Why Hawks Become Doves

Shimon Peres and Foreign Policy Change in Israel

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To My Parents

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments

CHAPTER ONE
Introduction: An Individual Level Explanation of Foreign Policy Change

CHAPTER TWO
Assessing Cognitive Structure: A Comparison of Four Israeli Prime Ministers

CHAPTER THREE
Peres: The Hawkish Years (1953–1977)

CHAPTER FOUR
Peres’s Dovish Turn, Phase I (1977–1987)

CHAPTER FIVE
Peres’s Dovish Turn, Phase II (1987–1997)

CHAPTER SIX
Conclusion

Notes

Bibliography

Index

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ONE

INTRODUCTION

An Individual Level Explanation of Foreign Policy Change

Why do some hawkish leaders become dovish, thereby pursuing dramatic change in their states' foreign policies, while other hawks remain committed to the status quo? Recent history provides us with important examples of prominent foreign policy "hawks" who underwent dovish transformations. These leaders' shifts led, in turn, to major changes in their states' foreign policies. Egyptian president Anwar Sadat's peace overtures to Jerusalem, just four years after launching a surprise attack on Israel, led to the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty in 1979. In South Africa, Nelson Mandela's repudiation of violence in his 1989 letter to President P. W. Botha set the stage for the country's transition from apartheid to democracy. In the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev moved his country from a policy of containment to détente between 1985 and 1991.

Yet major foreign policy transformations have occurred not only in authoritarian regimes, where change, some would argue, may more likely occur as a result of the whims of an authoritarian leader, but also in democratic societies.[1] For example, Charles de Gaulle, the French military leader who became president of the Fifth Republic, reversed the longstanding French policy vis-à-vis the Algerians by granting them independence. The United States also has undergone a number of major foreign policy reversals. President Richard Nixon's famous 1972 visit to China marked a significant turnaround of American-Chinese relations. President Ronald Reagan began seeking a rapprochement with the Soviet Union even before Gorbachev came to power and, in so doing, effectively reversed his hardline stance toward the country to which he had formerly referred as "the evil empire" (Farnham 2001; Fischer 1997).

Foreign policy transformations can also take place in the opposite direction; that is, dovish policies can be replaced with hawkish ones, as was the case in the Carter administration. Following the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, President Carter revised his relatively dovish beliefs and attitude toward the Kremlin. Whereas he entered office with high hopes of improving U.S. relations with the Soviet leadership, he ended up pursuing hawkish policies, such as withdrawal from the SALT II treaty, recalling the American ambassador from

Moscow, and boycotting the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow (Aronoff 2006; Glad 1980, 1989; Lebow and Stein 1993; McClellan 1985).

Since the 1990s, Israel has had a comparatively large number of hawkish leaders who have reversed their previously hardline positions toward the Palestinians. Every premier since Ehud Barak, who governed the country from 1999 to 2001, has publicly endorsed a future Palestinian state despite many years of championing alternative solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The most dramatic foreign policy change in Israel in the last two decades, however, was the historic decision in 1993 to negotiate the Oslo accords with Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)—a reversal of longstanding Israeli policy of not negotiating with what had long been regarded as a terrorist organization. Had it not been for Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's and then-foreign minister Shimon Peres's change of heart—and the latter's determination—the Oslo agreements would not have come about. What led these two veteran leaders, both of whom had long opposed a peace deal involving the PLO, to pursue this sea change in Israeli foreign policy? Focusing primarily on the case of Peres, without whom such a change would not have occurred, the objective of this book is to explain why some hawkish leaders are more inclined to adopt more dovish foreign policy positions than others. Such an explanation should, more broadly, enhance our understanding of foreign policy change.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDYING A LEADER'S HAWK-TO-DOVE SHIFT

The phenomenon of hawkish leaders who pursue dovish policies has occurred in many parts of the world, and in many cases these shifts have led to major foreign policy changes by states. The extant political science literature, however, has not provided an adequate explanation for why some leaders change their core political beliefs, thereby altering their states' foreign policy, while others, witness to the same situational factors, remain firmly committed to their original beliefs.

Why do some hawks remain hawks, for example, while others become more dovish in their foreign policy orientation? To what extent do situational factors determine the likelihood of a leader's propensity to opt for more accommodative strategies vis-à-vis an adversary? Are certain personality characteristics critical to our understanding of this occurrence? None of these questions is adequately answered in mainstream explanations of foreign policy change, yet each has significant theoretical and policy value. With respect to theoretical debates, explaining foreign policy change remains an unsettled topic in the international relations literature. With regard to policy debates, if there are certain common factors underlying a leader's shift from a hawkish foreign policy orientation to a more dovish one, then identifying such factors could, among potential benefits, help policymakers shape the circumstances that might sway other leaders to opt for peace diplomacy.

How significant are the leaders themselves in affecting major foreign policy change? Few would question that events, such as the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty, the disappearance of Apartheid, and the end of the Cold War are of historic significance. But would they have taken place had other political actors prevailed? This is an important counterfactual question. Writes Fred Greenstein, a political scientist who has written prolifically on leadership:

> Most historians would agree … that if the assassin's bullet aimed at President-Elect Franklin D. Roosevelt in February 1933 had found its mark, there would have been no New Deal, or if the Politburo had chosen another Leonid Brezhnev, Konstantin Chernenko, or Yuri Andropov rather than Mikhail Gorbachev as General Secretary of the

> Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985, the epochal changes of the late 1980s would not have occurred, at least not at the same time and in the same way. (1992, 105)

Yet the discipline of political science has long neglected the role of leaders. As Greenstein observed nearly a half-century ago, the study of personality and politics has more critics than practitioners (Greenstein 1967, 630). In the field of international relations, scholars generally minimize the importance of leaders and their personalities, attributing political outcomes to structures and situational factors. In recent years, however, a number of scholars have called on political scientists to "bring the statesman back in" because many political outcomes cannot be adequately explained without factoring in the role of leaders and their personalities (Byman and Pollack 2001; see also Aronoff 2001; Hermann and Hagan 1998; Hudson 2005, 2007; Sasley 2006; Ziv 2010, 2011).

This book addresses this lacuna by studying the hawk-to-dove phenomenon and its impact on a state's foreign policy change. It makes four contributions to the literature. First, it explains why certain leaders are more likely to revise their foreign policy beliefs than are others. Second, it incorporates the individual level of analysis into international relations theory so as to provide an improved understanding of the role of leaders in foreign policy change. Third, it contributes to the learning literature by providing an additional mechanism by which to assess whether a leader has truly learned something new—genuinely adopting a new belief—as opposed to espousing a different position for tactical reasons. Fourth, it makes an important empirical contribution by shedding new light on the personal characteristics of key Israeli decision makers. Their personality attributes, in turn, are shown to have impacted their beliefs on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the wake of international, regional, and domestic changes.

Rethinking Explanations of Foreign Policy Change

International relations scholars tend to downplay the role of individuals in state (and nonstate) behavior. Yet a leader's personality can play a central role in foreign policy decision making. Theories that emphasize systemic-structural factors or domestic-level variables, while ignoring the signal role of decision makers, can offer, therefore, only partial explanations of foreign policy change.

The mainstream international relations scholarship currently lacks a robust theory of foreign policy change. Insight from the literature on cognitive psychology into leaders' personalities may be critical in explaining foreign policy change—for example, a decision maker's dovish turn. Cognitive psychologists, pointing to such factors as an individual's cognitive openness and cognitive complexity, are able to show why some decision makers are more prone to alter their beliefs than others. This study suggests that rationalist approaches must be supplemented with cognitive psychological explanations for an improved theory of foreign policy change.

The Inadequacy of Systemic-Level and Domestic-Level Approaches

The systematic study of foreign policy change is a relatively recent development in international relations scholarship. It had been largely ignored prior to the early 1980s, which were witness to a number of attempts by several prominent authors in the field to address this gap (Boyd and Hopple 1987; Gilpin 1981; Goldmann 1982, 1988; K. J. Holsti 1982; and Rosenau 1978, 1981).[2] The failure to deal with foreign policy change in a systematic manner led James N. Rosenau to

point out that "in our search for recurring patterns—for constancies in the external behavior of nations—we tend to treat breaks in patterns as exceptions, as nuisances which complicate our tasks" (1978, 371). It was the epochal events that took place between 1989 and 1991 that highlighted the importance of foreign policy change to the field of international relations, which had failed in predicting the extraordinary changes that accompanied the end of the Cold War.

Since the early 1990s, a general trend in the literature has been to question the utility of systemic-structural approaches, such as neorealism, in explaining states' foreign policy behavior in general and foreign policy change in particular.[3] To be sure, Kenneth Waltz makes clear in his *Theory of International Politics* that his structural theory does *not* determine which specific foreign policy actions states will take or when they will take them. He wisely observes that his theory must not be confused with a theory of foreign policy (Waltz 1979, 121–23). Yet, structural realists tend to account for foreign policy change by pointing out that states adjust their behavior in response to perceived changes in the characteristics of the international system. For some of these theorists, system-level variables, such as the distribution of power, explain the variation in foreign policy (Mearsheimer 2001).

Of neorealism, Robert Keohane writes: "The link between system structure and actor behavior is forged by the rationality assumption, which enables the theorist to predict that leaders will respond to the incentives and constraints imposed by their environments" (1986, 167). Thus, neorealists would explain foreign policy change by pointing out that states adjust their behavior in response to perceived changes in characteristics of the international system. Yet, as Voss and Dorsey (1992) point out, "one of the most central criticisms of the realist and structuralist interpretations of systems theory has been their inability to cope with change in a state's policies, whether those changes occur in terms of domestic or foreign policies." They further argue that "to confront the significant implications of these changes, a singularly causal explanation that sees change as deterministically and environmentally derived would not appear to be adequate" (Voss and Dorsey 1992, 24).

Indeed, recent research on foreign policy change finds that systemic-structural explanations are underdetermined; at best, they are partial explanations. Such criticism has come from scholars employing a similar rationalist framework—for example, those analysts emphasizing domestic-level variables (Rosati, Hagan, and Sampson 1994)—as well as from those favoring nonrationalist approaches, such as cognitive and/or motivational psychology (Farnham 2003; Lebow and Stein 1993; Levy 1994, 2003) and prospect theory (Welch 2005).[4]

Domestic-level theorists argue that internal factors, such as bureaucratic politics, public opinion, and political parties are what underlie foreign policy change (Goldmann 1988; Hermann 1990; Risse-Kappen 1991; Rosati, Hagan, and Sampson 1994). What both systemic-structural and domestic political explanations share, however, is a tendency to downplay the role of decision makers themselves in shaping a state's foreign policy behavior.

In contrast to rationalist assumptions, cognitive psychologists reject the notion that people readily revise their beliefs in light of new information, regardless of whether it emanates from the international environment or from domestic political circumstances (Conover and Feldman 1984; George 1969; Jervis 1976; Lau and Sears 1986; Little and Smith 1988; Suedfeld and Rank 1976; Suedfeld and Tetlock 1977; Tetlock 1985; Vertzberger 1990). Cognitive consistency theorists posit that people are "cognitive misers" who tend to accept information that is consistent with their prior beliefs, rather than information that challenges those beliefs. People rely on their belief systems to help cope with potentially overwhelming environmental uncertainty and are highly unlikely to change their beliefs in light of discrepant information.

Leaders can be expected to discount systematically new information or use those elements that correspond with their preexisting beliefs, thereby resisting change in their fundamental beliefs (Jervis 1976; Little and Smith 1988; Stein 2002, 293). Leaders, in particular, may be disinclined to change their beliefs given that it is difficult to explain such a change to the public, which is rarely fully aware of the informational basis of the currently held beliefs; nor is the public necessarily aware of new information the leader may have come across. Thus, to protect their credibility with the public, leaders may choose to avoid information that challenges their beliefs (Vertzberger 1990, 122, 137–38).

Like theories of cognitive consistency, attribution theories emphasize that people's schemata—cognitive structures that represent knowledge about a concept, person, role, group, or event—are generally resistant to change once they are formed (Stein 1994, 163; see also Vertzberger 1990). And, like cognitive consistency theorists, attribution theorists argue that people tend to discount information that is discrepant with existing schemata, a factor that also helps to explain cognitive stability (Stein 1994, 163; Stein 2002, 293).

Yet images people hold sometimes *do* change. People do not *always* hold on to their beliefs; their schema *can* change. In recent years, a number of studies in cognitive psychology have challenged some of the assumptions of the cognitive consistency and attribution theories. Scholars employing the *operational code* framework have found significant changes in the fundamental beliefs, for example, of U.S. Presidents George W. Bush (Renshon 2008) and Jimmy Carter (Walker, Schafer, and Young 1998) and Israeli premiers Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres (Crichlow 1998).[5] And, in contrast to Jervis's claim that once change comes, "it will come in large batches" and that "several elements will change almost simultaneously," recent studies show that changes in core beliefs do not necessarily cause all of one's beliefs to change (Jervis 1976, 170; Renshon 2008, 830–31, 840).

Other researchers have looked into certain personality types that appear to be more predisposed to changing their own views and their states' foreign policies than are others. Cognitive psychologists note that individuals who are *cognitively open*—that is, receptive to new information that challenges their core beliefs—are more likely to change their beliefs than are those who are *cognitively closed*; those in the latter group are more likely to reject information that challenges their beliefs (Finlay, Holsti, and Fagen 1967; Goldmann 1988; M. Hermann 1984; Rokeach 1960; Stoessinger 1979). Similarly, cognitive psychologists distinguish between *cognitively complex* individuals—those who recognize multiple dimensions in people, objects, and situations—and *cognitively simple* individuals, who tend to view the world in black and white terms (Hermann 1980; Shapiro and Bonham 1973; Tetlock 1984, 1985; Vertzberger 1990; Wallace and Suedfeld 1995). Political scientists employing this framework—and the one used in the present study—have argued, accordingly, that cognitively open and complex leaders are more likely to change their beliefs, and will therefore be more inclined to alter their states' foreign policies, than their cognitively closed and simple counterparts (Aronoff 2001, 2006; Farnham 2001; Stein 1994; Ziv 2011). Discourse analysis of these decision makers' own words in memoirs, press conferences, speeches, and published interviews, as well as testimony from associates of these leaders, elaborate upon the extent to which the decision maker is receptive to new information he or she comes across (cognitive openness) and also the number and combination of dimensions the decision maker applies to people and situations (cognitive complexity). These studies find that the more a decision maker is open and complex, the higher the likelihood that he or she will revise his or her beliefs when confronted with new information. Thus, cognitively open and complex decision makers are more likely to learn than those who are

cognitively closed and simple.

Learning and Foreign Policy

How can we determine whether a decision maker who espouses a new position on a given issue has actually changed his or her beliefs as a result of "learning" as opposed to having adopted a new position out of mere expediency? In other words, how do we know if genuine learning has taken place? This is an important question because the answer will likely be indicative of a decision maker's level of commitment to a newly announced policy.

Jack Levy defines "learning" as "a change of beliefs (or the degree of confidence in one's beliefs) or the development of new beliefs, skills, or procedures as a result of the observation and interpretation of experience" (1994, 283).[6] In other words, learning is a change of beliefs at the cognitive level. Unlike schema theory, it is an active process (Levy 1994, 283; Stein 1994, 170). Learning is an analytic construction, whereby people interpret historical experience through their own "frames," which they apply to that experience. This helps to explain why different leaders draw different conclusions from similar experiences.

Nye's (1987) distinction between "simple learning" and "complex learning" offers a useful framework in helping the researcher ascertain whether the decision maker has actually learned. Simple learning refers to new information the actor uses to alter means, but not ends. Similarly, Haas (1991) distinguishes simple learning, which he calls "adaptation," from genuine learning. Complex learning, by contrast (the only real learning, for Haas), involves the alteration of one's causal beliefs that lead, in turn, to the adoption of new goals.

The literature on learning suggests that most learning takes place at the tactical level (Tetlock 1991, 28).[7] A major challenge for the scholar, therefore, is to determine the extent to which a decision maker has surpassed the tactical level. The conventional wisdom is that complex learning is brought about by dramatic occurrences—wars, crises, catastrophic events, etc.—which may trigger a change in a decision maker's belief system (Bennett 1999, 84–85; Nye 1987, 398). Recent studies have explored, for example, the impact of the Korean War on Mao Zedong's more hostile and confrontational worldview (Feng 2005) and that of 9/11 on George W. Bush's more negative and bellicose worldview (Renshon 2008).

Complex learning can also occur incrementally, however (Ziv 2013). A decision maker may change his or her beliefs over an extended period of time as a result of a trickling of information that challenges the logic of a prior belief. Such incremental change may herald a change in ends given the amount of time that has elapsed, enabling the decision maker to reassess his or her beliefs. It is this incremental process that characterizes Shimon Peres's evolution from a hard-nosed hawk to a dove.

A Theoretical Framework

This book argues that it is the leader's cognitive structure—his or her levels of cognitive openness and complexity—that is the critical causal variable in determining his or her propensity to revise core positions in light of new information. A cognitively open and complex leader will be more sensitive to structural changes internationally and to changes in the domestic political environment. Such a leader is more amenable to change his or her beliefs and reorient the country's foreign policy than a leader who is cognitively closed and simple. Systemic-structural and domestic political factors are necessary but insufficient determinants of such a change; they

are permissive conditions, not causal factors.

DEFINING "HAWKS" AND "DOVES"

The term *hawk* is used to denote a leader who has an uncompromising attitude in the realm of foreign policy, whereas the term *dove* denotes a leader who prefers strategies of accommodation with the adversary. These terms are context-specific, however, since a dovish policy in one situation might mean something quite different than a dovish policy in other circumstances. For example, the hawk-dove divide in the context of U.S.-Soviet relations was based on one's positions on issues such as arms reduction, whereas the hawk-dove divide in the context of French policy toward Algeria from 1954–1962 was based on one's position regarding granting Algeria independence.

Since this book focuses on the hawk-to-dove transformation of long-time Israeli leader Shimon Peres, it is necessary to lay out specific criteria that define the "hawk" and "dove" labels in the Israeli context. For the period in question (1967–2014), I examine Peres's positions on the following issues to distinguish hawks from doves: (1) territorial compromise; (2) Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza; (3) negotiations with the PLO; and (4) Palestinian statehood.

Since 1967, the year in which Israel became an occupying power in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a consequence of the 1967 War, it is what one observer calls "the territorial divide" that has essentially differentiated hawks from doves.[8] Doves have supported territorial compromise; that is, returning parts or all of the occupied territories. Hawks have generally opposed territorial concessions, preferring to either provide the Palestinian residents of these territories with some sort of autonomy or having these territories formally annexed by Israel. The establishment of Jewish settlements in these territories has been an important strategy in retaining them; thus hawks have supported their expansion, while doves want to see them curtailed—even dismantled. Until the Islamist movement Hamas won a large majority in the Palestinian parliamentary elections of January 2006, the PLO was widely considered by the international community and by the Palestinians themselves as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. Whereas Israeli doves have long supported negotiations with the PLO, hawks have opposed it on the grounds that one must not negotiate with a terrorist organization. Finally, doves have supported the establishment of a Palestinian state as part of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while hawks have opposed it.[9]

Doves and hawks are ideal types; in reality, however, people fall along a continuum, with those at one end being strongly hawkish and those at the other end being strongly dovish. Thus, for example, a leader who opposes the expansion of settlements, favors territorial compromise and supports PLO talks that will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state is considered more dovish than one who favors territorial compromise in theory but opposes dealing with the PLO (or Hamas) and rejects Palestinian statehood. The latter, however, is more dovish than one who rejects not only negotiations with the PLO and a Palestinian state, but also the very notion of territorial compromise.

This study considers all three levels of analysis in explaining the momentous decision to negotiate with the PLO: (1) the cognitive structure at the individual level; (2) the balance of power at the systemic level; and (3) coalition politics, party politics, and public opinion at the domestic level.

Each leader's cognitive structure—specifically, his levels of cognitive openness and

complexity—is evaluated through a comparative analysis of character assessments provided by interviewees as well as discourse analysis of statements made by Shamir, Begin, Rabin, and Peres on issues other than the Palestinian question. The leader's level of cognitive openness is assessed by comparing the analytical results as they pertain to three questions: (1) Is the leader receptive to the views of other leaders or is he dismissive of opinions that differ from his own beliefs? (2) Does the leader surround himself with advisers who are free to challenge his views or does his staff consist largely of yes-men? (3) Does the leader respond to new information that challenges his beliefs by rejecting that information or by updating his beliefs in response to these inputs?

The leader's level of cognitive complexity is assessed by determining his ability to identify nuances in given situations and use them to his advantage. The analytical results of three key questions are employed in this regard: (1) Does the leader tend to view the world in black and white terms, or does he view shades of gray in people and events? (2) Is the leader able to identify situational ambiguity and use it to his operational benefit? (3) Does the leader tend to view conflict situations in zero-sum terms or positive-sum terms?

The balance of power is evaluated in terms of the distribution of military and political capabilities of actors in the Middle East. The impact of these systemic-structural conditions on Israeli security interests is then assessed, specifically the extent to which shifts in the international and regional balance of power have impacted Israel's geopolitical position.

Coalition politics, party politics, and public opinion are evaluated by examining press reports, polling information, party platforms, intraparty debates, parliamentary debates, and responses from interviewees. These factors are examined within the context of Israeli foreign policy decision making as it pertains to the Palestinian issue in order to determine whether and to what extent they have impacted Israeli foreign policy.

WHY SHIMON PERES?

This study demonstrates the inadequacy of standard rationalist explanations of foreign policy change that are based on systemic and/or domestic political variables. These factors are found to be insufficient in explaining why Shimon Peres became a dove prior to his erstwhile Labor Party rival Yitzhak Rabin, who was witness to the same international and domestic events. Moreover, other hawks who were privy to these events, such as Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, never became doves. Begin and Shamir are cases of the "dogs that did not bark."

Shimon Peres is the primary case study in this book for three reasons. First, Peres is an exemplary case of a hawk-turned-dove. His formative political years were spent running the ministry of defense, where he oversaw furtive arms deals with the French as well as the initiation and development of Israel's nuclear weapons program. His views on foreign policy were distinctly hardline, as was manifested by his belligerent rhetoric toward Israel's Arab adversaries, his fervent support for counterterror operations, and his push for Israel's involvement in the 1956 Sinai War. Following the 1967 War, Peres stood to the right of the Labor Party, his political home, by opposing territorial concessions and promoting the establishment of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. It was only in the late 1970s that he changed his mind about territorial compromise and settlement expansion, becoming a supporter of the former and an opponent of the latter. By the late 1980s, Peres identified with the party doves, who were advocating negotiations with the PLO, a position he vigorously pushed following Yitzhak Rabin's victory in the 1992 national elections. By 1997, Peres publicly endorsed the notion of an independent Palestinian state—a view he has retained to this very day.

The one-time hawk had become a devoted dove.

Second, the data availability on Peres makes him a particularly appealing leader to study. Peres's six-decade political career is unique not only in terms of its broad time span but also in terms of the extent to which he has been a key player in Israeli foreign policy decision making. As the empirical chapters make clear, Peres has had a hand in major foreign policy decisions since the mid-1950s. Many archival documents dating to the earlier part of Peres's career have been declassified and are now available to the public. Because Peres is a prolific writer and speaker, his transformation from hawk to dove also can be traced through his own words. Furthermore, expert testimony is readily available given the numerous family members, friends, acquaintances, former colleagues and aides—supporters and detractors alike—who are still alive.[10] These witnesses are important for corroborating Peres's words as well as providing the interviewer with insight into Peres's personality. Furthermore, Peres himself is alive and generally grants interviews. In two lengthy interviews with the Israeli president that were conducted in November 2006 and April 2012, this author probed Peres's evolving beliefs and major decisions during his political career.

Third, Peres has had a significant impact on Israeli foreign policy; he is not just an ordinary policymaker whose views have shifted. Peres matters because he has had a central role in shaping the course of events in Israel, in contrast to other hawkish Israeli officials who became doves but whose impact on Israeli foreign policy has been far more limited. Former president Ezer Weizman, a high-ranking official in Likud, became increasingly dovish in the late 1970s. In 1980, Weizman left Begin's government and formed his own political faction before ending up in the dovish wing of the Labor Party. Yehoshafat Harkabi, a former chief of military intelligence, similarly shifted in a dovish direction, advocating in 1977 talks with the PLO that would lead to a Palestinian state, many years before Israel's mainstream political establishment was prepared to do so. Weizman and Harkabi are but two examples of Israeli hawks who became doves. However, these figures had relatively minor roles in influencing the direction of Israeli foreign policy and are thus less appealing cases for exhaustive research.[11]

To be sure, there are other examples of hawks who adopted dovish policies *and* who played a major role in Israeli foreign policy. As made clear in chapter 5, however, the extent of Yitzhak Rabin's transformation appears to have been more limited than Peres's shift. The concluding chapter addresses the more recent Israeli case of Ariel Sharon's dovish turn, as well as the enigmatic case of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose beliefs do not appear to have shifted in a significant manner.

This study independently confirms other works that have found both Peres and Rabin to be pragmatic leaders who display a high level of sensitivity to their environment. In a quantitative analysis of each leader's "operational code," Crichlow (1998) shows that Peres in particular displayed pragmatic behavior, shifting his strategy over time in response to situational changes. Aronoff's (2001) qualitative study examines the cognitive structure of Israeli prime ministers. She finds Rabin and Peres, in particular, to have high levels of cognitive complexity, which helps to explain their ability to change their image of the PLO. In contrast, Shamir's cognitive simplicity prevented him from revising his image of the PLO. Yet Aronoff focuses also on two other factors: the decision makers' ideology and their "time horizon"—that is, the percentage of time that each leader devotes to thinking of the past, the present, and the future. These additional factors are superfluous, however, for explaining the decision makers' foreign policy beliefs; her model is thus overdetermined. Moreover, her framework does not account for the systemic-structural and domestic political variables that are ultimately necessary in explaining *why* a

decision maker might revise his or her beliefs. Thus, the explanation offered here is more parsimonious with respect to the psychological factors by focusing solely on cognitive openness and complexity as determinants of a leader's propensity to change foreign policy directions. At the same time, it does not neglect the important situational variables that would prompt him or her to do so.

METHODS OF INQUIRY

Interviews, archival documents, and a slew of primary and secondary source material were utilized for this project. Autobiographical works and biographies of the decision makers were consulted, as were their op-eds, public speeches and published interviews. The decision makers' written and spoken statements were juxtaposed with expert testimony from veteran journalists, former political aides, members of Knesset (the Israeli parliament), retired diplomats, ex-generals, and close friends and family members (in the case of Peres). Two personal interviews with Peres are included in this list. The rest of the interviews were conducted in Washington, D.C., where retired diplomats and ex-government officials gave their accounts of the personalities of these leaders and their take on what factors led Peres and Rabin—as opposed to Begin and Shamir—to change their positions on the Palestinian problem.

Complementing the interviews are relevant papers of record and periodicals covering political affairs in Israel from 1953 to the present, as well as archival research that took place in three locations in Israel: the Israel Defense Forces and Defense Establishment Archives (IDFA) in Tel Hashomer, the Israel State Archives (ISA) in Jerusalem, and the Moshe Sharett Israel Labor Party Archive in Beit Berl. The IDFA has yielded a plethora of newly available material—specifically, minutes from meetings, briefings, and closed-door speeches from Peres's early years as director-general of the ministry of defense. The ISA has supplied transcripts of Knesset deliberations and speeches, which provide a glimpse of the various leaders' attitudes at different points in time and highlight the differing approaches toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict amongst the various Knesset factions. The Labor Party Archive, a repository for all archival materials pertaining to the party, is a particularly valuable resource for helping to assess the differences between Rabin and Peres within the context of the general attitudes prevailing in the party at any given time.

