 15 Kissinger and the administration learned that King Hussein had chosen to face-off against the fedayeen. He learned that Hussein established a military government the following morning to be posted around the city and await any offensive by the fedayeen.¹⁸⁰ King Hussein struggled with this decision to use his own forces to face-off against the fedayeen because he feared that his army may split along Jordanian and Palestinian sides and that he feared that his military could have to rely on U.S. or Israeli forces to bail them out.¹⁸¹ Kissinger expressed his concerns about Hussein's intervention against the fedayeen to Nixon and cautioned that it could fail, destabilize U.S.-Soviet relations by requiring either's involvement, and possibly involve the Israelis.¹⁸² In the early morning hours of the September 17, Hussein ordered his troops to attack and because of fears of Syrian intervention the U.S. positioned its armed forces in Cyprus, Crete, and Turkey to support Jordan.¹⁸³ This positioning of U.S. armed forces in the Mediterranean clearly shows the administration's concern that Syria and Iraq, with the support of the Soviet Union, might become involved in the crisis and potentially cause the collapse of Jordan. By stationing its armed forces in the area, the administration demonstrated that it understood that it might be able to prevent the loss of Jordan, but would only intervene directly if absolutely necessary because of the fear of further Soviet involvement that may tip more Arab governments to enter the conflict.

¹⁸⁰ Kissinger to Nixon, 15 September 1970, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXIV, Middle East Region and Arabian Peninsula, 1969-1972; Jordan, September 1970*, 246.

¹⁸¹ Nigel J. Ashton, "Pulling the Strings: King Hussein's Role during the Crisis of 1970 in Jordan," *The International History Review* 28, no. 1 (March 2006): 106-109.

¹⁸² Kissinger to Nixon, 16 September 1970, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXIV, Middle East Region and Arabian Peninsula, 1969-1972; Jordan, September 1970*, 247.

¹⁸³ Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 196; Haig to Kissinger, 17 September 1970, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXIV, Middle East Region and Arabian Peninsula, 1969-1972; Jordan, September 1970*, 253; Minutes of WSAG Meeting, 17 September 1970, FRUS, 1969-1976 XXIV: 254 United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXIV, Middle East Region and Arabian Peninsula, 1969-1972; Jordan, September 1970*, 253.

On September 19, Kissinger learned that the Israelis had spotted Syrian tanks moving towards the Jordanian border. The administration witnessed Soviet advisors jump off of the Syrian tanks as they rolled into northern Jordan.¹⁸⁴ The Jordanians had been under the fire of the Syrian tanks near Dar'a. The Iraqis remained out of the fighting, although Iraq had two units in Jordan at that time. Because of this Israeli intelligence the administration learned that the Soviets were concerned about U.S. or Israel intervention, but there was no indication early on September 19 that the U.S. acknowledged the Soviet concern.¹⁸⁵ In a memo from Helmut Sonnenfeldt (a member of the NSC team) to Kissinger advised that the Soviets were concerned about how "outside" intervention might amplify the current hostilities and "force them into the unpalatable decision of going to the defense of the Arab states with their own personnel." Sonnenfeldt also warned that the Soviets wanted to make clear to the U.S. that the "Middle East is a Soviet preserve where the U.S. can no longer act with impunity." The memo concluded that the Soviets did not want any outside intervention (U.S. or Israeli) even if it solved the crisis in the region, but "would probably prefer to see the King remain in power."¹⁸⁶ Sonnenfeldt's advice to Kissinger regarding the Soviet threat of military support on behalf of the Arab governments and that the region was a "Soviet preserve" proves that the administration's and Kissinger's concerns of direct Soviet intervention in the crisis was rooted in fact, but also the delegacy of maintaining a balance of power in a region was of interest to both superpowers. The U.S. publicly condemned Syria for its involvement and developed a military supply package to be used by the Jordanian

¹⁸⁴ Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 49.

¹⁸⁵ Memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, 19 September 1970, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXIV, Middle East Region and Arabian Peninsula, 1969-1972; Jordan, September 1970*, 272.

¹⁸⁶ Memorandum from Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, 19 September 1970, *Ibid.*, 273.

government if needed. The U.S. offered to make sure that the Sixth Fleet was available to aid if requested and that an airlift of military and hospital supplies from Turkey was on alert.¹⁸⁷

In an NSC meeting during the morning of September 21 the council discussed the possibility of Israeli involvement in Jordan. They understood that while Israel had no territorial aims, it did see the elimination of the PLO from Jordan as a plus. They also understood that Israel wanted U.S. support against any possible Soviet retaliation on behalf of the Arab governments. All parties involved—the U.S., Israel, and Jordan—agreed to the use of Israeli forces and wanted to make clear whether or not Hussein was willing to use them.¹⁸⁸ King Hussein understood the potential value of Israeli airstrikes, but did not see the value of Israeli ground forces because he grew suspicious of Israeli intentions after 1967.¹⁸⁹ The Jordanian town of Irbid fell to the Syrians by the morning of September 21 and as a result Hussein authorized the potential use of Israeli airstrikes to combat Syrian forces already present and to prevent the movement of future Iraqi forces.¹⁹⁰ By the morning of September 23 no Israeli forces were used and a new cease-fire was reached between the Jordanian army and the fedayeen.¹⁹¹ A conference was convened on September 22 in Cairo by Arab governments concerned about the Jordan

¹⁸⁷ Memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, 20 September 1970, *Ibid.*, 275.

¹⁸⁸ Minutes of NSC Meeting, 21 September 1970, 8:45 a.m *Ibid.*, 299.

¹⁸⁹ Nigel J. Ashton, "Pulling the Strings: King Hussein's Role during the Crisis of 1970 in Jordan," *The International History Review* 28, no. 1 (March 2006): 105; Nigel John Ashton, *King Hussein of Jordan: A Political Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 135-157.

¹⁹⁰ Memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, 21 September 1970, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXIV, Middle East Region and Arabian Peninsula, 1969-1972; Jordan, September 1970*, 305.

¹⁹¹ Memorandum from Saunders to Kissinger, 23 September 1970, *Ibid.*, 322.

crisis. They appointed Sudanese President Jaafar Muhammad al-Nimeiry as the mediator between Arafat and Hussein.¹⁹²

During a phone conversation between Dobrynin and Kissinger on the evening of September 24 the two discussed the invasion of Jordan by Syrian forces (September 19) about the knowledge of the invasion by the Soviets. Dobrynin assured Kissinger that the Soviets had no prior knowledge of the Syrian intent to invade and that Soviet advisors dropped off tanks to the Syrians before the invasion. Kissinger understood this to be a contradictory statement in his memo of the conversation the following day since Israeli intelligence notified the administration of the invasion and that the administration witnessed Soviet advisors dismount the tanks on the day of the invasion.¹⁹³ In Dobrynin's memo of the conversation, he detailed Kissinger's questions of Soviet involvement in Jordan, but did not make any specific reference to Kissinger's concerns over Soviet involvement in the Syrian invasion. Dobrynin focused more on the concerns of the Soviet government that the U.S. should increase its restraining influence on Israel and King Hussein in the hopes of a peace settlement—this position is not mentioned by Kissinger in his memo. Dobrynin also reported that the U.S. has no interests in U.S. direct military involvement in the crisis in Jordan, but only that preparations were for security purposes.¹⁹⁴

By the morning of September 26 the cease-fire remained intact and Nimeiry returned to Cairo with Arafat to speak with Egyptian President Gamael Abdel Nasser.

¹⁹² Minutes from WSAG, 21 September 1970, Ibid., 303 (n. 2).

¹⁹³ Memorandum of Conversation, 25 September 1970, 10 a.m., Keefer et al., *Soviet-American Relations the Détente Years, 1969-1972*, 82; Memorandum of Conversation, 25 September 1970, 10 a.m., United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XII, Soviet Union, January 1969-October 1970*, 218.

¹⁹⁴ Memorandum of Conversation (USSR), 25 September 1970, Keefer et al., *Soviet-American Relations the Détente Years, 1969-1972*, 84.

All parties opposed Hussein and felt that the PLO was under attack by the U.S. and Israel.¹⁹⁵ September 27 saw the signing of a cease-fire agreement between Arafat and Hussein at the Cairo Hilton. By 19:25 GMT the fedayeen and Jordanian forces were to cease all military actions. Arafat and Hussein agreed to withdraw all fedayeen and Jordanian forces from Amman, restore law and order as it was prior to the crisis, and end the military government.¹⁹⁶ Unfortunately violence remained between the fedayeen and the Jordanian army until June 1971 when the Jordanian army crushed the PLO, which fled to Lebanon.

