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March 27, 2023

Israel's Big Brother: How the *Ramparts* Exposure of the CIA-AFME Relationship Altered

US-Israel Relations from 1948-1995

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Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies

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## Abstract

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By Jaclyn Youngentob

The American Friends of the Middle East (AFME), a group funded by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), aimed to increase American support for the Arab world during the beginning of the Cold War years despite America's close friendship with Israel. The relationship between the CIA and the AFME did not come to light until 1967.

In this thesis, I will examine the formation of AFME, the role it played during the Cold War years, and the infamous CIA financial scandal uncovered by *Ramparts* magazine. Further, I will analyze Zionist and Arabist reactions to the exposé and how they spurred passage of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The result of the AFME saga and exposure led to a closer US-Israel relationship—one that ran contrary to the goals of the organization.

Because I am analyzing the history of an American intelligence agency, I will utilize CIA briefings, analyses, and agent notes via FOIA requests. Currently, there are few authors who have written about the AFME. Hugh Wilford, Geoffrey Levin, and Nick Grover have written books, articles, and theses featuring the AFME. Beyond them, authors have mentioned the group but have not taken a deep dive into their effect on American politics. I hope this thesis provides a thorough analysis of the significant role this group played in shaping US-Israel relations and exposes the catalyst for this important alliance.

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## Acknowledgements

This thesis was made possible with the help of various professors at Emory University. Thank you to Dr. Courtney Freer for her extensive advice, feedback, and many hours spent editing throughout the entire thesis process. Thank you to Dr. Sam Cherribi and Dr. Matthew Payne for agreeing to be on my committee and helping me think outside the box when researching this topic. Thank you to my adviser, Dr. Geoffrey Levin, for many classes at Emory on Israel and Zionism in the United States, for inspiring me with this topic, and for ultimately challenging my writing.

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## Chronology of Major Events Before and During Relevant Years<sup>1</sup>

1917	Balfour Declaration; Great Britain becomes imperial power over Palestine
1918	End of World War I
1939 - 1945	Nazis kill 6 million Jews; Truman becomes President of USA; USA drops atomic bomb at Hiroshima; USA defeats Japan and Germany; End of World War II
1946	Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech
1947	United Nations General Assembly enacts Partition Plan; Truman Doctrine, CIA established
1948	State of Israel comes into being; Israeli War of Independence; Truman recognizes Israel; Beginning of Palestinian refugee problem (Arab-Israeli conflict)
1949 - 1954	NATO established; Beginning of Korean War; Nuclear Arms Race; KGB established; AFME established
1956	Soviet Union sends aid to Afghanistan; Suez Crisis
1960	JFK wins presidential election; Soviets reveal they shot down American spy plane; Cuba sides with USSR
1961	Bay of Pigs invasion; Berlin Wall construction commences
1962	Cuban Missile Crisis; USA becomes more involved in Vietnam
1965	USA sends hundreds of thousands of troops to Vietnam
1966	USA bombs Northern Vietnam
1967	<i>Ramparts</i> Exposé; FOIA enacted; Six-Day War
1973-1975	Yom Kippur War; Disengagement Treaty
1978-1979	Camp David Accords
1991	End of Cold War
1993-1995	Treaty between Israelis and Palestinians (Oslo Accords) Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty

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<sup>1</sup> "Timeline of the Cold War," Truman Library, Accessed March 14, 2023.  
[https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/TrumanCIA\\_Timeline.pdf](https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/TrumanCIA_Timeline.pdf).

## Abbreviations

ACJ	American Council for Judaism
AFME	American Friends of the Middle East
AIPAC	American Israel Public Affairs Committee
AZC	American Zionist Council
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
ARAMCO	Arabian American Oil Company
CJP	Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
HELP	Holy Land Emergency Liaison Program
KGB	Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti
NEA	Near East and Africa Division
NSA	National Security Agency
OAS	Organization of Arab Students
OPC	Office of Policy Coordination
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
SNCC	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
UAR	United Arab Republic

## American Presidents From World War II to the Oslo Accords

Franklin D. Roosevelt	1933 - 1945
Harry S. Truman	1945 - 1953
Dwight D. Eisenhower	1953 - 1961
John F. Kennedy	1961 - 1963
Lyndon B. Johnson	1963 - 1969
Richard Nixon	1969 - 1974
Gerald Ford	1974 - 1977
Jimmy Carter	1977 - 1981
Ronald Reagan	1981 - 1989
George H. W. Bush	1989 - 1993
William "Bill" Clinton	1993 - 2001

## Preface

As I began my research for this project, I was most surprised to learn that few scholars had taken an in-depth academic interest in the role of the American Friends of the Middle East (AFME). Hugh Wilford, a professor of History at California State University, Long Beach has produced multiple publications that feature the AFME. His research has featured the AFME as just one player in a sea of other actors, covertly funded by the CIA and shaping US foreign policy throughout the Cold War years. He has published a journal article that focuses on the AFME and its role in fighting for the dominant American public opinion in respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict and multiple books about American Arabists. Dr. Geoffrey Levin, my adviser for this project and Assistant Professor of Middle Eastern Studies and Jewish Studies at Emory University, has also taken an interest in this group. Levin's work, entitled "Arab Students, American Jewish Insecurities, and the End of Pro-Arab Politics in Mainstream American, 1952-1973,"<sup>2</sup> focuses on the Arab student groups (such as the Organization of Arab Students, or OAS) started by the AFME, the effect the group had on American Jewish politics, and the downfall of Arabism in the United States. Additionally, graduate student Nick Grover wrote a Master's thesis at Queens University (Canada) in 2018 entitled "Neoliberal Modernizers: The American Friends of the Middle East and Its Subversion of Arab Nationalism, 1951-67."<sup>3</sup> Grover focuses extensively on how the AFME played a role in the downfall of Arabism in relation to the rise of Nasserism in the United Arab Republic (UAR), the short-lived union of Egypt and Syria. He also critiques Hugh Wilford in his approach of only focusing on the AFME's role in shifting

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<sup>2</sup>Geoffrey P. Levin, "Arab Students, American Jewish Insecurities, and the End of Pro-Arab Politics in Mainstream America, 1952-1973," *The Arab Studies Journal* 25, no. 1 (2017): 30–59.

<sup>3</sup>Nick Grover, "Neoliberal Modernizers: The American Friends of the Middle East and its Subversion of Arab Nationalism, 1951-67," Order No. 10857299, Queen's University (Canada), 2018.

American public opinion. Other academics have cited the work of Wilford and Levin for brief mentions of the AFME. These academics all take a unique approach in analyzing how the AFME affected American politics.

Additionally, one author, Peter Richardson, wrote a book about how *Ramparts* magazine affected American culture by publishing provocative stories and exposés all through its existence. He also penned an article explaining the rapid rise of the publication.<sup>4</sup> No author, however, has dedicated their work to focusing on how *Ramparts* changed the climate of the American public opinion in regards to Zionism,<sup>5</sup> by way of exposing the Arabist<sup>6</sup> agenda of the CIA and AFME, ultimately leading to a shift in US-Israel relations.

Existing scholarly sources fall short in answering how this exposé and involved parties affected US-Israel relations and US-Arab relations after 1967. Dr. Levin analyzes American Arabism through 1973, but does not touch on how changing American Arabism in the years after 1967 altered the course of American Cold War politics and US-Israel relations from 1967 to 1995. I am hoping that my research fills the void in scholarly literature previously existing on this subject. Additionally, while there are publications that feature the American Friends of the Middle East for its role as an Arabist organization advocating against Zionism, for its role as a CIA front organization, and for its role in swaying the American public opinion of Israel during a

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Richardson, "The perilous fight: the rise of Ramparts magazine, 1965-1966," *California History* 86, no. 3 (2009): 22+. *Gale Academic OneFile* (accessed March 15, 2023).

<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A203026585/AONE?u=anon~759d452b&sid=googleScholar&xid=52f9894c>.

<sup>5</sup> According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Zionism is "an international movement originally for the establishment of a Jewish national or religious community in Palestine and later for the support of modern Israel." <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Zionism>.

<sup>6</sup> According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, an Arabist is "a person who favors Arab interests and positions in international affairs." <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Arabist>.

pivotal time in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, no source examines, in depth, how the American Friends of the Middle East influenced the Cold War.

The limitations to my research are those that Hugh Wilford and other authors also faced. The CIA is an intelligence agency, meaning that many pieces of information are classified. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is a federal law, passed in 1966, which allows citizens to request past classified materials to be partially or fully declassified. It is at the discretion of the American government and its intelligence agencies as to what information can be revealed to the general public. As such, it is unknown to the public truly how much more classified information American intelligence agencies still have in their files regarding the AFME and related topics.

As past researchers have experienced shortcomings to their research, I too, unfortunately was unable to delve further into the role that the AFME played in establishing intelligence networks throughout the Middle East. It is my hope that, as more information is released and declassified for the use of the general public through FOIA, future students and scholars can delve deeper into this organization and how it has bridged the relationship between the United States and its assets abroad. Specifically, past research has examined how the founders and leaders of the AFME used their social standing and pro-Arab stance to create relationships with other prominent anti-Zionist figures in the United States and in the Middle East. However, I think it would be worthwhile, once more information becomes declassified, to examine the ways in which American intelligence officers formed relationships with individuals (dubbed assets amongst intelligence agencies) in the Middle East to inform their intelligence networks in the wake of the Cold War – especially as a new wave of terror against the West emerged in the 1990s.

My research consists of primary and secondary sources. It includes annual reports from official American Friends of the Middle East meetings, CIA personnel reports, family papers, personal documents, books, and journal articles. Of utmost use in describing the shift in American Central Intelligence Agency attitude toward Israel in the wake of the *Ramparts* exposé are declassified primary source documents from CIA archives and the actual *Ramparts* exposé from 1967. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the CIA and other American government agencies have released previously classified documents.

The following undergraduate honors thesis is arranged into four chapters. In the first chapter, Foundations, I explain the global political context and the CIA's preexisting relationship with the Middle East before the establishment of the AFME. The second chapter is a deep dive into the AFME. I examine the founding of the group, its main actors, and how it recruited members to be proud anti-Zionists in a country that publicly supported the Jewish state. Chapter three is a thorough analysis of the infamous *Ramparts* magazine exposé in which the CIA's financial relations with activist groups such as the AFME were revealed. The chapter features the reactions of Zionists and Arabists alike in the wake of the exposé. Further, it provides an explanation into how the controversial magazine and its uncovering of covert intelligence activities paved the way for more American freedoms and access to governmental information. Finally, the fourth chapter is an analysis of the *Ramparts* magazine revelation of the CIA-AFME relationship and its effect on American foreign policy. I highlight six major events – from 1967 through 1995 – in which the United States did not just act as an ally of Israel, but as a guarantor for the young state in order to persevere in a region where they were not accepted by their immediate neighbors.

When I embarked on this honors thesis project, finding a topic was not a difficult feat. For years, stories of espionage, action, and culture have piqued my interest. My academic interests within the fields of Middle Eastern Studies and Arabic language (my major and minor at Emory University) have been Israel, intelligence, and the study of terrorism. My hope is that this research helps the next generation of students and scholars in their academic endeavors.



## Chapter I: Foundations

### *World Political Context*

Developing a strong foreign policy requires mutually beneficial relationships among countries involved. A mutually beneficial relationship between two countries takes compromise, concession, and loyalty. When Israel was established in 1948, the country was looking for support, allyship, and reciprocity. Israel's geography and timeline of establishment should be examined within the context of its neighbors and world history. Colonialism, superpowers, world wars, rising tensions in the Middle East, and the Cold War all relate to Israel's decisions and actions in its early history. The rise of Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt (r. 1954-1970) and the arrival of the Cold War to the Middle East impacted Israel and helped determine which states eventually became its allies. The Cold War and changing United States presidencies significantly impacted the United States' role in the Middle East and with Israel.<sup>7</sup>

### *Foundations of American Foreign Policy in the Middle East*

While the United States has been developing a global foreign policy since the late 19th century, American involvement in Middle East affairs significantly increased in the aftermath of World War II, with the growing world powers divide caused by the Cold War. In 1947, University of Pennsylvania professor and assyriologist E. A. Speiser "published a broad overview of the Middle East and US interests there. In *The United States and the Near East*, Speiser argued that US 'policy towards the Near East should be based on a thorough

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<sup>7</sup> Jaclyn Youngentob, "Was Kennedy the Father of the US-Israel Alliance?" *MESAS 470W*, December 11, 2021.

understanding of the present social and political conditions of the region.”<sup>8</sup> He continued in his overview, calling “for regional experts to begin playing a critical role in the development of policy because he found Americans woefully ignorant of the Middle East. He averred that the United States lacked the ‘trained and experienced men and women to handle our growing commitment in the region. . . .”<sup>9</sup> Initial United States foreign policy in the Middle East entailed American government employees learning about the region on the job. As Americans became more involved in the Middle East, “questions regarding what to do with the territories of the former Ottoman Empire, the growing need for oil and its likely abundance in the Middle East, and tensions between Jews and Arabs in Palestine drew increasing attention.”<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the United States invested in finding experts, Orientalists,<sup>11</sup> and scholars who could act as advisors in the early stages of determining US-Middle East foreign policy. It was also increasingly worrisome to the United States that the Middle East region would become entangled in the Cold War struggles between the United States and the Soviet Union. The fate of the Middle East region was at stake due to the decline in British and French influence and subsequent dwindling of colonialism. It was for these reasons that the United States became a prominent player in Middle East political affairs after 1945. At the forefront of US interests was containing the spread of communism around the world. As a result, “the Harry S. Truman and Dwight D.