Two commonly accepted methodological approaches have been used to analyze the data: process tracing and discourse analysis. Useful for both theory testing and theory development, process tracing is used to trace the link between possible causes and observed outcomes. Bennett and George define "process induction" as a type of process tracing that involves "the inductive observation of apparent causal mechanisms and heuristic rendering of these mechanisms as potential hypotheses for future testing" (1997, 5). Indeed, the plentiful research data has helped to identify the causal path depicting Peres's and Rabin's dovish turns.

Discourse analysis has assisted in the process of determining each leader's personality characteristics—in particular, his levels of cognitive openness and complexity. A leader at the lower end of the complexity continuum tends to describe situations in black and white terms, using absolutist language to convey a thought—words such as *always, never,* or *without a doubt*. Little or no ambiguity can be discerned from his statements. By contrast, a cognitively complex leader tends to avoid absolutist language, crafting thoughts in a more subtle or ambiguous manner, thereby leaving some wiggle room for an altered position in the future. The cognitively complex thinker, when discussing a controversial issue, will generally convey the impression that the issue under discussion is not cut-and-dry but rather involves multiple dimensions. Such

thoughts are often conveyed by employing conditional language (e.g., *if*, *as long as*, etc.), a certain level of ambiguity, or by explicitly acknowledging (though not necessarily endorsing) alternative points of view. The latter is indicative not only of cognitive complexity—the recognition of different dimensions to an issue—but also of the extent of an individual's cognitive openness. Of the four leaders examined in this study, Shamir most closely typifies the cognitively closed and simple leader. He rejects out of hand the validity of other viewpoints and indicates absolute certainty in the rightness of his way. At times, he even perceives those who challenge his views as traitorous. Peres, by contrast, exemplifies the cognitively open and complex leader. He often acknowledges various ways of looking at a problem, and his statements are often ambiguously worded so as to leave the door open for a future change in policy.

Limitations of the Study

This in-depth exploration of Peres's dovish shift enables us to gain a rich understanding of the circumstances that led to his shift and why his political rivals were either slow or failed to revise their foreign policy beliefs. One should not attempt to overgeneralize from this study, however, since it examines a small number of cases. The conclusions derived herein are contingent generalizations, and it is left to future researchers to apply the theoretical framework presented here to other cases.

Some would consider the loss of parsimony in an explanation that encompasses various sets of factors at different levels of analysis to be an additional limitation. Explanations that use fewer variables to explain outcomes are often preferred to those that employ more variables because they explain a lot with a little and so maximize analytical leverage. Yet, as this book attempts to demonstrate, more parsimonious approaches provide inadequate explanations of changes in leaders' foreign policy views and of changes in their states' foreign policy behavior. A more accurate account of this phenomenon, therefore, requires scholars to sacrifice some analytical parsimony.

BOOK STRUCTURE

In the following pages, Shimon Peres's significant reversal on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is explored. In describing his dovish transformation, Peres's decision-making approach and attitudes are compared with those of his contemporaries. An explanation, rooted in cognitive psychology, is offered for why Peres and, to a lesser extent, Rabin, became dovish, while Begin and Shamir maintained their hardline positions all along.

Chapter 2 compares the cognitive structure of four Israeli prime ministers—Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Shamir, Yitzhak Rabin, and Shimon Peres. To avoid a tautology, the analysis is done on each leader's statements and actions on issues *other than* the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, rather than on the basis of this book's dependent variable. Shamir is shown to be the least cognitively open and complex of these leaders and therefore the least amenable to altering his views. Begin is also found to be relatively cognitively closed and simple. Peres is shown to be the most cognitively open and complex, and therefore the most likely leader to alter his views. Rabin is also a relatively cognitively open and moderately complex leader but less so than Peres.

Chapter 3 explores Peres's hawkish years (1953–1977). This chapter demonstrates that Peres, in the earlier part of his career, was an uncompromising hawk and that he had a major impact on Israeli foreign policy even though he was a secondary political actor during these years. Archival documents, interviews, and Peres's public statements reveal his deep lack of faith in Arab intentions toward Israel, resistance to domestic and international calls for restraint in the wake of Israeli counterterror operations, and vociferous opposition to territorial compromise, negotiations with the PLO, and Palestinian statehood during the decade following the 1967 War. As minister of defense in the mid-1970s, Peres emerged as a stalwart ally of settlers, lending his support to some of the first Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

Chapter 4 focuses on the first phase of Peres's dovish transformation (1977–1987). The Socialist International and his own political aides, coupled with domestic and international events, are shown to have influenced his acceptance of territorial compromise, opposition to settlement expansion, and, more generally, a change in rhetoric toward the Palestinians and the elevation of the peace process to the top of his agenda. During Peres's years as leader of the opposition, he consulted regularly with numerous officials both at home and abroad. He often sought out the opinions of his young, highly educated and ambitious aides, who were encouraged to challenge Peres when they disagreed with their boss. His willingness to entertain ideas other than his own contributed significantly to his reevaluation of his long-held views on the Palestinian issue.

Chapter 5 covers the second phase of Peres's dovish transformation (1987–1997). The London Agreement that Peres reached with King Hussein in 1987, followed by the collapse of the "Jordanian option" the following year, led Peres to the conclusion that Israel needed to directly engage the PLO—a move he had resisted for decades. Peres had an important role in bringing about this sea change in Israeli foreign policy following the election of Rabin in 1992. As foreign minister, he applied no small amount of pressure on Rabin to formally authorize the secret negotiations taking place in Oslo. By the mid-1990s, Peres's dovish transformation was complete: he staunchly advocated territorial compromise and negotiations with the PLO, while opposing continued construction of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, and he also became a strong proponent of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

The final chapter (chapter 6) summarizes the central conclusions drawn from the empirical research and demonstrates how this model might be applied to explaining other cases in Israel

and elsewhere. Regarding the former, vignettes are provided of former prime minister Ariel Sharon and current prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Like Netanyahu today, Sharon was a chairman of the right-wing Likud party. However, as prime minister, Sharon came to support the idea he had long fought against: Palestinian statehood. Parting ways with Netanyahu, he eventually bolted his political home and formed Kadima, a new party whose central aim was to promote a two-state solution—a policy the Likud continues to reject. Sharon appears to be more cognitively open than Netanyahu, a factor that probably played an important role in his decision to leave Likud and promote a different policy. Similarly, this chapter includes vignettes of three leaders outside of Israel—U.S. president Ronald Reagan, Soviet general secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, and U.S. president Jimmy Carter. It is their relative cognitive openness and complexity that may help to explain why Reagan and Gorbachev became more dovish toward the Soviet Union and the United States, respectively, while Carter became more hawkish toward the Soviets. The chapter concludes by arguing that the cognitive structural analysis approach can have useful implications for policymaking, including on such fundamental questions as war and peace.

TWO

ASSESSING COGNITIVE STRUCTURE

A Comparison of Four Israeli Prime Ministers

EVALUATING LEVELS OF COGNITIVE OPENNESS AND COGNITIVE COMPLEXITY

The previous chapter highlighted research from cognitive psychology showing that while people are generally consistency seekers who are slow to change their beliefs, schema change does occur in certain individuals. Cognitive psychologists have been able to show that two related traits—cognitive openness and cognitive complexity—are particularly useful in determining a leader's propensity to part with even deeply engrained beliefs.

To reiterate, cognitive openness refers to the extent to which an individual is amenable to new information from another person or from the environment. Applying this insight to decision makers, a closed cognitive system will cause a leader to ignore new information; additional information is not necessary and will thus have no bearing on the actor's beliefs. By contrast, a cognitively open system will lead a decision maker to factor in new information that may lead, in turn, to a reassessment of the decision maker's beliefs; in fact, the decision maker may seek additional information in the hopes of preparing him or her to make the right decision—even if that means that the additional information will alter his or her beliefs in a given issue area.[1] As noted in the previous chapter, decision makers will, in reality, fall somewhere in between these two ideal types of cognitively open and cognitively closed systems.

Related to cognitive openness is cognitive complexity, which refers to the number and combination of dimensions an individual applies to characterize a given situation. A cognitively simple leader will generally view the world in black and white terms, while a complex leader will tend to see many dimensions in his or her surroundings. The more cognitively complex a leader is, the more capable he or she is of making new distinctions, thus revising his or her beliefs when confronted with new information.[2]

This study explores whether and how these concepts might be used to explain why Shimon Peres's views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict changed so profoundly while the views of other Israeli leaders who were witness to the same events were either slow to change or did not change at all during the 1990s. In chapter 5, Peres's shift in views is shown to have occurred sooner than did Rabin's, his Labor Party colleague and archrival. Ultimately, however, both figures became convinced of the need to negotiate a deal with the PLO that would eventually lead to a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. By contrast, throughout the 1990s, the leadership of the right-leaning Likud party remained steadfast in its opposition to negotiations with the PLO and the concept of a Palestinian state. Peres began his career as a hawk who opposed the very notion of territorial compromise. He backed the construction of some of the first settlements in the West Bank. In the late 1970s, as the opposition leader, he reversed his positions on these issues while Prime Minister Menachem Begin remained firmly supportive of the settlement enterprise and remained committed to the sanctity of the West Bank. Begin died in 1992, a year before the historic Declaration of Principles was reached between Israel and the PLO. It is highly doubtful he would have supported this agreement given his unwavering opposition to negotiating with the PLO and ceding any part of the West Bank. Yitzhak Shamir, who succeeded Begin as Likud chairman and prime minister, likewise remained consistent on these issues and fervently opposed the Oslo agreements of the 1990s. Shamir's replacement, Benjamin Netanyahu, also opposed what became known simply as "Oslo" but, as prime minister from 1996 to 1999, he implemented agreements signed by the previous Labor government. Since the premiership of Ehud Barak, every prime minister—including those from Likud—has expressed public support for a Palestinian state, though the extent of each leader's commitment to the establishment of such a state and how much territory in the West Bank each would ultimately have been willing to cede to the Palestinians remain ambiguous.

In this chapter, Peres's cognitive structure—specifically, his levels of cognitive openness and complexity—is compared with that of three erstwhile rivals: Rabin, Begin, and Shamir. These particular leaders have been selected because each was prime minister for a certain period of time during the years of Peres's transition from a hawk to a dove. Each was thus a witness to the same events yet came to quite different conclusions or, in the case of Rabin, reached similar conclusions as did Peres but did so somewhat later. In chapters 3 through 5, cognitive structure is shown to be a critical factor in explaining Peres's shift (and other leaders' non-shifts or slow shifts).

Assessing each leader's level of cognitive openness and complexity cannot be done on the basis of the dependent variables that have been identified in this study; namely, the decision maker's position on territorial compromise, settlements, negotiations with the PLO, and Palestinian statehood. Doing so would create a tautology that would undermine the falsifiability of my analytic claims. Instead, each leader's outlook on other issues and before the behavior in question has taken place is explored.[3] Thus, for example, such matters as the decision makers' receptivity to advice from political aides, attitude toward former adversaries, and handling of an assortment of controversial decisions are considered here.

To that end, discourse analysis is done on statements each decision maker has made on issues other than the Palestinian question. Interviews, speeches, memoirs, and secondary source material are examined. Discourse analysis is particularly useful in helping to evaluate an individual's level of cognitive complexity. A leader at the lower end of the complexity continuum will tend to describe an object or situation in black and white terms, using absolutist language to convey a thought—words such as *always, never,* or *without a doubt*. Little or no

ambiguity can be discerned from such a leader's statements on decisions taken, even highly controversial ones. By contrast, a cognitively complex leader will tend to avoid absolutist language, crafting thoughts in a more subtle or ambiguous manner, thereby leaving some wiggle room for an altered position in the future. The cognitively complex thinker, when discussing a controversial issue, will generally convey the impression that the issue under discussion is not cut-and-dry but rather involves multiple dimensions. Such thoughts are often conveyed by employing conditional language (e.g., *if, as long as,* etc.), a certain level of ambiguity, or by explicitly acknowledging (though not necessarily endorsing) alternative points of view. The latter is indicative not only of cognitive complexity but also of the extent of an individual's openness. Does the leader recognize that there are other valid viewpoints? Or, as in the case with a cognitively closed person, does the leader view his or her perspective as the *only* legitimate one? Indicative in this respect is the manner in which the leader regards those with a differing perspective. Are they seen merely as misguided individuals, or are they viewed as so obviously wrong, perhaps even traitorous?

Discourse analysis is supplemented with relevant insight about these leaders' cognitive styles from individuals familiar with their personalities, such as political aides, colleagues (and political rivals), diplomats, biographers, and journalists who have covered them closely. By reading descriptions of these leaders' modi operandi in published works as well as poring through transcripts of this author's interviews, a clear picture emerges concerning the cognitive structure of each leader examined in this book. Prior to an interpretive account of each leader's cognitive structure, a brief description of each leader's background and political career is included below.

YITZHAK SHAMIR (1915–2012)

Yitzhak Shamir was born in Poland in 1915. At the age of twenty, he emigrated to British Mandatory Palestine, where he joined the underground *Irgun Zvai Leumi,* which simultaneously fought British rule and the Arabs in Palestine. The militant group, founded on Ze'ev Jabotinsky's ideology of nationalist Revisionist Zionism, split into two groups in 1940. Shamir, a disciple of Avraham "Yair" Stern, left the Irgun to join the more extreme *Lehi* (or "Stern Gang"), which opposed the Irgun's decision to collaborate with the British in their fight against the Nazis.[4] Following Stern's assassination by the British in 1942, Shamir emerged as one of the three leaders of the organization. The Lehi remained an uncompromising group, its members viewing the mainstream, semi-legal Haganah—the predecessor to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF)—and underground Irgun organizations as too soft on the British. Its activities under Shamir's leadership were marked by militancy and acts of violence. Shamir is reported to have played a key role in the 1948 Deir Yassin massacre and in the assassination of individuals whom he viewed as traitors to the Zionist cause. In 1955, he joined the secret intelligence service, the Mossad, and in 1973 he was elected to the Knesset as a member of the right-wing Likud party. As foreign minister (1980–83) and later prime minister (1983–84, 1986–1992), he was known as an uncompromising hawk, a leader who never softened his views on the territorial dispute with the Arabs. One former aide describes his ideology as "hard as a rock."[5] Shamir's premiership was marked by a violent Palestinian uprising (the first Intifada), an aggressive expansion of settlements in the occupied territories—supported and encouraged by Shamir and his Likud colleagues—and, under heavy pressure by the administration of George H. W. Bush, the launching of Arab-Israeli peace talks on October 31, 1991, in Madrid.[6] At no point did Shamir

ever waver in his opposition to territorial compromise with the Palestinians, believing that the West Bank and Gaza must be annexed to Israel. In short, Shamir could always be counted on to stay true to his beliefs, which never changed despite regional and international events, public opinion, and pressure from critics both at home and abroad.

Shamir is the least cognitively open and complex of the four Israeli leaders examined here. Ironically, as closed as Shamir was to information that challenged his beliefs, he did not discriminate against colleagues who disagreed with his politics. In his autobiography, Shamir wrote that when he replaced Moshe Dayan as foreign minister in Menachem Begin's government, he made it a point to work with the staff already in place rather than replace the staffers with people who shared his more hardline worldview. He wrote of the staff's loyalty, "even though my policies (and the phraseology that went with them) were not what they were accustomed to, liked or could easily identify with" (Shamir 1994, 110–11). A former aide relates that when Shamir offered him the post of director-general of the foreign ministry, he told Shamir that he was neither connected in any way to Shamir's Likud party nor was he a Likud sympathizer. "Shamir, to his everlasting glory," recalls David Kimche, "said to me, 'David, I'll ask you one question. Do you love *Eretz Yisrael* [the land of Israel]?' I said, 'Of course!' And he said, 'That's enough for me.' "[7]

It would be tempting to conclude from this anecdote that Shamir's acceptance of aides whose views differed starkly from his own is indicative of cognitive openness.[8] However, this is hardly the case, because Shamir was very secretive and tended to confide his thoughts with only a small number of people with whom he felt truly comfortable.[9] "For him, a three-person gathering was enough to constitute a town meeting," writes an Israeli journalist who knew Shamir well (Haber 2012).

Neither Shamir's friends nor foes regarded him as a good listener. Says his then-Likud party colleague Ariel Sharon, "If he [Shamir] hears a noise in the other room, he'll get up and close the door. Better to let somebody else take care of it" (Brinkley 1988). According to veteran Israeli columnist Nahum Barnea, Shamir "doesn't just close the door. If something's going wrong, he puts his fingers in his ears and pretends he doesn't hear" (Brinkley 1988). Describing his own modus operandi as prime minister, Shamir wrote: "The people who worked with me understood my priorities and I didn't care much about the opinions of anyone else, or whether I was perceived by critics as 'detached' or 'blinkered'—the two adjectives most frequently applied to me even then by non-admirers" (Shamir 1994, 157). Thus, while his aides may have been free to speak their minds, the evidence does not suggest that Shamir was amenable to what they had to say on matters in which he had already established an opinion.

Shamir was also known for his obstinacy. Even his former spokesman, Avi Pazner, has been quoted as saying of his boss: "He is stubborn. Once he has made a decision it's very difficult to get him to change his mind, if not impossible" (Fisher 1983). Once Shamir wanted something, "it may take a long time, but he'll never let go," says Pazner (Brinkley 2012). According to an American diplomat well acquainted with Shamir, "he was unlikely to be receptive to anything that fundamentally challenged all of his many feelings and assumptions."[10] Shamir's autobiography is filled with examples of his obstinacy on everything from high policy to the most mundane of matters. On one occasion, for instance, the State Department had informed his office that the upcoming president's dinner in his honor was to be, as usual, a black-tie affair. He relates that when the State Department protocol people were informed that the prime minister would rather wear a dark suit, they replied that they were reluctantly forced to be adamant. "But I too know how to be adamant," wrote Shamir, "and I didn't want to wear a

tuxedo." Indeed, he did not (Shamir 1994, 199).

Politicians rarely acknowledge past mistakes, but in reading Shamir's autobiography, one is struck by his insistence that he had been consistently right on seemingly every decision he had ever taken. He expresses no regret, for example, for the assassination of Count Folke Bernadotte, a man who saved Jews during World War II and later became the first Arab-Israeli mediator to try to broker peace.[11] Nor does he express any lament over his decision to kill Eliahu Giladi, a fellow Jew and comrade-in-arms whom Shamir saw as "far too dangerous to the movement" (Shamir 1994, 43, 75). His reflection on his role in the Lebanon War, widely regarded in Israel as deeply flawed in its execution if not in intent, is quite telling: "I neither disclaim nor minimize my role in the Government decision that initiated Operation Peace for Galilee, nor, even now, have any doubt that it was a justified and urgently needed campaign though, undeniably, subsequent mistakes and miscalculations of a most serious nature were made and cost precious lives" (Shamir 1994, 135). As one reviewer of Shamir's autobiography concludes, Shamir's "single-mindedness also makes for a flat, one-dimensional book in which the author is always right, people who opposed his ideas are always wrong, and always—always—there is only one way to do things" (B. Frankel 1994).

Shamir's choice of words—that he neither then nor today has "any doubt" about his decision—is typical of his rhetoric. Discourse analysis of Shamir's written and oral statements reveals a man who is neither open to the ideas of others nor complex in terms of seeing situations in multiple dimensions. In *Conversations with Yitzhak Shamir*, author Haim Misgav discusses an array of topics with the ex-prime minister, ranging from his days in the underground to his tenure as prime minister. Shamir, almost methodically, attaches the words "there is no doubt" to a large proportion of his replies. This is indicative of a self-assuredness that denies even the appearance of ambiguity or doubt about his expressed opinions. A few examples vividly illustrate this point:

- Asked which ideology prevailed in the end—that of Shamir's Lehi movement or that of the mainstream Labor movement—Shamir replies, "*there is no doubt* that our thesis prevailed in the end" (Misgav 2000, 25–26).

- Asked if he saw the British as somewhat responsible for the Holocaust for having limited Jewish immigration to Palestine, Shamir says, "*There is no doubt about it*. Four months before the war broke out, when the burning inferno in Europe threatened to sweep into it millions of Jews, the British published a new 'White Paper' which determined that within the next five years, only 75,000 Jews would be allowed to settle in the country. In addition to settling this absurdly small number, they also requested the removal of the 'illegal immigrants' " (Misgav 2000, 28).

- Asked if Jews in France are facing life-threatening danger, Shamir says: "*Without any doubt*. We have to listen closely to what Le Pen is saying: 'We need to get rid of the foreigners who are eating our bread and usurping our riches. France has to be for the French and not for foreigners.' He doesn't mention Jews, but the implication is, to a large extent, towards Jews as well" (Misgav 2000, 135).

- Asked if the religious camp in Israel will vote for a candidate from the Right, Shamir says: "*Without any doubt*. It is also very logical because, within the Left, there are too many who oppose Judaism. The Right will never oppose the religious heritage of the Jewish people" (Misgav 2000, 152).

Shamir's lack of cognitive openness and complexity was manifested, also, in his dismissal —even delegitimization—of perspectives that challenged his preconceived beliefs. For example, although not every Jew was a Zionist, to Shamir, "a man has no right to consider himself a part of the Jewish people without also being a Zionist, because Zionism states that in order for a Jew to live as a Jew he needs to have his own country, his own life and his own culture. Without this, the Jewish people cannot exist" (Misgav 2000, 68–69). As far as Shamir was concerned, therefore, Jews who did not identify with Zionism were not real Jews—an idea that is antithetical to those Jews who practice Judaism but do not regard themselves as Zionists. It is an idea, moreover, that is also at odds with traditional Jewish law, which regards anyone born to a Jewish mother as a Jew. Shamir disregarded such details.

Shamir's black and white universe can be seen in his attitude toward political philosophies other than his own. Despite the pluralism of the Israeli political system and the diversity of views, Shamir insisted that "there are no different philosophies," but rather "only false solutions. It is a mistake to think that we have achieved what we needed to achieve and that now we can live in peace and quiet and that no one will disturb us as long as we do not disturb others" (Misgav 2000, 69). As Avi Shlaim points out, Shamir had difficulty comprehending any point of view except his own. He cites the following example, taken from Shamir's autobiography:

> It wasn't a happy moment for me; I remained unhappily convinced that if we had held out united we could have kept Taba—without forfeiting anything—and I thought it was ironic that I, and those who like myself resist handing over bits of land to Israel's enemies, should be castigated for "fanaticism" while no one at all protested or even paid any attention (except the Likud) when the Egyptians, risking peace itself, clutched at Taba solely for reasons of national prestige. Of course nothing changed after Taba; it was as though nothing had happened. (Shamir 1994, 172, quoted in Shlaim 2001, 429)

Shamir often showed little tolerance for criticism, holding critics with disdain. American Jews who were critical of Israel's handling of the first Intifada, for example, were considered betrayers (G. Frankel 1994, 225). For Shamir, Jewish critics were self-haters, while gentile critics invariably harbored anti-Semitic feelings. As foreign minister, he wrote, "I sometimes even suspected that those who tried hardest to trip Israelis up with leading questions and inaccurate statistics were unconsciously revealing the way they themselves felt about Jews—or about being Jewish—rather than about the State of Israel or the Middle East as such" (Shamir 1994, 116). In other words, he did not appear to distinguish between legitimate criticism of his country's policies—including criticism by supporters of Israel—and outright hatred of Jews.

Nor did Shamir distinguish between the Nazi evil and British policies during World War II. The Holocaust left an indelible imprint on his character and political career. He viewed the world through the prism of the Holocaust, with the Jews as victims or would-be victims who need to defend themselves against their enemies—virtually everyone else. In his eulogy of Menachem Begin, Shamir said that during World War II, "the Jewish nation was left to be ground between the two belligerent blocs equally hostile toward the Jews and indifferent to their bitter fate." Analyzing his speech in the Israeli daily *Ma'ariv*, Amnon Abramovitz took Shamir to task for failing to differentiate between the Axis Powers—the Nazis—and the Allied Powers:

> What does it mean that "the Jewish nation was thus left to be ground between the two belligerent blocs?" It can only mean that the two sides in World War II had the same moral qualities, while we, the Jews, were being ground as they fought each other. Is it

> possible that the news of extermination of 6 million Jews by the Germans hasn't yet reached Shamir's notice? What does it mean that "both [were] equally hostile toward the Jews and indifferent to their bitter fate?" It can only mean that Nazi Germany was merely indifferent to our bitter fate. Does Shamir mean to say that Churchill and Hitler treated us in the same way? Yet it is not hard to conjecture what Shamir had in mind. In his view, the entire world has always been against the Jews and so it remains. In this respect, Churchill is no different than Hitler, George Bush is no different than Saddam Hussein and Mitterrand no different than Gaddafi. (Abramovitz 1992)

This chronic mistrust of others led Shamir to express his fear of being sold out by the United States, Israel's top ally, during the Persian Gulf crisis of 1990. In a speech he gave in New York, Shamir said, "Israel in 1990 is not Czechoslovakia of 1938. We shall not acquiesce to any deal with enemies who wish to destroy us" (Thomas 1990).[12]

Neither time nor circumstances altered Shamir's crude, often harsh depictions of other nations. At one point during his premiership, he caused a storm by remarking that Poles suck in anti-Semitism with their mother's milk. When asked by a Polish journalist if he would retract his comment, Shamir refused, saying: "I do not withdraw my statement. I am sure there are many Poles, anti-Semites, many, many … " (Krien 1990). Avi Shlaim points out that it is evident from Shamir's reflection on the dispute over Taba, quoted above, that he continued to view Egypt as an enemy despite the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty. After all, Shamir wrote of resisting "handing over bits of land to Israel's enemies" during the Taba negotiations, which took place *after* the two countries were at peace. Nor did Shamir distinguish among the Arabs in general. "The Arabs are the same Arabs, and the sea is the same sea," he would often say (Shlaim 2001, 426).

In sum, Shamir held an extremely narrow, undifferentiated worldview.[13] In his black and white depiction of the universe, Jews must constantly be on guard as the Arab world threatens Israel's destruction, while the Western world remains indifferent to Israel's fate. To Shamir, the Jewish people have no friends, neither among Arabs nor among other nations. Throughout his life, Shamir stubbornly stuck to his views. Not even his closest aides were able to get him to change his mind. Neither cognitively open nor complex, Shamir could always be counted on to stay true to his beliefs, which had never changed despite other people's efforts to alter them and changes in international and regional circumstances.

MENACHEM BEGIN (1913–1992)

Menachem Begin was born in Brest-Litovsk, then part of the Russian Empire, in 1913. He studied law at the University of Warsaw from 1931 to 1935. Inspired by Jabotinsky's Revisionist Zionism, Begin became active in his Revisionist Zionist youth movement, Betar, becoming the leader of its branches in Czechoslovakia and Poland. At the outbreak of World War II, he escaped to Vilnius, where he was arrested by the NKVD—the Soviet law enforcement agency—and spent many months in the Lukishki prison and, later, in Siberian labor camps. Following his release, he joined the Polish army-in-exile, finally emigrating to Palestine in 1943. By all accounts, he was deeply affected by the Holocaust, in which his brother and both of his parents were murdered.[14] The Holocaust would be a recurring theme in Begin's spoken and written words throughout his life.