§

What the Labor Day hijackings and Black September represent is a period in which the President and Kissinger faced a new national security crisis triggered by the new entity of Palestinian terrorism which involved American citizens as hostages and how their policy of maintaining “moderate” Arab governments was juxtaposed against Kissinger’s pursuit of détente in the region.¹⁹⁷ The President and Kissinger were troubled over whether the safety of the hostages was the primary concern at the start of the crisis or whether the possibility of the loss of Jordanian state could be prevented with the use of U.S. air and land forces. Kissinger also considered whether or not the U.S. should encourage the Israelis to fill the void. Either option would cause a shift in the balance of power in the region because the Soviets would intervene on behalf of the Arabs. These events clearly show the President’s reluctance to elevate Middle East terrorism above a secondary concern as he chose to remain relatively hands-off, with the exception of

¹⁹⁵ Memorandum from Haig to Nixon, 26 September 1970, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXIV, Middle East Region and Arabian Peninsula, 1969-1972; Jordan, September 1970*, 328.

¹⁹⁶ Memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, 28 September 1970, *Ibid.*, 330. *FRUS, 1969-1976 XXIV*: 330.

¹⁹⁷ Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger*, 223.

asking for armed guards and embargos. Since TWA 840 the President and Kissinger agreed that counterterrorism was the responsibility of the State Department because it freed up the President and the NSC to focus on the more pressing issues of détente with the Soviets and on the Vietnam War. This “official” detachment of the President and the NSC from counterterrorism harmed their efforts to effectively respond to the hijackings, rescue the hostages, and support King Hussein. Because the President had instructed the State Department to work with the ICAO and other states to resolve the crisis the administration did not understand how to work with the Palestinian organizations directly; partly due to the fact that U.S. relationships with the Arab governments were hindered by the events of 1967 and the fact that negotiations through other parties worked in the TWA 840 case.

The invasion of Syrian forces, supported by Soviet advisors, was a fear of the administration because the balance in the region could have been tipped if either the U.S. or Israelis retaliated. This calculation by the NSC and Kissinger indicates that he understood the importance of the balance between the Soviets and the U.S. and the relationships between the Soviets and the radical Arab governments. Kissinger’s choice to position C-130s and the Sixth Fleet indicates his uncertainty of whether interstate diplomacy could resolve the issue, or if U.S. military intervention was necessary to deter the radical Arab governments and the Soviets.

Most importantly, these events show how hijackings, which used to be a “domestic inconvenience”, became “terrifying political theatre on [the] global stage.”¹⁹⁸ This political theater showed how Palestinian nationalists successfully used hijacking and guerilla warfare as their tool to bring their liberation movement to the global stage and

¹⁹⁸ Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 52.

involve many different states and international organizations. Even though the PFLP used hostages as their bargaining chip they were only successful in making political statements. The fedayeen and the PLO were successful in earning the support of radical Arab governments for a time, but ultimately lost as the PLO fled to Beirut in 1971. The administration was initially successful in its calls for increased security at U.S. airports and the adoption of the Hague Convention to combat hijackings, but they saw no need to pursue additional measures because no lives were lost. The unsuccessful attempts by the PLO to create their own Palestinian state in Jordan meant that the administration was successful in its attempts to sustain King Hussein, but because the U.S. was not directly involved in the Cairo agreement violence and instability remained in Jordan for another year. It was not until two years later that the President and Kissinger took Palestinian terrorism more seriously when their and international efforts failed to save lives in September 1972.

The Munich Massacre

Before sunrise on September 5, 1972, a twenty-three hour ordeal began which left eleven Israeli Olympic athletes, one West German police officer, and five Palestinian nationalists dead—all members of Black September Organization (BSO). The BSO, posthumously named for the Black September incident in Jordan where the PLO was forcibly removed, was a very militant arm of the PLO, more specifically of Fatah. Two Israelis were shot in the very beginning of the ordeal on September 5 by the members of BSO who broke into the Olympic Village in Munich housing the apartment building where the Israelis were sleeping. Nine of the remaining Israeli athletes were taken hostage and soon shot to death in a shootout at the Fürstenfeldbruck airbase between the

BSO and West German police.¹⁹⁹ This massacre played a crucial part in U.S. national security concerns as the terrorist attack once again brought into focus the need for international cooperation to combat transnational terrorism. The event also triggered discussions within the administration about the safety of foreign officials/diplomats in the U.S. and the threat of Palestinian terrorism to the peace process.

While the global community watched the events unfold live on their televisions the administration set up a task force in the State Department to deal with the situation and the Executive Protection Service was ordered to protect German, Israeli, Arab, and Soviet delegations in Washington and New York.²⁰⁰ President Nixon spoke to reporters on the Golden Gate Pier in San Francisco around one p.m. in the afternoon on September 5 concerning the attack on Israeli athletes in Munich. Nixon told the reporters that he spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir on the phone and that “she could expect total cooperation from the Government of the United States in any way that would be helpful in obtaining the release of the hostages.” The President said that he learned from Meir that Israeli intelligence knew nothing of the possibility of the attack and that these “international outlaws” would “stoop to anything in order to accomplish their goals.” Nixon said that the U.S. and Israel should work together in the future to “anticipate that Israeli citizens traveling abroad would be subjected to such activities in the future” and that the U.S. government only had the ability through diplomatic channels to voice their concerns if another attack happened outside the U.S. Nixon also told the reporters that

¹⁹⁹ For monographs about the events see: Serge Groussard, *The Blood of Israel: The Massacre of the Israeli Athletes, the Olympics, 1972* (New York: Morrow, 1975); Aaron J Klein, *Striking Back: The 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre and Israel's Deadly Response* (New York: Random House, 2005); Simon Reeve, *One Day in September: The Full Story of the 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre and the Israeli Revenge Operation "Wrath of God"*, 1st ed. (New York: Arcade, 2000) David Binder, “A 23-Hour Drama,” *New York Times*, 6 September 1972, 1.

²⁰⁰ Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 54-57.

the U.S. would work to provide proper intelligence and security for Israelis traveling in the U.S.²⁰¹

A memo from National Security staffer Samuel Hoskinson to Kissinger, said that the “terrorists” took the hostages to the airbase outside Munich and were demanding the release of 200 Arabs being held by Israel. Hoskinson outlined the “stunned” attitudes in the embassy in Tel Aviv and that the public attitude towards the West Germans was already “sensitive.” He felt that if something else should happen to the Israelis it would hurt the public attitudes towards peace with the Arabs. Hoskinson also told Kissinger that the Israeli security forces were warned by West German security of a possible attack. The memo concludes by saying that the State Department:

is at a loss over how to apply effective leverage on the terrorists. The best they could come up with today was a cable to the major European capitals plus Jidda and Kuwait (the big financial contributors to the fedayeen) calling on them to use whatever influence they may have in Arab capitals or elsewhere to bring pressure to bear on the terrorists.²⁰²

During the evening of the September 5 the President and Kissinger were concerned about Israeli anger. Israeli officials wanted the U.S. to pressure the International Olympic Committee to cancel the remainder of the games in protest. Kissinger—whose ability to directly shape the diplomatic responses to terrorism after Rogers’s humiliation over the second Rogers Plan and Black September—met with General Haig to attempt to discourage the Israelis from this idea because they knew that Nixon (who they did not

²⁰¹ United States, United States, and United States, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, 1974* (Washington: Federal Register Division, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1975), 287.

²⁰² Memorandum from Hoskinson to Kissinger, “Munich Situation as of 5:30 EDT,” 5 September 1972, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969-1972*, 1:90.

wake up for this discussion) saw that this scenario would play into the hands of the Palestinians.²⁰³

In another memo from Hoskinson to Kissinger on September 6, Hoskinson called the attempt by the West German police to rescue the hostages and the resulting loss of the lives of the nine remaining Israelis was the “most dramatic and outrageous incident since fedayeen radicals hijacked five [sic] aircraft over Labor Day weekend two years ago.” He advised Kissinger to direct other officials to take a “statesmanlike posture” since there was little that could be done at that point.²⁰⁴ The concern over the Munich massacre to U.S. national security became evident in conversations between Nixon, General Haig, Rogers, and U.S. Attorney General Richard Kleindienst. In those conversations Haig said that he was worried that the Israelis would respond to the crisis by possibly attacking Lebanon. Ten minutes later Nixon told Haig that “any nation that harbors or gives sanctuary to these international outlaws we will cut off all economic support—obviously Lebanon. Jordan’s another.” Haig replied, “We may have some Chinese problem on this” and Nixon responded, “Screw the Chinese on this one. Be very tough.”

General Haig then called Rogers and told him of Nixon’s request to “break relations with nations that harbor or give sanctuary to these guerrillas.” Rogers protested, “He can’t do that, especially when we don’t know which nations. What we are trying to do tonight—we are trying to get some protection against a JDL [Jewish Defense League] blowup. We are taking whatever security precautions there are to take.” Haig commented that he told Nixon this and Rogers believed that, “we did everything we could. We got in touch with the Olympic Delegation, sent out telegrams, talked to the

²⁰³ Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 55.