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew F. Jacobs, “The Task . . . Falls to the Area Specialists: National Interests, Knowledge Production, and the Emergence of an Informal Network,” *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918-1967* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), pp. 23–54, [https://doi.org/10.5149/9780807869314\\_jacobs.5](https://doi.org/10.5149/9780807869314_jacobs.5).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> An Orientalist is a scholar of Asian culture, language, history, etc. The Middle East is part of the Asian continent so, technically, experts on Middle Eastern history are considered Orientalists. One might confuse Orientalists and Arabists. Orientalists are strictly historians or experts on the Middle East and greater Asia. Arabists are Orientalists, or historians of the Middle East, but are also more concerned about the international affairs of the region being in favor of Arab countries and people.

Eisenhower administrations strove to maintain access to petroleum resources, military bases, and lines of communication in the Middle East and to deny these assets to the Soviet Union. Under these two presidents, the United States also sought to promote peace in the region, to sustain governments supportive of Western political objectives, and to maintain a liberal economic system conducive to US commercial interests.”<sup>12</sup> Hence, the United States pursued security in the Middle East in order to advance its own interests and triumph in the Cold War. The United States worried that instability in the region would cause Soviet infiltration, the spread of communism, and potentially another world war.<sup>13</sup>

In an effort to prevent further infiltration into various regions by the Soviet Union and other allied communist countries, President Harry Truman announced the Truman Doctrine in 1947, which “would provide political, military and economic assistance to all democratic nations under threat from external or internal authoritarian forces.”<sup>14</sup> The policy effectively redirected the United States foreign policy from avoidance of far-away conflict, to potential intervention given the context of the time.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Peter L. Hahn, *Caught in the Middle East : U.S. Policy toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945-1961*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005.) *ProQuest Ebook Central*, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/emory/detail.action?docID=413307>.

<sup>13</sup> Youngentob, “Was Kennedy the Father of the US-Israel Alliance?”

<sup>14</sup>“The Truman Doctrine, 1947,” *Office of the Historian*, Accessed March 14, 2023, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/truman-doctrine>.

<sup>15</sup> Youngentob, “Was Kennedy the Father of the US-Israel Alliance?”

*Truman (1945-1953) and Eisenhower (1953-1961) Presidencies*

With the Truman Doctrine in effect, President Truman believed Israel was an ideal state for the United States to support. The United States wanted to prevent the Cold War from turning into another full-scale world war.<sup>16</sup>

When Israel was established in 1948, it needed external support because many of its neighboring countries were not pleased with its establishment and displacement of the Palestinian people. Support for the new state came from the United States. Under President Harry Truman, the United States became the first country to recognize the new government in Israel as the “de facto authority of the new state.”<sup>17</sup> Israelis and Jewish people around the world were thrilled with the action taken by the American leader. Years later in March of 1967, David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s first prime minister, spoke to Truman. He recalled the conversation that they had earlier where he expressed his admiration for the former president:

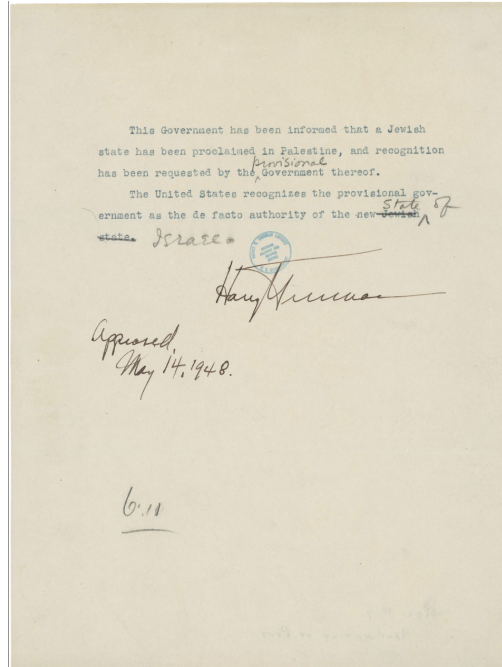
I can't leave America without saying what my people in Israel and many Jews throughout the world feel for what you have done for the establishment of Israel. Our hearts are with you. You have become immortal in our country...I told him that as a foreigner I could not judge what would be his place in American history; but his helpfulness to us, his constant sympathy with our aims in Israel, his courageous decision to recognize our new State so quickly and his steadfast support since then had given him an immortal place in Jewish history. As I said that, tears suddenly sprang to his eyes. And his eyes were still wet when he bade me goodbye. I had rarely seen anyone so moved.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> “The Truman Doctrine, 1947,” *Office of the Historian*, Accessed March 14, 2023, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/truman-doctrine>.

<sup>17</sup> “Press Release Announcing United States De Facto Recognition of the State of Israel; 5/14/1948;” Charles G. Ross Papers, 1892 - 1987; Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, MO. [Online Version, <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/united-states-de-facto-recognition-state-israel>, March 19, 2023]

<sup>18</sup> “The Truman Doctrine, 1947,” *Office of the Historian*, Accessed March 14, 2023, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/truman-doctrine>.



*Figure 1. Press release from President Harry Truman announcing US recognition of the interim government as the “de facto authority” over the newly declared State of Israel. Harry S. Truman Library, National Archives Catalog, May 14, 1948*

With his words and actions, Truman stole the hearts of Jewish people around the world. He was the first world leader “to recognize a sovereign Jewish state after two thousand years of nonexistence. He laid the foundations for the future relationship between the United States and Israel, a relationship that would prove in years to come to be of utmost importance to Israel's survival.”<sup>19</sup> While the American president’s action generated an era of Jewish gratitude and indebtedness, it put a stain on American relations with the Arab world. Notably, this was a rocky time to be altering these relations, as Arab armies were at the ready to curb Israel’s newfound establishment. Immediately following the United States’ recognition of the State of Israel, five

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Arab nations invaded the newly recognized Jewish state. Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria attacked Israel in what is now known as the Arab-Israeli War of 1948.

Truman was known to be a Zionist. While his administration and advisors did not fully agree with his stance on the Jewish state, he did not let that deter him. Truman and the rest of his administration were in agreement, however, that they needed to find a way to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict. This was to serve their own interests in hoping to prevent drastic Cold War infiltration into the Middle East.<sup>20</sup>

Under President Eisenhower, the United States was more fearful of the spread of communism throughout the Middle East. President Eisenhower enacted the Eisenhower Doctrine in 1957 to prevent the spread of communism throughout the Middle East region by way of providing economic assistance to countries facing aggression due to the spread of communism.<sup>21</sup>

### *The Rise of Nasser and the Cold War in the Middle East*

In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Egyptians grew increasingly frustrated living under British colonial rule, supported by the United States, and subsequently experienced a period of widespread turmoil and societal discontent. Throughout this period of turmoil, “rising prices and a general downturn in the economy sparked calls for social and economic reform.”<sup>22</sup> Egyptians called for more educational opportunities, land reform, public housing, better healthcare, “social insurance, and workers’ compensation”<sup>23</sup> — some of which materialized. Many of these reforms can be attributed to Gamal Abdel Nasser, a devout Egyptian Arab nationalist who spent his life

<sup>20</sup> Youngentob, “Was Kennedy the Father of the US-Israel Alliance?”

<sup>21</sup> Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), Introduction.

<sup>22</sup> Betty S. Anderson, *A History of the Modern Middle East: Rulers, Rebels, and Rogues* (Palo Alto, Cali: Stanford University Press, 2016), 293-329.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

fighting for change. In March 1937, after grade school, Nasser went to train for the military where he and others would form “the central cohort for the Free Officers.”<sup>24</sup> The Free Officers were a politically-charged group that fought for Egyptian patriotism and independence, particularly in the face of sustained British influence. Israeli troops detained some of the Free Officers in 1949.<sup>25</sup> The detainees used their time in hold to plan their overthrow of the Egyptian government. In 1952, they “led a bloodless coup against the government.”<sup>26</sup> The Free Officers would use the Revolutionary Command Council “as the chief executive instrument constructing a new kind of republican Egypt.”<sup>27</sup> Without the establishment of the Free Officers, Nasser would likely not have risen to such prominence.

Over the next few years, the Free Officers gained traction and doubled their following. The coup had successfully put the Free Officers in power in Egypt.<sup>28</sup> Nasser eventually became leader, two years after the overthrow of the monarchy, in 1954 and served until his death. Nasser was—and continues to be—a very controversial figure in Egyptian history. On the one hand, he was a heroic and groundbreaking figure who built the foundation for positive social changes across Egypt. On the other hand, however, Nasser was a radical, authoritarian leader who censored his opposition and ignited instability across the Middle East. These conflicting images of Nasser emerged as a result of his time in political office. He was the paradigm of both fascist and democratic ideals. To the average Egyptian, Nasser appeared a strong leader who fought for the upward mobility and success of the middle class. To outsiders, Nasser presented a stark

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<sup>24</sup> Anderson, *A History of the Modern Middle East: Rulers, Rebels, and Rogues*, 295.

<sup>25</sup> Anderson, *A History of the Modern Middle East: Rulers, Rebels, and Rogues*, 294.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Jaclyn Youngentob, “Nasser: Egyptian Hero or Radical Dictator?” *MESAS 200W*, April 7, 2021.

reality—a man grasping for power, emulating the actions of previous world dictators.<sup>29</sup> Nasser’s foundational morals of being anti-imperialistic and backing Arab socialism, while being an under-the-radar dictator, made it very clear which side of the Cold War – should it enter the Middle East – he would back.

During the early 1950s, the United States was well aware of the internal instability in Egypt and other countries around the Middle East, as well as the region’s increasing independence from the West. Americans were fearful, but also hopeful, that these political coups would turn into revolutions that would change the landscape of the region. The United States and other world superpowers such as Britain and France were worried more about the fate of the Suez Canal, rather than what one man on the rise could do to the region and the world as a whole.<sup>30</sup>

Nasser’s arrival into office was during a particularly tumultuous time in the Middle East region as it was midway between Israel’s War of 1948 and the Six-Day War of 1967. Nasser “distinguished himself by standing strong against the United States, the European powers, and Israel”<sup>31</sup> to further appeal to Egyptian society and be the heroic party that the people needed and wanted. Unfortunately for the United States, this meant that Nasser was quick to side with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Nasser proved his resistance to these foreign states when he “managed to hold on to the [Suez] canal with the superpower acquiescence. In the wake of this victory, Nasser was viewed throughout the Arab world as a hero defending the Arab homeland

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Barry Rubin, “America and the Egyptian Revolution, 1950-1957,” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 97, no. 1 (1982): 73–90, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2149315>.

<sup>31</sup> Anderson, *A History of the Modern Middle East: Rulers, Rebels, and Rogues*.



from imperialists.”<sup>32</sup> Nasser’s apparent heroism became evident due to the reforms, relatability, and protection he was able to provide for the Egyptian people.

Nasser’s revolution “became a model for Arabs throughout the region who wanted to bring revolutionary change to their societies, displace old elites, and shift their countries away from reliance on the old colonizing powers and the new US and Soviet superpowers.”<sup>33</sup> Nasser’s influence on other countries in the Middle East to initiate radical reform in their respective countries, his opposition to free speech, and his usage of propaganda parallel the way other fascist regimes inspired and spread messages such as antisemitism throughout the world.

Nasser’s arrival into Egyptian political office would decisively change the political landscape of the Middle East. He rose as a man of the people yet developed into a dictator-like leader. He negotiated alliances with the Soviet Union and created the United Arab Republic, a sovereign state that between 1958 and 1961 united Syria and Egypt, who together opposed the existence of Israel. Egypt’s rise to power in the region gave Israel much to fear as the state became surrounded by states who did not support its existence. In the 1960s, Israel and Egypt would be engaged in an arms race, backed by the Soviet Union and United States, respectively, providing fuel to the global tensions caused by the Cold War and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The turn of events would not come until American covert operations were revealed in 1967. In 1967, it would become known that while the United States was publicly supporting Israel, the CIA was working against the American government in regard to the Middle East by covertly funding anti-Zionist Arabist groups. All the while, Kermit Roosevelt Jr., one of the people responsible for founding the AFME and connecting it with the CIA, was an ally of Nasser

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

even though American government officials were somewhat fearful of his rise in relation to communism.

*The CIA and its Evolving Relationship with the Arab World*

Before it was called the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the United States' leading intelligence service was established as a wartime agency and operated under the title of Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Under President Harry Truman, the CIA was created as an independent agency, operating as a part of the United States' executive branch, charged with obtaining, handling, and acting on matters of intelligence that could put the nation's national security at risk.

Early Central Intelligence Agency activity and ideology were sympathetic to the Middle East and Arabist behavior. With the rise of Islamophobia throughout the United States and other Western nations, the average reader most likely wonders how and why the Central Intelligence Agency was an ally of prominent Middle East figures who would be questionable for an American intelligence agency to be an abettor of today. The CIA was founded at the beginning of the Cold War. During this time, there were looming worries amongst American governmental leaders, such as John Foster Dulles, eventual Secretary of State under President Dwight D. Eisenhower, that certain Middle Eastern leaders were going to turn communist. Looking back, we know that Dulles's concerns were incorrect and a rush to judgment, however. His thoughts at the time, though, were ever present and caused American leaders to choose a proactive path forward. The United States was eager to protect the Western nations' access to oil in the Middle East region, though Middle East nations did not want Western nations poaching their oil supplies

because of past imperialism by France and Britain. On February 14, 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt met with Saudi King Abdulaziz ibn Abdul Rahman Al Saud in the Suez Canal in an effort to secure oil flow to the United States. In 1948, Israel was declared a state, inciting the War of Independence. President Truman recognized Israel as its own entity, which was, and still is, a controversial stance. The two events, in 1945 and 1948, arguably laid the foreground for two critical US relationships in the Middle East—with the Gulf states to secure the flow of oil to the West and with Israel to protect the new Jewish State from its hostile neighbors. Though it may have been for selfish reasons, the United States was inclined to form alliances with Middle East nations for access to resources such as oil. However, President Truman's recognition of the state of Israel in 1948 put the United States in a sticky situation, one that it would have to balance through foreign policy decisions for decades to come. It would have to balance the pressure from the growing Israel lobby in the United States with the global threat from the Arab world to support the Jewish state.