Like Shamir, Begin became active in the Irgun. Unlike Shamir, however, Begin became the Irgun's commander and remained with this group until it was disbanded in 1948, with the

establishment of the State of Israel. In February 1944, he initiated a revolt against British rule in Palestine. While not as militant as Shamir's Lehi, the Irgun engaged in a number of violent acts including the bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem.[15] Following the establishment of Israel, he emerged from the underground, founding Herut, a right-wing party based on the teachings of Jabotinsky. After losing every election since 1948, he was finally elected prime minister in 1977, defeating the ruling Labor Party, and he remained in power until his resignation in 1982.[16] The key foreign policy decisions marking Begin's premiership were the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty—Begin became the first Israeli prime minister to sign a peace agreement with an Arab leader—the bombing of Iraq's nuclear reactor, and the war in Lebanon.[17] Until the day he died, Begin never wavered in his opposition to ceding territory, which he regarded as rightfully Israel's, to the Palestinians.

The right-wing ideology to which Begin—like Shamir—subscribed at a young age is an important key to understanding his hawkish attitudes toward Arabs and his hardline foreign policy positions. Jabotinsky's Revisionist Zionism championed a Greater Israel that would encompass the territory of Mandatory Palestine—a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan River. Jabotinsky did not believe that peaceful coexistence with the Arabs was possible. He envisioned an "Iron Wall of Jewish bayonets" that would protect Jews from the native population. As Ilan Peleg writes, "Once he achieved power, Begin proceeded systematically to implement Jabotinsky's vision and adopted a mode of behavior fitting his fundamental political philosophy" (1987, 2). He wanted to be remembered "as the man who set the borders of *Eretz Yisrael* for all eternity" (Silver 1984, 182). Although Begin was never able to realize his mentor's vision of a Greater Israel, he stood firm throughout his political career in opposing partition of the land. He opposed the 1947 UN Partition Plan supported by the mainstream Zionist leadership, regarding it as "a historic national catastrophe" (Sofer 1988, 127). In the 1950s, as head of the opposition Herut party, Begin blasted Israel's leaders for their readiness to make sweeping territorial concessions, including "all the far and wide land eastward across the Jordan River," and derided them for their "pathological desire to conclude peace treaties with the Arab countries" (Peleg 1987, 36). Following the 1967 War, he consistently opposed every one of the numerous peace plans, which called for territorial compromise over the territories conquered by Israel in that war. Eventually, he would acquiesce to relinquishing only the Sinai Peninsula, which had never been part of Greater Israel, under the terms of the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty.

The significance of ideology, however, ought not be exaggerated. While Revisionist Zionist ideology certainly explains Begin's (and Shamir's) foreign policy orientation, it does not explain why Shamir was more extreme than Begin or why both men were more radical than their chief mentor. Nor can it explain why some prominent Israeli political figures, including Ehud Olmert and Tzipi Livni, who were raised in Revisionist homes and influenced by its right-wing ideology, softened their hardline stance toward the Palestinians mid-career—while others did not budge from their rigid ideological positions. In short, ideology appears to be inadequate in explaining foreign policy change.

It is the individual's cognitive structure that sheds light on one's proclivity to adopt positions that stray from, or even contradict, one's ideology. Begin appears to have had relatively low levels of cognitive openness and complexity, though not quite as low as Shamir's. There are some notable differences between the personalities of these two men. Begin was significantly more charismatic and a far superior orator than his low-key, more humble successor. Unlike Shamir, Begin was not altogether dismissive of human rights and even pursued certain policies, as prime minister, that have not been typically associated with the Israeli Right. For example,

Begin, a trained lawyer, valued the rule of law, even when it proved inconvenient. Shamir, though himself honest and incorruptible, did not concern himself with human rights or the rule of law if such factors threatened policies he deemed important. Whereas Shamir, as one of the leaders of the Lehi, approved of assassinating fellow Jews he considered dangerous or treacherous, Begin, as leader of the Irgun, steadfastly opposed violence against other Jews (though not against the British or the Arabs). Avishai Margalit characterizes their contrasting approach in the following manner:

> Begin had inner conflicts. In the Knesset, he was a liberal; he was against imposing military government on Arabs inside Israel, and while he was Prime Minister, he stopped systematic torture by the Shin Bet. But when he addressed crowds in the street he revealed himself as a ferocious demagogue. In Shamir's case, on the other hand, one finds no such conflicts. He's made of different stuff. (Margalit 1992)

The two leaders, however, shared many more similarities than differences in terms of their cognitive styles. Neither man was particularly open to the influence of others, save for the inspiring leadership of Jabotinsky.[18] Begin had referred to Jabotinsky as "our teacher, master, and father" (Shlaim 2001, 353). When a foreign journalist asked Begin's trusted assistant, Yehiel Kadishai, about the new prime minister's opinions, Kadishai responded by telling him to "go read Jabotinsky" (Avnery 1978, 10). Yet, Begin's and Jabotinsky's cognitive styles were dissimilar. Israel Eldad, a disciple of Jabotinsky who later joined the Lehi faction, sees a teacher-student relationship between Jabotinsky and Begin—but one in which the teacher is more complex than his student:

> He (Begin) was to Jabotinsky as a Roman pupil to a Greek tutor. Trying to follow in the teacher's footsteps, but by his very nature he cannot match his sensitivity and nobility. Closer to drama, and far from tragedy. Jabotinsky was a man of distilled tragedy. His pupil was simpler, both in thought and in expression. Jabotinsky would often shut his eyes to see, and close his mouth in order to think. His pupil—not so. (Eldad 2008, 32)

Notwithstanding Jabotinsky's sway over Begin, the student's worldview was more narrow, dogmatic, and militant than his teacher's. Influenced by nineteenth-century European liberalism, Jabotinsky was a keen believer in democracy, individual freedom, and diplomacy. To Jabotinsky, politics had to have a moral dimension, and while he supported the idea of resistance, including civil disobedience, he was much more reticent about the idea of conducting a violent struggle against the British, which was to become the hallmark of Begin's underground activities as leader of the Revolt (Sofer 1988, 20–29). Begin was dismissive of the moral dimension; his message was "to fight, to die or triumph" (Sofer 1988, 20). In contrast to Jabotinsky, Begin envisioned "a political struggle to be conducted by military means," eschewing diplomacy (Shapiro 1991, 57). As Robert C. Rowland points out, even though Begin was Jabotinsky's disciple, the latter's ideology was much more flexible. In the 1930s, for example, Jabotinsky cooperated with the government of Poland, despite its anti-Semitic policies, because he believed that the Polish officials might be persuaded to aid Jewish emigration to Palestine (Rowland 1985, 50). Begin also tended to resort to stereotypes when discussing different nationalities, referring to "the Englishman," "the German," or "the Arab" (Sofer 1988, 102).

A biographer of Begin contrasts his "one-dimensionality" with the multidimensionality of his mentor:

> The difference is that between the freedom of one who shaped an ideology and that of one who adhered to it; between a more open belief system, and a dogmatic one. Politically, Jabotinsky was a relativist. Begin believed almost simplistically in the absolute truth of a number of fixed assumptions. Both men tended towards the manifest and the formal. They shared an attitude that regarded facts and events as symbols. Both had an ardor in their belligerence toward adversaries, but while Begin balanced his romantic ardor by juridical argument, Jabotinsky did so with the help of a rationalistic reasoning. (Sofer 1988, 30)

Once Shamir and Begin shaped their worldviews, they clung to them for the remainder of their lives. And like Shamir, Begin never left room for doubt that his way was the right way. "We have never been mistaken," he once wrote in an Israeli newspaper, assuring his readers that "we have always judged things correctly, so we have never changed, for we have never needed to change" (Silver 1984, 143). Begin has been described as having "a rigid, even stagnant personality structure"; someone who saw "no ambivalence," asked "no questions," and held "black and white attitudes" (Grosbard 2004, 108, 112). Like Shamir, he was known—even by admirers—for his stubbornness and inflexibility (Avner 2010, 333; Gervasi 1979, 337–38). Until his dying day, for example, he refused to admit that the Deir Yassin massacre of April 1948, in which more than one hundred innocent Arab villagers were killed by Begin's Irgun forces, had been a tragic mistake. Despite evidence to the contrary, he was consistent in his defense of his fighters, arguing that they had fought bravely and tried to keep civilian casualties to a minimum (Perlmutter 1987, 217; Silver 1984, 88). Begin's militancy can be traced back even earlier, to the 1930s, when rifts within the Zionist leadership threatened to tear apart the Zionist enterprise. When fellow Revisionist Abba Ahimeir called for a truce within the Zionist movement, Begin reportedly told a friend, "We cannot accept his view. It is a serious breach of movement discipline" (Haber 1978, 43–44). This was yet another of many instances in which Begin, when faced with a decision, would reject any kind of compromise. It is this dogged adherence to his positions that once earned him the designation as "probably one of the most consistent politicians of significance in the world today" (Claiborne 1979; Merhav 1977, 7, 14).

Begin's team of advisers—in his underground days, as Herut party leader, and as prime minister—tended to be small and exerted little influence on him. As a leader of Betar, he considered ideas contrary to his own as "red poison" (Shilon 2012, 14). He led the Irgun in a patriarchal and authoritarian manner, demanding loyalty and engaging in limited consultation with those around him (Temko 1987, 88–89). As head of Herut, he consulted only with his close associates from the Irgun (Gervasi 1979, 311; Sofer 1988, 231). Begin even continued to address some of these men, such as Haim Landau and Amihai Paglin, by their underground code names decades after the group disbanded (Haber 1978, 231–32).

Begin's leadership style was characterized by an insistence on loyalty, discipline, and centralized control; his authority could not be questioned without provoking a crisis, and those who dared to challenge him were sidelined (Peleg 1987, 31; Silver 1984, 111; Sofer 1988, 31). He tended not to involve others in his decisions; was generally convinced of the superiority of his ideas; and often treated colleagues as high school students to whom he felt compelled to preach (Sofer 1988, 174, 232). According to Ezer Weizman, who served as Begin's defense minister in his first term, Begin was "incapable of taking into account views or proposals that do not fit in with his basic philosophy. … They [his associates] think as he does. Having learned to guess what Begin wants, they try to outdo one another in proposing ideas that will be to the Prime Minister's liking and thus win his approval" (Weizman 1981, 118–19). Uri Avnery, an

Irgun activist-turned-writer and left-wing leader, corroborates Weizman's account, describing an atmosphere of little dissension in Begin's Herut-led government:

> In his government there is one man who makes decisions. … Issues are brought up for brief discussion, information is presented, and decisions are taken. Usually the decision is Menachem Begin's. There are hardly any difficulties from within, since all cabinet members are aware of Begin's absolute superiority. When one of his steps—like the sudden appointment of Moshe Dayan to the foreign ministry—arouses opposition, the opposition quickly fizzles out. Begin patiently explains his arguments to the other side, and they are almost always accepted. (Avnery 1978, 12)

Avnery relates a couple of anecdotes that illustrate Begin's inability to accept opposition and criticism. Shmuel Merlin, a friend of Begin's from Warsaw who later served in the first Knesset in Begin's faction, claims that Begin stopped saying hello to him following some criticism (Avnery 1978, 6–7). Another friend from the Warsaw period, Natan Yalin-Mor, later split with Begin, joining the rival Lehi organization. When Yalin-Mor met with Begin in 1944 to discus the possibility of cooperation between the two underground factions, he asked Begin what mechanism would be in place if there were disagreements between the two groups. Begin purportedly suggested having "an objective referee." According to Yalin-Mor, when he asked Begin who would serve as this objective referee, Begin answered "I will!" in all seriousness. "I was amazed," says Yalin-Mor in retrospect. "I have never known a less objective man in all my life" (Avnery 1978, 7).

If Begin was selective with regard to those with whom he chose to consult, limiting himself to a miniscule circle of political advisers, he was even less inclined to seek out the views of foreign leaders. He was considered a poor listener who displayed little interest in what others had to say (Sofer 1988, 192). A former U.S. diplomat who participated in the Camp David accords relates the following anecdote:

> After he left government, I was talking to Carter one time. He was talking about his life in Plains, his religious beliefs, etc. I said: "Did you ever talk to Sadat and Begin about those?" With Sadat, the answer was yes. He said, "I listened to Begin and all of his experience with great attention because I wanted to learn and understand." I said, "Did you tell him about life in Plains under segregation?" He rather ruefully said, "He didn't seem to want to listen."[19]

As with Shamir, the Holocaust played a crucial role in shaping Begin's uncompromising approach to politics. Begin's obsession with the Holocaust led him to see nearly any threat and every possible danger to Israel as a precursor to another Holocaust. He thus failed to make distinctions in assessing Israel's adversaries. To Begin, "the PLO are Nazis, Arafat is Hitler" (Perlmutter 1987, 13; Rowland 1985, 6). Begin was mistrustful not only of Arabs but of non-Jews in general (Grosbard 2004, 54, 112). Like Shamir, for example, Begin saw the British as "Hitlerites" during World War II (Perlmutter 1987, 137). Notwithstanding the fact that British prime minister Winston Churchill led his country in the fight against Hitler and rescued a substantial number of Jews during the war, to Begin, the British were no better than the Nazis.

Even West Germany's democratic leaders, according to Begin, were no different than their Nazi predecessors. When Prime Minister Ben-Gurion decided to accept reparations from West Germany in September 1952, Begin, the then-opposition leader, declared: "There is no German

who did not kill our fathers. Every German is a Nazi. Every German is a murderer. [Chancellor Konrad] Adenauer is a murderer" (Haber 1978, 234). Begin's fierce opposition to Adenauer and to reparations from Germany is illustrative of both his rigidity and inability to see individuals and situations in their multiple dimensions. That Adenauer had served time in a Nazi prison camp and spoke of wanting "a different sort of Germany from the Germany of Hitler" meant little to Begin (Silver 1984, 119).

He regularly lectured foreign leaders on the Holocaust, invoking it whenever he felt the need to justify a particularly controversial decision to a foreign leader (Walsh 1982, A14).[20] One classic example of this tendency concerns Begin's decision to destroy Iraq's nuclear reactor in Osirak. According to then-chief of staff Rafael Eitan, during the planning of the operation Begin vowed that "he will not be the man in whose time there will be a second Holocaust."[21] Following international condemnation of this event, including a severe reprimand from the Reagan administration, Begin sent President Reagan a letter replete with references to the Holocaust:

> A million and a half children were poisoned by the Ziklon gas during the Holocaust. Now Israel's children were about to be poisoned by radioactivity. For two years we have lived in the shadow of the danger awaiting Israel from the nuclear reactor in Iraq. This would have been a new Holocaust. It was prevented by the heroism of our pilots to whom we owe so much. (Shlaim 2001, 387)

Another controversial act in which the Holocaust was invoked concerns the Begin government's decision in June 1982 to strike Lebanon. When Begin made the proposal to his cabinet, he reportedly said: "Believe me, the alternative to fighting is Treblinka, and we have resolved that there would be no more Treblinkas" (Shlaim 2001, 404).

Like Shamir, Begin did not take well to criticism. For example, when Begin decided to extend Israeli law to the Golan Heights in 1981, he complained that U.S. criticism of this controversial move was motivated by anti-Semitism (Rowland 1985, 6). And just as Shamir viewed Jews willing to compromise as traitors, Begin also regarded them with disdain, referring to them alternately as "cowards," "synagogue clerks," "slaves and Yahood" (Perl-mutter 1987, 137). In Begin's writings, he accused the moderate pre-state Yishuv leaders of appeasing foreigners and thus leading the nation astray (Perlmutter 1987, 137). In opposing Ben-Gurion's decision on the reparations deal, Begin stated that "a Jewish government that negotiates with Germany can no longer be a Jewish government" (Haber 1978, 234). Begin is thus similar to Shamir in his tendency to delegitimize points of view other than his own.

In conclusion, Begin can be seen as slightly more complex than Shamir—as illustrated, for example, in his recognition that the rule of law in a democracy triumphs over sectarian interests. For Begin, human rights were not to be trampled on, even if this meant a setback for his cause. He was thus able to weigh another dimension in his calculus, in contrast to Shamir. In most respects, however, Begin's cognitive makeup was quite similar to that of his successor. Neither man was open to considering other viewpoints; neither tolerated criticism of his policies; and neither was able to see much complexity in people or situations.

YITZHAK RABIN (1922–1995)

Born in 1922, Yitzhak Rabin was the only native Israeli premier of the leaders discussed here. In 1940, he joined the Palmach, the elite fighting unit of the Haganah, and fought in the 1948 War of Independence. By 1964, he became chief of staff of the IDF. He commanded the IDF during

the June 1967 War, defeating three Arab armies in six days. U.S. Senator Henry Jackson called Rabin "the George Marshall of the Six Day War, a brilliant strategist and tactician" (Slater 1996, 185).

Rabin retired from military service the following year, becoming ambassador to the United States, where he developed close relations with the political establishment and, in particular, with President Richard Nixon. In 1973, upon his return to Israel, Rabin was elected a Labor Party member of Knesset—not surprising, given that he had been raised in a socialist household—and served as a minister in Golda Meir's government. Following her resignation in April 1974, Rabin assumed the premiership, a post he held from June 1974 until his own resignation in April 1977. Henry Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East produced the Sinai Interim Agreement with Egypt (Sinai II), which provided for Israel's withdrawal in the Sinai to the eastern ends of the Mitla and Gidi Passes as well as Israeli withdrawal from the oil fields—in return for Israeli access to the Suez Canal. Following the revelation of an illegal bank account held by Rabin's wife in Washington—of which he apparently had not been aware—he resigned from office but continued to be active as a member of Knesset during Labor's years in opposition. In the mid- and late 1980s, Rabin served as minister of defense in the two "National Unity" governments (1984–1990). He adopted an iron fist policy toward the Palestinians during the first Intifada while simultaneously searching for a diplomatic resolution to the conflict. In February 1992, he defeated Shimon Peres in the Labor Party primaries and was elected prime minister again in the June national elections. His premiership was marked by the diplomatic breakthrough with the PLO but was cut short when, in November 1995, an Israeli right-wing extremist gunned him down at a peace rally.

A tough, straight-talking ex-general, Rabin the politician was also a pragmatist, whose views on any given issue were not constrained by dogma (Haberman 1993; Inbar 1999; Kurzman 1998; Slater 1996). Throughout much of the 1980s and early 1990s, Rabin was identified with the hawkish wing of the Labor Party. While he had always supported some form of territorial compromise, he had long opposed Palestinian statehood as well as the party doves' calls for holding direct talks with the PLO. In 1993, however, he dramatically changed Israeli policy by authorizing backchannel negotiations with the PLO, which led to mutual recognition followed by the Oslo Accords.

Rabin's cognitive structure can be described as both moderately open and moderately complex—less open and complex than his longtime Labor Party rival Peres, but more so than either Begin or Shamir. In at least one respect, however, Rabin does resemble the modus operandi of Begin and Shamir: failure to consult with more than a few people before making key decisions. In Rabin's case, he avoided doing so in part because of his introverted, reserved manner, but also because he was suspicious by nature and trusted very few individuals. His demand for personal loyalty led him to studiously avoid selecting advisers who he feared could become political rivals (Auerbach 1995, 295). Even the few people he would listen to "knew they were suspect" and, despite the fact that Rabin was in the army for thirty-five years, "he couldn't name one man he could call for advice" (Kurzman 1998, 35). Rabin's wife acknowledges that

> people were one of Yitzhak's weaknesses. He never had a kitchen cabinet and relied almost exclusively (with some reservations and some criticism) on the people in the official chain of command, behavior consistent with his rigorous military background. (L. Rabin 1997, 222)

Rabin's biographer concurs with this assessment, noting that "he had few close advisers, thinking like a general. He might listen to aides but he would give credence only to his own views, based on intricate analysis" (Kurzman 1998, 392). Rabin's circle of advisers was thus very limited. It is very likely, moreover, that much of the advice he did receive failed to challenge his own views on various issues, particularly since those who dared disagree with him would often incur his wrath (Kurzman 1998, 344). As Israel's ambassador to Washington, his embassy colleagues found him to be intolerant of dissenting opinion. He reportedly would open up staff meetings with a long monologue and conclude with the remark, "And those who don't agree with this view are either fools or don't understand what is going on in America" (Segev 1998, 36).

When Rabin's views were challenged—often, by the Americans—he tended to resist the opposing viewpoints, although there were also instances when he absorbed them into his own evolved thinking.[22] He was always direct and sometimes brash with his American interlocutors, digging in his heels on points of disagreement. Martin Indyk, a Middle East adviser to President Bill Clinton before becoming ambassador to Israel in April 1995, got to know Rabin quite well. Writes Indyk:

> It is difficult to convey how adamant Rabin could be once he had decided to reject an idea. He would swing his right arm dismissively, as if he were sweeping the suggestion off the table. Recognizing our frustration, he captured the moment precisely: "You look at it from your point of view; I look at it from my point of view." (Indyk 2009, 108)

Rabin's lack of openness to other people was compensated, however, by his openness to information from the environment. In this respect, he proved to be quite different from Shamir and Begin. Dennis Ross, the former U.S. Middle East peace envoy, offers the following description of Rabin:

> Rabin trusted his own assessments more than those of others. He drew information from others, and it was possible to influence him if you could do so before he had thought an issue through. Once he had made his analysis, though, you would not move him; only events would. For example, Rabin's analysis told him that it was both possible and desirable to do a deal with Assad before doing one with Arafat. When it became clear that this was not the case, Rabin turned to Arafat; he did not give up on a deal with Assad, but he altered his assessment accordingly. (Ross 2004, 92–92)

As Ross puts it, "Rabin was certainly more open to a kind of analysis that might counter his own, but it might be something he would read as opposed to what someone would say."[23] He was thus able to display flexibility in light of changed circumstances.

Rabin's decision making leading up to the famed Entebbe rescue operation ("Operation Thunderbolt") is typical of his tendency to reassess situations in light of new information. In late June 1976, during Rabin's first term in office, an Air France flight from Tel Aviv to Paris was hijacked by terrorists after a stopover in Athens and taken to Entebbe, Uganda. Rabin was initially inclined to accede to the hijackers' demands that Israel release hundreds of Palestinian terrorists:

> When it comes to negotiating with terrorists, I long ago made a decision of principle, well before I became prime minister, that if a situation were ever to arise when terrorists

> would be holding our people hostage on foreign soil and we were faced with an ultimatum either to free killers in our custody or let our own people be killed, I would, in the absence of a military option, give in to the terrorists. I would free killers to save our people. So I say now, if the defense minister and the chief of staff cannot come up with a credible military plan, I intend to negotiate with the terrorists. I would never be able to look a mother in the eye if her hostage soldier or child, or whoever it was, was murdered because of a refusal to negotiate, or because of a botched operation. (Avner 2010, 308)

However, once the IDF chief of staff came up with a military plan to rescue the hostages that Rabin deemed practicable, he changed his mind about negotiating with the terrorists. “So long as we had no military option I was in favor of conducting serious negotiations with the hijackers,” Rabin told his ministers during the cabinet’s deliberations. “But now the situation has changed,” he concluded, and he recommended, therefore, the military plan (Avner 2010, 309). The mission was successful.

Another example of Rabin’s flexibility was his stance on the Lavi fighter bomber, which was developed in Israel in the 1980s. Rabin changed his position on whether to pursue this costly aircraft not once, but twice! Originally, he opposed the project. As defense minister, however, he changed his mind, arguing that three thousand workers would lose their jobs if the project were cancelled. However, by 1987, he came to the conclusion that other military equipment was more pertinent to Israel’s defense needs than the Lavi. In light of these latest relevant facts, he changed his mind again, opting to buy planes from the United States rather than manufacture the Lavi in Israel (Kurzman 1998, 396).

In contrast to Shamir and Begin, Rabin was not always absolutely certain of the rightness of his way. He could assess a situation one day and reach a particular conclusion, but reach a different conclusion another day, either due to further reflection or changed circumstances that had altered his calculations. He did not believe that either he or his country was always 100 percent correct. When he reflected years later on why peace had not prevailed in the late 1960s, during his time as ambassador to the United States, Rabin gave a nuanced response that acknowledged both Arab attitudes *and* Israel’s responsibility in the failure to reach a settlement:

> I believe we tried, though maybe not hard enough, to find a settlement. I would add that though our demands might have been too much, I believe the Arab world was not ripe for peace. I believe both sides lacked the minimum confidence to reach a solution. Still, I will not deny that in Israel there were people in the government who did not care about peace. The mood in the cabinet was based on a conviction that we had become the third great power in the region, if not in the world. (Viorst 1987, 124)

These examples of Rabin’s flexibility, compared to the more dogmatic attitudes of Shamir and Begin, are indicative of a cognitive openness that was absent in these other political actors. Although Rabin tended to shun advice from others, he showed himself to be quite sensitive to new information from the environment, enabling him, in turn, to revisit his positions.

An evaluation of Rabin’s level of cognitive complexity leads to similarly mixed results. On the one hand, Rabin tended to make simplistic judgments about people and certain situations. He would make clear-cut distinctions between those he perceived to be “good guys” versus those he deemed to be the “bad guys” (Auerbach 1995, 304–305). Those whom he favored included his former comrades in arms from the Palmach; comrades in arms from the IDF; and his two closest political aides, Eitan Haber and Shimon Sheves. Those whom Rabin held in contempt included

Jewish settlers (whom he once labeled “crybabies”) and political rivals, such as Peres, whom he called “an indefatigable schemer” (Auerbach 1995, 304–305). In the words of former U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger, Rabin “hated ambiguity” (Kissinger 1979, 355).

Rabin’s two-dimensional perception of people transcended domestic politics. During the Cold War years, Rabin saw the international system as under the total control of the United States and the Soviet Union, exaggerating the bipolar division in the international system (Auerbach 1995, 305). As a result, he tended to be dismissive of other powers. For example, after being appointed chief of Operations Branch—the second-highest position in the IDF at the time—Rabin opposed efforts to procure arms from Western Europe, preferring to fulfill Israel’s defense needs by dealing with the United States. While the United States did eventually become Israel’s main supplier of arms, France proved to be instrumental in supplying Israel with arms that enabled Israel to win the 1956 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars (Ziv 2010). The United States, by contrast, refused to supply Israel with major weaponry during the 1950s and early 1960s, in spite of no small effort on Israel’s part to convince the Eisenhower administration to change its policy.