²⁰⁴ Memorandum from Hoskinson to Kissinger, 6 September 1972, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969-1972*, 1:92.

German Government . . . and . . . talked today about what kind of reprisals we might make.” Haig, wanting to cool the situation, suggested that “tomorrow we should call for calm” and Rogers said, “There are financial angles—Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.” Haig agreed to the financial angles and said, “he always wants to do something. We have to be careful not to do something he will regret.”

Later that night Nixon called Haig and said that he wanted to go to the Israelis’ funerals, but Haig feared that it would be a “slap for the Germans” who were already getting criticism. Haig then called Rogers about the matter of attending the funeral and Rogers suggested “a day of mourning in Washington with flags at half mast.” Haig, worried, replied that “all I am worried about is some cynics coming back and saying, ‘You are bombing the hell out of Vietnam.’” Rogers replied, “I suppose they will say that, but for Christ’s sake, it is like somebody you shouldn’t have gone to the funeral or something.” Haig agreed and called Attorney General Kleindienst about the day of mourning.²⁰⁵

In a conversation between Nixon, Kissinger, Rogers, and Haig on September 6 they discussed what should be the U.S. reaction to Munich. President Nixon told Kissinger that he wanted Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir to go to the International Olympic Committee and tell them that the Munich games should proceed. Nixon feared that the terrorists wanted the U.S. and Israel to pull out of the games or even call for a cancellation of the games, but if they continued it would not draw more attention than what had already been drawn. Kissinger suggested that Rogers should go to the United Nations and get the Security Council to discuss international rules on the harboring of terrorists. He believed this was a way of preventing Israeli retaliation and involving the

²⁰⁵ Text of conversations found in “Editorial Note,” *Ibid.*, 1:91.

international community on the issue.²⁰⁶ Rogers agreed that it would prevent retaliation on the part of Israel.²⁰⁷ President Nixon continued to press Kissinger on Rogers's earlier suggestion for the lowering the flags, but Kissinger argued this may be inappropriate because the U.S. did not do it for the deaths of Irishmen in Belfast. Nixon agreed and suggested that he would make a sudden appearance at a church in Washington during the time of the funeral for the athletes as to make it a personal statement rather than a national one.²⁰⁸

The President was concerned about the domestic fallout after Munich because of the "trouble with the Jews." He told Kissinger and Haig, "is that they've always played these things in terms of outrage. You've got the Jewish Defense League raising hell and saying we ought to kill every Arab diplomat." The President feared what the American Jewish community would do in response to Munich. "You don't really know, Henry, what the Jewish community will do on this. It's going to be the goddamnest thing you've ever saw." The President called the Palestinian terrorists "international outlaws" who are unpredictable and was upset that Lebanon allowed the PLO to stay in Beirut after they were kicked out of Jordan. The President's Chief of Staff, Haldeman, agreed with the President and told him that they must find a way to solve the situation. Nixon responded by saying that Rogers was seeking suggestions from other states.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ Conversation 771-2, Oval Office, 6 September 1972, 8:13 to 9:48 a.m. "Nixon Tapes," <http://www.whitehousetapes.net/tapes/nixon/chron>, (accessed 16 March 2009).

²⁰⁷ Memorandum from Haig for the President's File, "President's Meeting with Secretary of State Rogers, Dr. Kissinger and M/Gen. Haig," 6 September 1972, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969-1972*, 1:94.

²⁰⁸ Conversation 771-5, Oval Office, 6 September 1972, 9:53 to 12:38 p.m., "Nixon Tapes", (accessed 16 March 2009).

²⁰⁹ Conversation 772-6, Oval Office, 7 September 1972, 10:32 am to 10:40 a.m., *Ibid.*, (accessed 16 March 2009).

Kissinger's concerns were more focused on the international fallout as he feared that Israelis would start another Middle East War over Munich. Kissinger told the President that he feared the Israelis would react like the Austrians in World War I and invade Lebanon.²¹⁰ However, the administration's fears came true as Israeli air forces attacked PLO bases in Syria and Beirut. Three Syrian jets were destroyed as was a railway between Syria and Beirut. Nixon was willing to accept the invasion, but feared that Israelis would soon attack much larger targets.²¹¹

In a conversation between Israeli ambassador to the U.S. Yitzhak Rabin and Rogers, Rabin expressed his concern over the possibility of an anti-terrorist agreement failing to pass in the Security Council with China as the President of the Council. Rogers assured Rabin that it would be passed as they were buttressing the proposal with anti-hijacking legislation as a means to pass it through the council. Rabin then wanted the U.S. government to speak with Arab states believed to support terrorists, to "explain to Cairo, Beirut, and Damascus that as long as they offered their territory as refuge for groups acting against Israel, or as staging areas for actions in their states, they would have to take responsibility," and to ask European governments to make efforts against "terrorist organizations" within Europe. Rogers and Rabin then agreed that Munich could hurt the peace process and that it played into the hands of those who committed the act, which was a major component of the secular Palestinian nationalist agenda. The

²¹⁰ Conversation 771-2, Oval Office, 6 September 1972, 8:13 to 9:48 a.m., *Ibid.*, (accessed 16 March 2009).

²¹¹ Reeve, *One Day in September*, 152-153.

meeting ended with an agreement that the games should go on and that both sides would recommend an increase in security.²¹²

In a telegram to his embassies, Rogers said that the President had placed him in control of mobilizing the international community to combat terrorism. He also wanted the staff in the embassies to work with leaders in Arab governments to convince them that their support of Arab terrorists was not in the best interests of their states. These actions by the terrorist harmed Middle East peace and Munich had “markedly raised tension in the Middle East.” He concluded by instructing his staff to tell the Arab governments that they should publicly condemn the BSO and all fedayeen for their acts of terrorism.²¹³ U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, George H.W. Bush, was instructed on September 14 to forward a letter to UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim from Rogers about the U.S. interests in continuing a dialogue on the combating of terrorism.²¹⁴ With the letter forwarded to Waldheim, the UN General Assembly made room on the agenda to discuss the combating of terrorism.

In a memo to Nixon, Rogers outlined other steps taken to combat terrorism including the creation of two special committees in the Department of State under Deputy Secretary, John Irwin. One was to encourage international cooperation to combat terrorism chaired by Assistant Secretary, Joseph Sisco, and the second to “protect foreign persons and in the United States” chaired by Deputy Under Secretary, William Macomber. These special committees coordinated an increased effort to screen more

²¹² Telegram 164170 from Department of State to Embassy in Israel, “Munich Incident: Secretary—Rabin Conversation,” 6 September 1972, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969-1972*, 1:98.

²¹³ Circular Telegram 164986 from Department of State to Embassy in United Kingdom and Other Posts, “Combating of Terrorism,” 9 September 1972, *Ibid.*, 1:99.

²¹⁴ Telegram 169556 from Department of State to the Mission at the UN, 14 September 1972, *Ibid.*, 1:100.

closely the Visa applications of potential terrorists, look at how to observe and tighten controls over foreign organizations with ties to terrorism, and directed the U.S. representatives to work with INTERPOL to develop a program to use their resources to combat transnational terrorism.²¹⁵

A week after the Israeli airstrikes on PLO targets in Syria and Lebanon, Israeli armored divisions invaded southern Lebanon and destroyed 130 homes of suspected Palestinian militants.²¹⁶ In response the President in his meeting with George H.W. Bush, Rogers and Kissinger identified Munich as a test of U.S.-Israeli relations.²¹⁷ The administration learned of the possibility that Israel's friends in Congress were beginning to influence public sympathies regarding Soviet unwillingness to allow for the free emigration of Soviet Jews. The administration believed that the play on public sympathies aimed to undermine détente. The President and Nixon agreed that Israel might use Munich as a way to force the U.S. to pressure Moscow to allow the emigration through measures other than détente with the Soviets.²¹⁸ Later that day, the President realized that Munich was not a strain on détente, but preventing future terrorist attacks and the safety of foreign diplomats in the U.S. remained a national security concern.

A very rare and strange moment in U.S. history occurred as the President learned of some troubling information from alleged psychic Jeanne Dixon. After Rogers, Bush, and Kissinger left the Oval Office, the President used his secretary, Rose Mary Woods, to learn about Dixon's latest prophetic vision. The President learned, by way of Woods, of

²¹⁵ Memorandum from Rogers to Nixon, "Measures to Combat Terrorism," 18 September 1972, Ibid., 1:102.

²¹⁶ Reeve, *One Day in September*, 153.

²¹⁷ Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 57.

²¹⁸ Conversation 783-4, Oval Office, 19 September 1972, 10:39 am to 11:16 am, "Nixon Tapes," (accessed 16 March 2009).