Early CIA operatives Kermit Roosevelt Jr. and Archie Roosevelt, cousins and grandsons of Theodore Roosevelt, were taught throughout their elitist adolescence “to look upon the Middle East much as the British imperial agents of an earlier generation had: as a place for heroic individual adventure, where a handful of brave and resourceful Western spies could control the fate of nations.”<sup>34</sup> The Roosevelts developed a following amongst other operatives in the agency, operatives who came from non-elitist backgrounds, too. Other operatives were found to:

share their appetite for game playing. The story of CIA involvement in the Arab world during the early years of the Cold War is therefore, in part at least, one of an internal struggle between two contradictory influences: the British imperial legacy and the

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<sup>34</sup> Hugh Wilford, *America's Great Game: The CIA's Secret Arabists and the Shaping of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Basic Books, 2013), xx-xxi.

American missionary tradition. If the latter, more moralistic, idealistic impulse shaped the Agency's earlier operations, it was the former – comparatively pragmatic, realistic, even cynical – that eventually came to dominate, with the Iran coup acting as a sort of tipping point.<sup>35</sup>

As it will come to light in later chapters, the CIA's path forward, from the 1950s until 1967, was one of deceit. The agency deceived its own government while propelling its own objectives forward. Until 1967, the CIA's agenda covertly called for Arab sympathy and support.

### *CIA and American Road Map for Post-Imperial Operations for the Middle East*

Important to understanding the United States' foreign policy strategy of the Middle East around the time of the founding of the CIA, is comprehending the major political shifts in the region at the time. Prior to the Cold War, many Middle Eastern countries were actually ruled by outside forces such as France and Britain. In 1946, the United States put mounting pressure on France to withdraw their imperialist rule from Lebanon and Syria. Also in 1946, the Emirate of Transjordan (today known as Jordan) secured its independence from the British (Transjordan, Egypt, and Iraq were still under “de facto British control,”<sup>36</sup> however, ruled by British-allied monarchs).

In the fall of 1947, during a career break, Kermit Roosevelt visited the Middle East as a private citizen, tasked with writing a book, and returned to the United States with a stronger sense of Arabism. The six-month tour included visits to Egypt and Lebanon as well as excursions to “Palestine, Syria, Transjordan, Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.”<sup>37</sup> Being that his visit came so soon after the end of European imperialism, Roosevelt learned from the locals, politicians,

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Wilford, *America's Great Game*, 77.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 79.

journalists, and royals he encountered in his excursions. From them, he discovered that “there was an alternative model for the Middle East-West relationship and future American policy, one based not on ‘political domination and economic exploitation,’ but rather ‘on common interests.’”<sup>38</sup> Roosevelt wrote following his trip about the United States’ disparate history with the people of the Middle East region. These unique ventures included the cultural and societal trades that had occurred between Americans and Arabs in years past such as the building of educational institutions, the rise in the American oil business, and enhancements in medicine, schooling, and communication infrastructures. These cultural trades prompted people in the Arab world to assume “‘a different attitude toward [Americans] as distinct from other Westerners.’ Together, these activities constituted ‘a national asset of incalculable value’ and, potentially, ‘more effect bulwarks of national security than the imperialism of Russia and Britain.’”<sup>39</sup> There was also a group that Roosevelt called the “Young Effendis” who wanted to ensure the riddance of all traces of past European imperialism. This group rejected communism, obtained Western education, and was quite welcoming to American ideas and influence, so long as not imperialistic, in the region.

This extensive trip through the region offered Roosevelt a glimpse into what the future of American foreign policy in the region could hold. He was able to identify key assets of the United States, including economic connections, political groups, and local group assets. From this, he was able to develop what he called “‘a little Marshall Plan’ involving an alliance of US government and business that would promote ‘the social and economic advancement of Middle East peoples’ and thereby foil ‘Communist infiltration and revolutionary tactics.’”<sup>40</sup> It was clear

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

to Roosevelt at this time that the path forward for American tactics in the region lay with the ever-growing efforts of the “Young Effendis” and American efforts to promote Arabism.

Back in the United States, it was clear that to appeal to transformative groups such as the “Young Effendis,” the United States could not endorse Zionism on the opposite side of the world. Rather, something had to be done to give voice to Arabs in the United States and in the Middle East. Kermit Roosevelt came to be a key breakthrough voice advocating for anti-Zionism in a country with an ever-growing Zionist presence and Israel lobby. Roosevelt established himself as an ally to Arab groups and organizations throughout the United States. After the UN Partition vote at the end of 1947,<sup>41</sup> much of the Arab lobby was forced to shut down within the United States. They were angry and felt that Arab voices were silenced and had rights stolen. As a result, Roosevelt turned to Protestant missionaries who he had learned through his travels were also for the anti-Zionist cause. The American oil industry was also keen to advance the anti-Zionist cause for economical reasons. ARAMCO (Arabian American Oil Company) was a deep-rooted anti-Zionist consortium whose business relied on anti-Zionists such as Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia and on the “developing trans-Arabian pipeline (TAPline) to the Mediterranean that would run through the Arab countries neighboring Palestine.”<sup>42</sup> It was essential for business that American oil executives outwardly be a part of the Arab lobby for the success of global oil trade.

Interestingly enough, one other group was essential to Roosevelt and his American-led Arab-lobby. There was a group of Jewish Americans who were becoming increasingly

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<sup>41</sup> United Nations Resolution 181 was an official vote to divide Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state. Jerusalem would be “a *corpus separatum*” or a “separate entity” which would be governed internationally and not divided between the Jews and Arabs. (Courtesy of: Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "United Nations Resolution 181." Encyclopedia Britannica, January 10, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations-Resolution-181>.)

<sup>42</sup> Wilford, *America's Great Game*, 86.

uncomfortable with the Zionist lobby. This group was mostly old money, upper class individuals. They were Reform Jews of German descent, interestingly enough right after World War II, and they believed that a Jewish state and growing Zionism was a disaffirmation of their American identities. The group believed that a contained Jewish state would be a call for anti-Semitism globally. Rabbi Elmer Berger, along with Rabbi Morris S. Lazaron and George Levison, was one of the leaders of this group of anti-Zionist Jews and he led an organized group and effort of these people called the American Council for Judaism (ACJ).<sup>43</sup> The ACJ was an anti-Zionist group of wealthy Jewish people who descended from Germany and “objected strongly to Zionism on the grounds that it conflated religion and nationality. Insisting on the universal character of Judaism, ACJ leaders such as Michigan rabbi Elmer Berger carried on a vigorous campaign to dissuade American Jews from supporting the creation of a Jewish homeland abroad.”<sup>44</sup> The newfound growing pressure from the anti-Zionist lobby within the United States at this time was crucial to the CIA’s agenda moving forward. In order to ensure the containment of communism in the Middle East and secure the trade of oil to the West, it was essential to the CIA, and Kermit Roosevelt, to please the Arab-lobby in the United States despite the public messaging of the US government. In the next chapter, Kermit Roosevelt’s role in supporting the Arab lobby will become more clear.

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<sup>43</sup> Jack Ross, *Rabbi Outcast : Elmer Berger and American Jewish Anti-Zionism* (Washington, D.C: Potomac Books, Inc., 2011).

<sup>44</sup> Wilford, “American Friends of the Middle East,” 97.

## **Chapter II: American Friends of the Middle East (AFME)**

### *Founding*

In 1949, the head of the CIA's Near East Division, Mike Mitchell, attended a covert meeting in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the meeting was to staff a brand new clandestine sector of the CIA called the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC). Mitchell advocated for Kermit Roosevelt to lead this new covert unit of the Near East Division. There was initially a debate over whether Kermit Roosevelt or Archie Roosevelt should lead this new branch. Kermit came out on top because of his personal skills and team-player can-do attitude. Mitchell instead sent Archie Roosevelt to be CIA Station Chief in Beirut, Lebanon. The choice of Kermit over Archie without a doubt caused tension within the family. Archie thought the choice was unfair and that Kermit had been chosen because, while Archie had been leading stations and personnel overseas, Kermit had been developing high-profile connections and contacts domestically that would prove more valuable for the role. On November 10, 1949, Roosevelt began his new appointment as "deputy chief of the Near East and Africa Division (NEA)" at the OPC headquarters in Washington, D.C.<sup>45</sup> On May 15, 1951, 24 people convened at the Manhattan home of Dorothy Thompson, a prominent American journalist. It was at this meeting that the American Friends of the Middle East (AFME) was born.<sup>46</sup> During the next few months, the group worked to establish itself. One of the founders, Cornelius Van Engert, made a corporation and bank account for the group. Kermit Roosevelt, however, was one of the key people who initiated the formation of this group.

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<sup>45</sup> Wilford, *America's Great Game*, 115.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.



While the AFME was a group organized and funded by the government, many supporters viewed it as a private advocacy group. It was the type of network that “originated in the pre-existing activism of private citizens and, even after the state had assumed the role of covert patron, exhibited a considerable amount of dynamism thanks to the fact that the citizens and government officers involved usually shared the same values and goals, removing the need for intrusive official management.”<sup>47</sup> That being said, the AFME represented a dual relationship that many organizations at the time shared: such groups had both private and state interests and therefore were influenced by both entities. The AFME would steadily balance the interests of both parties for the next almost two decades.

The next few years after the AFME’s establishment would prove to hold pivotal moments in defining contemporary:

US-Middle Eastern relations, as [Kermit] first worked secretly to support the Arab world’s leading nationalist—the Egyptian Gamal ‘Abdel Nasser— and then personally led a covert operation to toppled the region’s other most prominent nationalist leader, Iran’s Mohammed Mosaddeq. Nor was Kermit’s influence confined to the Middle East. At home, in America itself, the CIA would be increasingly drawn into the domestic debate about US policy toward Israel, as [Kermit] used his new position to provide covert US government support for a group of apparently private American Arabists and anti-Zionists.<sup>48</sup>

Roosevelt’s past travels to the Middle East, his role within the NEA, and involvement with the AFME were crucial to the evolution of US-Middle East relations for at least the 1950s and early 1960s.

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<sup>47</sup> Hugh Wilford, “American Friends of the Middle East: The CIA, US Citizens, and the Secret Battle for American Public Opinion in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-1967,” *Journal of American Studies* 51, no.1 (2017): 95.

<sup>48</sup> Wilford, *America's Great Game*, 115.

*Kermit “Kim” Roosevelt*

Famous not only by association with relatives,<sup>49</sup> Kermit Roosevelt Jr. made his own mark on American history in a more subdued way. Before the AFME, Roosevelt served in Cairo, Egypt in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). The OSS was “the wartime precursor of the CIA. OSS/Cairo proved to be a nexus of the network that would become the American Friends of the Middle East. Roosevelt was under the command of Stephen B. L. Penrose Jr., a missionary-descended educator, future president of AUB, and ardent anti-Zionist.”<sup>50</sup> While in Cairo, Roosevelt’s intrigue about clandestine activity grew. Following this assignment, Roosevelt took a break from government sanctioned Middle East work. He took a trip as a private citizen to the Middle East with his wife Polly, during which his interest and support for Arab people were cemented. As Zionism in a world post Nazi-Germany was growing, Roosevelt “undertook a nationwide lecture tour of the United States on the theme ‘The Arabs Live There Too,’ and even wrote a book explaining his interest in the Arab world, *Arabs, Oil, and History*. It was as if Roosevelt was single-handedly trying to craft an Arabist counter narrative to rival the Zionists’ influence on American opinion.”<sup>51</sup> One listener of Roosevelt’s post-trip lectures “noted the fact that during a forty-minute-long talk in which he dwelt at length on the Palestinian situation, he did not use the words ‘Jew’ or ‘Zionist’ once.”<sup>52</sup> Roosevelt excelled in advancing his messages through his verbal adaptability. Not only was Roosevelt called to advocate for the anti-Zionist movement as a result of his private visit to the Middle East, the Partition Plan,<sup>53</sup> in November

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<sup>49</sup> President Theodore Roosevelt was the grandfather of Kermit “Kim” Roosevelt.

<sup>50</sup> Wilford, “American Friends of the Middle East,” 98.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Wilford, *America’s Great Game*, 84.

<sup>53</sup> The Partition Plan was voted on and passed by the United Nations in November 1947. It ended the British Mandate of Palestine and called for a Jewish and Arab state in what is today Israel.

1947, also fueled him to “to organize the pro-Arab, anti-Zionist elements in American society. In February 1948, he announced the result of his labors: the formation of the Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land (CJP). Calling on the UN to reverse partition, the CJP also urged the adoption by the US government of a bipartisan policy toward the region – a thinly veiled dig at Zionist influence on Democratic Congressmen – and American aid for Palestine.”<sup>54</sup> The CJP was the first instance of the CIA dipping its toes into anti-Zionist propaganda and the media failing to realize who was behind ventures trying to sway American public opinion. Initially, Roosevelt ran operations of the CJP out of his own home in Washington, D.C. He had the help and support from:

Rabbi Morris S. Lazon, and constant logistical support from George Levison and Elmer Berger, who noted privately their hope that their association with Roosevelt and the other anti-Zionist gentiles would protect the new organization against allegations of anti-Semitism. Also in the background was the ARAMCO executive William A. Eddy, a figure who, by virtue of his upbringing in Lebanon as the son of a prominent missionary family, wartime service as an OSS officer in North Africa, and postwar employment by the oil industry, embodied almost all of the strands of the emergent Arabist state-private network.<sup>55</sup>

From his pre-AFME efforts, Roosevelt had the knowledge, skill, drive and support of others to lead and revolutionize the anti-zionist, pro-Arab lobby within the United States. Roosevelt filled the gap of being a sort of figure-head for American Arabists.

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<sup>54</sup> Wilford, “American Friends of the Middle East,” 98.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 99.

*American Arabist Advantages and Disadvantages*

Following World War II, how did any Arabist, anti-Zionist movement gain traction in a country such as the United States? The American Arabists had two main advantages: Dorothy Thompson and covert CIA financial support.