It would be mistaken, however, to equate Rabin’s tendency to engage in oversimplification with Begin’s and Shamir’s inability to see shades of gray in nearly any situation. While Rabin sometimes saw people and situations in binary terms as Begin and Shamir did, he often proved willing to revise antiquated views in light of changed circumstances. He viewed the political arena as a complex place that required constant analysis. Dennis Ross describes Rabin as having

> a first-class mind. More than any leader I have dealt with, Rabin was an analyst. His thinking was structured and highly organized. He would summarize in a staccato fashion what were the regional developments as he saw them. He might offer four or five points to capture the strategic reality, always presenting them in sequence and literally saying first, second, third, fourth, and fifth. (Ross 2004, 90)

According to Ross, “Rabin was someone who wanted to see things as they were, even if the facts might be uncomfortable with what he wanted [to believe].”[24]

While Auerbach is correct to note that Rabin was not as politically open to Europe as he was to the United States, he did not view the world as the enemy of the Jewish people, as did Shamir and Begin. Nor did he view with alarm America’s relations with the Arab world, seeing no necessary contradiction between positive U.S. relations with Israel and with Arab countries. After becoming prime minister in 1974, he stated in an interview that he had “never believed that an improvement of the relationship between the U.S. and the Arab states has to come about at Israel’s expense.”[25]

Although Rabin may have been two-dimensional in some respects, he demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of certain multifaceted concepts by considering their various dimensions. A classic example of this sophisticated approach was his view of security. In September 1975, Begin chastised Rabin for endangering Israeli security by agreeing to the American-brokered second disengagement agreement with Egypt, which entailed further withdrawals from the Sinai Peninsula and the relinquishment of oil fields and passes without a commitment from Egypt to end the state of war. Rabin responded by suggesting that “security is not merely a matter of territory” and that Sadat would now be motivated to reopen the Suez Canal and rebuild his cities along its banks. “That, in itself, grants us substantial added security,” Rabin insisted, while speculating that the agreement would enable the Egyptians to fully move out of the Soviet orbit and into the Western one, thereby widening the rift with the Syrians

(Avner 2010, 297). Years later, Rabin expounded on his conception of security in his acceptance speech following his election victory in 1992:

> Security is not only a tank, an aircraft, a missile ship. Security is also, and perhaps foremost, men and women—the Israeli citizens. Security is also a man's education, housing, schools, the street and the neighborhood, the society in which he grew up. And security is also that man's hope. Security is the peace of mind and the means to live for the immigrant from Leningrad, the roof over the immigrant from Gondar in Ethiopia, the factory and employment of the citizen born here, of the demobilized soldier. It is in integration and participation in our experience and culture. That, too, is security. (L. Rabin 1997, 215)

In short, Rabin was considerably more cognitively open and complex than was Shamir or Begin. An introvert who distrusted people in general, he tended not to look to others for decision-making advice. Nevertheless, he was open to revising his decisions when facing new information from the environment. And despite his tendency to dichotomize people, he was able to view certain concepts and situations in their complexity. He was thus able to display flexible thinking on an assortment of issues.

SHIMON PERES (1923–)

Born in Poland in 1923, Shimon Peres moved to Israel in 1934. Active in the Labor Zionist youth movement—he served as secretary-general of Hanoar Ha'Oved—Peres was handpicked by Labor Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion in 1947 to purchase arms for the Haganah. In 1952, he was appointed deputy director-general of the ministry of defense, becoming the ministry's director-general the following year. In addition to helping establish the Israel Aircraft Industries, he was involved in secret arms purchases from France and the construction of a nuclear reactor, with French assistance, in the town of Dimona (Cohen 1998; Ziv 2010). In his six-decade political career, Peres served in every major cabinet post including the premiership, which he held from 1984 to 1986, and again from 1995 to 1996.

As minister of defense in Rabin's first government, Peres was known as a hawk, who did not share his Labor Party colleagues' support for territorial compromise and who advocated the establishment of Jewish settlements throughout much of the West Bank (Bar-Zohar 2007, 306–11; Gorenberg 2006, 243, 292–98, 326–56). (Rabin was the more dovish of the two leaders given his early support of territorial compromise and skepticism of the settlement enterprise.) In the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, Peres underwent a dovish shift, emerging a devoted supporter of territorial compromise and a champion of the peace process. By the late 1980s, he had become an opponent of settlements. He also began to lay the groundwork for a shift in Israeli policy vis-à-vis the PLO. In 1993, as foreign minister in Rabin's second government, he threw his full political weight behind the Israel-PLO talks in Oslo and, together with Rabin and Arafat, received the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in the Declaration of Principles agreement. In 2005, Peres left the Labor Party, defecting to Ariel Sharon's newly formed Kadima. In June 2007, he was elected president, a largely ceremonial post he held until his seven-year term was up in July 2014.

Peres can be seen as a paradigmatic case of a cognitively open individual. Numerous interviews conducted for this research back the finding by Yael Aronoff (2001) that Peres is significantly more cognitively open than other Israeli leaders.[26] Those who know him well

invariably describe him as "open,"[27] "pragmatic,"[28] or "adaptable."[29] Superlatives are sometimes used to emphasize his pragmatism; he is commonly described as the "ultimate pragmatist."[30] "I don't know anyone as open as he is," says a former adviser.[31] A prominent journalist who covered every Israeli prime minister until he died in 2007 viewed Peres as "much more open" than were Rabin and Golda Meir—two of Peres's predecessors as Labor Party leader.[32] Comparing Peres with Rabin, one academic who has worked with both men describes Peres as

> more open, more attuned to voices from the outside, from the West, from Europe, from America, from intellectuals. He is more open to this kind of thing. That is why he is aware of others. His mind is not locked.[33]

Peres is "a great listener," says a former aide.[34] Former U.S. officials and high-ranking diplomats concur, viewing Peres as "a much more open person," "more open to listening to others," than the other leaders discussed in this chapter.[35]

Similarly, a former Knesset member who has known Peres her entire life describes him as far more receptive to others' opinions than other Israeli decision makers:

> He was more open to the world, and the world liked him for it, and he listened. The other people we mentioned, including Begin, their attitude was Ben Gurion's "Um Shmum" [a reference to Ben-Gurion's derogatory comment about the UN ("um" in Hebrew)]. Peres gave great importance to each hand in the UN and each country, and he would spend hours listening to what the Norwegians and what the Indonesians and what this and that would think and he was really attentive. And he would ask them: "What do you suggest? What do you think?" Other politicians would lecture about what they thought. Peres would ask—and I was with him on so many of these occasions—and I think this affected him greatly. He really understood.[36]

Peres's critics also acknowledge his openness, although the implications of this trait are, as far as they are concerned, not necessarily positive. Says Gad Yaacobi: "He's a good listener, a good collector of ideas, of initiatives, and he uses them later for his needs and raises them as if they are his ideas."[37] Indeed, his openness is perceived by Peres detractors such as Yaacobi as a manifestation of political opportunism. Throughout his political career, Peres was seen by rivals, such as prime ministers Moshe Sharett, Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin, and Yitzhak Shamir, as an untrustworthy, bureaucratic infighter lacking principles.

Peres actively seeks out other people's views. He has been known to surround himself with young, highly educated, and ambitious advisers who are not afraid—and are even encouraged—to challenge his views and, in fact, often do so (Ross 2004, 235–36).[38] He has generally made it a point to consult with professionals before making key decisions. In 1974, after he was chosen to be minister of defense in Rabin's first government, for example, his main objective was to rehabilitate the defense establishment, which had been badly damaged in the Yom Kippur War. To that end, he met day and night with scientists, soldiers, and defense-industry executives to find solutions to the defense establishment's numerous problems (Lau-Lavie 1998, 321). Two years later, as Peres studied a military plan to rescue the Israeli hostages at Entebbe, he made it a point to consult with Moshe Dayan, his predecessor in the defense ministry (who was no longer in the government), prior to pushing for the plan's implementation (Lau-Lavie 1998, 333).[39]

A more recent example of Peres's consultative approach concerns his conduct prior to

Israel's second Lebanon war in the summer of 2006. On the eve of the Olmert government's decision to declare war on Hezbollah, Peres—a senior minister in the government—took the initiative to call his archrival, Ehud Barak, Israel's most highly decorated soldier (and a former prime minister), to hear out his views of the impending war. Barak provided Peres with his professional military opinion of the problems that the army would likely run into during the war, leading Peres to ask the toughest questions of the senior military officials who addressed the cabinet (Mideast Mirror 2007).[40]

As prime minister from 1984 to 1986, Peres mobilized the knowledge elite, forming a circle of academically trained aides who consulted regularly with scientists, economists, and experts in academia, government, and the business world (Keren 1995, 7–8). He declared an "intellectual struggle against the habits of the population and the inertia of this country" (Keren 1995, 23). An example of this struggle that Peres did not shy away from during his premiership was his implementation of the economic stabilization program in July 1985. Faced with triple-digit inflation when he took office, this plan introduced a rigorous set of market-oriented structural reforms, which challenged parts of the traditional socialist dogma of Peres's Labor Party. Peres succeeded in large part because he made it a point to listen to the concerns of various sectors of society, while coordinating his efforts with members of the business community, economists, and the leadership of the Histadrut labor federation. The result was a reinvigorated economy in which inflation was reduced to less than 20 percent followed by record growth in the decade that followed.

Peres's high degree of openness—openness to what others tell him and openness to new information from the environment—appears to be a critical factor in explaining his propensity to update his views. Says Ron Pundak, one of two academics who initiated the Oslo process, "Peres is somebody who is not stuck at any point with an ideology. He adapts, he learns, he listens, he upgrades himself. This is a man who on a linear line always moves forward."[41] One former Peres aide, Israel Peleg, describes how, in the 1990s, he helped prepare then–foreign minister Peres for a meeting with then–U.S. vice president Al Gore. According to Peleg, when he briefed Peres on the value of desertification, Peres, at first, appeared rather indifferent. He nonetheless allowed Peleg to proceed with the briefing on its potential. By the time Peres returned from his visit in the United States, "he became Al Gore's representative on the issue of desertification. That's all he talked about," recalls Peleg.[42] Similarly, after consultations with various experts on nanotechnology, he has emerged, in recent years, a strong proponent of this minute technology for Israel's defense needs. "He didn't get to nanotechnology out of the blue," says Peleg. "Someone sat with him and showed him the potential, the future. … He then transformed it into a central issue."[43] In 2006, Peres presented some of his ideas to high-ranking U.S. officials in an effort to interest them in cooperation with Israel in developing weapons of the future based on nanotechnology (Eichner 2006, 4; Peres 2006).

Peres's cognitive openness is matched by his high degree of cognitive complexity. A former aide to Peres, who served in the first "national unity government" during Peres's premiership, compares his former boss's multidimensional outlook with the lower complexity of Peres's predecessors:

> The man [Peres] sees so many more variables and dimensions of any issue simultaneously and has no problem negotiating them in his mind simultaneously than any of them. Rabin was two-dimensional. Shamir was one-dimensional. Shimon is endless-dimensional. … He has a complex view of reality—very nuanced, very detailed. The

> driving forces are from the formative years, and the ability to negotiate many, many variables simultaneously is almost a mark of the man. He likes to launch many balls into the air. I've never seen him lose one, not knowing which one of them will produce results but not losing sight of any. He keeps his eyes on all the balls simultaneously.[44]

In contrast to the other leaders reviewed here, Peres sees value in ambiguity, both in terms of public posturing and as a tactic to provide Israel's decision makers with the maximum leverage to pursue different policies in accordance with different needs. As a young aide to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, Peres extolled his mentor's subtle, ambiguous method, which he contrasted to the unequivocal and bluntly straightforward approach of then–opposition leader Menachem Begin: "If Begin were prime minister," Peres noted, "every Jew and every American would know what would happen. That Ben-Gurion is prime minister of Israel and tomorrow he can be as sharp and as aggressive as Begin, and on the day after he can be battling for peace … this is one of the sharpest political cards that Israel holds toward the outside world."[45] Aliza Goren, an adviser to Rabin and later to Peres, notes that what impressed people about Rabin was that "what they saw and heard was what they got," whereas with Peres, "it's always packaged, sophisticated; he is multilayered and multifaceted" (Bar-Zohar 2007, 296).

Also distinguishing Peres from the other leaders is his tendency to avoid making simple dichotomies that often lead to dead ends in terms of policymaking. "If you have two unacceptable alternatives," Peres says, "the way out is to select a third one that nobody has thought about" (Willenson and Kubic 1977, 39). As far as Peres is concerned, people needlessly limit their options by presenting a dichotomy that does not necessarily exist. He states:

> [W]hen people analyze something, they think in terms of two alternatives: black and white. I believe that two alternatives never exist, because the minute they're becoming known they mobilize armies for and armies against, and they are useless. So when you have two alternatives look for a third one—the hidden one, the unknown one, the creative one that may surprise everybody, and enter a land where you have neither supporters nor opponents but you can operate freely.[46]

This unconventional approach to decision making has, at times, been a source of frustration for aides and colleagues seeking straightforward answers to problems they are tasked with solving. It also has led his rivals to ridicule Peres as a man detached from reality. According to writer Amos Oz, Peres has paid a personal price for his outside-the-box thinking:

> This is Peres's major problem; without it he would have reached lofty heights. His grasp of events, his endless creativity, his talent to open a window in a wall where there are no windows, to find a crack where others see only a concrete wall, to tie things together that others believe could never be tied together, all the things because of which people ridiculed him and called him a man of fantasy—that's his greatness. He has more vision and imagination than Ben-Gurion or any other Israeli politician had. (Bar-Zohar 2007, 350)

Peres's multidimensional thinking is illustrated in the following excerpt from an interview he gave concerning his support of a national unity government with Ariel Sharon's Likud in 2001—a move strongly opposed by many in his party:

> INTERVIEWER: To tell you the truth, there was a lot that made sense in the speeches of those opposed to the unity government.
>
> PERES: Certainly. But when you make a decision it is never 100 percent good against 100 percent bad. It is 65 percent good to 45 percent bad. Even now I can give you a list of disadvantages and doubts. When I was a boy I thought that a king can only do good things. But as you grow up you see there are constraints and dilemmas and difficulties and choices have to be made. (Kafra 2001, B4)

Peres's response to the interviewer concerning a controversial decision he made—in this case, bringing Labor into a right-leaning government—demonstrates his acceptance of the legitimacy of alternative viewpoints. He also is careful to acknowledge that his decision is imperfect. Typical of Peres's discourse, it is a nuanced reply, free of the absolutist language that typifies the rhetoric of Begin and Shamir.

In short, Peres is the most cognitively open and complex leader reviewed here. His willingness to listen to different perspectives, to incorporate the insights of others and update his beliefs accordingly, and to characterize situations in multidimensional ways distinguish him from other decision makers. This openness and complexity release him from being wedded to a particular position, allowing him to revise his beliefs and support changes in policy accordingly.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, Peres has been shown to be cognitively open and complex; Begin's and Shamir's cognitive structure is far more closed and simple; and Rabin is somewhere in between—more open and complex than either Begin or Shamir, yet not as open or complex as Peres. This analysis follows in the footsteps of cognitive psychologists who have used these criteria to help explain why certain individuals are more—or less—likely to undergo schema change; that is to say, why some people are more prone to alter their beliefs than others. By qualitatively analyzing oral and written statements made by four Israeli prime ministers over a course of several decades, and corroborating this data with expert testimony about these leaders' personalities, a clear picture emerges as to the level of each leader's cognitive openness and complexity. To avoid tautology, the leaders' positions on the Palestinian issue were not included in this assessment; in this way, the outcome is not the same as the evidence used to explain it.

Having established these leaders' cognitive makeup, the following chapters explore their positions on territorial compromise, settlements, negotiations with the PLO, and a Palestinian state. The chapters ahead trace Peres's hawk-to-dove shift and try to show that his high levels of cognitive openness and complexity help to explain why he underwent a dramatic change in views—and why he did so sooner than others.

THREE

PERES: THE HAWKISH YEARS

(1953–1977)

The purpose of this chapter is threefold: first and foremost, to show that Shimon Peres, in the earlier part of his career, was an uncompromising hawk; second, to demonstrate that, despite his status as a secondary political actor—he was merely a civil servant in the 1950s and became a senior minister only in 1974—he had a profound impact on Israel's foreign policy in the period covered here (1953–1977); and, third, to show that, notwithstanding his hard-line views, Peres displayed high levels of cognitive openness and complexity. This chapter comprises two periods in Peres's political career, separated by the 1967 War: the first covers his stint as director-general of the defense ministry and leadership in the Rafi party; the second begins with Israel's victory in the 1967 War and concludes with Peres's tenure as minister of defense in the first government of Yitzhak Rabin, until the latter's resignation in April 1977.[1] These periods, it will be shown, constitute Peres's "activist" and hawkish years, respectively.[2] The criteria used to assess one's level of hawkishness—one's post-June 1967 positions on territorial compromise, Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, negotiations with the PLO, and the establishment of a Palestinian state—are used to demonstrate that Peres was a hawk throughout this entire period.

That Peres was an important foreign policy player is significant to demonstrate as well, as it could easily be assumed that the views of an individual who is neither a head of state nor even a senior cabinet official (which Peres did not become until 1974) are inconsequential to that state's foreign policy. Yet this was clearly not the case with Peres. Chapters 3 through 5 thus, taken together, provide an in-depth look at Peres's approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the various ways in which his evolving views have impacted Israel's policies.

1953–1967: THE ACTIVIST

Although the terms *hawk* and *dove* did not become part of the public discourse in Israel until the aftermath of the 1967 War, there were nevertheless clear inter-and intraparty divisions with

regard to the Arab-Israeli issue—divisions between hardliners and those who adopted more moderate positions. The Revisionists, represented by Begin's Herut party, were followers of right-wing Zionist firebrand Ze'ev Jabotinsky. They maintained an uncompromising stance toward the Arabs, preaching Jabotinsky's vision of *Eretz Yisrael Hashlema* (a "Greater Israel"), an Israel encompassing both sides of the Jordan River. The Israeli Left, represented by the Communists and Mapam, rejected the notion of extending Israel's borders and advocated, instead, a more conciliatory approach toward the Arabs including territorial concessions.

The mainstream Mapai (forerunner to the Labor Party), the party that dominated Israeli politics until Labor's defeat in the 1977 elections, had a greater diversity of views within its rank and file. The Ahdut Ha'avodah faction, while holding left-wing socioeconomic views, shared the Revisionists' dream of a Greater Israel. Within Mapai itself, the majority of its members did not rule out future compromises with the Arabs, but only a minority, led by Moshe Sharett, believed that peace talks with the Arabs was a feasible option at the time. Most Mapai members held what today would be considered hawkish positions (though not as hawkish as supporters of Ahdut Ha'avodah or the Revisionists).

Within Mapai, as against the moderate Sharett line, stood the so-called activist approach, led by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and his young protégés, Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres. Like General Dayan, Peres was seen as a *bitchonist*—a man of security, who placed Israel's military interests ahead of its international standing, or any other factors that were of concern to moderates like Sharett.[3] As "activists," both Dayan and Peres adopted a generally hard-line policy toward the Arabs. Frustrated by the intensity of hostile rhetoric from Arab leaders and by terrorist infiltration from Arab countries into Israel (e.g., the *Fedayeen* from Egypt), the "activists" pushed for an aggressive policy of counterterrorism measures, such as retaliatory strikes. They also sought to redress what they viewed as the gross imbalance of arms flowing into the Middle East by seeking to procure arms from any country willing to sell them to Israel.

In December 1953, at the age of twenty-nine, Peres was appointed director-general of the ministry of defense by Prime Minister and Defense Minister David Ben-Gurion. Throughout the decade and into the next one, Peres did not deviate from his hardline attitude toward the Arabs. Although he did not officially enter politics until 1959, the year he was first elected to the Knesset, Peres neither hid his political views from Ben-Gurion nor from the general public. He passionately voiced his support for counterterrorist operations, seeing them not as acts of revenge but rather as acts of defense (Davar 1962). He rejected Sharett's call for a policy of restraint, arguing that "it was very important to emphasize that 'crime does not pay.' "

He also rejected the moderates' talk of peace, which he viewed as "an admission of weakness."[4] Peace would only come about, he insisted, if Israel were prepared to fight:

> Only if we demonstrate that we are a nation that has physical strength, military preparedness, military manpower to win or bend the Arabs in a war, and if we will have statesmen and leaders willing to use this strength—not for conquering, not for war, but to protect what we have attained—maybe that is the only way in which we can ensure peace that does not entail indefinite concessions. Because Israel is not interested in just any kind of peace. Israel is not interested in a peace without the Negev, and peace alone is not an end.[5]

Given the hostile intentions of Arab leaders toward Israel, he saw no room for accommodation with Israel's Arab neighbors:

> If the Arab countries were to extend their hands in peace, we would welcome the extended hand, although the alternative to this is not for us to extend our hand alone. Gandhi already said: "When a dog chases a cat it would not be a wise policy on the part of the cat to declare its intention to make peace—the dog will continue to chase it."[6]

Peres was concerned primarily with the hostile attitude of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, whom he saw as the ringleader of Arab rejectionists yet, at the same time, the leader whose country was essential for an eventual Arab-Israeli peace. "The key to peace, just as in the danger of attack, is to be found somewhere near the shores of the Nile," Peres argued. "Egypt is the biggest and the oldest of the Arab countries. It sets the tone, and without it—if I can express myself like this—there is no concert."[7] Convinced that Nasser's political goal was the destruction of Israel, Peres argued that, more than anyone else, it was Nasser who was responsible for perpetuating "the situation of no peace."[8] In one lecture, Peres even compared Nasser to Hitler.[9] Yet in that very talk, it should be noted, Peres was careful to distinguish Nasser from the Egyptian people, who he felt desired peace.

For Peres, the idea of negotiating peace agreements with Arab leaders under the circumstances prevailing at the time was futile. Not merely were these leaders highly antagonistic toward Israel, but what they really aimed for, argued Peres, was nothing less than the destruction of the Jewish state. This was a theme Peres would repeat again and again during this period, in private and public forums alike. He insisted it was pointless to even consider conceding parts of the country to the Arabs, as some on the Left were prepared to do. The notion that Israel's policies were needlessly belligerent—an idea voiced by some on the Left as well as by many in the international community—was misguided, Peres maintained. "In the eyes of the Arabs, our very existence represents aggression," he remarked in closed-door sessions of the ministry of defense.[10]

Just as he opposed the Sharett line throughout the 1950s, Peres continued to voice his opposition to dovish demands in the 1960s. When Nahum Goldmann, the well-respected president of the World Jewish Congress, called for a demilitarized region and urged Israel to dismantle its arms under international supervision, Peres rejected it out of hand. "The only alternative to the situation of no-peace is to strengthen the IDF's military might," Peres said in response to Goldmann. What Israel needed, he said, was a military deterrent force (Hamishmar 1963; Lavie 1963).

Significantly, however, while this view did not differ much from the prevailing view in Israel at the time, Peres's conclusions were particularly in line with Ben-Gurion's view that conciliation with the Arabs was a necessary political objective, but one that was simply not an available option at the time. Peace would be possible only once Israel managed to convince the Arab world that there was no other way, that Israel could not be wiped out.[11] This was a belief that the hostility displayed toward Israel in the Arab world was not an ineluctable destiny to which Israel had to be subjected eternally. Israel, Ben-Gurion believed, had the ability to help shape the future of Arab-Israeli relations. Peres shared that belief, declaring:

> I believe that we have the power to convince the Arabs that war is not only undesirable, but also unacceptable in terms of the chances of a military [victory]. … From an Israeli perspective, it is important that we do three things: (a) to develop a scientific ability capable of convincing the Arabs that if they will want modern weapons, Israel will be able to neutralize this strength … (b) we must ensure that the next ten years will not

> feature any war … (c) we must also develop initiatives for peace everywhere and at every possible opportunity.[12]

Peres was implying more here than merely a note of the optimism for which he is famous—a characteristic that has long been attributed to him and which he accepts as an accurate reflection of his personality.[13] Peres may have rejected the Left's talk of restraint and compromise, but, like his mentor, he also rejected the sense of determinism—even defeatism—that gripped supporters of the Right as well as certain members of his own party. Approaching the Arabs from a position of strength may indeed have been a widely held view, but Revisionists and others doubted this would lead to Arab acceptance of Israel in their midst. They did not accept the view expressed by Peres that "it is possible to rid Nasser of his aggressive stance—to do so, Israel must be strong."[14] Thus, from the perspective of Ben-Gurion and Peres, Israel had the ability to take steps that would influence Arab attitudes in a positive direction.

To do so, Israel would need to enhance its military strength in terms of both conventional and unconventional weaponry. It was the latter that Peres had in mind when he spoke of the need to develop a scientific capability of deterring Israel's enemies. Peres shared Ben-Gurion's faith in the power of science and technology to alter the course of human events. Ben-Gurion had always been attracted to science and, in particular, the idea of nuclear power, seeing in it a potentially useful alternative to oil and coal with regard to producing electricity and, more generally, a way to catapult Israel into an advanced industrial state (Peres 1995, 115–16; Shlaim 2001, 175–76). Before Israel could even consider going nuclear, however, it would need to find a reliable source for conventional arms.

The search for such a partner proved to be a daunting challenge. The Israeli foreign ministry tried in vain to obtain arms from the United States. However, since December 5, 1947, the United States had maintained an embargo on arms sales to the Middle East, only to be reinforced by the Tripartite Declaration of May 25, 1950, in which the United States, Great Britain, and France committed themselves to maintain an arms balance in the region. This effectively meant that Israel was denied arms while Arab countries continued to receive them because of previous commitments, such as the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty, an agreement between the United States and Saudi Arabia, and prior understandings that France and Italy had with Egypt (Peres 1970, 34).

While Foreign Minister Sharett and Israeli ambassador to the United States Abba Eban remained hopeful that Israel would be able to receive arms—and perhaps also a security guarantee—from the United States, Peres felt these efforts were futile, particularly given what he perceived as hostility by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles (Ziv 2010, 411–12). Peres believed that only France, which he saw as "the friendliest country today," could be persuaded to provide Israel with arms.[15] He then persuaded a reluctant Ben-Gurion to give him complete authority to try his hand at procuring arms from France (Crosbie 1974, 45; Levey 1993, 204–207; Peres 1995, 103; Ziv 2010, 413).

In the years 1954–56, Peres was instrumental in establishing the "French connection," with France becoming Israel's first major ally and chief arms supplier. By engaging in personal diplomacy at all levels of the French elite—government officials, opposition figures, bureaucrats, military officials, and industrialists—Peres successfully maneuvered his way through the labyrinthine bureaucracy of the Fourth Republic. In his various meetings, Peres was effective in linking Israel's concerns about Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser to France's problem in Algeria, where Nasser was supporting the rebels. He successfully persuaded his interlocutors that France and Israel had a mutual interest in neutralizing Nasser. In the course of two years, the

French delivered substantial arms packages that included large numbers of tanks and tank transporters, trucks, artillery, cannons, radar equipment, Ouragan, and later also Mystère, jet fighter planes. The massive quantity of sophisticated arms procured by Peres changed the balance of power in the Middle East and proved to be instrumental in Israel's subsequent defeat of the Egyptian army in the 1956 Sinai Campaign, which had been jointly planned by France, Britain, and Israel (with the Europeans playing a supporting role) and the 1967 War (Crosbie 1974, 203).

The Israeli-French alliance produced not only conventional arms agreements but cooperation in the nuclear realm as well. Peres had been placed in charge of the nuclear project, which he pursued with his French contacts with the same tenacity as he did with the conventional arms. The Suez crisis provided Peres with the opportunity to pursue another mission with which he was tasked by Ben-Gurion: the nuclear project. At the culmination of the September 1956 negotiations over the Sinai Campaign, Peres purportedly followed up on previous conversations he had had with the French leadership concerning French assistance in building a large-scale nuclear reactor in Israel. According to the bureau chief of then-IDF chief of staff Moshe Dayan, who was present during these discussions, Peres's suggestion was followed by a handshake between Ben-Gurion and French Prime Minister Guy Mollet, signifying an agreement in principle.[16] A month later, the French inner cabinet decided to instruct France's Atomic Energy Commission to provide Israel with nuclear capability (Pinkus 2002, 120–21). Peres administered the nuclear program over the next decade, until his departure from the defense ministry in 1965. He assured the French that the proposed twenty-four-megawatt reactor would be utilized merely for "scientific research" and that Israel would consult France on any international action concerning the project (Golan 1989, 53; Karpin 2006, 90). Peres hired the country's top scientists and engineers to build the reactor in Dimona; sought outside financial assistance to help cover the relevant costs; and worked doggedly to overcome numerous political and bureaucratic obstacles that threatened to destroy the project. The Dimona project was ultimately completed sometime between mid-1966 and 1967, turning Israel into a nuclear weapon state (Cohen 1998, 275; Karpin 2006, 268). Peres left the defense ministry just as the nuclear reactor was entering the phase of plutonium extraction (Bar-Zohar 2007, 274; Pean 1982, 120).[17]

THE MOVE TO RAFI (1965–1968)

In another demonstration of his commitment to Ben-Gurion's "activist" approach (and loyalty to his mentor), he bolted from Mapai and joined his mentor's breakaway Rafi party in June 1965.[18] This could hardly be seen as an easy move for Peres, not only because he would not be able to be present at this critical juncture in Dimona's timeline, but also because it meant leaving his post as deputy defense minister and, in leaving the dominant Mapai and joining an untested party, risking the future of his career.[19] It was thus far from a politically expedient decision for Peres, who might have become the minister of defense had he stayed in Mapai.