Dixon's prophesy that a major terrorist attack would occur against either an Israeli official in the U.S. or an American political figure.²¹⁹ Later that evening, Nixon called Haig to see if the FBI had developed any contingency plans to protect foreign diplomats in Washington and New York.²²⁰

At this point Kissinger still saw the main fallout of Munich was the threat of Israeli overreaction that could cause another war. Kissinger developed the idea of a cabinet level committee to deter the Israelis by showing that the U.S. was hard on international terrorism. Kissinger saw this committee as small gesture towards the Israelis, but the President saw it more as an opportunity to combat the major terrorist event prophesized by Dixon. On September 21, the President confessed the source of his concerns about potential terrorism to Kissinger and that

They are desperate that they will kidnap somebody. They may shoot somebody... We have got to have a plan. Suppose they kidnap Rabin, Henry, and demand that we release all blacks who are prisoners around the United States, and we didn't and they shoot him? What, the Christ, do we do? We are going to give in to it... We have got to have contingency plans for hijacking, for kidnapping, for all sorts of things happen around here.²²¹

Kissinger drew up the plans for the committee the over the next few days even though he and the NSC did not see it as more than a gesture. The President insisted that the directors of the FBI and CIA be members of the committee in order to help protect Israelis and American Jews.²²²

On September 25, Nixon sent a memo to the "heads of important departments and agencies" which outlined his desire to establish a Cabinet Committee to Combat

²¹⁹ Conversation 783-25, Oval Office, 19 September 1972, 3:27 pm to 3:42 pm, Ibid., (accessed 16 March 2009).

²²⁰ Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 58.

²²¹ Conversation 784-7, Oval Office, 21 September 1972, 10:15 am to 10:50 am, "Nixon Tapes," (accessed 16 March 2009).

²²² Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 59.

Terrorism (CCCT), to be chaired by Rogers. This CCCT would look at possible means to combat terrorism “here and abroad” and develop governmental procedures to combat transnational terrorism “swiftly and effectively.” The CCCT was to be made up of the Secretaries of State, Defense and Transportation, the Attorney General, the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, the Directors of the CIA and FBI, and the Assistants to the President for the National Security Affairs and Domestic Affairs.²²³ Even though the CCCT was a cabinet level committee to combat terrorism it met only once during the administration in October 1972. Following the establishment of the Cabinet Committee, Rogers oversaw the coordinating of inter-agency intelligence, the tightened control over Visas and the procedures involved in immigration and customs, contingency planning if a terrorist attack was to occur in the U.S., and improvement of relations between the CCCT and Congress.²²⁴

The anti-terrorism actions in the UN General Assembly were summarized in documents prepared by NSC staffers, Richard Kennedy and Fernando Rondon to Kissinger. They said that the UN Secretary General, Waldheim, would bring up the agenda item of terrorism on November 1 and that the Department of State hoped that it will draft a UN working group to tackle the issue in the following year. They continued on to say that the “Terrorism Convention” as of date provided for punishment or extradition of individuals who commit terrorism, i.e., murder and kidnapping “outside the terrorist’s state of nationality; outside the territory of the state at which the terror is

²²³ Memorandum from Nixon to the Heads of Departments and Agencies, “Action to Combat Terrorism,” 25 September 1972, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969-1972*, 1:109; and Memorandum from Nixon to Rogers, “Action to Combat Terrorism,” 25 September 1972, FRUS, 1969-1972 E-1: 110.

²²⁴ Memorandum from Rogers to Nixon, “Actions to Combat International Terrorism, 7 November 1972, *Ibid.*, 1:115.

directed, i.e., the Munich Olympics; within the territory of the state at which the terror is directed but against third country nationals, i.e., the Lod Airport killings.” In another memo to Kissinger, Kennedy outlined how in the General Assembly there has been a discussion over “jurisdictional responsibilities” so that a government can respond “quickly, effectively and in full cooperation.”²²⁵ The text of the terrorism resolution as it was adopted by the General Assembly condemned terrorism against innocent people, “invites states to take all appropriate measures at the national level, with a view to the speedy and final elimination of the problem [terrorism],” and called for the creation of a UN ad hoc committee to look further into the terrorism convention.²²⁶

Following Nixon’s promise to Meir in his September 5 phone conversation the House of Representatives passed H.R. 15883 on October 24, 1972 “making acts of terrorism against foreign diplomats and specified guest a federal offense.”²²⁷ This gave the government the authority to deal with such acts in a manner that would be swift and effective. The act allowed for the use of Secret Service and Executive Protection Service agents to protect foreign dignitaries at diplomatic posts in Washington and at UN missions in New York City.²²⁸ The passage of this act was a result of encouragement by Secretary Rogers and President Nixon.

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²²⁵ Underline is found in the original source; Memorandum from Rondon and Kennedy to Kissinger, “Terrorism: United Nations Actions,” 25 October 1972, *Ibid.*, 1:113; and Memorandum from Kennedy to Kissinger, “Status of USG Actions Against Terrorism,” 1 November 1972, FRUS, 1969-1972 E-1: 114.

²²⁶ Telegram 5526 from Mission to the UN to the Mission to NATO, “Terrorism,” 13 December 1972, *Ibid.*, 1:119.

²²⁷ Congress, House, Protection of Diplomats Act of 1972, 92nd Congress, H.R. 15883, (24 October 1972); United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969-1972*, vol. 1 and Memorandum from Kennedy to Kissinger, “Status of USG Actions Against Terrorism,” 1 November 1972, FRUS, 1969-1972 E-1: 114.

²²⁸ Memorandum from Rogers to Nixon, “Actions to Combat International Terrorism, 7 November 1972, *Ibid.*, 1:115.

Perhaps the most frightening aspect of Munich was not that it involved “lunatic acts of terrorism, abduction and blackmail, which tear asunder the web of international life,” but a photograph in the *New York Times* of one of the BSO members wearing a ski mask looking down from the balcony outside the apartment where the Israeli athletes were attacked.²²⁹ This frightening image of a Palestinian terrorist with his face covered provided the image of the evilness spawned by Palestinian nationalism against innocent Israeli athletes at the peaceful Olympic Games. The Israelis responded to this image and the death of their citizens through “Operation Wrath of God” to assassinate those responsible for the Munich Massacre. Organized under “Committee X” which was lead by Meir, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, General Aharon Yarviv, and Mossad Director Yvi Zamir, they organized a list of targets made up of BSO and PLO members who would be killed to prevent future attacks against Israel.²³⁰

Beyond the photograph and the Mossad assassinations, the Munich massacre brought forth perceptions of transnational terrorism in the administration and associated it with a national security crisis. This attack brought into question how not only the U.S. should respond to this attack, but also how Israel should respond, and whether backing out of the Olympics would play into the hands of the Palestinian nationalists. By stimulating debates between Nixon’s advisors over how the U.S. should give their condolences demonstrates how important the U.S. image is seen around the world, but more importantly in the Middle East.²³¹ Within the Nixon administration, concerns developed over how the attack could have an impact on a peace process and America’s

²²⁹ Terrance, Smith, “Mrs. Meir Speaks,” *New York Times*, 6 September 1982, 1.

²³⁰ For a detailed account of the operation see; Reeve, *One Day in September*, 160-174.

²³¹ Derick L Hulme, *Palestinian Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1969-1977: Dynamics of Response* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 2004), 110 and 113.

interests in the region. The establishment of an official White House cabinet committee (the CCCT) is also an indication of how important the perceptions of transnational terrorism and the association with U.S. national security in the Nixon administration evolved since the Labor Day hijackings.

More physical evidence of the impacts of the massacre on the President and Kissinger was the change in how the State Department handled foreign visitors. The federal government ended the program that allowed 600,000 visitors to remain in the U.S. for ten days without prior screening or approval. As of September 27, 1972 all foreign visitors, except for Canadians, had to be screened and have visas to enter the U.S. The State Department also created Operation Boulder that developed safeguards against the entry of foreign terrorists and their sympathizers. The operation also permitted the FBI, CIA, and Immigration and Naturalization Service to screen the visas and ensure that a five-day waiting period was observed.²³² With that said, Palestinian terrorism remained only a secondary concern as the President and Kissinger continued to pursue détente, the peace process, and dealt with Vietnam.

The Khartoum Incident

According to an intelligence memo dated June 1973, Palestinian terrorists attacked the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Khartoum, Sudan on March 1, 1973.²³³ This was a result of the renewed relations between the U.S. and Sudan, which wanted to aid the U.S. in bringing Egypt and Libya under the umbrella of the West. The Sudanese President Jaafar Muhammad Nimeiry told U.S. ambassador to the U.N. George H.W.

²³² Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 67-68.