Dorothy Thompson was a popular and respected journalist in the 1930s and 1940s. She made headlines for her reporting on Nazi Germany and subsequent removal from the country in 1934. Thompson was “the first American journalist to be so treated by the Nazis, after having personally criticized Adolf Hitler. She subsequently became a prominent campaigner in the United States on behalf of the victims of the Third Reich, a position she combined with vocal support for Zionism.”<sup>56</sup> As a journalist, she was sympathetic to the Jewish people and viewed the Nazis as a threat to the future of democracy across Europe and the world. In 1939, she was described “by *Time Magazine* as the most influential American woman after Eleanor Roosevelt, Thompson wrote a thrice-weekly column, ‘On the Record,’ that was syndicated to two hundred American newspapers, and during the late 1930s she appeared nightly as a news commentator on NBC radio.”<sup>57</sup>

Thompson’s rhetoric changed, however, in the late 1940s. At this point, she “began voicing objections to various aspects of Zionist behavior, both in Palestine and in the United States: acts of terrorism against the British, harsh treatment of Palestinian Arabs, and the growth of nationalist feeling among American Jews, which she perceived as a form of divided loyalty.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Wilford, *America's Great Game*, 116.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 117.

Thompson was ambushed by pro-Israel media for her changing messaging, and many media companies felt pressure to drop her popular column. The public outburst against her advocacy:

stiffened Thompson's resolve, and she began to cast around for possible comrades in her new cause. Catching word of this interesting development, the ever-resourceful anti-Zionist activist Rabbi Elmer Berger wrote her in January 1949, offering her the American Council for Judaism (ACJ) as a platform to express her misgivings about Zionism to the American Jewish community, and apprising his friend Kim<sup>59</sup> Roosevelt of this valuable new contact.<sup>60</sup>

By the middle of 1950, Roosevelt had Thompson roped into his anti-Zionist network. Thompson was not simply a supporter of the cause, but she was also “a potential organizational figurehead in the tradition of the CJP chair Virginia Gildersleeve, only much better known.”<sup>61</sup>

Dorothy Thompson's assumed new role as a leader in Roosevelt's Arabist network was very important to the development of the cause, but arguably, it was not as important as the secret economic support that Roosevelt and the AFME received from the CIA. Prior to the establishment of the AFME, the OPC had started to make undisclosed “payments to US labor leaders involved in overseas efforts to counter communist ‘front’ activities in the international labor movement.”<sup>62</sup> From 1948 to 1950, the number of organizations and groups receiving covert payments from the CIA had significantly risen. Some of these CIA-funded operations included:

groups on the American Non-Communist Left, among them students and intellectuals, and the OPC was experimenting with various forms of funding pass-through to disguise its grants, including fake charitable foundations. Maintaining secrecy across this sprawling, tentacular operation was not easy for the intelligence officers involved, but they were helped by the anticommunist consensus that prevailed in early Cold War

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<sup>59</sup> “Kim” was a nickname for Kermit Roosevelt.

<sup>60</sup> Wilford, *America's Great Game*,” 117.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

America and by the social deference they could generally count on others to show them on account of their elite backgrounds.<sup>63</sup>

The groups receiving secret funding from the CIA would face no issues in terms of the confidentiality of their funds until 1967. In 1967, “with the anticommunist consensus badly undermined by the Vietnam War and the social power of the old East Coast elites eroded by the cultural upheavals of the sixties,” the CIA’s involvement in many social groups throughout the United States was revealed by *Ramparts* magazine.<sup>64</sup>

The advantages of the American Arabists were put to the test when up against the main inhibitors to their cause: timing and historical context. By the time that the CJP and AFME were formed, the world had just emerged from World War II. The Jewish people had endured heinous persecution and formed their own lobbies for Jewish people and Zionism such as the American Zionist Council (AZC). Further, the events of World War II “weakened the once powerful grip of anti-Semitism on American public opinion, while the horrors of the Holocaust had generated a groundswell of support for the Zionist vision of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, among Jews and gentiles alike. Compared with the sizable Jewish American community, Arab Americans were few in number and lacking in political organization.”<sup>65</sup> Many Americans at the time did not know any Arab people in their neighborhoods. They held prejudices against Arab people “that drew on classic European ‘orientalist’ stereotypes of the Arab ‘race’ as atavistic, despotic, and cruel.”<sup>66</sup> Some foreign governments in Europe and the Middle East attempted to sway “American opinion concerning Palestine, but they lacked public resonance. It was telling that the Arab Office, the information arm of the Arab League, shut up shop in Washington in 1947, blaming a ‘complete

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 118

<sup>65</sup> Wilford, “American Friends of the Middle East,” 95-96.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 96.

and arrogant disregard for Arab rights, Arab interests, and Arab feelings' in the United States."<sup>67</sup>

The Arab influence in the United States was to change a few years after this with the AFME in operation.

### *Recruitment and Operations*

By 1950, a new group called the Holy Land Emergency Liaison Program (HELP) was established. Roosevelt believed there was potential for different ways that the United States could support the land known today as Israel. The purpose of HELP was:

to coordinate American aid for displaced Palestinians while working to reduce US support for Israel. HELP's officers included Roosevelt, Hopkins, and Eddy, and its funding was allegedly provided by ARAMCO. However, it too eventually fizzled out in the face of Zionist resistance and public indifference. Roosevelt's efforts to organize a countermovement to Zionism were, it seemed, doomed to an endless cycle of initial hope and eventual disappointment.<sup>68</sup>

With the future unknown, Roosevelt trudged forward and continued his fight in supporting American Arabists.

At the beginning of the AFME's existence, the CIA wanted to make it a more permanent group in terms of its standing within the CIA. This was crucial to its establishment and organization. As a result, according to unofficial documentation found in family letters and papers, the CIA assigned a case officer to the group, Mather Greenleaf Eliot, who was given a team, decided by the CIA, but also worked to recruit other officers to his team.<sup>69</sup>

With Eliot working for the AFME on behalf of the CIA, the group started raising major funds. The second meeting of the charter, on December 12, 1951, not only was when the AFME

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>68</sup> Wilford, "American Friends of the Middle East," 99-100.

<sup>69</sup> Wilford, *America's Great Game*, 120.

established a governing board, but the meeting also saw sizable donations for the benefit of the American Arabists. Dorothy Thompson announced that they had received an anonymous \$25,000 donation, with the caveat of the group matching the donation.<sup>70</sup> With great ease, the donation was matched. Over the next six years, too, the Dearborn Foundation would give \$1.5 million to the AFME.<sup>71</sup> Interestingly enough, though, it would come to light in the same *Ramparts* magazine article in 1967 (the same article that would expose the AFME's relationship with the CIA) that the Dearborn Foundation was also a CIA backed organization. The December 1951 meeting was also essential for the recruitment of leaders as they did the following:

elected a board of directors to make policy, and formed an executive committee to carry it out, consisting of the president, Dorothy Thompson; the vice president (effectively, chief executive officer), Garland Evans Hopkins; and the secretary-treasurer, Engert. By April of the following year, Hopkins had established four executive departments: Intercultural Relations, Research and Publications, Public Relations, and Student Affairs.<sup>72</sup>

At this point, too, volunteer offshoots of the AFME arose in various cities around the United States and in the Middle East at American colleges.

While money of course helped the cause, the AFME gained the backing of other groups in the United States. The AFME had the support of many American Protestants and missionaries. Some pro-AFME missionaries included “the descendants of nineteenth-century American missionaries to Syria. Although they had failed in their efforts to convert Muslims to Christianity, the missionaries had nonetheless left a lasting impression on the Arab world in the shape of the educational institutions they had founded there, among them the prestigious American University of Beirut (AUB).”<sup>73</sup> The support of American Protestants and missionaries

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.



would prove helpful in establishing friendly relations with people in the Arab world for their advocacy against Western imperialism and sympathy to the Arab cause. Further, the AFME garnered the support of another crucial entity, the American oil industry. The American oil industry was dependent on good relations with countries in the Middle East, most significantly Saudi Arabia. ARAMCO<sup>74</sup> hinged “on the goodwill of the Saudi king Ibn Saud, a fervent anti-Zionist, for its access to Arabian petroleum. Concerned lest US support for Zionism harm its business operations, ARAMCO executives launched a public-relations campaign on behalf of the Arab countries and established an office in Washington partly in order to lobby government.”<sup>75</sup> The most surprising support came from members of the Jewish diaspora. As mentioned earlier, the ACJ, and its Jewish anti-Zionist members, were aligned more with American Arabists because they feared that the establishment of the Jewish State would cause global anti-Semitism.

Students, too, were a crucial part of the cause. The AFME, acting as a front for the CIA, helped fund a summer program at Harvard College, started by Henry A. Kissinger in 1950, called International Summer School. The goal of the new program was to create a compelling bond between foreign students and the United States. This student program was a success, for “even students ‘who were uncommitted and often a bit critical,’...were transformed into ‘friendly champions abroad who could refute, by personal experience, the misrepresentations of the United States.’”<sup>76</sup> It has been reported and repeated since 1967 that Kissinger vehemently denied knowing that the AFME and its contributions was a front for the CIA.

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<sup>74</sup>ARAMCO is the United States oil consortium, Arabian American Oil Company.

<sup>75</sup> Wilford, “American Friends of the Middle East,” 96-97.

<sup>76</sup> Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009) 126.

In May of 1948, President Truman controversially recognized Israel as the land of the Jewish people. The public US support of Israel did not hinder Roosevelt and the AFME's agenda, though it was a setback. Roosevelt knew the United States could not withdraw its public support for Israel, but was determined to keep fighting for the Arab cause. Interestingly enough, in a book published after the Truman presidency, William Eddy explained that Truman reflected on his acknowledgement of the land of Israel to a group of diplomats saying:

I'm sorry, gentlemen, but I have to answer to hundreds of thousands who are anxious for the success of Zionism. I do not have hundreds of thousands of Arabs among my constituents.' Truman later admitted that the influence of American Zionist organizations during this time had been intense: 'I do not think I ever had as much pressure and propaganda aimed at the White house as I had in this instance.'<sup>77</sup>

Truman's commentary on the pressure from American Zionists to recognize the State of Israel provides ample evidence as to why a small organization such as HELP was unable to succeed in the turn of the decade.

Summer of 1953 was another crucial time for the AFME. At this point, "the organization had begun setting up field offices in Middle Eastern cities: first in Tehran, under the direction of a former Presbyterian minister, Charles R. Hulac Jr., and then in Jerusalem under John W. Barwick, previously a YMCA worker aiding Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan. In October 1953, Mather Eliot himself traveled to Damascus to assume the post of AFME Middle East director."<sup>78</sup>

The CIA's backing of the AFME around the time of its establishment and initial operational years was crucial to its growth and longevity.

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<sup>77</sup> Karine Walther, "Dorothy Thompson and American Zionism," *Diplomatic History*, vol. 46, no. 2 (April 2022): 281-282, <https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhab107>.

<sup>78</sup> Wilford, *America's Great Game*, 121.

# In the Middle East today PEOPLE are democracy's outposts

To defeat Communism the 200 million people of the Middle East need more than bread alone. They must have American friendship and understanding - - -

Our civilization was created in the Middle East. From the ancient Near East came today's great religions—the Religion of the Book. But the West has gone far toward looking to heritage and forgetting the place of origin of its faith.

Now that both religion and science are threatened by narrow and aggressive materialism, the American people need to know more about the contributions made to both by the peoples of the Middle East. And those people, who are great poets, need the assurance of American awareness and the demonstration of practical friendship that go with it.

### How Are the Facts We Face

Most Americans have never had an accurate picture of the Middle East. Too often they regard it in the romantic terms of the "Thousand and One Nights". Or they conceive of it as simply a vast petroleum source. Their misconceptions have been exploited by partisan propaganda which has lowered a curtain of misunderstanding between the peoples of the West and the peoples of the East.

The Middle East is the home of some 200,000,000 people of Islam and some 1,000,000 others, Jews and Christians among them. A growing national consciousness is forming there from one place. Remnants of ancient nations, they are still today among the nations. They are among the most democratic institutions. In their effort they are entitled to American support, the free political process and each of its religious institutions.

### Israel's Arabian Neighbors

Soviet Communism is inherently materialistic. Atheism is one of its basic principles. It denies all spiritual values. It denies the dignity of man.

In the areas under its control, Soviet Communism undertakes to suppress and wipe out all religion by campaigns of extreme violence. Where the Soviets have found that religion could not be taken from men's lives by materialism alone, they resort to the cruel tactics which they habitually apply in other Middle-Eastern and elsewhere as so to suppress and eventually destroy from within.

In the Middle East, the Soviet Union is now trying to suppress the ancient faiths under the pretense of sponsoring them. They are actually claiming that Communism is the answer of religion. That Mohammed was the "Prophet of Communism". Christianity was the faith of the Babylonians and Judaism was the source of its social philosophy. Even the Buddha is represented as the "First Communist". These efforts to advance Communist dogmatism by cloaking it in the robes of the greatest spiritual concepts must be understood and opposed.

We regret that our knowledge of the common danger with these people in the Middle East who are not yet aware of it. Americans and the peoples of the Middle East must strengthen their bonds of culture and religion, of literature and education, as so to stand united against the danger which threatens to engulf us all.

### How To Have Mutual Understanding

The few American studies of the mutual understanding which is needed between the peoples of all American peoples and the peoples of the Middle East are scattered and scattered. No one has yet written a book on the subject of the spiritual heritage of the East. And many Middle Easterners still regard the American people as an ignorant and ignorant people, not qualified by political or economic considerations.

There remains much to do in which to counteract Soviet efforts to divide and conquer the peoples of the Middle East. We must dispel the darkness, the cloud which has settled over traditional good relations.

### What The Committee Believes

This Committee believes that human freedom is the inalienable right of all men, regardless of race, creed or color. If freedom is confined within national boundaries, the hope of freedom for humanity is lost. All nations of the Middle East, without distinction of race or faith, must have the same right to develop their way of life that we ourselves have enjoyed.