Although Ben-Gurion was the nominal head of Rafi, Peres ran its day-to-day affairs. He was the key spokesperson for the party, representing it in the media, at public forums, and in the Knesset. The unenviable task of raising funds for the new party, which lacked the infrastructure and financial backing of the well-established parties, fell on Peres's shoulders (Bar-Zohar 2007, 275–76).[20]

Rafi was, by all accounts, the "activist" party, a more hawkish version of Mapai. Apart from the left-leaning Yitzhak Navon, its ten Knesset members adopted an aggressive approach toward

the Arabs. During one particularly stormy session of Knesset on March 16, 1966, Peres responded to the labeling of him and his colleagues as “activists” and “the Suez group” by rhetorically asking, “Does the nation of Israel regret the activism in the realm of security, the settlement and the immigration led by Ben-Gurion?” He lambasted those “official apologists” who were assisting “the leftist obsession.” Labor’s Abba Eban, the then-foreign minister, accused Peres of displaying suspicion “toward any revelation of a direction toward peace,” an accusation that elicited the following response from Peres: “Does this direction toward peace come from the Arabs or from you?”[21] In contrast to Abba Eban, Peres saw no use whatsoever in seeking ways to compromise with those who sought Israel’s demise:

> They [the Arab leaders] declare this [their intention to annihilate Israel], they are preparing for this, and they leave no doubt concerning the uncompromising nature of their political goal. This is not a limited goal aimed to gain a political or economic advantage: to annex part of a territory or part of a river, to change a regime or orientation, because their far-reaching eternal goal is to annihilate a nation and a state. This position of the Arab states treats the Arab-Israeli conflict like a biological conflict more than a political conflict.[22]

Peres was thus no more convinced of the Arab world’s readiness for peace in the mid-1960s than he had been a decade earlier. In short, throughout the period leading up to the 1967 War, Peres held firm to the notion that peace was not an option for Israel at the time given the Arab world’s rejection of the Jewish state.

1967–1977: THE HAWK

Opposition to Territorial Compromise

Israel’s victory in the 1967 War is an event of monumental importance in understanding the hawk-dove divide in Israeli politics. Up until June of that year, most Israelis regarded their country as the underdog, a relatively weak nation fighting for its survival. Following Israel’s tremendous territorial gains in this war—the Sinai peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria—Israelis began to view themselves in a different light, practically overnight. No longer did Israel appear weak and vulnerable; it had proven itself to be a significant military power in the Middle East.

The newly acquired territories immediately became the focal point in the ensuing national debate concerning the future of Israel’s relations with its neighbors. Israelis’ attitudes toward the territorial divide emerged as the key issue that distinguished hawk from dove, with the latter favoring partition of some sort. Religious nationalists felt a vindication that land promised by God to the Jewish people had finally been “liberated.” They, as well as the mostly secular supporters of Begin’s right-wing Gahal (later Likud) party, were now more determined than ever to realize the dream of a Greater Israel and thus advocated annexing the conquered territories. For them, the territories were Israel’s to keep irrespective of Arab attitudes toward Israel. Likud’s platform stated that “between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, there can be only Israeli sovereignty” (Laqueur and Rubin 2008, 206). To Begin and his supporters, therefore, settling the newly acquired territories with Jews was essential, as it would help to ensure that they become integrated into the Jewish state.

By contrast, the governing Mapai (later the Labor Party) saw the territories as potential bargaining chips for an eventual peace agreement.[23] While it lacked a coherent position concerning the future of the territories, it opposed annexing them.[24] Territorial compromise soon became the party's guiding principle, manifested in the Allon Plan. This plan, proposed by Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon, a leading figure in the party, aimed to provide Israel with secure borders by retaining sovereignty in the Jordan Valley while offering to return to Jordan the heavily populated areas in the West Bank.[25] Although the now-retired Ben-Gurion expressed the view that Israel ought to relinquish all of the territories, save for Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, in return for a real peace, his was a minority view at the time.[26]

Shimon Peres and his political ally Defense Minister Moshe Dayan adopted a distinctly hawkish line. Dayan wanted the Israeli government to "establish permanent facts with settlement and military consolidation" (Gorenberg 2006, 199). A mere four months after the 1967 War, Peres tried to shoot down the increasingly popular idea within the party of withdrawing from part of the territories. "There is no reason that Israel should withdraw even one inch from the territories it held," he declared in a Knesset debate, "and it is my impression that those who propose withdrawal play chess with themselves … it is no wonder that in such a game they are the losers" (Agid-Ben Yehuda and Auerbach 1991, 535). As late as the mid-1970s, Peres rejected the very term *occupation,* as can be seen from the following excerpt of an exchange he had with a member of Knesset belonging to the Communist Party:

> What occupation? Did we attack Jordan? Did we attack Hussein? Stop exaggerating. One can think from your talk that in 1967, Abraham went out nicely, attacked Hussein and conquered the [West] Bank. Is this how it began? And in 1947, did we go out and attack? What are you talking about? What occupation?[27]

Peres's hawkish views seem to have been influenced in no small way by Dayan, a man Peres admired greatly according to numerous individuals who were well acquainted with both men.[28] Dayan, eight years his senior, played an important role in mentoring Peres. Their acquaintance began when Peres was a teenager, and the two worked closely together from the early 1950s, as shown in the previous section, until Dayan's resignation from the government in 1974. Following Dayan's resignation, Peres continued to consult with him on matters of defense, as he did, for example, when he wanted Dayan's take on the proposed military plan to rescue Israeli hostages in Entebbe (Lau-Lavie 1998, 333). In his memoirs, Peres devotes an entire chapter to Dayan, whom he refers to as "the most admired Israeli in the world." Peres writes that he saw in him "the unique traits of our evolving nation, its greatnesses and its foibles," and notes that he viewed him as a potentially great leader (Peres 1995, 125, 127).

Only on rare occasions did Dayan and Peres disagree with each other publicly; generally, the two men adopted the same positions and tended to offer similar arguments in support of these positions. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy to point out one of the rare instances of disagreement, because the analysis provided by Peres can be seen as an example of his high level of cognitive complexity. Addressing a Rafi party forum on September 3, 1967, Peres expressed his typically hawkish views about the danger of conceding territory to the Arabs. At the same time, though, he noted that "in the West Bank there are 120,000 refugees" and that, therefore, "we must think about how to maintain Israel's moral standing and not to disregard it." At this early stage in Israel's post–June 1967 borders, amidst the confusion concerning the future of these territories, Peres indicated his appreciation of the issue's complexity; there was a moral issue to be dealt

with, in addition to the obvious political and security dimensions. The theme of not wanting to rule over another people was one to which Peres would return years later. After Peres inserted the moral dimension into the debate, Dayan responded negatively. "Ben-Gurion said that whomever approaches the Zionist problem from the moral aspect is not a Zionist," he said, chastising Peres.[29]

Dayan and Peres had collaborated for many years to strengthen Israel militarily in the face of continued Arab enmity. Peres's creative methods and dogged persistence had helped to overcome the arms embargo, providing Israel with much-needed arms, while Dayan transformed the IDF into a first-class army, preparing it for war. Their joint efforts paid off in impressive victories in both the Sinai Campaign and the 1967 War, eleven years later. As far as Dayan and Peres were concerned, however, these victories had failed to change Arab attitudes toward Israel. The resolution adopted by Arab leaders at the Arab Summit Conference in Khartoum on September 1, 1967—it declared "no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with it"—solidified their beliefs. The idea gaining momentum in Mapai, of withdrawing from some of the newly conquered territories, was thus utterly rejected by Dayan and Peres. As Peres explained in a party forum, his opposition to territorial concessions stemmed from his continued lack of faith in Arab intentions:

> Of course we can withdraw, of course we can yield—but peace will not come even with the crutches of withdrawal and concession. Even when we were not in Judea and Samaria, even when we were not in the Sinai and in the Golan Heights—the Arabs did not accept us. The difference between then and today is not a difference in political character but rather a strategic difference—then, too, they threatened our existence; today it is easier to guarantee it. Moreover, the lack of peace is not a result of Israel's policy, but rather the fruits of the Arabs' social structure. The militarism rules Arab society.[30]

Peres's view of Arab attitudes toward Israel is expressed even more starkly in his book, *David's Sling*: "No compromise can satisfy them [the Arabs]. It is the Arab goal to abolish Israel, not to change a political situation" (Peres 1970, 10).

In lieu of territorial compromise, Dayan and Peres pushed for what they called a "functional arrangement" (or "functional compromise"), according to which the security responsibility until the Jordan River would be within Israel's purview, whereas the civil and municipal responsibility would belong to the Palestinians.[31] In his memoirs, Peres blames the press for wrongly depicting him as a "hardliner," arguing that he never wavered from the concept of territorial partition. He makes it a point to distinguish himself from the right-wingers who wanted to annex the territories. "After 1967 I never favored annexation of the West Bank and Gaza," he insists (Peres 1995, 145). This much is true. Peres is on record, early on, as opposing annexation.[32] Yet in his memoirs, he also contradicts the notion that he always supported partition:

> During the 1970s, I favored the idea of "functional compromise"—that is, a sharing of power—as an alternative to territorial partition. At that time, the advocates of territorial partition within the government and the Labor movement proposed the Allon Plan. This called for Israel to retain under its own sovereignty and control the Jordan Valley, which is relatively sparsely populated, as well as the area around Jerusalem. However, Dayan and I felt it was more important for us to hold onto the hill range running down the center of Judea and Samaria. … I suggested that the West Bank, which was to be demilitarized,

> could be administered by the Palestinians themselves, under the joint control of Israel and Jordan, at least for an interim period. Israeli control would ensure freedom of movement for Israelis throughout the territories and freedom of worship at the Holy Places. Israel and Jordan, together with this Palestinian entity, would make up a regional unit of close economic cooperation. I certainly did not envisage—nor do I envisage today—a physical or economic separation between Israel and the West Bank-Gaza. (Peres 1995, 143–44)

Peres's statements during those days, in fact, give no hint as to his support for partition. As late as January 1977, Peres expressed his opposition to territorial compromise in a party forum:

> I do not believe that there is a territorial compromise that would be acceptable to the Arabs. Even if all of the Jews would unite, I do not see the Arabs yielding on Jerusalem, I do not see the Arabs yielding on territorial contiguity. On the other hand, I do see the possibility for political arrangements that will enable the Arabs to conduct their affairs, with their passports, with their laws, their expenses, while Israel—and this is, in my opinion, our main objective in Judea and Samaria—that the defense of the country will begin in Jordan, Jordan is the security border of the State of Israel.[33]

In short, while the Labor Party promoted the concept of territorial compromise, Peres contended that "instead of dividing the land, I would prefer to divide the government"; that is, he saw a functional arrangement encompassing autonomy as preferable to parting with territory (Kubic 1977: 36).

Founder of Settlements in the West Bank

Peres's stated opposition to territorial compromise was buttressed by his actions in the mid-1970s, when he was given an opportunity to do something about it.[34] From 1974 to 1977, Peres served as defense minister in Yitzhak Rabin's first government. As the second most powerful government official, Peres's cognitive openness was manifested clearly in his efforts to listen to a diversified range of views. Aside from seeking out the opinions of his predecessor, the now-retired Moshe Dayan, he had an essentially open-door policy to Arab officials from the occupied territories, meeting with them in his office whenever they wished to discuss problems or issues of concern to their community (Kafir 1976, 5–7). At the same time, he also displayed a great willingness to listen to what the settler leaders had to say.

In fact, settler leaders had unprecedented access to the Rabin government due to Peres's willingness to meet with them in his Tel Aviv office and engage them in substantive discussions concerning their agenda. "In Peres, we found an attentive listener," recalls one of the settler leaders. "His door was always open to us" (Bar-Zohar 2007, 307). A former Peres aide, Aliza Eshed, recalls how her boss looked forward to such meetings, because he regarded the settler leaders as "the salt of the earth," "true Zionists, as the new settlers of the land," and was thus "so happy that there was such a group of young settlers around him" (Bar-Zohar 2007, 309).[35]

It was in this capacity that he was responsible for the establishment of some of the first Jewish settlements in the West Bank.[36] The Gush Emunim (Block of the Faithful) settlers' movement, under the spiritual guidance of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, saw the 1967 War as an opportunity to realize the vision of the Whole Land of Israel (or Greater Israel).[37] Its adherents exerted, therefore, a considerable amount of pressure on the government to enable their

settlement enterprise to flourish. Its modus operandi was to settle a particular site without government sanction, thereby creating "facts on the ground" (B'Tselem 2002). The prime minister, for his part, viewed settlements as an obstacle to peace. "The West Bank is our one bargaining chip for a future peace with the Palestinians," he told Begin in one off-the-cuff exchange with the opposition leader. "Fill it up with settlements and you destroy the very hope of peace," he warned (Avner 2010, 287). Of all the ministers in Rabin's government, it was Peres who proved to be the most sympathetic to the settlers' goals—support that was manifested in both word and deed. Peres was an early advocate of Jews' right to settle all the land of Israel, including the newly conquered West Bank. If Jews could settle anywhere, Peres asked rhetorically, why couldn't they settle there?[38]

On his very first day as defense minister, Peres took a meeting with Rabbi Kook to discuss the settlers' desire to settle in Elon Moreh, an area located in the hills of Samaria, northeast of Nablus. Although Peres did not commit himself to approving their settlement, he reportedly told Kook that he "identified with [the] goals of the group's members" (Gorenberg 2006, 284). According to Benny Katzover, one of the militant settler leaders, only two prominent figures in the Labor Party were supportive of the Elon Moreh project: "Moshe Dayan, and especially Shimon Peres" (Gorenberg 2006, 243).[39]

Peres appointed Moshe Netzer as his settlement coordinator to assist him in promoting the settlers' agenda. In contrast to Prime Minister Rabin's antagonistic attitude toward the settlers, Peres and Netzer supported Jewish settlement on the mountain ridge and thus lent their hands to the establishment of Ofra, located northeast of Jerusalem. Peres and his aide provided permits for wives and children to reside there; hooked up the settlement to the local electricity grid; and agreed to pay for floodlights around the settlement (Gorenberg 2006, 328). Peres's rationale for backing the Ofra settlement was its proximity to Jerusalem. Concerned about the construction of Arab houses near Jerusalem, he saw Ofra as an attempt to counterbalance this trend and thus "fortify Jerusalem." In addition, Peres envisioned Ofra as a place that would provide the army with temporary housing. Years later, Peres says: "I thought that in Ofra, we can build a radar station and the settlers will handle the radar and defend the country."[40]

In December 1975, the Elon Moreh group organized a mass rally in Sebastia, a disused railway station from the Ottoman period near Nablus—despite Rabin's clear directive to prohibit the rally. When the cabinet met in Jerusalem to discuss the fate of the settlers, the atmosphere in the room was decidedly against the settlers' stance. A former defense ministry official recalls that when it was suggested that the settlers be removed from Sebastia by force, Peres sat in silence.[41] The cabinet rejected the settlers' demands and insisted that they be removed from the area. Peres subsequently went to Sebastia during the settlers' standoff with IDF soldiers to try to implement the government's decision to block the settlement. When he informed the settlers that they would have to evacuate the place, Rabbi Moshe Levinger, one of the militant settler leaders, tore his clothes as if in mourning. The settlers refused to budge. After protracted negotiations between the settler leaders and the government, a compromise ensued, which enabled the settlers to move to a nearby military base called Kadum (later Kedumim).

The precise nature of Peres's role in the settlers' standoff at Sebastia remains a matter of controversy. In his memoirs, Rabin speculates that Peres may have conspired with the settlers by providing halfhearted instructions to the army to stop the settlers that were on their way to Sebastia (Rabin and Goldstein 1979, 550). Peres flatly denies this charge and suggests, instead, that "someone from the government," without his knowledge, "set up a pseudo-military headquarters in Tel Aviv, from which he transmitted advice and guidance to the settlers on how

to dodge the army patrols and reach their designated settlement site in the face of the army's efforts—and orders—to prevent them" (Peres 1995, 147).[42] Notwithstanding the question of how the settlers were able to defy the army at Sebastia, what is clear is that Peres preferred a strategy of accommodation to confrontation vis-à-vis the settlers. While Peres warned his colleagues that forced evacuation could entail bloodshed, Rabin had made up his mind to send in troops (Gorenberg 2006, 335). In the end, Rabin acquiesced to a compromise plan, which essentially enabled the settlers to establish their settlement—just not at the Sebastia location. When Peres signed the deal with the settler leaders, he sweetened the final agreement for them by making a number of significant concessions. The original compromise would have enabled thirty individuals to set up shop in the army camp; Peres changed the wording to "thirty families." Peres also promised the settlers jobs and assured them that the government would debate the future of settlements in Judea and Samaria in two or three months (Bar-Zohar 2007, 310; Gorenberg 2006, 338–39). In less than six months, the settlers, with the active assistance of Peres's defense ministry, had built a synagogue, a dining hall, and classrooms (Gorenberg 2006, 346).

Peres's attitude toward settlements differed markedly from that of his colleagues in Rabin's government. Unlike Peres, Rabin opposed Jewish settlement on the mountain ridge (Gorenberg 2006, 312).[43] Peres was deferential toward the settler leaders, seeking to accommodate them whenever possible, while Rabin was unsympathetic toward them and was prepared to use force in response to their illegal activities (but ended up not doing so). Peres's cooperative approach with the settlers could not have been more different than the outright hostility shown toward them by Labor's doves—in particular, Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir, former secretary-general Arieh "Lova" Eliav, and Knesset member Yossi Sarid. Eliav opposed all settlement activity in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, arguing that these territories would constitute a future Palestinian state (Gorenberg 2006, 234). Sapir, too, opposed settling the West Bank and Gaza, but not the Golan Heights, which he wanted Israel to retain (along with East Jerusalem) (Gorenberg 2006, 62). Sarid, as Sapir's protégé, was even more vociferous in his opposition to the settlement enterprise.

In contrast to the doves, the Labor Party mainstream supported the notion of settlements but, unlike the rightist opposition, opposed annexing the West Bank. It was Yigal Allon who, in 1968, as minister of labor in Golda Meir's government, pushed for Jewish settlement in Hebron, leading to the establishment in 1970 of Kiryat Arba, a settlement just north of Hebron (Sedan 1997).[44] However, Allon, who was now foreign minister in Rabin's government, had become an advocate of territorial compromise following the Yom Kippur War.

Although he still favored settling the Jordan Valley in order to provide Israel with "defensible borders," he was unwilling to go as far as Peres, who favored settling not only the Jordan Valley but the mountains of Samaria as well. Allon thus expressed disapproval of the new settlements that were established with Peres's consent. He also complained bitterly that his support for territorial compromise was being used against him by Peres, who he alleged was leaking rumors to the press that Allon "was about to turn over the whole West Bank and Gaza Strip to the Jordanians" (Gorenberg 2006, 289).

Peres's positions were thus clearly to the right of his party. At the same time, it would be mistaken to equate them to those of Begin, head of the Likud (formerly Gahal) party. Peres did not share Begin's support for annexing the territories; he was not an advocate of Greater Israel. Nor did he appreciate the boisterous demonstrations organized by Begin and his supporters in the West Bank, preferring a far more discreet strategy. Yet Peres and Begin both favored the

establishment of as many settlements in the West Bank as possible. It is therefore hardly surprising that Peres met with a delegation of senior Likud officials on August 31, 1976, with the aim of mobilizing their support for his settlement policy (Gazit 2003, 261).

During the rest of his term as minister of defense, Peres continued to actively promote the settlements, helping to plan the future settlement (now city) of Ariel (Bar-Zohar 2007, 311; Gorenberg 2006, 355). In party forums, he passionately defended his hawkish position, blasting the doves' idea that the settlements were somehow a burden to Israel's security. "Where is the consistency?" he rhetorically asked his fellow Labor Party members. "How can you explain that settlements in the Golan Heights advance the peace yet the settlements in Judea and Samaria burden the security of Israel?" Peres insisted that, as long as settling east of the green line did not result in the eviction of its Palestinian residents, Jewish settlement in these territories ought to be allowed.[45] He argued further that at least some of these settlements would be permanent.[46] The following excerpt from an interview in *Newsweek* illustrates Peres's belief that the settlements were not merely bargaining chips for an eventual peace deal, but rather were meant to be enduring fixtures in the Israeli landscape:

> Q: What would happen with the Israeli settlements in the occupied areas?
>
> A: I don't see any problem. The Jewish people have the right to settle even in Brooklyn or in the Bronx or in London, and I don't see why they could not remain on the West Bank, if there is peace.
>
> Q: What if the Arabs object?
>
> A: Well, we won't take any objections about Jewish settlements. We cannot turn the clock back. Over the past five, ten years, Arabs have built hundreds of new houses, even without permission, in the Galilee and the Negev, and nobody says they should be expelled. (Kubic 1977, 36)

As the above interview also illustrates, Peres did not see a contradiction between settlements and a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. He dismissed the doves' notion that the settlements would prevent Arab leaders from making peace. A former adviser at the ministry of defense recalls that Peres would respond to such assertions by arguing that if the Arab leaders wanted an agreement with Israel, they would seek it regardless of the activities on the ground.[47]

In short, Peres distinguished himself as the chief hawk in the first Rabin government by promoting the idea of settling the mountain ridge of the West Bank and lending his support to the establishment of Jewish settlements there.

Opposition to a Palestinian State

The notion of an independent Palestinian state—widely accepted in Israel today by large swaths of the population—was not seriously countenanced by the Labor Party in the years 1967–1977. Golda Meir, who served as prime minister from 1969 to 1974, did not even recognize the existence of a Palestinian nation (Tessler 1994, 444). "Immediately after 1967, nobody thought about it [a Palestinian state]," recalls a veteran Israeli journalist.[48]

In the 1970s, greater international focus on the Arab-Israeli conflict, particularly following the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the Arab oil embargo, led to increased support around the world

for a Palestinian state. Leaders of the Socialist International were particularly active in this respect, pressuring Israel's leadership to end the occupation and support a two-state solution to the conflict. Defense Minister Peres passionately denounced such talk, saying that a Palestinian state would be "a disaster for Israel, for the Middle East and for peace."[49] Peres challenged a leader of the Socialist International, Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, to tell him "where in the socialist bible it is written that when two nations live in the same land there must be a territorial division and not a federation coexistence." Two fears, in particular, factored into Peres's opposition to Kreisky's position on a Palestinian state: terrorism and greater Soviet involvement in the region. "If a Palestinian state should emerge," Peres warned, "there is no doubt that it would be filled with modern Soviet weaponry or weapons from Libyan arsenals" (Eshed 1975). The following passage from a Labor Party gathering in January 1977 vividly illustrates Peres's dual concerns of terrorism and Soviet encroachment in the region:

> I see the scenario whereby these [terrorist] cells will begin to infiltrate our settlements, Kfar Saba, Ramat Hakovesh, Petach Tikva, and the IDF will, once again, have to carry out revenge operations. The revenge operations will lead to a strengthening of the Soviet orientation, because they will want to strengthen the Palestinian army. Before we know it, we will have created a most miserable situation for ourselves … if we shall agree to a Palestinian state, for two months we will be lauded all over the world. After these two months, however, we will return to terrorism, we will return to the conflict, plus a deep Soviet involvement, and we will have nobody to whom to turn.[50]

Unlike Peres's position on territorial compromise, which put him at odds with his party, when it came to opposing the establishment of a Palestinian state, Peres and his Labor Party colleagues saw eye to eye. The prevailing view in Labor was to establish some sort of confederation with Jordan, which was seen as a more legitimate partner than the Palestinians, particularly since it was led by a Western-oriented king familiar to the Israeli public. "All of us spoke of a Jordanian option, even [left-wing firebrand] Shulamit Aloni," says a former Labor legislator.[51] Indeed, Prime Minister Rabin made it clear that "Israel's policy is that the Palestinian issue has to be solved in the context of a peace treaty with Jordan. We don't see any room to have a third state between Israel and Jordan" (BBC Television 1975). Peres, especially, became an early supporter of the "Jordanian option." In the mid-1970s, he came up with a federation plan, according to which the residents of the West Bank and Gaza would enjoy autonomy and be able to decide whether to define themselves as Palestinians if they so chose. Rather than the state determining its citizens' fate, Peres argued, his plan would enable citizens to determine their fate in three ways: the place in which they reside, the school in which they educate their children, and the borders they defend. Peres envisioned this federation to be a first step toward a future confederation with Jordan (Eshed 1975).

Opposition to Negotiations with the PLO

In October 1974, the Seventh Arab Summit conference in Rabat recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Its chairman, Yasser Arafat, was subsequently granted the privilege of addressing the United Nations General Assembly, which passed resolutions declaring for the first time that the Palestinians were a nation with rights to sovereignty (*Time* 1975). No longer were the Palestinians regarded by the United Nations merely

as “displaced people.” The PLO was even granted observer status at the United Nations.

While several countries, including the Soviet Union and India, opened their doors to Arafat during this period, the Western world largely avoided any dealings with him. It was only in July 1979 that chancellors Bruno Kreisky of Austria and Willie Brandt of Germany would finally meet with Arafat.[52] In the meantime, in September 1975, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger officially pledged that the United States would not recognize or negotiate with the PLO (*Time* 1979). Only if the PLO accepted UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 would the United States reconsider its position.

In Israel, the broad consensus was that the PLO, which was continuously engaged in terrorism against Israeli citizens, was not a legitimate partner for negotiations. On this point, there was no discernable difference between Labor and Likud. Prime Minister Rabin’s rationale for rejecting dialogue with the PLO could probably have been offered by almost any mainstream Israeli politician:

> I don’t believe the PLO can really change its position apart from lip service to our existence. They are not going to abandon their objective of a secular state in a greater Palestine because they would then lose their *raison d’être*. Their basic philosophy is that the Jews have no right to a state of their own and that their own state should be erected on the ruins of the Israeli state. In any event, I don’t believe we should change our policy on the Palestinian issue and that is that it is not the key to a Mideast solution. … We will never negotiate with the so-called PLO. (*Newsweek* 1975)

Just as Rabin and Peres shared their opposition to a Palestinian state, they also agreed on excluding the PLO from prospective peace talks. Asked whether he ruled out completely any dealings with the PLO, Defense Minister Peres replied: “It’s not me who is ruling out dealings with the PLO but the PLO itself who is. If those gentlemen say it’s their purpose to put an end to the state of Israel, I don’t see much sense in negotiating with them. … The most moderate people in the PLO call for peace—without Israel” (*U.S. News & World Report* 1975). For the Likud’s Begin, it was not merely that the PLO was less than forthcoming or an untrustworthy partner; Yasser Arafat “and his henchmen … have a Nazi attitude toward the Jewish people. They want to destroy our people” (Brown 1977). Just as one would not think about negotiating with the Nazis, it was inconceivable for the Jewish state to negotiate with “the most implacable enemy of the Jewish people since the Nazis” (*Warren Times Observer* 1977, 1). To be sure, while Begin tended not to draw distinctions between moderate and extremist Palestinians, Peres was careful not to rule out talks with all Palestinians. “Our ‘no’ to the Palestine Liberation Organization sounds like a ‘no’ to all Palestinians, and this need not be,” he stated (*New York Times* 1975). Rabin, too, had indicated a willingness to accept some non-PLO Palestinians as part of a Jordanian delegation in future peace talks (*New York Times* 1975).