²³³ For a detailed account of the events see; David A Korn, *Assassination in Khartoum* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

Bush during their meeting in February 1972 that, ‘the Sudan could assist any initiative which the U.S. might undertake, provided he [Nimeiry] felt it serious and genuine and provided that any action he was called on to take would not embarrass or weaken Egypt.’ The Sudanese President also offered to setup a meeting between Libya’s leader, Muammar Gadhafi, and Bush who considered it as an opportunity worth trying if Secretary Rogers decided that that Nimeiry’s suggestion was worth the attempt. Washington turned down the meeting, but resumed official diplomatic relations in August of 1972.²³⁴

During the early morning hours of March 1, eight BSO terrorists, four of whom, jumped from a speeding Land Rover and seized the embassy during a diplomatic reception honoring the departure of the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM), George Moore.²³⁵ After wounding the U.S. Ambassador, Cleo Noel, Jr., and the Belgian Charge d’Affaires, Guy Eid, the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Sudan and the Jordanian Charge d’Affaires were all taken hostage.²³⁶ Ambassador Noel was shot in the ankle and DCM Moore was beaten on the head with a gun, and both were eventually tied up with the Jordanian and Belgian officials and placed in a separate room. The Saudi ambassador and his wife were not tied up, but were forced to served tea and food to the BSO members. The BSO members demanded the release of several hundred Palestinians in foreign jails, a Fatah leader being held in Jordan, and the release of Sirhan Sirhan, the assassin of Robert F. Kennedy.²³⁷ The attack was planned and carried out by the BSO members

²³⁴ Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 69.

²³⁵ Richard D. Lyons, “US Ambassador to Sudan and His Aide Reported Seized by Guerillas at Party,” *New York Times*, 2 March 1973, 73.

²³⁶ Intelligence Memorandum, June 1973, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-6, Documents on Africa, 1973-1976*, vol. 6, Department of State publication (Washington, DC: Dept. of State, 2006), 217.

²³⁷ CIA, *Khartoum Incident Detailed* (Declassified Documents Reference System, 1973).

under the “full knowledge of Yasser Arafat.” The primary goal of the attack, according to the intelligence report, was “to strike at the United States because of its efforts to achieve a Middle East peace settlement which many Arabs believe would be inimical to Palestinian interests.”

The State Department wanted to initially pursue negotiations because of their successes in Damascus in 1969 and at Dawson Field in 1970. Rogers dispatched Under Secretary of State William Macomber to the Sudan to begin the negotiations. The terrorists demanded that Sirhan Sirhan be released, a concession that no U.S. leader would allow. During the hijackings in 1970, the U.S. learned that the PFLP wanted the release of Sirhan Sirhan, but the rumor turned out to be false when the PFLP did not ask for his release. Negotiations were mediated primarily between the Sudanese Ministers of Interior and Health and no effort was spared in attempting to secure the release of all of the hostages.²³⁸ The Khartoum incident would bring the U.S. interests in the Middle East, the peace process and their relationship with Arab leaders in the region into question as this terrorist event would put these national security concerns in jeopardy.

During President Nixon’s news conference on March 2, he was asked what the U.S. government was going to do to release Noel and Moore. Nixon replied that the U.S. government “will do anything we can to get them released,” and after the President was asked about Sirhan Sirhan he said “but we will not pay blackmail.”²³⁹ The President appeared to be blowing off steam, but there is no evidence that the administration would follow the President’s pledge. According to some, uncertainty remains about whether the

²³⁸ Intelligence Memorandum, June 1973, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-6, Documents on Africa, 1973-1976*, 6:217.

²³⁹ United States, United States, and United States, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, 1973*, 60 [10].

NSC considered a policy of “no concessions” before Khartoum. However, with the President’s public statement of not giving into blackmail the administration was forced to throw out the five-year old policy of negotiations.²⁴⁰

On the night of March 2, the BSO members ordered the Americans and the Belgian Charge to write their will and each requested to speak to their wives, but their request was denied. Noel and Moore were taken aside and machine gunned to death. The Belgian Charge was told that he was being killed for the death of BSO terrorists who were killed at the Lod Airport after the 1972 Sabena hijacking.²⁴¹ Learning of the slaying of the two American diplomats the President said in a statement, “the United States is emphasizing its strong feelings that the perpetrators of this crime must be brought to justice” and this was another example for all nations to work together to combat transnational terrorism.²⁴² Under Secretary Macomber agreed with the President that the U.S. should not pay any ransom and that “the terrorists must know we have a hard line and will provide no reward.”²⁴³ After 34 hours, Yasser Arafat in Beirut ordered the BSO members to release the remaining hostages and to surrender to the Sudanese authorities.²⁴⁴

In response to the killing of some of the hostages Harold Saunders, a NSC staffer responsible for the Middle East, proposed the strategy to the President and Kissinger that because unilateral actions by the U.S. might upset the moderate Arab governments—

²⁴⁰ Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 70.

²⁴¹ CIA, *Khartoum Incident Detailed*.

²⁴² United States, United States, and United States, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, 1973*, 65.

²⁴³ "Memorandum for the Presidents Files," 6 March 1973, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E–3, Documents on Global Issues, 1973–1976*, vol. 3, Department of State publication (Washington, DC: Dept. of State, 2009), 207.

²⁴⁴ Intelligence Memorandum, June 1973, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E–6, Documents on Africa, 1973–1976*, 6:217.

always a primary concern of the administration—that instead they should provide quiet encouragement of the moderate Arab governments to deal with the BSO. The U.S. had known for some time that Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were responsible for funding Fatah, and indirectly BSO, so Saunders suggested that Kissinger should not advise the President to demand counterterrorism measures from any Arab state the administration wished to encourage because it might jeopardize the peace process.²⁴⁵ As a result, Rogers sent a request to Macomber to ask the Sudanese government to take responsibility to “administer just punishment to the terrorists.” Rogers also circulated memos to other states that any state that offered “asylum” to “these terrorists would incur the ill will of the United States government.” Lastly, Rogers made it clear that the U.S. knew which Arab governments supported the BSO and was considering measures of how to punish those states.²⁴⁶

Following the deaths of Noel and Moore in the Khartoum incident the *New York Times* reported that U.S. hands were tied in the situation as the government was not influential in Sudan since diplomatic relations were only restored a year earlier after being severed following the Six Day War in 1967. The State Department sent a task force headed by Armin H. Meyer soon followed by another task force of ten individuals formed under the CCCT.²⁴⁷ Following the Khartoum incident U.S. embassies abroad asked for more security personnel and equipment to prevent another terrorist attack. However, according to the article this request occurred at the end of the fiscal year when the State Department was short on funds making it difficult to respond to those requests.

²⁴⁵ Naftali, *Blind Spot*, 71.

²⁴⁶ Memorandum from Rogers to President, 8 March 1973, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E–3, Documents on Global Issues, 1973–1976*, 3:208.

²⁴⁷ “US Studying Options in Sudan,” *New York Times*, 4 March 1973, 1.

The article also said that psychologically the diplomats were stressed and even one was frightened by a car that backfired in Cairo.²⁴⁸

In Nixon's March 6 speech at the ceremony commemorating the slain American diplomats he expressed his strong feelings and perceptions that transnational terrorism was associated with a U.S. national security crisis that the U.S. government must deal with on the domestic and international levels:

I am quite aware of the fact that there are some governments who take the line that since they are not the targets of the terrorists, they can stand aside and not join in any international effort to be firm against terrorism, whether it is in the United Nations or bilaterally or multilaterally with other nations.

I would only suggest this: The nation that compromises with the terrorists today could well be destroyed by the terrorists tomorrow. And as far as we are concerned, we therefore feel we are on very sound ground calling upon the whole world community to join together in a firm stand against international outlaws who today endanger the nationals of one country, maybe the United States, and tomorrow will endanger the lives of others.²⁴⁹

The attack in Khartoum shows the relationship between Fatah and the BSO because a local Sudanese Fatah vehicle was used to transport them to the embassy. The report also demonstrates that the U.S. was emerging as a "primary fedayeen target" which could be attacked when "least expected."²⁵⁰

In a memo of conversation between the Sudanese Minister of National Reform, Abdel Abdullah, and President Nixon, Sudanese President Jaafar Muhammad Nimeiry expressed his condolences for the loss of the two Americans. Minister Abdullah requested the assistance of the U.S. in the form of equipment, expertise, and training to combat international terrorism. President Nixon understood the Sudanese concerns and

²⁴⁸ Juan de Onis, "US Security Request," *New York Times*, 8 March 1973, 10.

²⁴⁹ United States, United States, and United States, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, 1973*, 71.