### American Friends of the Middle East

(A Committee to Increase Understanding of Communist Methods)

The American Friends of the Middle East is a non-profit organization which has been in existence since 1946. In the past period of world tension it has been the people of the Middle East and of the Western World with a common spiritual crisis and danger.

It is proper to call attention to the fact that the American Friends of the Middle East is not a religious organization. It is not a political organization. It is not a social organization. It is not a cultural organization. It is not a religious organization. It is not a political organization. It is not a social organization. It is not a cultural organization.

In that Eastern homeland, religion plays an important, vital part. As the people in the Middle East develop new patterns, they should be encouraged to retain the best traits which are revered by all people who follow the religions of the Book.

### Established American Organizations

For generations American institutions have looked to the Middle East. They have built universities and hospitals. They have sponsored educational institutions. In fact, the oldest and finest institutions of education in the United States and the Middle East have been built by liberal Americans and Americans. These institutions have received no support from the United States government or any other source. They are the result of the private initiative and individual contributions of individuals and organizations in their own right, often without receiving the public recognition they deserve.

The members of the American Friends of the Middle East desire to cooperate in the future with the existing organizations and to assist them in their activities.

### Program

Within the measure of the public support we may receive, the Committee will direct its work along the following lines:

1. To seek through the medium of publicity and discussion by writing and publishing material designed to increase understanding in the United States of Middle Eastern people, their problems, and programs.
2. To send representatives to the different countries to pay particular attention to the various religious groups in order to see that their problems, and to assist them in having their voice heard in America.
3. To bring questions of human rights and cultural groups to the attention of the American public.
4. To send representatives of the Committee to the Middle East to see the first-hand situation of the American public opinion and to report on the work of this Committee to the American public.
5. To arrange public opinion, educational, and other activities in the area and outside the boundaries of the Middle East.
6. To invite the participation of the many Americans of the Middle East in our work.
7. To do, wherever possible, the preservation and rebuilding of religious, historical, and cultural centers in the Middle East.
8. To seek toward the calling of a spiritual and cultural conference in the Middle East, the purpose of counteracting the ill influences which a plan for permanent cooperation between the American and Middle Eastern peoples.

- Charter Members**
- WILLIAM A. AXLES**  
Professor of History, Yale University  
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- DR. MILLAR BURGESS**  
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- HON. WILLIAM A. BRY**  
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- H. H. FISHER**  
Former U. S. Senator from Wisconsin  
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- GEORGE CASP KIEHL**  
Chairman, Board of Governors,  
Middle East Institute, Washington, D. C.
- HAROLD LAMB**  
Author and Historian  
New York City
- FRANK MARSH**  
Former, U. S. Senator from Virginia  
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- HON. WALLACE MERRILL**  
Former U. S. Ambassador to Iran  
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- VINCENT SHELAN**  
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- W. L. WHITE**  
Editor, The Atlantic, New York City
- DR. JOHN A. WILSON**  
Director, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago  
Chicago, Ill.
- DR. MARSHALL W. FISHER**  
President of Foreign Affairs, The Middle East  
New York City

If you agree, please fill out and mail this coupon

**American Friends of the Middle East**  
DOUGLASS THOMPSON, Chairman  
237 East 48th Street, New York 17, N. Y.

American Friends of the Middle East  
237 East 48th Street, New York 17, N. Y.

I agree with you, please send me a membership card for my personal use.

I wish to help contribute to the Committee's program, I enclose \$ \_\_\_\_\_ as a contribution.

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Figure 2. American Friends of the Middle East full page advertisement in The New York Times (The New York Times Archive, June 27, 1961)

### Chapter III: Exposure and Reactions

#### *Exposure*

In March 1965, the United States went to war in Vietnam, under the direction of President Lyndon B. Johnson, to attempt to stop the spread of communism. American officials feared that if they did not intervene at this point in time, then communism would spread from North Vietnam, into South Vietnam, and ultimately to all of Asia. The American entrance into the war came with negative effects within the United States, including in the CIA. There were valid fears that classified CIA information would be revealed as a part of the anticommunist fight. Imminent threats and implications of exposure were being published for the world to see. For example, “in an article in the May 9, 1966 issue of *The Nation*, Robert G. Sherill implied that the American Friends had CIA ties. No official of the organization denied the allegations.”<sup>79</sup> American government officials were worried, but they were not fast enough in their effort to prevent the declassification of government information. In an attempt to prevent a leak of information, “Secretary of State Dean Rusk ordered a review of ‘continued U[nited] S[tates] G[overnment] support of AFME through CIA channels,’ but the move came too late. On 17 February 1967, three days after carrying an advertisement announcing *Ramparts* magazine’s imminent exposé of CIA links with US student groups, *The New York Times* identified AFME as a recipient of grants from an Agency pass-through, the J. Frederick Brown Foundation.”<sup>80</sup> *The New York Times* articles explained how the CIA had funded various groups, including the

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<sup>79</sup> Sol Stern, “A Short Account of International Student Politics & the Cold War with Particular Reference to the NSA, CIA, Etc.,” *Ramparts Magazine*, March 1, 1967.

<sup>80</sup> Wilford, “American Friends of the Middle East,” 113.

AFME, to channel government aid in a covert way to counter Soviet operations during the Cold War. The infamous *Ramparts* exposé on the CIA, entitled “A Short Account of International Student Politics & the Cold War with Particular Reference to the NSA, CIA, Etc.,” was officially published in the March 1, 1967 edition of *Ramparts* magazine.



Figure 3. Clippings from *The New York Times* articles that preempted the *Ramparts* exposé. (*The New York Times Archives*, February 13, 14, and 18, 1967)

*Ramparts* magazine was a left-wing publication that was produced from 1962 to 1975 in San Francisco. When it first came out, *Ramparts* was modest. Funded by its founder Edward Keating, *Ramparts* was a symposium for Catholic America.<sup>81</sup> Soon, however, it “morphed into something wild: a slick, muckraking magazine that was the most freewheeling thing on most American newsstands during the second half of the 1960s.”<sup>82</sup> This magazine was a game changer for American culture and society in the 60s. *Ramparts* “printed the Eldridge Cleaver prison letters<sup>83</sup> that became ‘Soul on Ice,’ and hired Cleaver on staff. It published Che Guevara’s diaries. In 1967 it ran a photo essay called ‘The Children of Vietnam’ that led the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to criticize America’s involvement in that war for the first time.”<sup>84</sup> The editors and writers whom the publication hired all had various social agendas but all agreed when it came to their sympathies for communism. Sol Stern, author of the CIA exposé, was “listed as being a member of the Young Socialist League in 1956, and the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in 1961.”<sup>85</sup> The CIA quickly responded internally to the exposé. Analysts drafted briefing notes on *Ramparts* and its staff. In internal briefing notes from February 20, 1967, the CIA described how the politically motivated magazine utilizes its art. *Ramparts*’ “anti-war propaganda and sensational exposes presented in a Playboy format are designed to make the magazine attractive and credible to campus radicals. Its goal appears to be to smear the liberals and undermine any faith in reform movements without presenting any positive or even

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<sup>81</sup> Peter Richardson, “The perilous fight: the rise of Ramparts magazine, 1965-1966, *California History* 86, no. 3 (2009): <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A203026585/AONE?u=anon~759d452b&sid=googleScholar&xid=52f9894c>.

<sup>82</sup> Dwight Garner, “Back When Ramparts Did the Storming,” *The New York Times*, October 6, 2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/07/books/07garner.html>.

<sup>83</sup> Eldridge Cleaver was a leader of the Black Panther Party. “Soul on Ice” was his memoir of personal essays that he wrote in prison which ultimately provided Americans insight into the civil rights movement. Che Guevara was the communist face of the Cuban Revolution.

<sup>84</sup> Garner, “Back When Ramparts Did the Storming.”

<sup>85</sup> Fulton Lewis, “Exclusive,” CIA Reading Room (Special Reports Inc., April 5, 1967), <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP70B00338R000300030009-3.pdf>.

alternative programs of its own.”<sup>86</sup> In the weeks following the revelations, the CIA and government officials repeatedly denied the claims made in the *Ramparts* article.

Not only was the CIA eager to refute *Ramparts* claims, but various leaders of AFME-funded groups attempted to deny their knowledge of the AFME being a front for the CIA, too. One such leader, Henry Kissinger, whose Harvard International Summer School received grants from the AFME, denied knowing about the aid. However, after *The New York Times* article was published, Harvard College admitted to receiving \$456,000 in funds from the CIA from 1960 to 1966.<sup>87</sup> It was also reported that of the \$456,000, \$135,000 went to Kissinger’s International Summer School.<sup>88</sup>

On April 5, 1967, a special report called *Exclusive* issued an analysis of the *Ramparts* feature that was not released to the general public until November 21, 2005. In the analysis, the author, American journalist Fulton Lewis III, wrote that “it becomes increasingly apparent that that publication’s attacks on the Central Intelligence Agency have been part and parcel of a leftist campaign to destroy that federal spy group completely, and to render it totally incapable of combating the international communist movement.”<sup>89</sup> Many believed at the time that there was an ongoing liberal campaign whose goal was to abolish the CIA’s covert funding of anti-communist American groups.

The exposure of the relationship between the AFME and CIA was detrimental to the group’s future. With the growing Israel lobby in the United States and the Vietnam War ongoing at the time in the late 60s, the AFME was not strong enough to withstand increasing scrutiny.

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<sup>86</sup> “Briefing Notes on Ramparts,” *CIA Reading Room* (Freedom of Information Act, February 20, 1967), <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp70b00338r000200230132-5>.

<sup>87</sup> Wilford, “The Mighty Wurlitzer,” 127.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Lewis, “Exclusive.”

The advantages that the AFME once enjoyed, such as the support of the powerful Protestant community, were well over. Following the *Ramparts* exposé, the AFME's board members planned to meet to discuss next steps for the group and obtaining funding from new and private sponsors. Coincidentally, "At precisely the moment when the directors were gathering in AFME's Washington headquarters, word arrived of a surprise Israeli attack on Egypt. Within a week, Israel had captured territories three times its original size. Throughout the Arab world, angry crowds attacked American targets, including the AFME office in Baghdad."<sup>90</sup> Israel's victory in the Six-Day War of 1967 marked the end of the AFME within the United States and abroad.

Scholars argue that the *Ramparts* article was a turning point for Americans' trust in their government. Tity de Vries, a history professor at the University of Groningen, explains that the exposé, along with other events occurring during the same general time period such as the American entrance into the Vietnam War:

contributed substantially to the sharp decline in the trust of the American people in their government, as measured in 1968. Moreover, the scandal prepared the American people for the shock to come with the Watergate scandal. In 1974 the Trust in Government Index dropped to a 29 percent positive rating, which was less than half of the 61 percent in 1966. Ever since, the rating has never been higher than 47 percent (in 1986).<sup>91</sup>

The exposure of the AFME was a victory for the American Israel lobby and a setback for Arabists and the American intelligence community.

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<sup>90</sup> Wilford, "American Friends of the Middle East," 113.

<sup>91</sup> Tity de Vries, "The 1967 Central Intelligence Agency Scandal: Catalyst in a Transforming Relationship between State and People," *The Journal of American History* 98, no. 4 (2012): 1089. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41509576>.



### *Zionist Concerns*

Immediately after the exposure of the AFME, public opposition from government officials and private Americans regarding the relationship between the CIA and the AFME became apparent. Those involved with “AIPAC and several congressmen lobbied Johnson to stop aiding the ‘anti-Israel’ organization, citing AFME’s long record of organizing, financing, and guiding OAS [Organization of Arab Students].”<sup>92</sup> Many Americans were worried about the impact that the AFME, now known to be sponsored by the American government, could have on the State of Israel. Senator Hugh Scott (R-PA) was one of those Americans. He conveyed worry over the CIA’s actions with the AFME and its effect on Israel. The Senator was quoted in a Philadelphia, Pennsylvania bulletin on March 23, 1967:

Neither am I critical of any organization which has as its objectives to reduce tensions in the Middle East or to encourage full and free exchange of students between the United States and all nations of the Middle East. But I do object strenuously to any use of U.S. government money for an organization whose principal objective is to generate anti-Israel propaganda in the United States and to conduct other activities that run counter to the stated objectives of American foreign policy.<sup>93</sup>

At the time, the chairman of the Zionist lobby, American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC),<sup>94</sup> Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein made an appeal to President Lyndon B. Johnson and Dean Rusk, the Secretary of State at the time. In the appeal, Bernstein described how it was not just that the AFME, supported by the CIA, was promoting Arab states, but more so that the AFME

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<sup>92</sup> Levin, “Arab Students, American Jewish Insecurities, and the End of Pro-Arab Politics in Mainstream America, 1952-1973.” 30–59.

<sup>93</sup> Laurence M. O’Rourke, “Scott Asks CIA to Stop Gifts to Foes of Israel.” *General CIA Records* (CIA FOIA #CIA-RDP73-00475R000100740009-7, March 23, 1967), <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP73-00475R000100740009-7.pdf>

<sup>94</sup> AIPAC was created in 1963 by Isaiah Kenen, but was preceded by the American Zionist Committee for Public Affairs which was founded in 1951.

“disseminated anti-Israel and anti-Zionist views prejudicial to the State of Israel.”<sup>95</sup> Given the greater global context, the fate of the Jewish state was a major concern for Jewish Americans. Nazi concentration camps had been liberated roughly 20 years prior. Many survivors of the Holocaust and Jewish immigrants were in the United States. It is estimated that during World War II, roughly 180,000 to 220,000 Europeans immigrated to the United States to flee Nazi persecution, and hundreds of thousands more refugees were on the American visa waiting lists.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, the preservation of Israel was of utmost importance to the Jewish community and Zionists. The exposure of the CIA’s relationship and financial support of the AFME was a turning point for Zionists. The exposure in 1967, coupled with Israel’s victory in the Six-Day War in 1967, were causes for celebration for the Jewish community and motivation for the Jewish and Zionist lobbies to continue their fight.