CONCLUSION

During most of the period 1953–1977, Peres was a highly influential actor, who played a significant role in moving the country’s defense and foreign policy in a decidedly hawkish direction. Prior to the 1967 War, he was identified with the “activist” approach of his mentor, Prime Minister Ben-Gurion. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, he opposed the moderates’ call for peace talks, compromise, and restraint in the wake of terrorist attacks. As far as Peres was concerned, Arab leaders were intent on Israel’s destruction, and there was therefore no point in

engaging them in peace talks or even bringing up the possibility of compromise of any kind. As to the terrorist attacks, he was an early, outspoken proponent of counterterrorism operations. His activism during this period foreshadowed his hawkish stance vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict following the 1967 War. While his Labor Party colleagues tended to support ceding at least parts of the newly conquered territories, Peres categorically rejected territorial compromise, favoring instead a "functional arrangement" in which Israelis would rule the West Bank together with Palestinians. Although Peres opposed the right-wing opposition's idea of extending Israeli sovereignty to the West Bank, he distinguished himself as a Labor Party hawk by becoming the party's foremost supporter of Jewish settlements there. Like the majority of his colleagues, he vociferously opposed Palestinian statehood and any dealings with the PLO.

Establishing Peres's hawkishness is necessary in order to demonstrate his subsequent dovish turn, which will be explored in the next two chapters. More broadly, however, Peres's views are of importance to the student of Israeli foreign policy since Peres was a major actor in Israeli foreign policy-making throughout the years covered here. As has been shown, even prior to becoming a politician, Peres played a significant role in some of the young country's epochal events. As a civil servant in the 1950s, Peres succeeded in maneuvering the government from an Anglo-Saxon to a French orientation, forging a formidable alliance with France. His "French connection" led to massive sales to Israel of sophisticated arms, a joint military campaign against Egypt, and a nuclear reactor.

Peres's hawkishness took on greater significance when he became a senior member of Yitzhak Rabin's first government from 1974–77. His tenure as minister of defense was marked by the construction of some of the first settlements in the West Bank. Peres not only gave the settler leaders unprecedented access to the government, he actively promoted their agenda of settling the mountain ridge of the West Bank. Without Peres's support, the settlements of Ofra and Sebastia/Elon Moreh would not have been established during Rabin's premiership given that the majority in the government—including Rabin himself—displayed ambivalence, if not outright hostility, toward the settlers. (Prime Minister Rabin, it should be recalled, was even prepared to evacuate the settlers by force, but was prevented from doing so due to Peres's actions.)

Finally, Peres's high levels of cognitive openness and complexity can be seen from this early period of his career. As defense minister, he showed himself to be attentive to the concerns of Jewish and local Arab leaders alike. The nascent settlement leaders found in Peres a good listener whose door was always open; it would have been difficult to cultivate this sort of relationship with another government minister. Peres also continued to consult with his predecessor, Moshe Dayan, whose military background enabled him to provide Peres with advice on such matters as the Entebbe hostage rescue plan. In contrast to the hawkishness of opposition leader Menachem Begin, Peres's brand of hawkishness was more nuanced and multilayered. Although he opposed ceding territories Israel had captured in the 1967 War, he showed concern about Israel's moral standing in light of the Palestinian refugees. Similarly, while Begin viewed all Palestinians as enemies, Peres drew a distinction between the PLO and more moderate Palestinians with whom he felt Israel could conduct peace negotiations. It is these cognitive traits that would facilitate Peres's significant shift in the years ahead.

FOUR

PERES'S DOVISH TURN, PHASE I

(1977–1987)

The year 1977 marked an important turning point in Peres's shift from a hawk to a dove. By the end of that year, he began to change his approach toward the Arab-Israeli conflict in general and the Palestinian issue in particular. He embraced the concept of territorial compromise; adopted a more positive tone with regard to the Arab world; began to change his attitude toward Jewish settlements in the West Bank; and emerged as a committed supporter of the peace process.

Several critical events affecting Peres's political career occurred that year. In February, Minister of Defense Peres challenged Prime Minister Rabin for the Labor Party's top spot. Rabin managed to squeeze out a narrow victory, only to resign two months later in the wake of a scandal over his wife's illegal foreign bank account. Peres was subsequently picked as the new Labor Party chairman and its candidate for prime minister. Then in May, for the first time since the establishment of the state, the Labor Party was soundly defeated by Menachem Begin's Likud Party in the national elections; Peres's Labor Party was relegated to the opposition. Six months later, on November 19, Egyptian president Anwar Sadat made a historic visit to Israel to address Israelis from the rostrum of the Knesset, where he called for peace between the two countries. Each of these events, it will be shown below, had an impact to some extent on Peres's evolving views concerning Arab-Israeli peacemaking. It will also be demonstrated that Peres's high levels of cognitive openness and complexity were instrumental in modifying his beliefs in accordance with new information he came across—in contrast to other leaders who were witness to the same information yet resisted changing their beliefs or were comparatively slow to do so.

THE BEGINNINGS OF A DOVISH SHIFT

Support for Territorial Compromise

As shown in the previous chapter, Peres and Moshe Dayan had been the Labor Party's leading

opponents of territorial compromise in the decade following the 1967 War. By the late 1970s, however, Peres had reversed course, becoming a committed supporter of territorial compromise. In interviews and Knesset speeches, and various other public forums, he spoke repeatedly of the need "to withdraw from territories," though he remained vague about the extent of such a withdrawal from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.[1]

Peres adopted the Labor Party's key marketing tool for territorial compromise: the demographic argument. According to this oft-stated argument, if Israel was to remain a democratic state with a Jewish character, it could not rule indefinitely over an Arab minority—a growing minority that could one day become a majority—against its will. In 1977, Peres began employing this rationale in his public pronouncements—a rationale from which he since has not strayed. "We do not want to include in the heart of the Zionist and Jewish demography a minority that always will be an eternal threat to our existence," he declared.[2] The Likud's stated objective of annexing the West Bank and Gaza came under sharp criticism by Peres for neglecting the demographic consequences of such a move. "The argument is not whether or not to annex the territories to the state of Israel … the argument is whether to annex Arabs to the state of Israel," Peres contended.[3] If the government were to annex well over a million Arabs, he argued, the state of Israel would be endangered, because as a binational state it would no longer remain a Jewish one.[4] The answer to the demographic danger was territorial compromise. "What is territorial compromise?" Peres asked rhetorically. "It is necessary for ensuring the Jewish character of the state of Israel in the future," was his answer.[5]

Such arguments, couched in terms of Israel's security concerns, tended to trump moral explanations for ending the occupation. Even so, a noticeable shift in Peres's attitude toward the moral aspect of the occupation can be discerned in the late 1970s as well. As minister of defense in the mid-1970s, Peres had rejected the very term *occupation*. By 1979, however, Peres began raising the moral problem inherent in occupying another people. "We do not want to be a nation that rules over other nations," he said. "Not only do we not want to transform Israel from a Jewish state to an Arab one, but we also do not want to turn Israel into a country that rules over Arabs, even though we have the power to do so; we do not want to do so for moral reasons."[6] Another moral danger that Peres saw stemming from the occupation was the growing Israeli dependence on Arab labor, "not because it is Arabs who are working, but because the Jews are stopping to work."[7] Thus, to remain self-sufficient, rather than rely on others to do the work for them, Peres saw it in Israel's interest to end the occupation. Since annexation would lead to a binational state and continued occupation was politically and morally dangerous, territorial compromise was a necessity.

Diminished Support for Settlements

Following the Likud's victory in the May 1977 elections, Begin made settling the West Bank a high priority for his government. Ariel Sharon, who joined the government as minister of agriculture, played a big role in encouraging the construction of new settlements. Peres criticized the Likud's plans for settling all of the West Bank. The founder of some of the first settlements, who only a year earlier met with Likud officials to mobilize their support for his hawkish settlement policy, now advised caution with regard to the pace and extent of settling the biblical lands of Judea and Samaria. "Is it allowed?" Peres asked rhetorically. "Certainly it's allowed," he responded, "but we must remember to distinguish between what is needed and what is allowed."[8]

Peres rationalized his opposition to Begin's policies by distinguishing between "settlements that have a security benefit" and settlements being built in populous Arab areas; the former were, in his mind, the legitimate settlements to which he had lent a hand as minister of defense, while the latter was the counterproductive policy of Prime Minister Begin and his Likud party. The problem with Begin's approach, complained Peres, was that by establishing settlements in densely populated Arab areas—territories that the prime minister wanted to annex—Begin was unwittingly endangering Israel's Jewish majority. Begin's policy, as Peres described it, was to erect "political settlements," as opposed to the "demographic settlements" established by the previous government.[9] If Labor returned to power, Peres pledged, he would put a stop to building Jewish settlements in these areas.[10]

At the same time, Peres's views on settlement policy did not undergo any sort of radical change during the late 1970s. He did not express any regret, for example, over the settlements that had been established under his watch. On the contrary, he defiantly defended his previous actions: "We established settlements … and we do not regret what we did," he stated. "We stand firmly in support of the important and serious settlement construction over the last ten years without regret and without change."[11] He even expressed the hope that the Likud government would not "uproot the settlements we built."[12] In his writings, he laid out his vision for Jewish settlements, which did not betray his earlier support for settlements:

> [Israel needs] to create a continuous stretch of new Jewish settlements; to bolster Jerusalem and the surrounding hills, from the north, from the east, and from the south and from the west, by means of the establishment of Jewish townships, suburbs and villages —Ma'aleh Adumim, Ofrah, Gilo, Beit El, Givon and Nahal outposts—to ensure that the Jewish capital and its flanks are secured and underpinned by urban and rural settlements. … These settlements will be connected to the coastal plain and Jordan Valley by new lateral axis roads; the settlements along the Jordan River are intended to establish the Jordan River as [Israel's] de facto security border; however, it is the settlements on the western slopes of the hills of Samaria and Judea which will deliver us from the curse of Israel's "narrow waist." (Peres and Eshed 1978, 48)[13]

Nevertheless, by the early 1980s, Peres's rhetoric concerning settlements had undergone a noticeable shift. No longer did he speak about the need to create a string of settlements along the hills of Samaria or the Jordan Valley. Any reference he made to the government's program of settling the West Bank was expressed in largely negative terms. He lamented the Begin government's "investment in Judea and Samaria" while "numerous *moshavim* [cooperative agricultural settlements] and *kibbutzim* [communal settlements] are in dire financial straits" yet were being neglected by the government.[14]

Peres's growing number of attacks on the Likud's settlement policy was a reaction to the government's accelerated pace in constructing new settlements and in appropriating increasingly greater revenues for the settlement enterprise. In the early 1980s, Begin and Sharon—who, in 1981, became minister of defense—established "bedroom communities" by subsidizing housing within commuting distance of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. For several years beginning in 1981, more than 80 percent of public funds invested in the territories went toward the construction of these communities. It was not surprising, therefore, that by the end of 1981, there was a 30 percent increase in the number of Jewish settlers in the West Bank, and by the end of 1982 there was another 30 percent increase, bringing the number of settlers to 21,000. In total, there were

103 Jewish settlements, 70 of which had been built by Begin's government (Tessler 1994, 548).

In the 1984 national election campaign, as Labor's candidate for prime minister, Peres repeatedly blasted the Likud government for investing $3.5 billion in settlements over a seven-year period.[15] When Peres and the Likud's Shamir (Begin's successor) established a government of "national unity" following the near-tie that resulted from these elections—Labor received forty-four seats, while Likud garnered forty-one—the new government's settlement policy was a major issue of contention in the coalition negotiations. The two major parties agreed that any proposal for a new settlement would necessitate the approval of the entire government.[16] In practical terms, Labor agreed to the establishment of six new settlements, an agreement that had the support of both Peres, who directed the negotiations and who would serve as prime minister for the first two years (until 1986), and Rabin, who would serve as minister of defense for the entire duration of the new government. Only a minority of Labor's senior officials, such as Gad Yaacobi and Yitzhak Navon, voiced their objections to these settlements, though they did so in ministerial meetings rather than publicly. "We said that this was an unnecessary concession," recalls Yaacobi. Peres, he says, "is no small manipulator and diplomat. He said, 'We didn't have a choice—the government wouldn't have emerged otherwise.' "[17] As prime minister, then foreign minister from 1986–88, Peres was constrained in terms of stopping settlement activity. He was able to limit it, but his Likud colleagues in these two national unity governments prevented him from freezing settlement activity altogether. Notwithstanding his limited influence in this regard, what is clear is that by 1987, Peres had become a settlement critic. Recalls a former colleague:

> At that point, I was able to discern a sharp distinction in his view between the Jordan Valley and Judea and Samaria. I then understood that he made this distinction and that he was prepared to act accordingly. I think that in his first term as prime minister, he already began presenting clear views: [settlements in] the Golan Heights—yes; [settlements in] Judea and Samaria and the Gaza Strip—no. But he wasn't prime minister long enough to implement it.[18]

In short, by the late 1970s, Peres no longer gave unqualified support for the establishment of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. He began to distinguish between settlements that were legitimate in his eyes versus those that were problematic. In the mid-1980s, he sharpened his criticism of the governing Likud Party's settlement policy but stopped short of demanding a complete halt to new settlements as a condition for remaining in the government.

Continued Opposition to a Palestinian State

In the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, Peres continued to oppose the creation of an independent Palestinian state. "With regard to a Palestinian state," he told the Labor Party Central Committee on December 25, 1977, "we do not simply oppose a third state because a Palestinian state would not bring peace; to my regret such a state would also push for the continuation of the conflict between the Arabs and ourselves."[19] He promised that if Labor returned to power, it would not permit the establishment of such a state.[20] Peres believed that a Palestinian state would be "a disaster for Israel, for the Middle East, and for peace" because it would lead to terrorism, military conflicts, and deeper Soviet involvement in the area.[21] Of particular concern to him was the prospect of an additional army between Israel and the

Kingdom of Jordan.[22]

His opposition to Palestinian independence was shared by most of his colleagues in the Labor Party and, of course, by those affiliated with the right-wing Likud. "It is inconceivable to us to allow a Palestinian state. … It would be a mortal danger to us," stated Begin in an interview given shortly after his 1977 election triumph. Begin was basically correct in noting in that interview that there was a national consensus on this issue (Halevy 1977).

Where Peres's Labor Party clearly distinguished itself from the governing Likud was in opposing the latter's annexation plans and supporting, instead, territorial compromise in the framework of a Jordanian solution to the conflict. Peres, in particular, became his party's chief advocate of the "Jordanian option," viewing it as a way to resolve the Palestinian issue while avoiding the establishment of another state between Jordan and Israel. Addressing a meeting of the Labor Party Central Committee on November 25, 1979, Peres said: "If we do not want a Palestinian state in addition to the Palestinian state that exists—and Jordan is, in effect, a Palestinian state—we must conduct negotiations with Jordan."[23] Peres's not-so-veiled reference to Jordan serving as the Palestinian state is indicative of his strong opposition at that time to an independent Palestine. More often than not, Peres was careful to include Palestinians—as opposed to the Jordanians alone—in his framework for a solution to the conflict, although the addition of Palestinians sometimes appeared to be little more than an afterthought. "We are calling on the Jordanians and the Palestinians to join forces in resolving the Palestinian problem," he said at the opening of the Third Labor Party Convention on December 17, 1980. "Most of the Palestinians are residents of Jordan, and most of the residents in the territories are Jordanian citizens. Given that it is a single problem it is necessary to find one solution … within a Jordanian-Palestinian framework," Peres said.[24] Despite Peres's inclusion of the Palestinians in such a delegation, however, he viewed the Palestinians as a necessary accessory rather than the crux of the solution to the conflict. "They [the Palestinians] do not have an exclusive right to decide themselves on the future of the territories," Peres argued. "Their needs will come into consideration, but will not be the sole factor," he stressed.[25]

Peres's approach did not deviate in any significant way from his Labor Party colleagues or from the party platform, which, throughout the 1980s, supported negotiations with a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and, at the same time, rejected "the establishment of an additional separate state in the territory between Israel and Jordan."[26]

The viability of the "Jordanian option" peaked in 1987, the year Peres reached the ill-fated London Agreement with Jordan's King Hussein. The king's subsequent decision to renounce claims to the West Bank would serve as a key turning point in Peres's hawk-to-dove transformation, a point that will be discussed in detail below.

Continued Opposition to Negotiations with the PLO

The Jordanian option was, as far as Peres was concerned, the best antidote to a solution that would require a deal with the PLO. According to this logic, by dealing with the Western-oriented Jordanian monarch, Israel would be spared the nuisance of having to deal with the wily, erratic, and more extreme Yasser Arafat. "It is not possible to say no to the PLO without saying yes to Jordan," Peres argued. "If you say no to Jordan and no to the PLO," he continued, "you create a sort of creature with whom you cannot conduct negotiations."[27] *Yes* to Jordan and *no* to the PLO was Peres's position throughout the 1970s and 1980s. He was convinced that the PLO would not alter its rejection of Israel and support for terrorism; that it lacked a governing structure

representing the majority of the Palestinians' true desires; and that, politically, any solution involving the PLO would not be as viable as a deal with Jordan.[28]

Peres's position was at odds with the influential Socialist International, of which the Labor Party is a member. As leader of the Labor Party, Peres became well acquainted with its leadership, which held the position that Israel ought to negotiate with the PLO. To those who suggested that the PLO be granted recognition by Israel, Peres would reply: "Stroking a tiger will not make it a pussycat."[29] He adamantly resisted the pressure placed on him by his socialist friends—Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky, in particular—to engage the PLO in peace talks, as can be clearly discerned from Labor Party Central Committee meetings during these years. On one occasion, Peres chastised Kreisky for "proving that despite his good relations with the PLO, it hasn't prevented the problem of terrorism and the desire of a group of extremists among the Palestinians to eliminate the state of Israel."[30] Peres's position on this issue did not change after he became prime minister in 1984. The PLO was, as far as he was concerned, an organization that was committed to terrorism, not peace.[31]

Peres's stance reflected the mainstream view among the country's leaders. At the same time, Peres did not seem to rule out the possibility of future talks with the PLO, unlike the Likud's Begin, who could not fathom the notion of ever dealing with the PLO. Asked by a journalist if he would negotiate with Arafat if he were he to recognize Israel's existence, Begin replied: "No, sir!" Asked to explain why he would continue his refusal, Begin said: "Because I wouldn't believe him. It would be a trick, a subterfuge, a phase in his plan to destroy the Jewish State in stages" (Avner 2010, 353). In the atmosphere that prevailed at the time, key figures in the Labor Party, including Peres's archrival, Yitzhak Rabin, rejected talks with the PLO. Yigal Allon, the former foreign minister, regarded the Palestinian National Covenant as "an Arabic Mein Kampf" because it called for the destruction of Israel (Agid-Ben Yehuda and Auerbach 1991). Only a minority in Labor voiced a willingness to conduct negotiations with the PLO. In one party debate, for example, Mordechai Gur, a former IDF Chief of Staff who joined Labor upon his retirement from the army, declared that Israel ought to "negotiate with anyone in the Arab world that recognizes Israel's right to exist in peace and security. It goes for states and it goes for organizations." Peres responded by saying that "if Israel will be seen as soft toward the PLO, the world will not hesitate to join the PLO in clobbering Israel on the head."[32] While dovish Labor Party figures, such as Yossi Sarid, expressed support for talks with the PLO, these voices were marginalized. Throughout the 1980s, the party's platform stated explicitly that "the PLO and other organizations based on the Palestinian Covenant, which denies the State of Israel's right to exist and rejects the national character of the Jewish people, or which use terrorist methods, cannot be partners to negotiations."[33]

Peace Becomes a Top Priority for Peres

Notwithstanding his continued opposition to talks with the PLO and to the establishment of a Palestinian state, peace emerged as a top priority for Peres in the late 1970s. "Peace and security will be the foremost consideration in elections, in the party, in parliamentary tactics," he declared at the end of the decade.[34] For Peres, it was imperative that Israel not miss what he regarded as the golden opportunity launched by Sadat's peace initiative in 1977 to settle the Arab-Israeli dispute. "If there will not be a continuation of the peace process, then there will be a process of no peace," Peres predicted. "Things don't stop in the middle of the road. The peace process must

continue."[35] Throughout his years as opposition leader, Peres continued to promote the peace process, criticizing Prime Minister Begin, and later Begin's successor, Yitzhak Shamir, for their failure to carry out the autonomy plan in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as stipulated in the Camp David Accords.

Peres underwent a significant change in the late 1970s and early 1980s concerning his attitude toward the Arab-Israeli conflict in general and the Palestinians in particular. This change manifested itself, first and foremost, in a marked shift in rhetoric. Throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and most of the 1970s, Peres spoke and wrote about hostile Arab intentions. In his view, Israel lacked a partner in the Arab world, which was united on the objective of destroying the Jewish state. In the late 1970s, however, Peres had identified at least one prominent Arab partner for peace: Egypt. "I got the impression that Egypt and its president, like Israel and its government, are interested in peace," he declared to his Labor Party colleagues, some of whom had remained skeptical toward Egyptian president Anwar Sadat's true intentions.[36] Peres's approach toward the Arab world extended to the Palestinians as well, according to Peres's former political aides, who emphasize his adoption of a much more positive attitude and rhetoric concerning the Palestinians.[37] Recalls Gideon Levy, ex-Peres spokesman-turned-leftist firebrand *Haaretz* journalist: [Y]ou could see mainly how his rhetoric had changed. His rhetoric in those days [late 1970s] was really a rhetoric I can sign onto today—me, maybe one of the most radical Israelis! *I* could sign onto his rhetoric."[38] Another former political aide recalls that when he began working for Peres in July 1977, he thought he would be working for a hawk, "but instead I found him to be a dove."[39]

According to Moshe Shachal, a Peres associate who served as a Labor Party member of Knesset and cabinet minister, "Peres emerges as a persistent leader for peace" throughout the four governments in which they were both cabinet members. Shachal notes that the hawkish leader in the 1970s became the key person "who really made a very persistent effort to have peace with the Arab countries, with the Palestinians."[40] Shachal says that one of Peres's constant challenges at each juncture was to present formulas that would be acceptable to all segments of the Labor Party, from hawks to doves. Although at times his pragmatism would lend itself to conduct reminiscent of an *askan* [a wheeler-dealer], Shachal insists that Peres was remarkably consistent in pursuing peace since becoming the leader of the opposition in 1977.[41]

To sum up, the decade that began in 1977, with Peres's ascent to the Labor Party chairmanship and leadership of the opposition, witnessed a palpable shift in Peres's attitude toward the key criterion distinguishing hawk from dove: territorial partition. From 1967 to 1977, Peres was an outspoken opponent of territorial compromise, situating himself to the right of his Labor Party colleagues. However, beginning in January 1977, Peres embraced the concept he had earlier criticized, becoming the leading voice in favor of territorial withdrawal, which he argued was necessary for guaranteeing Israel's Jewish majority in the long run. Around this time, Peres's enthusiasm for settling the West Bank diminished. On the one hand, he continued to defend those settlements that had been established under his watch, and he continued to promote, in his writings, the notion of settling the mountain ridge and the Jordan River. On the other hand, he was critical of Begin's aggressive settlement policy, arguing that it was foolish to build settlements in densely populated Arab areas. Two related issues on which he did not change his views during the 1977–1987 period concern his opposition to the establishment of a Palestinian

state and to negotiations with the PLO. Finally, there was a noticeable shift in Peres's rhetoric vis-à-vis Israel's enemies, while peace became a high priority item on Peres's agenda.

ANALYSIS OF PERES'S DOVISH TURN IN 1977–1987 PERIOD

Domestic Political Factors: Labor Party Politics and Opposition Politics

Peres's newfound expressions of support for territorial compromise coincided with political activities within the Labor Party. During the weeks that preceded the Labor Party convention in late February 1977, Peres campaigned to replace incumbent party leader Yitzhak Rabin. In these pre-primary days, the party chairman—who also was its candidate for prime minister—was chosen by the three thousand party delegates attending the convention. A clear majority of Labor Party members favored territorial compromise, in contrast to Peres, who was to the right of most of his party colleagues.[42] Peres, a seasoned bureaucratic infighter, understood that he had little choice but to soften his stance on the Palestinian issue. Had he stuck to his hard-line positions, it would have made him less competitive with Rabin in terms of gaining the chairmanship of a party that was committed to territorial compromise; this was, after all, a concept that essentially marked the key difference between the two major parties, Labor and Likud. In early February, Peres thus joined Rabin in support of the draft platform plank, which advocated "territorial compromise on all three fronts"—that is, the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank (AP 1977). As it turned out, Rabin narrowly defeated Peres in that race, winning by merely forty-one ballots (1,445 to Peres's 1,404).

At the convention, Peres spoke of "the objective of territorial compromise" and the need for Israel to concede territories in the framework of negotiations.[43] From that moment on, Peres publicly—and emphatically—supported territorial compromise. Rabin's victory at the convention, however, was short-lived. In April, a scandal entailing his wife's illegal bank account in the United States led to his resignation. Peres was then picked as Rabin's successor, becoming the party's candidate for prime minister. However, after Labor suffered its first defeat in the 1977 elections, Peres assumed the role of opposition leader, a role that, by definition, required him to draw sharp distinctions between Prime Minister Begin and himself. He understood that, as opposition leader, he was expected by his party and by the general public to offer a clear alternative to the government's policy. Says Beilin, "He became a leader of a party that did not accept his view, so he had to accommodate himself."[44] Indeed, he did so by making repeated references that year to Labor's historic support for territorial partition, and crediting this support with the establishment of the state of Israel.[45] Just as Ben-Gurion favored painful compromises in 1948, Peres argued, the situation Israel faced thirty years later necessitated similarly difficult compromises in the West Bank.[46] The Labor Party's ideology, he declared, was "an ideology that has declared that peace has a price—territorial compromise, an ideology that has rejected extremism, be it Greater Israel or total concession of the State of Israel."[47] Greater Israel was, after all, the policy of Begin's Likud-led government.

Domestic politics thus played a key role in the timing of Peres's favorable pronouncements on territorial compromise. The race for the party leadership, the subsequent national elections, and the opposition politics that followed Labor's debacle at the polls are key "triggering events" that explain Peres's sudden change on the issue of territorial compromise in 1977. To his admirers, Peres's about-face on territorial compromise was a smart, pragmatic move; to his detractors, it was typical of the political opportunism they had come to expect from Peres.

Yet domestic politics constitutes only part of the explanation for Peres's dovish turn. As Israel Peleg, one of Peres's former aides from this era attests, "The party matter was important as far as his political standing," but it did not form the basis of Peres's worldview. "It's a focal point of power that he knew was important to him—that if he wanted to realize the ideas he was adopting, learning, planning, seeing in the long term, he couldn't do this if he wasn't the head of the party," says Peleg. "I don't think it formed him, I think it was utilized by him."[48] It would be mistaken, therefore, to conflate the impetus behind Peres's rhetorical shift with the underlying reasons for his evolving attitude on the prospects for peace with the Arab world and on issues such as settlements. What were these underlying reasons?