²⁵⁰ Intelligence Memorandum, June 1973, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-6, Documents on Africa, 1973-1976*, 6:217.

responded that the attack in Khartoum could have happened anywhere and that the U.S. was limited on what to do if another attack happened because the U.S. was outside its realm of legal sovereignty in the state under a terrorist attack. However, Nixon said that the Sudanese government should not be expected to “deal firmly” with the attacks unless it was backed up by the U.S. government, which Nixon assured Abdullah, would be the case.²⁵¹ In a briefing memo from Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, David Newsom, to Secretary of State, Kissinger detailed the U.S. assistance to the Sudanese government. The U.S. AID’s Office of Public Safety would sponsor two Sudanese Security Officials to attend an eight week Technical Investigation Course. The course would outline in detail bomb detection and disposal techniques. The second part of the plan is still redacted, but the third part of the plan detailed the plans for two FAA officials to fly to Sudan to improve airport security.²⁵²

U.S. Ambassador to Sudan, William Brewer, in a memo to President Nixon suggested that a letter be sent to President Nimeiry thanking him for the “steadfastness” of the Sudanese legal process and that the President should assure Nimeiry that just sentences should be given and completed. The drafted letter attached to the memo pointed out the importance of Nimeiry’s political authority in that part of the Arab world and that the U.S. government and the American people should understand the delicacy of the matter to Middle East peace.²⁵³ In response to Brewer’s telegram, the Department of State suggested that the letter with the President’s concerns might appear to the Arab

²⁵¹ Memorandum of Conversation, “Security Help to Sudan,” 6 March 1973, 10:30 a.m., Ibid., 6:218.

²⁵² Briefing Memorandum from Newsom to Kissinger, “Security Help to Sudan,” 17 October 1973, Ibid., 6:219.

²⁵³ Telegram 1276 from the Embassy in Sudan to the Department of State, “Khartoum Terrorists: Suggested Presidential Message,” June 4, 1974, Ibid., 6:220.

world as “undue pressure.” The recommendation was that Brewer would meet with Nimeiry after a guilty verdict and express an oral demarche.²⁵⁴

The BSO terrorists were sentenced to life terms after their conviction on June 24, 1974, but Sudanese President Nimeiry commuted their sentences to seven years and released them into the custody of the PLO to carry out the sentences as the ‘legitimate representatives of the Palestine people.’²⁵⁵ In an angry telegram from Secretary Kissinger to Ambassador Brewer, Kissinger ordered Brewer to express “dismay and extreme disappointment over this virtual release of these confessed murderers of diplomatic representatives of two governments, including personal representatives of President Nixon.” Kissinger also wanted Brewer to remind the Sudanese President of “his repeated assurances that appropriate justice would be rendered.” The seven year punishment was seen by Kissinger as inadequate and that it would have a negative impact on public and Congressional opinion in the U.S.²⁵⁶ In a memo from Brewer to Kissinger he outlined his conversation with Nimeiry about the commuting of the sentence. In his conversation on June 26, Nimeiry said that other states have held other Palestinian terrorists for shorter periods and given them lesser sentences. Nimeiry also noted that the release of the terrorists would lessen the tensions surrounding the peace process. Nimeiry concluded the conversation by saying there had been several reports about an attempt on

²⁵⁴ Telegram 130677 from Department of State to Embassy in Sudan, “Sentencing of Khartoum Terrorists,” 4 June 1974, *Ibid.*, 6:221. *FRUS, 1969-1972 E-6: 221.*

²⁵⁵ CIA, *Khartoum Incident Detailed.*

²⁵⁶ Telegram 139021/SECTO 1 from Department of State to the Embassy in Saudi Arabia, 25 June 1974, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-6, Documents on Africa, 1973-1976*, 6:222.

his life and as a result of those reports the decision was based on Arab and Sudanese opinion.²⁵⁷

In a document prepared by the new Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Donald Easum, to Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Joseph Sisco, it was made clear that the U.S. reaction to Nimeiry's commuting of the sentences was important to analyze. On the basis of national security, the U.S. reaction may harm U.S. bilateral relations with Sudan and most importantly the credibility of U.S. policy towards terrorism. Easum advised Sisco that they should take into consideration how it will affect the U.S. position in the Arab world, especially U.S. relations toward Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Also, Sisco should take under consideration the U.S. role in the Middle East, i.e., (the peace process). Easum then provided a Pro/Con argument about four possible options of U.S. relations with Sudan: the freezing of future assistance to Sudan, the "moderate cutback" in diplomatic ties, "severe cutback in ties over foreseeable future," and the break of diplomatic relations.²⁵⁸ This document was important as it explicitly details the important national security concerns following the Khartoum incident by two important Department of State officials. It noted the importance of diplomatic ties with Sudan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia which could be damaged due to their differing stances on the issue, and most importantly the appearance of the U.S. in the Arab world and the success of the peace process. The Department of State decided to downplay diplomatic relations with Sudan and outlined how this would proceed in a telegram to the U.S. Embassy in Sudan. It outlined the effect of the decline in relations would influence U.S. economic aid to Sudan, the sales of military material and training, and the eventual return

²⁵⁷ Telegram 1538 from Embassy in Sudan to Department of State, "Nimeiry Seeks Explain GOS Release BSO Terrorists," 26 June 1974, *Ibid.*, 6:223.

²⁵⁸ Memorandum from Easum to Sisco, "US Relations to Sudanese Decision," *Ibid.*, 6:224.

of Brewer to the embassy.²⁵⁹ This advice by Easum and the decision by the State Department to downplay diplomatic ties only underlined Kissinger's concern about the Khartoum incident's impact on U.S. relations with Arab leaders and the Palestinian groups.²⁶⁰

Evidence of the impact of the Khartoum incident on Kissinger's Middle East policy can be seen first in U.S. Charge d'Affaires Allen Berlind's in a telegram to the State Department which outlined the possible U.S. relations with Sudan as "the half-breed poor boy of the Arab world." Berlind said that this "half-breed" status meant that Sudan does not have a substantial voice in regional affairs where U.S. had an interest. Of the four policy recommendations made by Berlind, he thought that Brewer's return to Khartoum to meet with senior Sudanese officials to discuss possible U.S. policies was the best option for the reestablishment of formal diplomatic relations with the Sudan. However, if Berlind himself met with the senior officials first he could overcome the potential collapse of relations. Berlind would also have the ability to negotiate for the return of Brewer to the embassy if he met with the senior officials first.²⁶¹

According to a telegram sent from the Embassy in Rabat, Morocco to the Saudi Foreign Minister, Ambassador Brewer was to return to Khartoum. In this forwarded message from Kissinger, Brewer would return to discuss the U.S. government's proposed policies. Brewer would also make the attempt to meet with Nimeiry when the time was

²⁵⁹ Telegram 169610 from Department of State to Embassy in Sudan, "US Policy Toward Sudan in Wake of Terrorist Release," 2 August 1972, *Ibid.*, 6:225.

²⁶⁰ Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982), 223 and 625.

²⁶¹ Telegram 2100 from Embassy in Sudan to the Department of State, "Further US Policy Toward the Sudan," 11 September 1974, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-6, Documents on Africa, 1973-1976*, 6:226.

best.²⁶² After discussions between Brewer and the Sudanese interim Foreign Minister Jamal Muhammad Ahmed, Brewer said that the “favorable action [to] be taken in order to begin getting our bilateral relations here back in gear” was to first restore economic and military aid.²⁶³

In a telegram from Brewer to Kissinger, Brewer said the Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat, might ask the U.S. government to “normalize” U.S.-Sudan relations. Brewer said that Sadat may ask this because of Nimeiry’s support for a Middle East peace process, mainly his support of Sinai II.²⁶⁴ The Ambassador also recommended that in the wake of renewed Export-Import Bank contracts with Sudan in May 1975 the U.S. should reconsider PL-480 food sales to the Sudanese Government and open a Defense Attaché office in Khartoum.²⁶⁵

In a conversation between Kissinger, Acting Assistant Secretary Talcott Seelye, and Ambassador Deng, Kissinger expressed the government’s displeasure with the release of the BSO terrorists and that Foreign Service officers felt as though they were betrayed. He also wanted to express that he would speak to the new President Gerald R. Ford about the normalization of relations with Sudan and arrange a visit between Presidents Ford and Nimeiry in June.²⁶⁶ Following the discussion between Kissinger and Deng on April 7, Deng coordinated Nimeiry’s visit in June which “demonstrate[d] his

²⁶² Telegram 16362/SECTO 125 from Kissinger to Department of State, “Return of Amb. Brewer to Khartoum,” 26 October 1974, *Ibid.*, 6:227.

²⁶³ Telegram 965 from Embassy in Sudan to Department of State, “Future Sudan/USG Relations,” 18 April 1975, *Ibid.*, 6:228.

²⁶⁴ Was the agreement following the end of the 1973 Yom Kippur War in which the Israeli forces would pull back in the Sinai peninsula behind the UN security forces; for more detail see, William B Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967* (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution, 1993), 166-171.

²⁶⁵ Telegram 2367 from Embassy in Sudan to Department of State, “USG/GOS Relations in Light of Sadat Visit,” 9 October 1975, United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-6, Documents on Africa, 1973-1976*, 6:232.