### *American Arabists*

The exposure of the AFME’s relationship with the CIA was a downfall for the American Arabist community. It effectively ended their reign and allowed the takeover of the American Zionist lobby.

The Zionist lobby was active in main-stream American media. They made their feelings heard after the *Ramparts* exposure and the Six-Day War, for example, in major publications such as *The New York Times*. Meanwhile, Arabists were publicly quiet. In his analysis of American

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<sup>95</sup> Quoted from “Halt Asked for CIA Millions for Friends of Middle East,” *General CIA Records* (CIA FOIA #CIA-RDP73-00475R000100740007-9, March 31, 1967), <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP73-00475R000100740007-9.pdf>.

<sup>96</sup> “How Many Refugees Came to the United States from 1933-1945?,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,, accessed February 21, 2023, <https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/how-many-refugees-came-to-the-united-states-from-1933-1945>.

Arabist diplomats and their behavior, Robert Kaplan explains how “even during the hottest moments of recent history in the Middle East, few diplomats have been more anonymous than the Arabists have. With the exception of April Glaspie, the recent US ambassador to Iraq, Arabists are just an opaque ‘them,’ even to many of their worst enemies.”<sup>97</sup> Kaplan further reasons that Arabists have historically been bashful in public. Unlike the Zionist lobby, Arabists “don’t pontificate on talk shows or op-ed pages.”<sup>98</sup> While this did not necessarily hurt the Arabist cause in 1967, the prevalence of Zionism in American main-stream media amplified the pro-Israel lobby and muted the Arabist lobby.

The Organization for Arab Students (OAS) was a bustling pro-Arab student organization in the 1950s and 60s that was co-sponsored by the AFME. Its members viewed the Six-Day War and events of 1967 as calamitous. According to “surveys from 1966 and 1968, sociologist Saad Ibrahim noted a vast negative shift in Arab student attitudes toward Americans and perceived American attitudes toward them, particularly among OAS members.”<sup>99</sup> Even though the OAS was experiencing the biggest challenge in their existence, the group was able to form new positive relationships. Approximately one month after the Six-Day War, “the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) published a newsletter article<sup>100</sup> pushing for Palestinian liberation, making it the first civil rights group to support Palestine. Founded as a mainstream civil rights organization, SNCC began embracing radicalism and the emerging Black Power

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<sup>97</sup> Robert D. Kaplan, “Tales from the Bazaar,” *The Atlantic*, August 1, 1992, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1992/08/tales-from-the-bazaar/305012/>.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Levin, “Arab Students, American Jewish Insecurities, and the End of Pro-Arab Politics in Mainstream America, 1952-1973.” 30–59.

<sup>100</sup> The article was published in the June-July 1967 issue of the SNCC Newsletter.

movement.”<sup>101</sup> The OAS publicly supported the SNCC’s messaging in response to moderate pro-Black and pro-Jewish groups condemning the SNCC’s messaging.

Despite the downfall of the AFME due to the infamous *Ramparts* exposé, American Arabists were steadfast in their position on Israel. Demonstrated by the actions of the OAS, and in order to stay afloat, American Arabists became more radical after 1967 through their alliance with the SNCC and loss of support from the AFME and CIA.

### *Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)*

Throughout the *Ramparts* drama, Congress was working to be more transparent to the general American public. On July 4, 1966, the bill that preceded FOIA was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson. When signing, President Johnson explained that “this legislation springs from one of our most essential principles: ‘a democracy works best when the people have all the information that the security of the Nation permits. No one should be able to pull the curtains of secrecy around decisions which can be revealed without injury to the public interest.’”<sup>102</sup> Congresspeople such as Senator Edward V. Long also praised the act, explaining that ““a government by secrecy benefits no one. It injures the people it seeks to serve; it damages its own integrity and operation. It breeds distrust, dampens the fervor of its citizens and mocks their loyalty.””<sup>103</sup> Government officials were quick to praise the bill, particularly given the information that was concurrently coming to light involving the CIA and its covert allies.

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<sup>101</sup> Levin, “Arab Students, American Jewish Insecurities, and the End of Pro-Arab Politics in Mainstream America, 1952-1973.” 30–59.

<sup>102</sup> Patricia M. Wald, “The Freedom of Information Act: A Short Case Study in the Perils and Paybacks of Legislating Democratic Values,” *Emory Law Journal* 33, no. 3 (Summer 1984): 652

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

Just a few short months after the major *Ramparts* exposé, the United States Congress enacted a new law called the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The Freedom of Information Act allows the following:

Any person, citizen or non-citizen-for whatever reason, good or ill-may file a request for an agency record, and the agency must disclose it unless the document falls within one of nine exemptions laid down in the law. If the agency refuses, the citizen can go to court on a priority basis, and the agency has to convince the court that the documents are exempt under the law. Most important, the court decides the issue afresh, without deference to the agency's call.<sup>104</sup>

FOIA means that not only can Americans request not-readily available government records, but so too can foreign entities. One example of this was when “Suzuki Motor Company used the FOIA to collect Toyota submissions to the US government, although Suzuki lacked comparable access to the data in Japan.”<sup>105</sup> Other countries have followed suit in the United States’ effort for governmental transparency, and individual states in the United States have created their own addenda to the statute. FOIA has been considered “and celebrated as a structural necessity in a real democracy.”<sup>106</sup>

Interestingly enough, in the *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, David Pozen argued that, when looking at FOIA and its usage through American history, the law “embodies a distinctively ‘reactionary’ form of transparency. FOIA is reactionary in a straightforward, procedural sense in that disclosure responds to ad hoc demands for information.”<sup>107</sup> For example, Americans saw the need for FOIA in 1966 and 1967. This was a time when American government intelligence agencies were being secretive and not being transparent with not only

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<sup>104</sup> Wald, “The Freedom of Information Act,” 655-666.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 667.

<sup>106</sup> David E. Pozen, “Freedom of Information beyond the Freedom of Information Act,” *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 165, no. 5 (April 2017): 1097-1158.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

the American public, but also with the rest of the American government in the highest levels. FOIA's 'reactionary' demand was also seen as a result of the Watergate scandal in 1974. The Watergate scandal caused great surprise and distress throughout the United States, as "high level cover-ups, agency hit lists, covert activities, and repeated invocations of executive privilege had generated a wave of indignation against closed government."<sup>108</sup> As a result of the public outcry due to governmental secrecy, three changes were officially made to the Act. The additions to FOIA in 1974 included the following:

First, mandatory time limits of ten to thirty days were imposed on agencies to respond to FOIA requests. Second, courts were specifically authorized to review the propriety as well as the fact of classification of documents, and to examine relevant documents in camera when conducting such a review. Finally, the 'investigatory record' exemption for law enforcement agencies was rewritten to apply only when certain harmful consequences, such as disclosing the identities of informers or the subjects of ongoing inquiries, would result from disclosure.<sup>109</sup>

Since FOIA's enactment and subsequent addendums, there have been critics to the law's existence. The most striking critics have been American intelligence agencies. In 1981, Congress held hearings on FOIA due to a specific demand to amend the Act further. One fear of intelligence agencies such as the CIA and NSA were "requests from foreign intelligence front organizations or even from legitimate groups who might inadvertently cause sensitive information to be revealed."<sup>110</sup> However, representatives from the CIA confessed in front of Congress that, in all of FOIA's existence, no classified information had been revealed in the case that the agency rejected a request. Nonetheless, looming fear of the possibility of classified information being released prompted the CIA occasionally to request complete exemption from

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<sup>108</sup> Wald, "The Freedom of Information Act," 656.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Wald, "The Freedom of Information Act," 671-673.

the law. The request for immunity was for two main reasons. The first was that “foreign governments were afraid to cooperate with the United States in intelligence sharing because they believed their secrets might be revealed through FOIA releases. Second, the process of reviewing intelligence files to see what could be released was prohibitively expensive and a constant risk to national security.”<sup>111</sup> The CIA had to designate roughly 200 experienced agents to the FOIA task force to certify that correct information was and was not being released under FOIA because, even if the smallest piece of inaccurate information was released, it could potentially be catastrophic to the agency if pieced together to create a bigger picture. Of CIA intelligence, “sources must not be disclosed; ongoing operations must not be compromised; relations with counterpart intelligence groups in foreign governments must not be jeopardized. The CIA repeatedly invoked the spectre of egregiously far-reaching requests, citing often the \$325,000 cost of processing one request from Philip Agee for all CIA records mentioning him.”<sup>112</sup>

### *The Future of Ramparts Magazine*

On February 4, 1969, *The Washington Post* published an article entitled “‘Ramparts’ Sets Bankruptcy Respite.” The article explained how the publication was \$1.5 million in debt and asked a San Francisco court for respite. In 1968, the magazine lost funding from major investors because they felt the publication was “pro-Israel but not pro-Israel enough,” according to Warren Hinkle III. The company underwent enormous transformations in a short time in an attempt to sustain the brand despite the financial inefficiencies. Leadership (resignation of Hinkle), publication frequency, artistic styles, and employee salaries are just a few of the things that

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<sup>111</sup> Wald, “The Freedom of Information Act,” 671-673.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

changed within the *Ramparts* brand at the time. The spring of 1968 also saw *Ramparts* lose half of its overall subscribers after the magazine hiked up the price of their subscription service. By 1969, the *Ramparts* Magazine was down to approximately 70,000 subscribers when, in 1967 during its peak, it was reaching its 200,000 subscribers.<sup>113</sup>

*Ramparts* Magazine published its final issue in October 1975. On March 7, 1976, *The New York Times* reported that the first issue of *Ramparts*' successor publication, *Seven Days*, would be issued in the following week. The goal was to produce a weekly "political alternative to Time magazine and other established news weeklies."<sup>114</sup> Despite its somewhat short time in publication, *Ramparts* magazine made its mark. It proved to be a changemaker. The publication took down powerful individuals in their AFME conglomerate while fueling the American Zionist lobby. The magazine also elicited the public demand for greater American governmental transparency. Most importantly, as argued in the next chapter, the *Ramparts* exposé proved to be a catalyst for change in the evolving relationship between the United States and Israel from 1967 to 1995.

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<sup>113</sup> "Ramparts' Sets Bankruptcy Respite," General CIA Records (CIA FOIA #CIA-RDP88-01314R000100150004-5, February 4, 1969),

<https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP88-01314R000100150004-5.pdf>

<sup>114</sup> "Successor to Ramparts to Be Issued Next Week," CIA General Records (CIA FOIA #CIA-RDP90-00845R000201080002-5, March 7, 1976),

<https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90-00845R000201080002-5.pdf>



## **Chapter IV: Evolving US-Israel Relations From 1967 to 1995 after AFME collapse (Friend to Guarantor)**

### *The Context of Affairs*

While the AFME was in existence, operating throughout the 1950s and 1960s to support the Arab cause, the Soviet Union was also in support of some Arab states. In the late 1950s and 1960s, the USSR supplied Algeria, Iraq, Syria, and the UAR with “military equipment to a value of about \$2 billion.”<sup>115</sup> The AFME was socially promoting the Arab States from the American side, while the Soviet Union was fiscally and militarily supporting several Arab states. As the AFME was covertly supporting Arab countries with the assistance of the CIA, in the early 1960s, the United States provided Israel with military resources – specifically the Hawk Anti-aircraft missiles. Despite the world powers supplying arms to countries in the Middle East, that did not equate to solid alliances. David Ben-Gurion, the Prime Minister of Israel, had not developed a trustworthy relationship with American President John F. Kennedy and therefore did not feel confident about the special relationship between the two countries. Many at home and abroad viewed Kennedy as “a political opportunist with few views of his own, who owed his political success to the ambition, backing and wealth of his father.”<sup>116</sup> This rumor, which stayed with Kennedy throughout his career, was thought to also extend into his relations with the Jewish diaspora, decisions, and attitude regarding Israel.

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<sup>115</sup> “Probable Soviet Objectives in Rearming Arab States (SNIE 11-13-67),” National Intelligence Council (NIC) Collection (CIA FOIA #0000272969, June 4, 1967), [https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/DOC\\_0000272969.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000272969.pdf)

<sup>116</sup> Ian J. Bickerton. “John F. Kennedy, The Jewish Community and Israel: Some Preliminary Observations.” *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 2, no. 2 (1983): 32–43, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41053330>.

According to Dr. Henry Gomberg, an American engineer and nuclear expert who helped the United States officially discover the Dimona Reactor (Israel's highly secretive nuclear facility), the Israelis regarded "the United States as a sort of rich but stupid uncle who will provide all kinds of moral support but actually do nothing whatever in a practical sense to provide the Israelis with any military security or at the very most provide too little."<sup>117</sup> Israelis believed that, in the bigger picture, the development of their nuclear reactor was essential for their protection and for developing their economy. They viewed Dimona as their "bargaining chip and would not give it up without concrete compensation. The reactor was a deterrent postponing the danger of war for many years to come."<sup>118</sup> At a time when war was always on the horizon, the Dimona nuclear reactor gave Israel some autonomy for one of the first times in history.

For Kennedy, the discovery of the Dimona nuclear facility was essential to his later actions regarding Israel and set a precedent for future US-Israeli relations. The issue of Dimona proved that, even though the United States had friendly relations with Israel, friendly relations do not equal full transparency and cooperation.<sup>119</sup>

It was the Cuban Missile Crisis later in October 1962 that changed the way Israel viewed Kennedy and the United States. The Cuban Missile Crisis was a brief, yet dangerous, encounter between the United States and Soviet Union over the threat of nuclear war, as Soviet missiles were installed in Cuba, 90 miles from US territory. The Soviets and the KGB (Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti – Soviet security and intelligence agency) were confident that

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<sup>117</sup> Information Report: CIA Feb 9, 1961 Country Israel. Subject: Nuclear Engineering Training/large Nuclear and Electric Power near Beersheba, 3. Box 501, NA, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb510/docs/doc%206C.pdf>

<sup>118</sup> Joseph Heller, *The United States, the Soviet Union and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948–67: Superpower Rivalry* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv18b5nbb>.