Systemic-Structural Factors: Socioeconomic Changes in the Arab World, the Completion of the Dimona Project, and Sadat's Historic Visit

In the 1970s, Peres began talking about social changes he was observing in the Arab world. "There is no doubt that far-reaching social change is already knocking on the historic door of the Arabs," he wrote in his book *David's Sling* (Peres 1970, 12). According to Peres, if there actually was such a change, "the destiny of the region will be completely transformed," and he expressed his "hope of a different kind of future for Arab-Israeli relations" (Peres 1970, 12). Later in the decade—but prior to the internal political events discussed above—Peres elaborated on this theme. With the increasing price of arms, he asserted, Arab leaders would not be able to afford continued warfare with Israel:

> I certainly think that a change has taken place in the Arab world on the issue of peace and war. The change emanates from a socio-economic structural change in Arab society, primarily in Egypt. … It is wrong to think that the wars left scars only in Israel. In my opinion, the wars left scars also with the Arabs, caused losses, frustration. The price of arms is going up and is a burden on the Arab world. Wars cause also an accelerated pace of political and social processes, each society emerges differently in almost every war. It is true also with regard to the Arab countries, not only with regard to Israel.[49]

Peres, in short, believed that Arab-Israeli wars had left deep scars in the Arab world, resulting in a loss of both arms and oil. Due to the burden of Arab-Israeli wars on the Arab economies, "there are structural changes taking place in every single country in the Middle East," he concluded.[50]

Above all, Peres believed that Arab leaders had come to appreciate "the satiety in the military strength of the Middle East," in particular "the destructive strength of the new arms."[51] What was likely on Peres's mind was the completion of his pet project: Israel's nuclear reactor in Dimona that he had overseen during his tenure as director-general of the ministry of defense. By the early 1970s, Arab leaders either assumed Israel to be a nuclear power or suspected that it was on its way to becoming one (Aronson 1992; Quester 1979; Weizman 1981; Ziv 2007). Peres had long believed that the day would come when the Arab world would recognize the futility of attempting to destroy the Jewish state. Dimona had been designed to do just that. According to Peres, in the aftermath of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the Arab world had come to realize that defeating Israel was an unrealistic goal. "We had Dimona and also I think the Arabs reached the maximum and came to the conclusion that they cannot win. And also they knew that we didn't use everything we have," he noted decades later.[52] In the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, Peres grew confident that Israel had "the defensive strength necessary to survive."[53]

A milestone event that reinforced Peres's conclusion was Egyptian president Anwar Sadat's decision to visit Jerusalem and address the Knesset in November 1977. Sadat's symbolic gesture had a discernable psychological impact on Israeli public opinion, which, practically overnight, saw a shift from overwhelming opposition to returning the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt to overwhelming support for such a move (Arian 1995, 104). Sadat's gesture, beyond being an important symbolic one, signified an important geopolitical shift: Israel's biggest and strongest enemy, Egypt, would henceforth no longer threaten Israel with destruction. The Egyptian-Israeli peace talks that followed Sadat's visit, and which culminated in the first-ever Arab-Israeli peace treaty, solidified this structural change, a fact that was not lost on Peres.[54] To Peres, Sadat's move took on additional importance in that it served to validate his Dimona project. His decision to make peace with Israel proved to Peres that Dimona had had a palpable effect on the attitude of at least one Arab leader's attitude toward Israel. According to Peres, the then-deputy prime minister Yigal Yadin confided in him that Sadat had told him that his suspicions of Israel's nuclear capability played a key role in convincing him that Israel could not be destroyed.[55] Peres thus saw the Dimona project as the underlying factor precipitating Sadat's move that led, in turn, to the critical structural change favoring Israel.[56] Why did these same structural factors not lead other Israeli leaders, such as Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, to reach the same conclusion as Peres?

Cognitive Openness: The Influences of the Socialist International and Political Aides

In chapter 2, Peres was shown to be a cognitively open individual whose level of openness was notably higher than that of Rabin and significantly higher than that of Begin and Shamir. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, this openness manifested itself in Peres's receptiveness to both foreign and domestic influences. One group of world leaders whose views Peres got to know particularly well after he became chairman of the Labor Party was the Socialist International, during a time when socialist parties were in power in many of Europe's capitals. Peres himself became active in the Socialist International and was elected its vice president in 1978. In this capacity, he met regularly with luminaries, such as Willy Brandt, leader of the Social Democratic Party of West Germany and president of the Socialist International; Bruno Kreisky, chancellor of Austria; Swedish prime minister Olaf Palme; Portuguese prime minister Mario Soares; and French president François Mitterrand. These frequent meetings exposed Peres to those voices that pressed for an equitable and expeditious resolution to the Palestinian issue. These leaders pushed hard for Middle East peace. Upon returning from his trips abroad, Peres would recount his conversations with them in party forums and interviews, speaking positively of their efforts to bring the Arab world and Israel closer to peace. Yet, during this period, he remained firmly opposed to both negotiations with the PLO and the establishment of a Palestinian state—positions strongly supported by the socialist leaders.

Nevertheless, his close association with the Socialist International appears to have had a discernable effect on his approach toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The politician who, in the mid-1970s, rejected the very notion of "occupation" began, by the end of the decade, to talk about the moral folly of ruling over the Palestinian people. Says Yossi Beilin: "It was very important for him [Peres] to have good relations with Willie Brandt, with Kreisky, with Olaf Palme. Now, you could not have good relationships with them with his old ideas. It was important for him to accommodate himself." According to Beilin, while Peres may not have changed his mind on such matters as holding negotiations with the PLO, he adopted a much

more positive attitude, reflected in his rhetoric, toward the Palestinians. Says Beilin: “It is not a matter of them [the leaders of the Socialist International] convincing him, but rather is a matter of him understanding that if he doesn’t accommodate himself to their general views on the Middle East, then they will not accept him.”[57] According to Beilin’s account, Peres thus *learned* that, to be accepted in the community of Socialist International leaders, he would need to begin to seriously address the plight of the Palestinians in his quest for a secure Israel.

Learning theorists note that most cases of learning take place at the tactical level, as opposed to a reassessment of strategic policy beliefs or fundamental assumptions (Tetlock 1991). Whether the impact of the Socialist International on Peres’s adoption of a softer line toward the Palestinians was purely tactical, or perhaps represented part of a deeper, strategic policy shift in Peres’s mind is not entirely clear. “He adjusted himself,” says Yael Dayan. “I don’t know if to reality or to a real understanding of moral questions, historical questions, surrounding himself with people whose basic thing was peace.”[58] The veteran journalist and author Yishayahu Ben-Porat, who first began covering Peres’s activities in France in the mid-1950s, recalls that Peres, as opposition leader in the late 1970s and 1980s, was particularly influenced by President Mitterrand and two of his Jewish advisers, Georges Dayan and Jacques Attali. Ben-Porat stresses that Dayan and Attali tried to impress upon Peres the importance of resolving the Palestinian issue while reassuring him that they shared his concerns for a secure Israel.[59] Former Peres aide Israel Peleg rejects the notion that Peres’s dovish shift was a purely tactical one:

> It’s not a matter of expediency. It’s not a political matter. There is an intellectual openness to accept a changed situation. … He is far-sighted. He is willing to bend what might seem to be his beliefs for the long run. Sometimes it does not seem this way, which is part of his image problem—that he didn’t make his moves due to a worldview that crystallized, but rather due to reasons of political expediency. I was with him, and I was close enough to view him from the side. I think it stems from responsibility and nothing else.[60]

Whether Peres’s “learning” was a mere tactical shift on his part, a reassessment of his strategic policy beliefs, or, perhaps, even a reevaluation of some fundamental assumptions, those who were close to him in the 1970s agree that his ongoing interaction with the Europeans at the end of the decade and into the next one was a significant factor in his dovish turn. With regard to his European influences, Peres can be seen to have absorbed information from the environment and modified his positions accordingly. His openness to the views of others—in this case, his European interlocutors—distinguishes him from both his predecessor, Rabin, and his then-Likud Party rival, Prime Minister Begin. According to Samuel Lewis, who was the U.S. ambassador to Israel in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Peres, unlike Begin, “was very sensitive to the international context” and was sensitive not only to American opinion but to European opinion as well.[61] It is the level of one’s sensitivity to his environment that is, after all, the defining feature of cognitive openness. Yael Dayan, as well, contrasts Begin’s derisive attitude toward the views of other world leaders with the modus operandi of Peres, who not only was amenable to other viewpoints but actively sought them out on issues including (though not exclusively) Israel’s conflict with its neighbors.[62]

As to Rabin, he was, as shown in the previous chapter, more dovish than Peres in the 1970s. He did not need to be convinced, for example, that settlements were detrimental to the cause of peace, having resisted (in vain) Peres’s efforts to establish them. However, Rabin, as prime

minister, did not enjoy a similar relationship with the leaders of the Socialist International or with other world leaders as did Peres. Rabin had always held an American orientation—an orientation that became even more entrenched during his ambassadorship to the United States (1968–1973)—and he tended to distrust Europe. But Rabin was also much less interested in what others had to say than was Peres, as was shown in chapter 2.[63]

If the Socialist International constituted an important moderating influence on Peres from the outside, his longtime aide Yossi Beilin helped to fulfill this role from within. Beilin was one of three pivotal figures who played central roles, at various points in Peres's career, in shaping Peres's policy positions, the others being David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Dayan. In the previous chapter, Ben-Gurion's and Dayan's mentorship in general, and their roles in informing Peres's hawkishness in particular, were discussed in detail. It was shown that Peres adopted Ben-Gurion's "activist" approach early on as director-general of the ministry of defense, subsequently as deputy minister of defense, and finally as co-founder of the Rafi party. It also was shown how Peres greatly admired Dayan and followed his lead, forging a political alliance in the 1950s. It thus came as no surprise when, in light of Dayan's opposition to territorial compromise (and support for a "functional arrangement") following the 1967 War, Peres followed suit. Even after Peres took over the defense ministry from Dayan, who resigned in the wake of the devastating losses in the Yom Kippur War, Peres continued to consult with Dayan, as he did, for example, in the hours preceding the Entebbe operation. After the 1977 elections, however, Dayan stunned the nation by accepting newly elected Prime Minister Begin's offer to serve as his foreign minister. Peres, caught off-guard, was distraught over Dayan's decision to abandon Labor and join forces with the Likud government.[64] While Peres did not sever his ties to Dayan after this controversial move, their relationship was never the same afterward. For Peres, this episode represents a clear break not only from their political alliance, but also from his reliance on Dayan to lead the way. Up until that point, Peres had always "accepted everything Dayan said, even if he disagreed with it," notes Shlomo Nakdimon, an author and former aide to Prime Minister Begin. "First, Dayan was his senior. And Peres belongs to that group of civilian leaders who looked up to army officials. … Dayan was a general-plus."[65] Zeev Schiff puts it more starkly, arguing that "Dayan had a negative influence" on Peres, because he "prevented him from crystallizing his views." Peres, according to Schiff, "diminished himself next to him [Dayan]" and thus his "crystallization was postponed."[66] Indeed, the moment Dayan joined the Begin government, Peres "thought that this would be an opportunity to free himself from the guardianship of Dayan and assume the role of the Labor Party, a leftist-oriented party," Nakdimon asserts.[67] Yishayahu Ben-Porat concurs, arguing that "the burden of Dayan" had finally been lifted from Peres. "The moment Dayan separated from him, Shimon managed to free himself and open up."[68]

As Peres freed himself from Dayan's grip, he worked feverishly to rebuild the vanquished Labor Party and establish it as a real alternative to the Likud government. To this end, he hired a team of young, talented aides headed by Yossi Beilin. One of the distinguishing features of this group was its members' penchant for speaking their minds and not hesitating to challenge Peres (or one another) when policy disputes arose. Their views were considerably more dovish than those of their boss, yet that hardly deterred them from freely expressing their opinions. Peres did not discourage them from contesting his views and listened to what they had to say—even if, in the end, he rejected their counsel.

By all accounts, the person with whom Peres consulted the most from 1977 on was Beilin. The two men—despite political and even personal rifts that have come between them—have continued to meet regularly over the years.[69] Beilin is widely viewed as the person who has had

the biggest influence on Peres since Dayan. Former *Haaretz* editor in chief David Landau says that "Yossi Beilin is not just key, he's far and away the most important person in the whole story. There's no comparison between Shimon Peres's relations with Yossi Beilin and his relations with anybody else."[70] Peres's former aides concur that Beilin has, over the years, played a critical role in moving Peres in a more dovish direction.[71]

Beilin was one of the leaders of the party's Young Guard prior to being picked by Peres to serve as Labor Party spokesman in 1977, following Labor's defeat in the national elections. "The leadership of the Young Guard was more dovish than the majority of branch members," Beilin writes (Beilin 1999, 12). Its members did not see the wisdom of establishing Jewish settlements in the newly conquered territories; nor did they accept the commonly held notion in Israel that there was nobody to talk to on the other side. In 1981, Beilin established the Mashov caucus, a dovish forum that advocated the return of the Golan Heights to Syria, Israeli recognition of the PLO, withdrawal from all of Gaza and most of the West Bank, and the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza—but no compromise concerning Jerusalem—in the framework of a confederation with Jordan (Beilin 1999, 15).[72] Members of Mashov met regularly with Palestinians throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s to discuss ways in which to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In 1983, Beilin brought in experts in various fields as part of Israel's first "100-day team" launched in the widespread anticipation of Peres's victory in the 1984 elections. While the Labor Party did not fare as well in the election as the polls had predicted, it did slightly better than Likud, enabling Peres to serve as prime minister for the first two years of the "national unity government." Nimrod Novik, one of the experts Beilin had brought in and who subsequently became Prime Minister Peres's chief foreign policy adviser, credits Beilin for having the greatest influence on Peres during the latter's premiership. "I would say that Shimon Peres was working mostly with an additional hard drive, which was Yossi Beilin, who was the brain behind any initiative of foreign policy then and since."[73] Beilin himself offers the following assessment of the one hundred-day team's influence on Peres's thinking:

> In many cases, I think that we had an influence. The influence is not on high policy. It is sometimes connected with high policy—whether or not to visit a settlement in the West Bank, for example. So we would say: these are the cons, these are the pros, and we'd make a recommendation as to whether to do it. In most of the cases, he [Peres] would accept it. Sometimes, he would say: "With all due respect, I respect what you say but I'm not going to abide by it. I have my own view about it." But it was an open game. In many cases, we had our own disputes, within the group. I would say: "Uri [Savir], please defend your view; Nimrod, defend your view; and let us see what is happening." Sometimes, he would say to me: "Okay, but if this is the case, what do you think about it?" In many cases, I did not have my own view. I would say: "Both of them are very convincing—you have to decide." But in most of the cases, we already came with a majority view and with a recommendation. So it did work.[74]

In short, Peres's attentiveness to the concerns raised by the leaders of the Socialist International on the one hand, and his own political aides on the other hand—particularly Yossi Beilin—exposed him to views that were considerably more dovish than his own. His willingness to listen to these views left open the distinct possibility that he would become influenced by them, which, according to Peres's associates, is in fact what had happened.

Cognitive Complexity: Peres as a Multidimensional Thinker

Peres's high level of cognitive complexity, like his openness, is a significant causal factor behind his capacity to undergo a significant shift from his formerly held views on the Palestinian issue. As discussed previously, cognitive complexity refers to the number and combination of dimensions an individual applies to characterize a given situation. The more cognitively complex a decision maker is, the more capable he or she is of making new distinctions, thus revising his or her beliefs when confronted with new information.

In chapter 2, Peres was shown to have a very high degree of cognitive complexity. Former colleagues, advisers, and aides describe him as a multidimensional and multifaceted thinker, who arrives at a decision after carefully examining various aspects of an issue. Important in this regard is what Peres does with the information he assimilates from his environment. Says a former adviser, "It's not *which* figures influence Peres, but *how* he is influenced by them." When he comes across an original idea that, in his view, holds promise, Peres explores this idea in its various dimensions before committing himself to it.[75] Explaining a highly complex decision-making process, a former cabinet minister and Labor Party colleague notes that Peres creates a conceptual framework based on the numerous meetings he has held with various people on a multiple set of issues. Says Avraham Katz-Oz, "I think that he usually does not work on one issue, but rather his conceptual product is a product of dealing and discussing in a very large group of issues. He takes out of this the relevant concept on the issue on which he is working."[76]

Understanding the way in which Peres processes information enables us to understand, in turn, why he was inclined to change his mind on core issues such as territorial compromise and settlements. It is important to note that even during his days as a relentless hawk, Peres demonstrated a high level of cognitive complexity concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Six months after the 1967 War, for example, he issued the following assessment about a proposed Israeli withdrawal from the newly occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip:

> One can claim that an Israeli withdrawal will not bring peace. But one can also claim that an absence of an Israeli withdrawal is likely to lead to war. Because the question is not just what we want—on the screen of desires, we must project also the will of the other. They too want something. Our ideology reflects only our aspiration. But our policy must take into account the position of our adversary.[77]

Peres thus views this situation in more than one dimension. His formulation is nuanced—even complex—in that it accounts for alternative ways of evaluating a hypothetical event, one he ended up opposing at the time. As noted in the previous chapter, Peres likewise made the case in an internal party forum that Israel must consider the moral dimension of occupying the West Bank, an argument that was answered swiftly with a harsh rebuke by Peres ally Moshe Dayan.[78] These examples serve to illustrate that even during Peres's hawkish period, he analyzed the situation with a multidimensional lens.

In short, by consistently maintaining an open mind, considering every possible angle of a given situation, and absorbing each new piece of information he came across—his own reading of the situation as well as input from numerous individuals with whom he consulted—Peres was able to adapt with relative ease to changed circumstances and to update his views accordingly.

CONCLUSION

The 1977–1987 period marks the first phase of Shimon Peres's dovish turn. Of the four leaders who dominated Israeli politics during this period—Begin, Rabin, Peres, and Shamir—only Peres's views concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict underwent a significant change. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Rabin was a dove in comparison to the others. Like the majority of Labor Party members, he supported territorial compromise and preferred to seek as little settlement construction in the occupied territories as was politically feasible. Peres was a newcomer to these positions. Domestic politics (e.g., becoming chairman of the Labor Party and head of the opposition) and structural shifts (e.g., the completion of the Dimona project and Sadat's historic visit to Israel that led to the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty), combined with a fear that the price for continued occupation would be exorbitant given the changing demographic balance between Jews and Palestinians, weighed heavily on his decision to move in a markedly more dovish direction. By the mid-1980s, he had emerged as Israel's foremost champion of the peace process. Begin and Shamir, by contrast, remained committed throughout this period to their opposition to territorial compromise and to the annexation of the West Bank and Gaza.

Peres's high levels of cognitive openness and complexity explain the relative ease with which he was able to revise his views in accordance with new information he received from the environment. Those who were witness to Peres's dovish turn are in agreement that his openness to the views of others played an important role in his revised positions. In particular, the extensive conversations he held with the leadership of the Socialist International and with his own team of advisers, who were free to challenge their boss when they disagreed with him, exposed Peres to positions that were considerably more dovish than his own. Moreover, his penchant for viewing concepts and events in multiple dimensions lent itself well to updating his positions. As will be shown in the next chapter, it is these qualities that enabled him to continually update his beliefs in response to changed circumstances, while other leaders—those with lower levels of cognitive openness and complexity—were slower to do so or did not do so at all.

FIVE

PERES'S DOVISH TURN, PHASE II

(1987–1997)

If the events that occurred in 1977 mark that year as the first major turning point in Peres's dovish turn, 1987–88 can be seen as the period in which Peres's second key turning point takes place in his hawk-to-dove evolution, a transition that can be said to have culminated in 1997, the year he first publicly endorsed the idea of an independent Palestinian state. The Oslo process, which began in 1993 and ended abruptly with the start of the second Palestinian Intifada in 2000, shattered big taboos in Israeli society—most notably, the notion accepted by most mainstream Israeli politicians that the PLO was not a legitimate negotiating partner. One of the more significant byproducts of "Oslo" was mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO, a development that opened the door to direct talks between nearly every prime minister since Yitzhak Rabin and the leadership of the PLO. While 1993 was a watershed year in this regard, it was the collapse of the London Agreement of April 1987 that persuaded Peres that there was no viable alternative to talking with the PLO.

Peres reached this conclusion after the so-called Jordanian option was essentially removed as a potential basis for a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.[1] His public support for an independent Palestinian state did not come until the late 1990s, when it became increasingly more acceptable to the Israeli public. Yet, like his support for direct contact with the PLO, Peres had come to this conclusion much sooner.[2]

THE COMPLETION OF PERES'S DOVISH SHIFT

Intensified Opposition to Settlements

The mid-1980s saw a deceleration in the pace of settlement construction, as compared with the aggressive settlement policy of the nation's first two Likud governments (1977–1981, 1981–84)

due to the “national unity government” Peres led, in partnership with the Likud’s Yitzhak Shamir, following the deadlocked 1984 elections.[3] The November 1988 national elections, however, resulted in a narrow yet important victory for Likud. The two major parties once again formed a national unity government, but this time Labor joined the coalition as a junior partner. With Labor’s influence significantly diminished in terms of setting government policy, and Likud blocking progress in the peace process, Peres led his party out of the coalition in March 1990. For the next two years, Shamir led a narrow right-wing government, with Labor sitting in the opposition. Sharon became minister of housing and presided over an unprecedented expansion of Jewish settlements. For the duration of that government (1990–92), the number of settlers grew from 90,000 to 126,000, creating a serious crisis in Israel’s relations with the United States (Frankel 1994, 295). Between 1967 and 1990, twenty thousand housing units had been built in the West Bank; in 1991 alone, thirteen thousand housing units were built (Slater 1996, 470). Fourteen new settlements were erected that year, with the government having spent 2.5 billion shekels ($1 billion) on settlement-related matters, such as housing, roads, and schools in the West Bank (Slater 1996, 470). The 1990–92 Shamir government had invested a total of 3 billion shekels ($1.2 billion) in the occupied territories (Slater 1996, 474).

Peres did not spare his criticism of the Likud’s settlement policy, condemning it privately and publicly, as a minister in the government and, later, as the leader of the opposition. As foreign minister, he asked the following rhetorical question at a Labor Party Central Committee meeting in February 1988: “Did this extravagant enterprise [settlement construction] produce security? Has it strengthened our position in the negotiations?”[4] At the end of that year, on the eve of the twenty-third government of Israel, in which Peres would serve as minister of finance, he once again questioned the wisdom of supporting settlements: “Will fortifying such settlements reduce Israel’s isolation in the world or the opposite, will they increase it?”[5]

Peres was hardly going out on a limb by expressing his opposition to the Likud government’s settlement policy. After all, the Labor Party as a whole opposed the construction of new settlements, particularly in those areas densely populated by the Palestinians, a position reflected in the party’s platform. Unlike Jewish settlements in the Golan Heights, which received the support of a small but vocal segment of Labor’s supporters, opposition to settlement construction in the West Bank had been a near-consensus issue since the late-1970s. Rabin’s problematic relationship with settlements, harkening back to his days as prime minister, has already been noted. In 1992, Rabin replaced Peres as head of the Labor Party and subsequently defeated the Likud’s Shamir in the national elections held in June of that year. Throughout his campaign, Rabin emphasized what he viewed as the “distorted order of priorities” in which “political settlements in the territories precede everything else: immigration absorption, the future of the younger generation, the war against unemployment, and social and economic progress.” Rabin promised that, if elected, he would “stop the political settlements, whose only purpose is to prevent any possibility of finding a political solution to the conflict” (Slater 1996, 475).

Yet, given the vehemence of his opposition toward new settlements, Peres appears to have transcended mere party politics. His antagonism toward settlement expansion surpassed even the opposition expressed by Rabin in both its scope and its intensity. For Rabin, what was troublesome about the Likud’s policy was the opportunity costs involved in pouring a tremendous amount of resources into the settlements, which came at the expense of pressing political, social, and economic matters. Yet he made it clear that he could live with some new settlements—what he referred to as “security settlements,” in contrast to Shamir’s “political

settlements." "If the construction were taking place in Greater Jerusalem, the Jordan Rift and the existing settlements on the Golan Heights, I would not complain," he said during the 1992 campaign (Slater 1996, 475). Peres, by contrast, preferred to see a freeze on all settlement activity in the territories (Haberman 1991). Even with regard to the Golan Heights, Peres, in contrast to Rabin, said he would be willing to trade land in the Golan Heights for peace with Syria (*Herald Sun* 1991). On the issue of settlements, Peres's shift was therefore more dramatic than that of Rabin; it had fully evolved. In the mid-1970s, Peres was a staunch supporter of settlements; in the late 1970s and early 1980s, he displayed a certain ambivalence toward them, questioning the wisdom of Likud's aggressive policy; in the mid-1980s, he advocated an end to building settlements in the densely populated Arab areas; and by the early 1990s, he wanted to halt settlement activity altogether. Rabin's position on this issue did not change in any significant way; at no point was he ever a fervent supporter, but neither was he a fierce opponent. It is not surprising that Shamir, in his autobiography, characterizes Peres as "far more extreme [than Rabin] in his opposition (it too amounted to hatred) for the settlements established beyond the so-called Green Line of our pre-1967 borders. For reasons I never understood, they literally enraged him," Shamir wrote, perhaps with a bit of exaggeration (Shamir 1994, 165).

Support for PLO Talks

Those on the Israeli Left had long advocated direct Israel-PLO talks as the only way to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the Knesset, left-wing parties, such as the Citizens Rights Movements and Mapam, as well as dovish members of the Labor Party, advocated dialogue with the PLO. The two men who led Labor, however, had steadfastly refused to countenance such a move, believing that the solution to the conflict lay with King Hussein and local Palestinian leaders (with Hussein playing the lead role). The deadlock in the Washington talks that began with the Madrid Conference in October 1991 and which continued in Washington during the first year of Rabin's second term as prime minister convinced Rabin that Israel could not continue to bypass the PLO leadership if it wanted to reach a deal with the Palestinians. Rabin thus became the first Israeli prime minister to authorize direct talks with the PLO. For Peres, however, this conclusion came nearly five years earlier, following the collapse of the Jordanian option. However, given his power-sharing arrangements with Shamir, he felt constrained with respect to his ability to change the country's policy. It took Labor's outright victory in the 1992 elections for Peres to push for such a change.

Peres's dramatic turnaround on this issue must be understood in the context of the ill-fated London Agreement of April 1987. Then-foreign minister Peres secretly met with Jordan's King Hussein at the London residence of attorney Victor Mishcon to discuss ways to jumpstart the peace process. The two veteran statesmen agreed to arrange an international conference that would launch the peace process but would not itself impose solutions. After the convening of the first session, subsequent sessions of the conference would require the prior consent of all the parties; Israel would negotiate with a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, which would exclude members of the PLO; and the actual negotiating would be done bilaterally (Peres 1995, 266–67). For Peres, this agreement was the opportunity of a lifetime. Eight years had passed since the first Arab-Israeli peace treaty was signed, and Israel finally had been given the chance to conclude not only a second Arab-Israeli peace treaty—with Jordan—but also to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict once and for all in a manner consistent with Israel's policy of preventing the formation of a PLO state.