²⁶⁶ Memorandum of Conversation, 7 April 1976, 12:00 p.m, *Ibid.*, 6:233.

good will.” A memo to President Ford said Sudan was important to U.S. initiatives in the Middle East, especially in supporting Sinai II. Also, that if the private meeting between the Presidents would happen it would provide the needed “psychological boost to our relation that the Sudanese so ardently desire.”²⁶⁷ On June 10, 1976, President Ford and President Nimeiry met in the Oval Office and had an hour long conversation. Both were very cordial to each other and both appreciated that normal relations have been restored. Ford thanked Nimeiry for his support of Sinai II and the special relationship he developed among Middle East leaders.²⁶⁸

In a telegram to Brewer in Washington, D.C. from the Embassy in Sudan, the advice was given to Brewer to make it clear that during the period of strong “pro-American” and “Anti-Soviet” feelings in Sudan it was recommended that the U.S. should strengthen its relations.²⁶⁹ During this period of normal relations with Sudan, President Ford signed the “Presidential Determination 77-5” on November 5 which said, “that the sale of defense articles and defense services to the Government of the Democratic Republic of Sudan will strengthen the security of the United States and promote world peace.” This was signed following a recommendation by Ford’s National Security Advisor, General Brent Scowcroft, that providing this defense aid would enable Sudan to maintain relations with neighboring states like Egypt and peace in the Red Sea area.²⁷⁰ On November 16, Ford approved a grant of \$400,000 in communication equipment and training for the Sudanese government to combat terrorism.²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ Telegram 108761/T110717 from Department of State to Kissinger, 5 May 1976, *Ibid.*, 6:234.

²⁶⁸ Memorandum of Conversation, 10 June 1976, 10:34 a.m., *Ibid.*, 6:235.

²⁶⁹ Telegram 2751 from Embassy in Sudan to Department of State, “Sudan Since the Coup Attempt-Implications for US,” 21 September 1976, *Ibid.*, 6:237.

²⁷⁰ Memorandum from Scowcroft to Ford, “Presidential Determination to Make the Sudan Eligible to Purchase Defense Articles and Services Under the Arms Export Act,” 1 November 1976, *Ibid.*, 6:238.

²⁷¹ Editorial note, *Ibid.*, 6:239.

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The Khartoum incident represented another instance of how a stateless nationalist organization through terrorism was effective at entering the geopolitical debate about the Middle East region (specifically the Arab-Israeli conflict). The Nixon and Ford administrations saw the murder of two American diplomats as a major national security crisis around the effectiveness of counterterrorism policy and safety of foreign diplomats at home and abroad. The fact that a Palestinian nationalist organization had the capability to take hostages at a foreign embassy raised concerns in the State Department. Embassies abroad made requests for additional funding to prevent another attack, but the budget was nearing the end of a fiscal year and unable to provide the necessary funding. Commuting the sentences of the terrorists by Nimeiry was a national security crisis in and of itself as the Nixon administration felt that a promise of justice was broken. The administration did not see the benefit of leaving the punishment of the terrorists with the PLO, the organization whose leader (Arafat) ordered the murder of the diplomats.

The temporary downplay in diplomatic relations with the Sudan by the U.S. government was also another national security issue. If the U.S. no longer had normal ties with Sudan it would lose a relationship with a state that was a neighbor to Egypt—a country of major interest to U.S. policy in the Middle East. The government also had to manage very carefully their reaction to Nimeiry's decision to ensure that the image of the U.S. in Africa and the Middle East would not be harmed. Restoring relations with Sudan following Nimeiry's support of Sinai II (an agreement brokered by Secretary of State Kissinger) demonstrated that the government understood once again Sudan's importance to the peace process. Ford's decision to allow for the sale of defense materials, training,

and communication equipment showed how important it was to have another country working on the international level to combat transnational terrorism.

Most importantly, Kissinger's actions during Khartoum make clear that his Middle East policy was still an extension of the principles that shaped détente, principles that were completely unsuited to handle the fact that the BSO was a non-state actor who could not be influenced by interstate diplomacy and international organizations. Kissinger was successful in addressing terrorism as a short-term concern through his ability to shape policy that would actively influence the Sudanese government's involvement in the trial and detainment of those involved in the assassinations. Even though the terrorists were released into the custody of the PLO, the U.S. government continued to see terrorism as a secondary problem that was overshadowed by Kissinger's diplomatic tactic of de-escalation of diplomatic relations with the Sudan as a potential measure to punish them for Nimeiry's actions. However, Kissinger would realize the shortfalls of the policy and how it could negatively affect the balance in the region. With Watergate scandal about to overcome President Nixon, U.S. position in Vietnam, the era of negotiations still underway between the U.S. and the Soviets, Kissinger and the NSC had more important challenges to address.

CONCLUSION: *Henry Kissinger and Transnational Palestinian Terrorism*

Journalist Eric Pace in his March 4, 1973 article “Again the Men in Masks; Again the Deaths of Hostages” made a dark and grim parallel between the Munich massacre and the Khartoum incident. Eerily similar images of the masked BSO terrorist standing on the balcony in Munich was beneath a photo of a masked BSO member on a balcony outside the Saudi embassy in Khartoum. Pace provided an alarming narrative of the events which happened in Khartoum outlining how the masked men’s demands were not met and lives again were lost just as they were in Munich. But the most striking part of his article is the very negative and dark language expressed in the last paragraph:

Nor is there much that governments can do in concert, since there are many Arab extremists, in one country or another, who want to help the fedayeen. And, as the commandos boast, each new crop of Palestinian schoolboys produces its share of fanatical youngsters who want to be masked men, holding tommyguns, shocking the world.²⁷²

This paragraph summed up completely and most eloquently what the Palestinian nationalist liberation movement had become since 1967 and how transnational terrorism

²⁷² Eric Pace, “Again the Men in Masks; Again the Death of Hostages,” *New York Times*, 4 March 1973, 195.

threatened U.S. national security. As these masked men stood before the public on eerily similar balconies they performed their acts of terrorism to promote their nationalist agenda. The fact that masked men could succeed twice and that lives were lost proves how the transnational terrorism challenged Kissinger's pursuit of détente in the Middle East and how his realist worldview caused him to draw the wrong lessons from history in terms of his ability to address the new problem of Palestinian terrorism.

These wrong lessons drawn by Kissinger were his reorganization of the limits of U.S. power and interstate diplomacy in the Vietnam era. However, Kissinger soon fell back on his knowledge of the nineteenth century concert of Europe model of interactions among states and their charismatic leaders as the administration's way forward. In the postcolonial world, and the Middle East in particular, non-state actors such as the PLO factions were undergoing the process of becoming some of the most important elements in the determination of the Middle East foreign policy.

Ultimately, the President and Kissinger's inability to understand the transnational nature of the Palestinian terrorism was due to the fact that they were non-state actors who performed extraterritorial terrorist attacks against domestic and foreign targets in a region that was considered to be an area of secondary importance after South-east Asia.

Kissinger's realism, which was shaped by his experience in Germany and as an academic fashioned the administration's interstate diplomacy as the primary avenue to ensure détente with the Soviet Union. Kissinger saw détente as the cornerstone of his foreign policy as a result of his experiences that appeasement did not work to solve disputes between states during the interwar period's collapse of the European state system.²⁷³

²⁷³ Kissinger's belief that appeasement is not an effective foreign policy was due to his experiences as a young Jewish boy in 1930s Germany; Mario Del Pero, *The Eccentric Realist: Henry Kissinger and the*

With détente as the cornerstone of his foreign policy Kissinger was able to work within the postcolonial geopolitical system to decrease tensions between the two superpowers (the U.S. and Soviet Union) while he linked other diplomatic issues together in order to reach agreements on Vietnam, Eastern Europe, and nuclear arms treaties. In each of these areas President Nixon and Kissinger were in sole control of the diplomatic decision making because of their efforts to restructure the National Security Council and isolate the State Department from the process. The secret back channel established by the President represented another instance where Kissinger through his discussions with Dobrynin made possible Kissinger's free rein in shaping the administration's foreign policy. The fact that the official diplomatic decision making process on the Middle East was left to the State Department also shaped the inability of the President and Kissinger to address the terrorism directly. Finally, the precedent was established in 1969 that the State Department was to act as the sole agency responsible for negotiations and the overseer of counterterrorism policy.

The hijacking of the four airliners with European, Israeli and American citizens aboard and holding them hostage in the Jordanian desert placed the Nixon administration in a difficult position of trying to gain the release of the hostages while they maintained the stability of the Hussein regime in Jordan. The President and Kissinger allowed the State Department to use multilateral measures to develop ways to punish the states that provided asylum to the terrorists. These measures resulted in possible U.S. sanctions that would later be adopted by ICAO. Because these sanctions were only directed at the states that offered the asylum and not at the PFLP indicates that Kissinger's regional

Shaping of American Foreign Policy (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 6; Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (Simon & Schuster, 1995).

policy was not suited to handle the stateless Palestinian organizations directly.