<sup>119</sup> Youngentob, "Was Kennedy the father of the US-Israeli Alliance?"

this tactical move would prove successful for the Soviet agenda and spread of communism, but they were wrong.<sup>120</sup> Following “the Missile Crisis, any ambiguity or delays would not be tolerated. This October confrontation was a measuring stick which tested [Kennedy’s] patience and nearly erupted in a thermonuclear war.”<sup>121</sup> The American president was viewed in a positive light following the Cuban Missile Crisis. Israel considered Kennedy to be “the man who had saved the world from destruction”<sup>122</sup> because he ensured a peaceful end to the Cuban Missile Crisis, preventing nuclear war and its potential global threat. Prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis, Israel and the United States were friendly, but not solidly allies, even though the United States controversially publicly recognized the relatively new Jewish state. The United States used Israel as its proxy for representation in the Middle East during the ongoing Cold War with the Soviet Union. It was a delicate situation in the region with a multitude of delicate political situations intertwining, such as the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union and the Arab-Israeli conflict between many Arab states and Israel.

As stated earlier, Israel did not trust President Kennedy initially because of his own political interests, and President Kennedy was not the most trusting of Israel because of their secrecy regarding Dimona. In 1960, the United States was sympathetic to Israeli needs for military equipment with the growing threat of Nasser in Egypt, especially due to the recent Egyptian-Czech arms deal (1955) and Suez Crisis (1956). However, the United States feared that supporting Israel with military equipment would lead to an arms race, in the midst of the Cold

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<sup>120</sup> Christopher Andrew, *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World - Newly Revealed Secrets from the Mitrokhin Archive* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 146-168.

<sup>121</sup> Adam Cahill, “Respect and Mistrust: Kennedy, Israel, and Dimona,” *Unpublished doctoral thesis*, University of Calgary, 2019.

<sup>122</sup> Heller, *The United States, the Soviet Union and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948–67: Superpower Rivalry*.

War, between the Soviet Union, by way of Egypt, and the United States, by way of Israel. Thus, an unwavering alliance between the United States and Israel was not ever present.

By 1967, when Americans in the United States were experiencing shock with the *Ramparts* magazine exposé, Israel was going to war with Arab forces. The timeliness of events was crucial in changing the nature of the US-Israeli relationship from 1967 to 1995.

### *1967 and The Six-Day War*

The Six-Day War in June of 1967 changed the way the world saw Israel. After recognizing the mobilization of Arab forces from Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, Israel took drastic steps to ensure its own safety and security. However, we would learn later that the mobilization of Arab forces had been a tactical play spurred by the Soviet Union to stir up tensions in the region. Additionally, it was a war that could have been prevented with the aid of American diplomats. In Jordan, King Hussein was an openly anti-Zionist leader. Secretly, though, he “had managed to reach a modus vivendi with Israel. He met clandestinely with Israeli emissaries on a regular basis and had open channels to the Israelis through the American and the British Embassies.”<sup>123</sup> King Hussein sent a letter to Levi Eshkol, the Prime Minister of Israel, in which he “promised to do his utmost to prevent future attacks like this.”<sup>124</sup> It was delivered swiftly by an American ambassador to officials in Tel Aviv. However, because it was delivered on Friday, the officials dismissed the letter to observe Shabbat for the weekend. By Sunday of that same weekend, Israel had made its surprise attack to commence the Six-Day War.<sup>125</sup> The American

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<sup>123</sup> Michael Oren. “The Revelations of 1967: New Research on the Six Day War and Its Lessons for the Contemporary Middle East.” *Israel Studies* 10, no. 2 (2005): 1–14. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30245883>.

<sup>124</sup> Oren, “The Revelations of 1967: New Research on the Six Day War and Its Lessons for the Contemporary Middle East,” 1-14.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

ambassador's swiftness in delivering the correspondence from Amman to Tel Aviv could have prevented the war, but due to the Jewish day of rest, American liaising between the two countries was not perfect.

Israel defeated the Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian armies to protect its existing borders and occupy the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza, and the Golan Heights. The outcome of the Six-Day War altered the view of Israel in Arab minds. Because of this decisive Israeli victory, the Arab world saw Israel as a legitimate entity in the Middle East that could stand amongst its neighbors.<sup>126</sup>

Shortly after the war, changing views were ever present. Egypt, most notably, "accepted United Nations Security Council Resolution 242. Besides calling for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories, Resolution 242 also affirmed the right of all states in the region to live within secure borders. It was the first time that Arab states had officially signaled willingness to recognize the State of Israel."<sup>127</sup> It can be argued that Egypt's willingness to recognize Israel's success in the war and accept the United Nations resolution was in part due to the downfall of the AFME as a result of the *Ramparts* article. Nasser no longer had the AFME, or more specifically his fierce supporter Kermit Roosevelt, in his ear promoting anti-Zionism on behalf of American Arabists and the CIA.

Egypt drifted farther from the Soviet sphere of influence and towards the Americans after Anwar Sadat took over the Egyptian presidency from Nasser in 1970. He rid the country of Soviet military advisors and in doing so, distanced the Soviets and drew in Western powers.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Youngentob, "Was Kennedy the father of the US-Israeli Alliance?"

<sup>127</sup> Shibley Telhami, "The Camp David Accords: A Case of International Bargaining." Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, 1992. *Human Rights Studies Online Database*. Web.

[https://search-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/view/work/bibliographic\\_entity%7Cbibliographic\\_details%7C3966290](https://search-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3966290).

<sup>128</sup> Youngentob, "Was Kennedy the father of the US-Israeli Alliance?"

This also paved the way for improved US-Egyptian relations and the later American facilitation of the Camp David Accords in 1978-1979.

The American Jewish diaspora was strong after the events of 1967: the downfall of the covertly CIA-funded Arabist lobby in the United States, greater transparency through FOIA in the United States, and Israel's victory in the Six-Day War. The year of 1967 was transformative for American Jews. Scholars argue that it was the year "when American Jews gained pride in being Jewish" and adapted "the once-liberal Jewish establishment into a mere 'instrument of nationalism.'"<sup>129</sup> The American Jewish lobby was strong, and arguably, would not have been this powerful without the exposure of the AFME and the subsequent downfall of the American Arabist lobby. Essentially, the Jewish diaspora, and the world view of Israel and Judaism became "divided between the Jews' friends and their enemies."<sup>130</sup> This set the tone for American political decisions and foreign policy. Satisfaction of the Jewish diaspora and Israelis now relied on "loyalty to the Jewish people, commitment to its survival, and hostility toward its enemies."<sup>131</sup> Making the protection of Israel even more pressing for the diaspora and US alike, by July of 1967, intelligence organizations within the United States were aware of the probability of the Soviet Union's intent to rearm some Arab states.

#### *The Yom Kippur War and Disengagement Treaty (1973-1975)*

On October 6, 1973, Egypt and Syria initiated a synchronized surprise attack on Israel along the Suez Canal and in the Golan Heights on the holiest day of the Jewish calendar - Yom

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<sup>129</sup> Quoted from Joshua Michael Zietz. "'If I Am Not for Myself...': The American Jewish Establishment in the Aftermath of the Six Day War," *American Jewish History* 88, no. 2 (2000): 253–286. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23886261>.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

Kippur. Many Arab and North-African states supported the attack by Egypt and Syria, but Jordan, geographically, did not. This allowed Israel to focus on the two war fronts and not on a third. Because of the surprise nature of the attack, Israel swiftly requested aid from the United States.

Oil-producing Arab states placed an embargo on oil to countries supporting Israel in the war (the United States, Netherlands, South Africa, and Portugal). This ultimately caused an oil shortage in the United States. Oil executives appealed to the Nixon administration to provide less support for Israel and more for Arab states to relieve some of the strain of the embargo which had quadrupled the price of oil in the United States.<sup>132</sup>

The Yom Kippur War was a proxy conflict during the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States but also proved the United States' unwavering support for Israel. The Soviets utilized this war to display their strength. They provided the Arab states with a great deal of military aid, significantly less than the United States was willing to provide to Israel initially. Eventually, the United States, under the direction of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and President Richard Nixon, called for Operation Nickel Grass to resupply Israel and to ensure the Soviet Union and its allies would emerge defeated.<sup>133</sup> However, NATO allies and British forces stopped the supplies from reaching Israel and prevented the United States from utilizing Cyprus as a staging and spying base. Portugal became the main hub for supplying Israel through the fighting.

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<sup>132</sup> "Oil Shock of 1973-74," Federal Reserve History, Accessed March 17, 2023. <https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/oil-shock-of-1973-74>.

<sup>133</sup> "Operation Nickel Grass: Turning Point of the Yom Kippur War," Richard Nixon Foundation, Accessed March 19, 2023. <https://www.nixonfoundation.org/2014/10/operation-nickel-grass-turning-point-yom-kippur-war/>.

Within about two weeks of the war commencing, Israel went from an underdog to powerhouse, with the support of their allies. Israeli forces made advancements geographically and defeated a large number of Arab planes, tanks, and other war materials in battle. The Soviets panicked at the sight of Arab defeat. They threatened to put boots on the ground in Damascus, while the Israelis, on their own, were capable of taking Cairo.

CIA intelligence from October 24th was crucial. Americans suspected the Soviets were going to start bringing troops into the Middle East, so the Americans prepared to do the same. Neither power acted, though. With Israel's dominance everclear, on October 22nd, the United Nations called for Resolution 338 "for 'all parties to the present fighting to cease all firing and terminate all military activity immediately.'" The resolution also called for the implementation of Resolution 242. The vote came on the day that Israeli forces cut off and isolated the Egyptian Third Army and were in a position to destroy it."<sup>134</sup> Israel's compliance with the ceasefire was due in large part to the United States. If Israel had not complied, the Israel Defense Forces could have moved into Cairo and Damascus – a potentially disastrous move for future politics in the region. Additionally, the United States was working with the idea that, if Israel did not agree to the ceasefire, then the Cold War could potentially become a war with boots on the ground or even a nuclear war. Once again, the United States was involved in not only offering its unwavering support for Israel when in crisis, but also in mediating an end to an event in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Interestingly enough, even though Egypt and Syria lost more resources and personnel in the war, they still view the war as a success and believe that Israel only gained the ground it did due to the support of the United States.

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<sup>134</sup> "The Yom Kippur War: Background and Overview (October 1973)," Jewish Virtual Library, Accessed March 14, 2023, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/background-and-overview-yom-kippur-war>.



The United States acted as a mediator in ensuring Israeli-Egyptian peace, as well. The Second Disengagement Agreement was signed by Israel and Egypt – and mediated by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger – in Geneva, Switzerland in September of 1975. In March 1975, the United States stopped supplying Israel with military aid until Israel agreed to continue negotiations to concede land in the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt.

Without the internal pressure of its own intelligence agency covertly supporting the enemy, the United States was able to swiftly mediate negotiations between Israel and Egypt. The lack of the AFME allowed the United States to work with Israel, and the United Nations, to ensure a peaceful end to the Yom Kippur War and to successfully mediate a Disengagement Treaty.

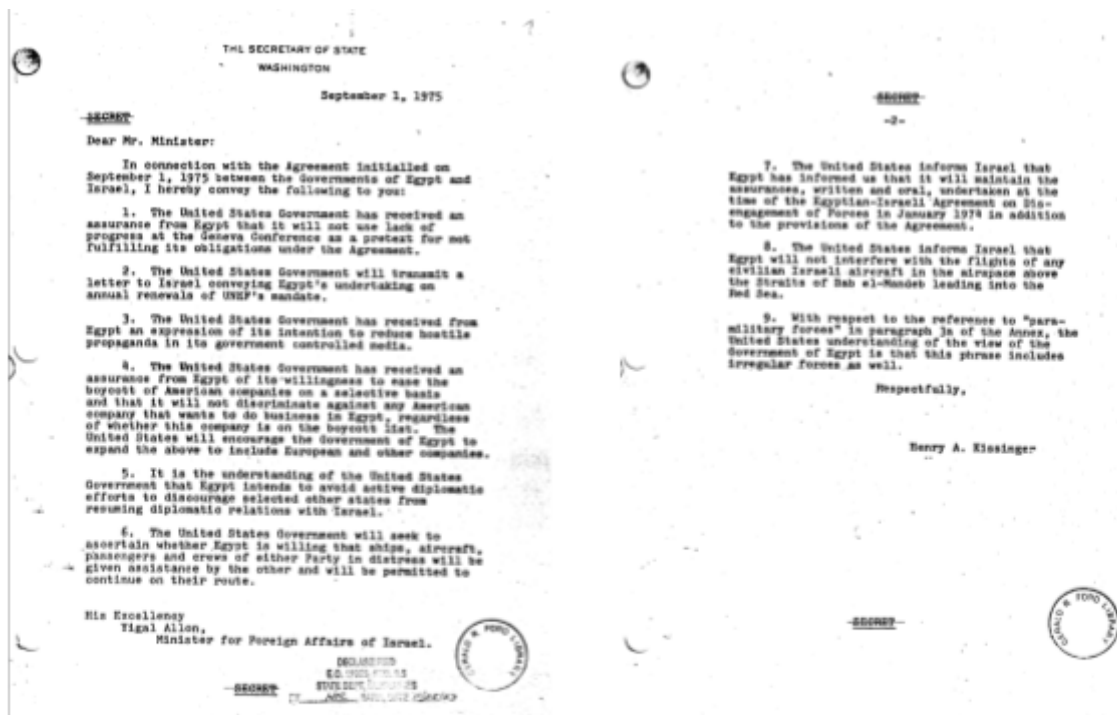


Figure 4. Letter from Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin as a part of a collection of documents from the Sinai Disengagement Agreement (Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library September 1, 1975)

*The Camp David Accords (1978-1979)*

Remarkably, in 1978, Egypt (represented by President Anwar Sadat) and Israel (represented by Prime Minister Menachem Begin) came together – mediated by the United States (represented by President Jimmy Carter) – to sign a peace treaty (ultimately signed in March 1979). Egyptians, Israelis, and Americans alike were all surprised by the willingness of the entities to come together for peace. Many were confounded because Egypt had initially villainized Israel for displacing the Palestinian people. A whole “generation of Egyptians grew up knowing Israel simply as ‘the illegitimate Zionist enemy.’”<sup>135</sup> Perhaps, that was because Nasser had enjoyed the support of Kermit Roosevelt, his American friend who happened to run the anti-Zionist AFME. In 1970, Nasser died of a heart attack and was succeeded by Anwar Sadat.