Black September presented many of the same challenges the administration faced with the PFLP. The PLO and the fedayeen forces in Jordan pursued an armed struggle against King Hussein's Jordan, a moderate Arab government that was an essential part of Kissinger's policy of maintaining the balance of power in the region. The persistent concern over Soviet support against Hussein on behalf of Syria or Iraq was present in the minds of the administration. Even with this concern the administration pursued the possibility of Israeli involvement in the crisis in order to maintain Jordan's stability, but also removed any possibility of direct U.S. military involvement which might cause Soviet retaliation. However, possible Israeli involvement was just as likely to trigger Soviet retaliation as U.S. The administration and Kissinger were successful in assuring that Hussein and Jordan would remain, but were not involved in the negotiation of the Cairo cease-fire agreement which allowed for the struggle to continue in Jordan until 1971.

The Munich massacre also caused a national security crisis over the balance of power since the President and Kissinger struggled to lessen the likelihood of Israeli retaliation while they once again relied on the State Department to work indirectly to negotiate the release of the hostages. The concern over the public display of the lowering the flags and the President's attendance at the funerals for the athletes provides an interesting debate over the delicate balance between the U.S., Israelis, and the radical Arab governments. The Nixon administration understood the attack as a travesty against Israeli athletes at the Olympic Games (a global peaceful display of athletic talent) and could have taken a strong or even militant stance on the side of Israel to punish the BSO,

or the states harboring the BSO, but this would have been a threat to U.S. national security that could have threatened all the reasons for Kissinger's pursuit of détente in the Middle East.

The slaying of two U.S. diplomats in Khartoum is the clearest example of a national security crisis over the balance in the region. If the U.S. made a decision which could have threatened alliances with Saudi Arabia or damage an already delicate relationship with the Sudanese government under President Nimeiry the balance could have tipped in the favor of the Soviets. The Nixon and Ford administrations knew that the attack against a Saudi Arabian embassy in Sudan, a country just across the Red Sea, could potentially cause a conflict between Sudan and Saudi Arabia. This conflict could have harmed the U.S. relationship with Sudan which was just being restored since it was severed in 1967. Also, Khartoum represented a threat to the delicate alliance between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia and the possible threat of Soviet influence over the Saudi government to insure greater access to oil.²⁷⁴ Following the break of diplomatic ties with Sudan after Nimeiry commuted the sentences of the BSO terrorists, a national security concern developed because Nimeiry supported Sinai II, the agreement being promoted by Kissinger between Israel and Egypt. If the U.S. did not restore relations with Sudan, they could have alienated Nimeiry who was one of a very small number of Arab leaders who supported the agreement. Ultimately the U.S., under President Ford, chose to restore diplomatic relations to maintain the support of an Arab leader for the Sinai II agreement and the opportunity to supply an Arab state with materials to combat transnational Palestinian terrorism.

The administration's and Kissinger's inability to understand the transnational

²⁷⁴ Neff, "Nixon's Middle East Policy," 9.

nature of Palestinian terrorism is unique and new to the historiography of U.S. involvement in the post-1967 Arab-Israeli conflict because the historiography has been dominated by international histories. These international histories argue that the U.S. policy in the region since 1967 had followed a policy of preventing Soviet dominance in the region through the pursuit of détente and the Rogers Plan. Also, that the U.S. tried not to alienate the Arab states with these efforts in the hopes that they would not go to the Soviets for support. Historians also recognize the fact that the U.S. understood that the Soviets wanted: “land, oil, power, and the warm waters of the Mediterranean” and that these desires threatened U.S. national security in the region.²⁷⁵ These histories outline the relationships between nations (i.e., U.S.-Soviet, U.S.-Israeli, Soviet-Arab, etc). More specifically the historiography argues that the U.S. tried to walk a delicate diplomatic line which would allow for “mutually binding peace contracts” between Israel and the Arab states, but not between Israel, the Arab States, and the transnational Palestinian organizations.²⁷⁶ Understanding that the historiography focuses strictly on national relationships and not the relationships between states and non-state actors makes the transnational argument made in this thesis more important in the development of a more nuanced picture of U.S. involvement in the post-1967 Arab-Israeli conflict.

This more nuanced picture recognizes the importance of the transnational nature of the Palestinian organizations and their relationships with the nations their terrorism

²⁷⁵ Donald Neff, "Nixon's Middle East Policy: From Balance to Bias," in Michael W Suleiman, ed., *U.S. Policy on Palestine: From Wilson to Clinton* (Normal, Ill: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1995).

²⁷⁶ Donald Neff, *Fallen Pillars: U.S. Policy Towards Palestine and Israel, since 1945* (Washington, D.C: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1995); Georgiana G. Stevens, "1967-1977: America's Moment in the Middle East?," *Middle East Journal* 31, no. 1 (Winter 1977): 1-15; Salim Yaqub, "The Weight of Conquest: Henry Kissinger and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," in Logevall and Preston, *Nixon in the World*; Salim Yaqub, "The Politics of Stalemate: The Nixon administration and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1969-1973" in Ashton, *The Cold War in the Middle East*.

targeted. Understanding the transnational nature allows for analysis of not just the diplomatic events and agreements, but how and why their nationalist agenda challenged the era of détente. A transnational history allows for a narrative that moves beyond the state to look at how the state is interconnected to forces outside and how those forces impact each other. This thesis demonstrates how interconnected relationships between the administration, the Palestinian organizations, and other actors in the international system shaped the inability of Kissinger's realism to address the transnational nature of the Palestinian terrorism because Kissinger struggled to use interstate diplomacy to end the crises while he worked towards détente in the region.

Since the beginning of the Nixon administration terrorism was seen as a national security crisis that triggered debates about the safety of civil aviation, the need for increased screening at airports and security aboard the aircraft, debates among states of how to prevent terrorism, and the safety of domestic and foreign diplomats in the U.S. or abroad. Each of these national security concerns were discussed at various points, but were not pursued further after the crises ended because international terrorism, most importantly transnational Palestinian terrorism was only a secondary concern of President Nixon and Kissinger who were faced with other foreign policy dilemmas that needed immediate attention. If Kissinger's realism would have been capable of understanding the simple fact that the organizations were stateless, he would not have been able to work with them directly because he drew from his knowledge of nineteenth century Europe that only interstate diplomacy was the means to secure peace.

§

In an address to the American Bar Association Annual Convention, Montreal

Canada, 11 August 1975 Kissinger summed up the impacts of international terrorism on states and the international community, and how both have struggled to address this new problem:

Terrorism, like piracy, must be seen as outside the law. It discredits any political objective that it purports to serve and any nations which encourage it. If all nations deny terrorists a safe haven, terrorist practices will be substantially reduced—just as the incidence of skyjacking has declined sharply as a result of multilateral and bilateral agreements. All governments have a duty to defend civilized life by supporting such measures.

The struggle to restrain violence by law meets one of its severest tests in the law of war. Historically, nations have found it possible to observe certain rules in their conduct of war. This restraint has been extended and codified, especially in the past century. In our time new, ever more awesome tools of warfare, the bitterness of ideologies and civil warfare, and weakened bonds of social cohesion have brought an even more brutal dimension to human conflict.²⁷⁷

The irony of Kissinger's address before the bar is that he had the opportunity to combat international terrorism, but failed to do so because his realist worldview drew the wrong lessons from history that interstate diplomacy and strong leaders was the means to secure peace during the Cold War. If Kissinger could have dealt with Palestinian statelessness he could have developed measures to combat future international terrorist events.

²⁷⁷ "International Law, World Order, and Human Progress," Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy*, 232.

GLOSSARY

Détente, the easing of U.S.-Soviet foreign relations during the Cold War; often through negotiations and linkages to policy issues

Fedayeen, Palestinian guerilla fighters

Guerilla warfare is irregular warfare pursued by a number of irregular combatants that use mobile military tactics; often use ambushes, sabotage, harassment, etc.

Linkage, the policy pursued by the U.S. during the 1970s, and championed by President Nixon and Henry Kissinger; connection of political and military issues, thereby establishing a relationship making progress in area “A” dependent on progress in area “B”

Realism, the prioritization of national interests and national security; political and diplomatic rather than idealism or morality

Realpolitik, politics and diplomacy rather than ideology; based on balance of power and interstate diplomacy

Terrorism, a political strategy pursued in the modern era for the gain of political concessions; understood to be irrational violence, rather than the rational violence of war

Transnational, a global interconnectedness between states and non-state actors in the international system which interact with each other extraterritorially; the internationalization of terrorism and guerilla warfare by stateless militant organizations targeted against domestic and foreign targets; the adoption of Third World liberation movement tactics and rhetoric

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