With Anwar Sadat in power after Nasser’s death (and with the AFME no longer in operation), Egypt was ready to step forward to bargain its end of a deal and finally make peace with Israel and Western world powers. Sadat acted as a “transitional president” in Egyptian history.<sup>136</sup> He helped change the course of the Arab-Israeli conflict because he had the legitimacy factor due to being Nasser’s successor, yet he forged his own ruling path that was distant from the errors made by Nasser. The United States trusted Sadat and Sadat was willing to work with the leaders in Washington, especially when he recognized Israel as a legitimate state in 1979.

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<sup>135</sup> Telhami, “The Camp David Accords: A Case of International Bargaining.”

<sup>136</sup> Kenneth Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy: Sadat, Kissinger, Carter, Begin and the Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 1.

With this newfound mutual trust, the United States was able to act as “a broker and mediator, not just Israel’s trusted partner” in order to secure peace between Egypt and Israel.<sup>137</sup>

In the end, the players involved in the Camp David Accords walked away with two main agreements. The first stipulated “Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai (including settlements and bases) in return for which Egypt would sign a peace treaty with Israel and normalize relations, including an exchange of ambassadors and travel across borders.”<sup>138</sup> The Sinai Peninsula had been cause for tension for so long. This compromise was essential for Egypt in signing the accords. The second agreement established a plan to resolve the condition of Gaza and the West Bank.

The Camp David Accords would not have been possible without the United States’ mediation and it signaled the start of American involvement in further mediation between Israel and its Arab neighbors.



*Figure 5. President Jimmy Carter, President Anwar Sadat and Prime Minister Menachem Begin meeting in Maryland, U.S.A. for the Camp David Accords (Office of the Historian, United States Department of State, 1978)*

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>138</sup> Telhami, “The Camp David Accords: A Case of International Bargaining.”

*Brokering Peace - The Oslo Accords I (1993)*

In 1993, President Bill Clinton hosted Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel and the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat at the White House for the signing of a “declaration of principles on interim Palestinian self-government.”<sup>139</sup> This was a monumental step, one that Clinton’s predecessors, including Truman, could only have dreamt of for the longevity of the Jewish state and to take a step towards solving the Arab-Israeli conflict. After the gathering, Clinton gave the following remarks to attendees:<sup>140</sup>

Ever since Harry Truman first recognized Israel, every American President—Democrat and Republican—has worked for peace between Israel and her neighbors. Now the efforts of all who have labored before us bring us to this moment—a moment when we dare to pledge what for long seemed difficult even to imagine: that the security of the Israeli people will be reconciled with the hopes of the Palestinian people and there will be more security and more hope for all.<sup>141</sup>

President Clinton followed some of his predecessors in supporting the State of Israel beyond what would be expected in a typical alliance.<sup>142</sup> He did not just simply support the country in a time of political need, he ensured a peaceful resolution for the nation by hosting the dueling leaders for the signing of a peace treaty. He acted on behalf of the United States not just as a friendly nation, but as a mediator to ensure Israeli security and longevity. Clinton’s efforts to

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<sup>139</sup> William J. Clinton, “Remarks by President Clinton in the Ceremony for the Signing of the Israel-Palestinian Agreement,” September 13, 1991, Washington, D.C., Executive Office of the President, *HeinOnline*, [https://heinonline-org.proxy.library.emory.edu/HOL/P?h=hein\\_forrel/rpccs0001&i=3](https://heinonline-org.proxy.library.emory.edu/HOL/P?h=hein_forrel/rpccs0001&i=3).

<sup>140</sup> Youngentob, “Was Kennedy the father of the US-Israeli Alliance?”

<sup>141</sup> Clinton, “Remarks by President Clinton in the Ceremony for the Signing of the Israel-Palestinian Agreement.”

<sup>142</sup> In the field of International Relations, a political alliance is “a formal agreement between two or more states for mutual support in case of war,” according to Encyclopedia Britannica.

D.G. Haglund, “alliance.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, November 12, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/alliance-politics>.

support Israel by way of arbitrating peace between Middle Eastern nations did not end with the first Oslo Accords of 1993.

*The Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty (1994)*

In 1994, peace was established between the Kingdom of Jordan and the State of Israel. The United States, specifically President Clinton, played a significant role in convincing the United States Congress to forgive Jordan's debts to ensure American support for Israel in obtaining this peace deal.<sup>143</sup> Additionally, President Clinton hosted the leaders of the two nations, King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin, at the White House in July of 1994. This meeting ultimately ended with the creation of The Washington Declaration. This agreement essentially called for an end to war, the commitment to peace between the two nations, and Israel's commitment to respect the Hashemite Kingdoms<sup>144</sup> role regarding Muslim religious sites in Jerusalem.<sup>145</sup> President Clinton's mediation efforts were recognized in the official documentation of The Washington Declaration:

This initiative of President William J. Clinton constitutes an historic landmark in the United States' untiring efforts in promoting peace and stability in the Middle East. The personal involvement of the President has made it possible to realise agreement on the content of this historic declaration. The signing of this declaration bears testimony to the President's vision and devotion to the cause of peace.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> "The Oslo Accords and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process," Office of the Historian, Accessed March 17, 2023, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/oslo>

<sup>144</sup> The Hashemites are the ruling family in Jordan. They have ruled since 1921.

<sup>145</sup> "Israel-Jordan Relations: Overview of Peace Negotiations," Jewish Virtual Library, Accessed March 19, 2023. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/overview-of-israel-jordan-peace-negotiations>.

<sup>146</sup> "The Washington Declaration: Israel - Jordan - The United States," Jewish Virtual Library, (1994), Accessed March 19, 2023. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-washington-declaration-israel-jordan-the-united-states>.

American devotion to peace for the State of Israel was not a continuous objective for American presidents pre-1967. The *Ramparts* exposé and enactment of FOIA, events that allowed for greater transparency for the American public and even for members of government, paved the way for American hesitancy in Israel to evolve into American loyalty and unwavering support in ensuring the safety and security of the Jewish State.

*Ensuring Peace – The Oslo Accords II (1995)*

In September of 1995, Israeli and Palestinian leaders once again met at the White House in Washington, D.C. The Oslo II Agreement “divided the West Bank into separate areas under Israeli control, Palestinian control, and Israeli military responsibility with Palestinian civil administration, respectively. Oslo II also spelled out provisions for elections, civil/legal affairs, and other bilateral Israeli-Palestinian cooperation on various issues.”<sup>147</sup> As a way to subdue tensions amid the controversial talks, the Clinton Administration supported the peace process by “defusing crises and building up the Palestinian Authority with economic aid and security assistance.”<sup>148</sup> Once again, the United States did what it could to ensure a peaceful end to controversial talks and agreements between dueling entities. The Clinton Administration was able to assist in this matter without the pressure of CIA-backed groups providing a resistance against the cause.

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<sup>147</sup> “The Oslo Accords and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process,” Office of the Historian, Accessed March 17, 2023. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/oslo>

<sup>148</sup> “The Oslo Accords and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process,” *Office of the Historian*.

*In Summary*

The major events mentioned in this chapter, from 1967 to 1995, are only a few of the examples of the United States acting as more than an ally to Israel. These events show the United States' loyalty and commitment to ensuring Israel's security amongst its neighbors and the world. Prior to 1967, President Kennedy and President Johnson led the United States in a hesitant relationship with Israel. They were working, whether to their knowledge or not, with their own government working against them in regard to Israel and the Middle East region. By 1967, however, greater transparency and the downfall of the CIA-backed groups working against the United States government allowed the US-Israel relationship to evolve from hesitant allyship to loyal guarantor for peace and longevity for the Jewish State.

The first of these events mentioned was the The Six-Day War of 1967. It broke out mere months after the exposure of the CIA and its relationship with the anti-Zionist AFME. This exposé clearly had a major effect on American trust in government and caused a rallying-cry for the American Zionist lobby. The events of 1967 were certainly a turning point for US-Israel relations. It was the first time since 1951, to public knowledge, that there was not a force within the American government working against its own. The impact that the *Ramparts* exposure of the AFME ultimately had on American society and foreign policy is not surprising given the effect that the magazine had already had on major societal issues in the United States before 1967. As mentioned earlier, the magazine "printed the Eldridge Cleaver prison letters<sup>149</sup> that became 'Soul on Ice,' and hired Cleaver on staff. It published Che Guevara's diaries. In 1967 it ran a photo essay called 'The Children of Vietnam' that led the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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<sup>149</sup> See Footnote 78.

to criticize America's involvement in that war for the first time."<sup>150</sup> By 1967, *Ramparts* was not new to being a changemaker in the United States. The United States was new, however, to not having a force of its own working against its own agenda. Because of this, it should not be surprising that *Ramparts* was the catalyst for change in the evolving relationship between the United States and Israel. The timeliness of the publication created the perfect storm with a declining Arabist lobby, a growing and fueled Zionist lobby, American readiness for governmental transparency, and Israel being on the brink of war with its Arab neighbors. The events of 1967 paved the way for a loyal and long-lasting relationship between the United States and Israel that would allow the United States to aid Israel in securing peace with critical neighbors in the Middle East during particularly tumultuous times.

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<sup>150</sup> Garner, "Back When Ramparts Did the Storming."



## Conclusion

This thesis has provided an in-depth glimpse into how *Ramparts* magazine proved to be a catalyst in changing the course of US-Israel relations. Chapter one provided context on world politics. This included analysis of initial American foreign policy in the Middle East region, as well as context of the Truman and Eisenhower presidencies. Chapter one also included context on the introduction of the Cold War globally, and specifically in the Middle East region, as well as the CIA's political stance in regard to the region and supposed plans. Chapter two was a deep dive into the AFME in which I discussed its founding, the role of Kermit Roosevelt, advantages of American Arabists, and the growth and operations of the group. It is in this chapter that I explained the CIA's role in relation with the AFME, and why this happened, given the greater global political context being the Cold War.

Chapter three involved an in-depth analysis on *Ramparts* magazine and the exposure of the CIA-AFME relationship. In this chapter, I highlighted the response of both American Zionists and American Arabists, using *New York Times* archives and CIA FOIA records to underscore the large extent to which this exposé affected the American public on both sides of the Israel issue. Additionally, there is a focus on how *Ramparts* played a role in the development and eventual enactment of the Freedom of Information Act. It caused Americans to rally for change and transparency of government when it came to classified information. Finally, Chapter four rounded out my narrative. It is the glue of this thesis that helps to explain the ultimate role that the *Ramparts* exposé of the CIA-AFME relationship had on American foreign policy. I highlight six major events – from 1967 through 1995 – in which the United States did not act

merely as an ally of Israel, but as a guarantor for the young nation, guaranteeing its survival in a region where they were not accepted by their immediate neighbors. The Six-Day War, the Yom Kippur War, the Camp David Accords, the Oslo Accords (I and II), and the Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty were pivotal events in relatively recent history that highlight the lengths that the United States has been willing to go to ensure the longevity of the Jewish state.

While other authors have researched the major events, characters, and groups that I name in this work, no other author has examined the role that *Ramparts* magazine played in shifting the narrative of US-Israel relations from 1967 to 1995. Many scholars describe the friendships and relationships of government officials for their work in brokering treaties and agreements between hostile countries. However, when examining the timeline of events, *Ramparts* magazine's role in shifting the narrative on Israel in the United States (i.e. from ally to guarantor) is based on the role that the magazine was able to play in shifting American public opinion. The exposé forced Americans to demand change in the freedom of information in the country, forced the American Israel lobby to reexamine its influence and importance, and caused the demise of a major portion of the American Arabist lobby.

The argument made in this thesis is unique and informative, though I recognize that I, as every author, have not treated this topic in its totality. I encourage future academics and scholars interested in this subject to build on my work. There is more information that has yet to be declassified by government intelligence agencies such as the CIA. Additionally, I encourage future academics and scholars to visit the presidential libraries of the appropriately related American presidents for further primary source information on events such as those in my fourth chapter. I believe that resources on the topics I have discussed in this thesis are not finite,

although time certainly is. As a student with other academic commitments, one of the most difficult things that I had to succumb to was not having enough time to visit the presidential libraries for further resources and not having enough time to receive more sources from FOIA. Requesting documents through FOIA is also a much longer process than I initially thought and there are no guarantees about what will or will not be released. While it is a law for the freedom of information, there are still governmental limitations and oversight for public access to materials.

A note that I think is important to this research is my background as the author. I was raised Jewish and therefore have a somewhat biased opinion on the state of Israel. I refer to the land south of Lebanon as Israel because I believe in the Jewish state, but also because that is how the United Nations officially recognizes the land.

One topic that I hope can be researched further in the future in relation to this thesis is the role that the AFME, and actors such as Kermit Roosevelt Jr., played in developing CIA networks and assets in the decades to follow. While I wish I could have used this academic opportunity to delve into that subject, the limitations of classified material were a great deterrent. Perhaps if more information becomes readily available with the help of FOIA and the cooperation of the CIA, without the risk of exposing any present day agents or operations, future academics and scholars can examine the role that the AFME and Kermit Roosevelt Jr. played in kick starting the major intelligence networks in the Middle East that are still in use today.

Stories of espionage, action, and culture have always been of the utmost interest to me. It is my hope that future academics and scholars can use my research, supplemental to their own, to

paint an even clearer picture of how the CIA-AFME relationship and subsequent *Ramparts* exposé played a role in changing US-Israel relations for decades after 1967.

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