The agreement fell through, however, because it failed to receive the backing of then-defense minister Rabin, who ridiculed the significance of the Peres-Hussein understanding, and Prime Minister Shamir, who feared that an international conference would push Israel into a corner.[6] Shamir was also miffed that Peres had negotiated this agreement behind his back, although he probably would not have accepted it in any case.[7] Rafi Eitan, a former intelligence official who served as the government's chief counterterrorism adviser, recalls that he tried in vain to persuade Shamir to accept the terms of the London Agreement, but to no avail (Hoffman et al. 2012). The first Palestinian uprising against Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza —the *Intifada*—erupted in December 1987, just months following the collapse of the London Agreement. Peres saw a direct link between these two events:

> We all paid a heavy price for the destruction of my milestone agreement with King Hussein. Hundreds of people, both Palestinian and Israeli, paid with their lives: within months the Palestinian *intifada* broke out in the West Bank and Gaza, resulting in years of violence and bloodshed. (Peres 1995, 270; see also Peres 1993, 16)

The Jordanian option was dealt a mortal blow with King Hussein's announcement, on July 31, 1988, that he was severing all administrative and legal ties, save for guardianship over the Muslim holy places in Jerusalem, to the West Bank (Hussein 1988). Hussein's decision meant that Israel was left with no plausible alternative to negotiating a future peace deal directly with the dreaded PLO. "My preference is the agreement I reached with King Hussein in London," Peres maintains. "The minute that Shamir torpedoed it, the choice was either not to negotiate with anybody or to negotiate with the Palestinians. Now, with the Palestinians you have to make a choice between the PLO and Hamas, and I thought that the PLO is better. Simple as that" (Peres 1995, 277).[8] That the London Agreement was a critical turning point in Peres's dovish turn is backed by testimony from numerous elected officials, former aides, and journalists who were privy to his change of heart on conducting talks with the PLO.[9]

Peres knew that it would be futile to challenge the Shamir government to change its policy vis-à-vis the PLO. He also had political considerations in mind in not pushing for such a change. Rabin was threatening to replace Peres at the helm of the Labor Party, and Peres did not want to risk losing an internal party battle over this issue. Labor's mainstream was committed to maintaining Israel's long-standing policy, and Peres, as the party's leader, opted not to push for a change that he did not have the majority necessary to implement.[10] Rabin, moreover, leading the hawkish wing of the party, wielded significant clout in both the party and the government.

While the London Agreement seems to have meant little to Rabin, the Intifada did have a discernable impact on the defense minister's attitude toward the Palestinians. When the uprising began, Rabin was slow to respond to this new challenge faced by Israel. It had not occurred to the man who had led his nation in battle that military force—short of, perhaps, extremely brutal measures—would fail to quell the uprising. As the Intifada dragged on, however, his hard-line position softened. "I've learned something in the past two and a half months. Among other things that you can't rule by force over one and a half million Palestinians" (Slater 1996, 416). This realization made Rabin more attuned to the seriousness with which a younger generation of Palestinians—those who had grown up under Israeli occupation—were committed to achieving political independence. He subsequently became dedicated to resolving the Palestinian issue via political means rather than trying to suppress Palestinian resistance by force. In 1989, he thus advanced a plan focused around Palestinian elections that could produce an acceptable partner

for negotiations (Slater 1996, 424). While the plan ultimately fell through due to both Palestinian and Likud party opposition, it demonstrates Rabin's recognition that the status quo was damaging to Israel's interests.

The Intifada did not, however, soften Rabin's stance with regard to the PLO. "I am totally opposed to negotiations with the PLO," he told a group of high school students in Jerusalem on March 17, 1988 (Slater 1996, 418). On this point, he did not differ with Shamir. Peres, by contrast, exhibited greater flexibility on this matter and had begun preparing the ground for eventual PLO talks. As foreign minister, he had even set up a special committee to examine the PLO developments (Kifner 1988). In September 1988, he implied that PLO chairman Yasser Arafat could become an acceptable negotiating partner, saying he would agree to hold talks with "every Palestinian leader that renounces terror and violence" and accepts United Nations Security Council Resolution 242. "We are not going to look in his past and his biography and his descriptions," Peres said. "We are going to look at his position." He criticized Arafat for telling then-French foreign minister Roland Dumas that the PLO had "indirectly" accepted Israel. "Mr. Arafat finds it extremely difficult to make the necessary decisions," Peres complained. "If he recognizes, recognize directly" (Markham 1988).

Arafat did just that less than three months later. On December 14, in a special session of the UN General Assembly in Geneva, Arafat explicitly declared the PLO's recognition of Israel's right to exist in "peace and security," accepted UN Resolutions 242 and 338, and renounced "all forms of terrorism, including individual, group and state terrorism." Arafat's declaration met the Reagan administration's conditions for talking to the PLO, ending thirteen years of American refusal to have any contact with the organization.

The U.S. decision to open a dialogue with the PLO was roundly criticized in Israeli government circles, not only by Prime Minister Shamir but also by Defense Minister Rabin and Foreign Minister Peres. Rabin said that the U.S. decision was "a grave mistake, both regarding terrorism and the possibility of open political talks." The decision, he suggested, "actually granted legitimacy to the uprising in the territories" (Shargorodsky 1988). Echoing Rabin's assessment, Peres said that the American decision "represents a sad day" for Israel (Xinhua 1988). Rabin's response, however, appears to have been a more genuine reflection of his true feelings than that of Peres, who, as noted, had been preparing the ground for dealing with the PLO. Just days after criticizing the American decision, Peres seemed to suggest that talks with the PLO were inevitable. "We had warned clearly that if there is not going to be a Jordanian-Palestinian option, the road to the PLO will be paved, and this is what happened after the London Agreement was torpedoed," he told his Labor Party colleagues. At the same time, he expressed skepticism about the PLO's true intentions: "The PLO has changed its declarations," he said, "but this will only have meaning if it becomes clear that there is a change on the ground."[11] Yet unlike the other senior members of the national unity government—Shamir and Rabin—Peres failed to rule out the possibility of dealing with the PLO.

On December 22, Peres's Labor Party joined forces with the Likud's Shamir in another "national unity" government. Peres was named vice premier and minister of finance in the new government, which, upon the Likud's insistence, rejected any form of dialogue with the PLO. As far as Shamir was concerned, the PLO was "still the same terrorist organization. They haven't changed, and we don't see any reason to change our attitude toward them" (Brinkley 1989A). Rabin agreed with Shamir, reiterating his well-known stance that he had always opposed, and continued to oppose, negotiations with the PLO (*Haaretz* 1989). However, the government's hard line vis-à-vis the PLO did not stop Peres's most senior aides, such as Yossi Beilin, from

holding meetings with Faisal Husseini, Ziad Abu Zayad, and other local Palestinian leaders openly associated with the PLO. Beilin argued that if the government continued to refuse to negotiate with the PLO, Israel "won't have a chance of convincing the world of the justness of its stand" (Brinkley 1989C). His repeated calls for Israel to talk with the PLO prompted requests for his resignation from right-wing members of the government (Brinkley 1989C). The meetings with PLO associates provoked fervent opposition not only from the Likud ministers, but also from the more hawkish Labor legislators, such as Micha Goldman, who complained that the meetings were "dragging the party to the left" and Mordechai Gur, who said: "I don't think the meetings with PLO supporters are contributing anything. The gap between Israeli and Palestinian stands is so large that by direct talks one won't be able to achieve anything" (Brinkley 1989B). While Peres did not participate in these meetings himself, he supported them. "The truth is that now I'm busy with the Treasury, but when I'll be free, I'll meet with them too," he said (Brinkley 1989B).[12]

A related crisis that threatened the unity government occurred when a Labor Party minister, Ezer Weizman, reportedly broke Israeli law by meeting with leaders of the PLO in December 1989. Shamir promptly fired him. Rabin publicly denounced Weizman's activities but in the end supported the party's decision to keep him in the government. Peres threatened to pull the Labor Party from the coalition if Weizman were let go. In the end, the coalition crisis was resolved when Shamir allowed him to remain a minister but not in the inner cabinet, the government's decision-making core. In the course of the crisis, Weizman revealed that Peres had listened in on one of his telephone calls to an Arab contact in Tunis (where the PLO was headquartered at the time) and passed on a message urging PLO acceptance of U.S. plans for Israeli-Palestinian talks (*New York Times* 1990; Tatro 1990). After two years of political stalemate and constant wrangling over the composition of the Palestinian delegation to proposed peace talks, with the Likud insisting that the PLO have no say in the negotiations and that the Arab population in Jerusalem could not participate in the Palestinian elections, Peres pulled Labor out of the coalition in March 1990.

As opposition leader, Peres helped the Labor doves, Beilin's Mashov group, achieve a major victory in November 1991, when the party congress adopted a resolution abandoning its objection to negotiations with the PLO. Labor's new platform also advocated the repeal of the five-year-old law forbidding contacts with the PLO, supported the extension of territorial compromise to include the Golan Heights, declared that it recognized the "national rights" of Palestinians, and called for a one-year freeze on new Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Beilin 1999, 44; Haberman 1991B).[13] While Rabin fought the party doves, siding with the hawkish Old Guard, Peres put all his authority behind them and helped them get their resolutions passed (Beilin 1999, 44; Makovsky 1996, 20).

Rabin defeated Peres in the Labor Party primary held in February 1992 and ultimately went on to beat Shamir in the national elections that year. As foreign minister in Rabin's new Labor-led government, Peres was again in a position to influence the government's foreign policy. The Rabin government inherited peace talks begun by the previous government but which had shown no signs of progress. In 1991, Prime Minister Shamir reluctantly agreed to participate in the Madrid Conference, an international conference aimed at resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Hosted by Spain and cosponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union, it convened on October 30 of that year. Subsequent bilateral sessions were held in Washington, talks that continued under the leadership of Rabin. Both Shamir and Rabin had insisted that the Palestinian team not include members of the PLO. The reality, however, was that the members of the

Palestinian slate communicated regularly with, and took their orders from, the PLO leadership in Tunis. Little autonomy was given to the Palestinian negotiators in Washington, who, as a result, displayed little inclination for compromise.[14] Peres recognized early on the flawed policy of the Israeli government, seeing it as a "Purim party," whereby the Israelis were pretending not to talk to the PLO when, in fact, it was clear that the Palestinian negotiators had ties to the PLO and were receiving directives from Arafat.[15] "The PLO leadership in Tunis pulled the strings," Peres wrote (1993, 6).

Peres made several attempts to persuade the prime minister to negotiate directly with Arafat, but to no avail. In his memoirs, he notes that he suggested this to Rabin in August 1992 and, subsequently, in January 1993:

> I told him again that, in my view, we must take bold steps toward negotiations with the PLO. As long as Arafat remained in Tunis, I argued, he would represent the "outsiders," the Palestinian diaspora, and would do his best to slow down the peace talks. I suggested that we propose to Arafat and his staff that they move to Gaza. Once there, they would have the right to vote and to stand in elections, and, if elected, they would represent the Palestinians directly in negotiations with Israel. My criticism of the Washington talks was that we were trying to reach a declaration of principles without any reference to specific territorial issues. The way to succeed, I believed, was to link a declaration of principles to a tangible concept of "Gaza first plus." I made no secret of my positions. They were known to my close aides at the Foreign Ministry—as well as to several key figures in the PLO. (1995, 280)

Rabin resisted Peres's entreaties. Not surprisingly, a source identified with Rabin at the time spoke of how "he [Prime Minister Rabin] now feels that Shimon Peres is leading him into Yasser Arafat's arms—the last place Rabin wants to be pushed" (Honig 1992). Yet the Washington talks failed to produce progress, threatening to undermine Rabin's pledge from his 1992 election campaign to reach an autonomy agreement with the Palestinians within six to nine months.

In the meantime, unbeknownst to Rabin, Arafat was very much in the picture. Beginning in April 1992, Beilin held a series of meetings with Norwegian academic Terje Larsen, who had taken a strong interest in Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking. That fall, in followup to the Beilin-Larsen talks, Norway's Deputy Foreign Minister Jan Egeland visited Israel, proposing backchannel negotiations between Israel and the PLO, which Norway would help facilitate. On January 19, 1993, through Beilin's and Peres's efforts, the Knesset repealed the law forbidding Israeli-PLO contact (Makovsky 1996, 20). Beilin, now Israel's deputy foreign minister, wasted no time and immediately began to authorize secret, unofficial talks between Israeli academics Yair Hirschfeld and Ron Pundak and a delegation of PLO officials headed by Ahmed Qurai (Abu Alaa). In contrast to the Washington talks, which were going nowhere, progress was being made in the backchannel talks, prompting Beilin to notify Peres in late January about the existence of this parallel track. Peres, in turn, informed Rabin, reportedly convincing him to sanction the continuation of this backchannel by arguing that these talks enabled Israel to obtain valuable information about PLO positions without obligating the Israeli government (Makovsky 1993, 23). The talks thus continued, eventually being upgraded to an official level. In contrast to Rabin, who was skeptical that the Oslo process would yield fruits, Peres recognized the usefulness of talks that took place away from the media limelight, enabling the two sides to "talk directly, person-to-person, rather than simply spout rhetoric" (Peres 1993, 14). He also feared

that the alternative to the PLO would not necessarily be a more moderate Palestinian leadership, but rather one dominated by Hamas radicals.[16]

After months of arduous negotiations, the Israelis and Palestinians reached a breakthrough in August 1993 with the signing of their “Declaration of Principles,” which would serve as a framework for a five-year interim period of Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The most difficult and controversial issues—Jerusalem, refugees, Israeli settlements, security and borders—would be deferred until final-status talks. The Declaration of Principles included, also, a paragraph on the Gaza Strip and Jericho, which Israel would transfer to a newly created Palestinian Authority. Significantly, the two sides also reached a historic agreement on mutual recognition, whereby Israel officially recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the PLO renounced terrorism and recognized Israel’s right to exist in peace and security.

For the Israeli Right, the Oslo track was a mistake of disastrous proportions, because it breathed new life into an organization that was financially and politically bankrupt after having sided with Saddam Hussein’s Iraq—the losing side—in the Persian Gulf War. As far as the Right was concerned, no lasting peace could result from negotiating with an organization that remained committed to Israel’s destruction. Former prime minister Shamir expressed the sentiment felt by many on the Right when he said the following in an interview:

> The PLO cannot be a partner for peace. We opposed any contact with the PLO’s people. Arafat was considered abominable and untouchable. That was correct. The negotiations were supposed to take place only with representatives of the Arab population in the “territories.” Any negotiations with the PLO have the seeds of the next calamity concealed within it, because this organization has engraved on its flag the liberation of the “occupied lands.” Unfortunately, we have brought a corpse back to life. (Misgav 2000, 104)

Peres, by contrast, came to believe that Israel needed to talk with the PLO following King Hussein’s decision of July 31, 1988 to renounce Jordan’s claims to the West Bank; that is, once the Jordanian option appeared to be dead. Peres was a relative latecomer to a viewpoint long held by Labor’s doves and by those philosophers, writers, politicians, and activists to the left of Labor. However, among the first tier of Israeli politicians—those who had already served as prime minister or were viewed as potential prime ministers—Peres was the first to arrive at this conclusion.

It took Rabin nearly five additional years to reach the same conclusion. His persistent opposition to dealing with the PLO in the late 1980s and early 1990s was not mere posturing—it was done in earnest. When he pledged during his 1992 campaign to reach an autonomy arrangement with the Palestinians within six to nine months he had no intention of negotiating such a deal with the PLO. Even when the Washington talks were deadlocked, Rabin still believed it was possible to reach an agreement with local Palestinian leaders, thereby bypassing the PLO leadership in Tunis. As one former government insider attests:

> Rabin, when he became prime minister, still thought that you can do [a deal] without the PLO … he was trying to negotiate with the local Palestinian leadership in Israel. We knew it won’t work. Rabin had to experience it himself. Rabin was convinced that all those who tried it before him failed because they didn’t do it right, not because it couldn’t work. Dayan failed with the Village League because he didn’t do it right. Shamir failed

> because he didn't do it right. "I will succeed," and that's why he promised the people within nine months a deal with the Palestinians. He was sure that he will do it right. … Shimon knew it can't work. They won't dare, the local leadership will not dare. It's like today assuming that [Hamas's prime minister in Gaza] Haniyeh will violate [Hamas leader] Meshal's instructions. Same thing. Rabin said no: I will produce the local leadership. I will strengthen them, I will give them the instruments, I will give them the prestige. And he saw intelligence was bringing them their faxes to Tunisia every day asking for instructions. They won't move an inch without guidance. Not [local Palestinian leaders] Hannan Ashrawi and Husseini and that whole group. We were the first ones to meet with them in public as government officials. And he saw it's not working. And the nine months were ticking. And he promised and he cannot deliver. And then Shimon shows up and says: "You know, there's something in Oslo that looks like this and that." He said, "You know what? Try it." Six months earlier, he [Peres] wouldn't dare suggest it to him. But he was desperate. His coalition was about to collapse because he was not doing anything.[17]

Once Rabin learned about the backchannel negotiations in Oslo and gave the green light for their continuation, he lent a hand to the dramatic shift in Israel's policy vis-à-vis the PLO. In one important respect, Rabin's change of heart was more significant than that of Peres: as prime minister, it was his shift that actually counted in the end. Had he rejected the secret talks, any agreement that might have been reached between the Israelis and Palestinians—unlikely, in any case—would have been meaningless, just as Arafat's approval was needed on the Palestinian side. In any event, by the first half of 1993, Rabin had come to the same conclusion at which Peres had arrived in the summer of 1988: namely, that progress in the peace process necessitated a change in Israeli policy with regard to the PLO.

Support for a Palestinian State

If it took many years for Israeli policymakers to recognize, and agree to negotiate with, the PLO, it took even longer for them to accept the notion—publicly, at least—of an independent Palestinian state. While today even rightist prime ministers such as Benjamin Netanyahu have endorsed Palestinian statehood, this was certainly not the case in the 1990s. This sea change in attitudes can be traced to the direct negotiations with the PLO begun in Oslo. It was only in May 1997 that the Labor Party, no longer in power, formally resolved to accept a Palestinian state (Ben-Ami 2006, 247). At the Sixth Labor Party Convention, which took place on December 7 of that year, Labor Party chairman Peres expressed his support for a Palestinian state "because we cannot carry on our shoulders the economic and social responsibility of three million Arabs, because they are authorized to conduct their lives and say so in a loud and clear voice."[18]

Prior to the late 1990s, however, neither Peres nor Rabin, whose peace efforts led to his assassination by a right-wing extremist in November 1995, expressed support for a Palestinian state. In his televised debate with Shamir on the eve of the 1992 elections, Rabin emphasized that there were three points about which he stood firm: "no to a Palestinian state, no return to 1967 borders and a united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty" (Lochery 1997, 214). Following the Oslo breakthrough, however, both Rabin and Peres danced around this delicate issue. On the one hand, they were careful to continue to publicly oppose a Palestinian state so as not to prejudge the outcome of the ongoing negotiations—and, perhaps just as importantly, to keep their fragile

coalition intact. On the other hand, their opposition to a state did not appear to be nearly as firm as it had been prior to Oslo. Rabin, when asked about his position on this matter, responded in a convoluted manner:

> Whoever reads the Labor party's election platform will find that there is no support for the establishment of a Palestinian state. However, it should be recalled that the permanent settlement will only be discussed in two years' time, or not later than another two years, when we will have had an opportunity to examine two stages—"Gaza and Jericho First," and afterwards stages connected with the transfer of authority, perhaps even elections in all the territories—what the level of the Palestinian system's capability will be to govern in those spheres which, according to the agreements, have been or will be given to them to govern. (Israel Radio 1994)

Peres, too, expressed opposition to an independent Palestinian state, but did not rule it out. In one interview, Peres was asked if the Palestinians would be given a state of their own, to which he responded: "No, we would prefer to see the solution as a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation which will leave the West Bank and Gaza demilitarized" (CNN 1993). In his book *The New Middle East*, penned shortly after the historic events at Oslo, Peres wrote about his concerns about—not his outright rejection of—a future Palestinian state:

> Even if the Palestinians agree that their state would have no army or weapons, who can guarantee that a Palestinian army would not be mustered later to encamp at the gates of Jerusalem and the approaches to the lowlands? And if the Palestinian state would be unarmed, how would it block terrorist acts perpetrated by extremists, fundamentalists, or irredentists? (Peres 1993, 169)[19]

Rabin and Peres understood that the logical extension of civilian Palestinian rule in the territories, following the creation of a Palestinian Authority, would be the eventual founding of a Palestinian state (Kurzman 1998, 473). Indeed, one Labor Party insider confirms that these two leaders had resigned themselves to the eventuality of such a state. Says Nissim Zvili, the secretary-general of the Labor Party during the Oslo negotiations:

> [I]n our own conversations and in small forums, he [Peres] has spoken about it [a Palestinian state] for a very long time. As far as he is concerned, the Oslo agreements are about a Palestinian state. He didn't discuss it because he had an agreement with Rabin not to discuss it. … Between Rabin and Peres, there was an understanding that at this stage, we don't talk about a Palestinian state, although everyone knows that that is the direction. Nobody was so naive as not to understand that that is the direction. They knew but didn't discuss it because of the reality in Israel. It was ridiculous not to understand this.[20]

In short, Peres and Rabin privately accepted a future Palestinian state as an inevitable outcome of the Oslo process, although Rabin never expressed support for it in public and Peres did so only in 1997, once he became leader of the opposition again and after the Labor Party had endorsed it.

ANALYSIS OF PERES'S DOVISH TURN IN 1987–1997 PERIOD

Domestic Politics and Party Ideology: Labor's Victory in 1992

Domestic political developments serve as permissive conditions for the second phase of Peres's dovish change. The religious nationalists, who had allied themselves with Labor governments following the 1967 war, had transferred their allegiance to Likud in the late 1970s. The Likud party proved to be far more committed to settlement expansion than was Labor's leadership, both in rhetoric and in action. While Labor distanced itself from the settlement enterprise soon after the first Likud government came to power in 1977, Likud leaders only deepened their resolve to create "facts on the ground" in territories they sought to ultimately annex. Labor's inclusion in the two national unity governments of 1984–88 and 1988–1990 slowed down the expansion of settlements but, due to the Likud's insistence, settlement growth was never frozen. When Likud was in power without Labor, for the two years beginning in June 1990, the government saw a massive expansion of settlements, with significant government resources devoted toward them. However, with Labor's victory in the June 1992 election, settlement expansion was placed on the backburner of national priorities by Prime Minister Rabin. Thus, the extent of the government's settlement activities rests, to a large degree, on the domestic balance of power between Likud and Labor. Just as Begin's election in 1977 and Shamir's formation of a narrow, right-wing government in 1990 facilitated settlement expansion, Rabin's formation of a Labor-led government in 1992 enabled the rollback in the resources allocated to settlements.

The Labor Party's return to power in 1992 can be seen as a permissive condition for the Israeli government's policy change vis-à-vis the PLO. While Peres concluded that Israel would need to talk to the PLO following the decision by King Hussein to cede Jordan's claims to the West Bank in July 1988, he did not make a direct push for this policy shift until Labor returned to power in 1992. For the Likud's Shamir, such a policy shift would have been inconceivable. Only with a different regime in place was it politically feasible to pursue direct talks with the PLO. This, of course, is precisely what Peres set out to do as Rabin's foreign minister.

However, it would be a mistake to conclude that party ideology led naturally to negotiations with the PLO. Peres, after all, changed his position on this issue five years prior to Rabin. It took all of Peres's persuasive skills to get Rabin on board the Oslo track, to which Rabin ultimately acquiesced after experiencing deadlock in the Washington talks. Nor can party ideology explain why several members of Likud ended up supporting the Oslo process while several members of Labor did not (Collins 1995; Haberman 1993B; Izenberg 1994; Keinon 1993; Richards 1993; Susser 1995). In short, party ideology is not a causal explanation for Israel's decision to talk to the PLO, but the return of Labor to power provided a context that permitted this development to take place.

As to the issue of a Palestinian state, neither Labor nor its leadership was prepared to endorse this solution during this period. While Rabin and Peres purportedly understood that a Palestinian state would be the inevitable outcome of a peace process with the PLO, they felt that the Israeli public was not ready to embrace such an option in the first half of the 1990s. Only in 1997, while Labor was in the opposition, did Peres allow himself to publicly endorse a two-state solution to the conflict.

Systemic-Structural Factors: The Collapse of the "Jordanian Option," Long-Range Missiles, the Gulf War, the Demise of the Soviet Union, and the Weakening of the PLO

Several epochal events and processes in the late 1980s and early 1990s served as the permissive conditions for the hawk-to-dove shifts on the Israeli political scene. For Peres, the key event that began his reevaluation of Israel's policy vis-à-vis the PLO was the collapse of the Jordanian

option. For years, Peres believed that the PLO could be bypassed by negotiating a peace agreement with Jordan's King Hussein. The London Agreement was the culmination of his efforts in this regard, and when it fell through, he saw the writing on the wall. He still was far from comfortable with the idea of negotiating with the PLO, but he began preparing for this eventuality from the moment King Hussein divested himself of authority for the West Bank.

Peres also viewed the end of the Cold War as having created a golden opportunity to make progress in the peace process. As foreign minister in 1992, he visited the former Soviet Union, where he declared that "the new relationship between Russia and America is a God-send contribution to the pacification of the Middle East." "Russia," he suggested, "instead of being a supplier of arms, hopefully will become a supplier of peace" (Sloane 1992). Moreover, the collapse of the Soviet Union—a key patron of Arab states as well as the PLO—and the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War had left the PLO (which backed Iraq in the war) in a vulnerable state. Peres wrote:

> No longer were the Arab states inevitably united among themselves and against Israel. An Arab state had engaged in naked aggression against a sister state. An international coalition, including Arab states, had been formed to beat back the aggressor … the Arab-Israeli conflict, which had been the strongest source of Arab unity, ceased to play that role as Arab unity gave way to dangerous divisions. (Peres 1995, 277)

The role of technological progress also was important in terms of the permissive context that facilitated Peres's dovish turn. Technological changes have long interested Peres, as can be seen, for example, in his embrace of nuclear technology in the 1950s. In the early 1990s, in the aftermath of Saddam Hussein's Scud missile attacks against Israel during the Persian Gulf War, Peres concluded that borders were becoming obsolete in the age of long-range missiles, which presented a long-term threat to Israel's security. In his first interview as foreign minister in Rabin's government, Peres said: "Today the countries of the entire world are organizing themselves on a regional basis because missiles do not respect national boundaries or borders, water does not flow according to customs tariffs or follow borders" (IBA 1992).[21] In discussing what he termed "the New Middle East," Peres wrote: "The world has changed. And the process of change compels us to replace our outdated concepts with an approach tailored to the new reality" (Peres 1993, 34). In the age of long-range ballistic missiles, what was needed, wrote Peres, was a new approach that combined diplomacy with economics. He thus called for

> bilateral and multilateral pacts, extending beyond the borders of the countries involved and covering the entire expanse within reach of the deadly missiles—that is, treaties that cover whole regions. The countries in a region must cooperate to counteract the nuclear, biological, and chemical menace by creating a state of affairs that makes conflicts too costly, too impractical, and too difficult. Thus, the key to maintaining an equable and safe regional system is in politics and in economics. … Politics should pave the way from pure military strategy to an enriched political and economic repertoire. (Peres 1993, 34–35)

In stark contrast to Peres, whose thinking was clearly affected by what he perceived as major changes in the world that had far-reaching consequences for Israel, such observations were conspicuously absent from the rhetoric of Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir. To be sure, Shamir welcomed the end of the Cold War, hoping it would bode well for Israel. Thus, on the eve of

Soviet foreign minister Alexander Bessmertnykh's visit to Israel in 1991, Shamir expressed the hope "that this visit will be a further stage in the development of our relations." He even offered the Soviets a role in the peace process (LaBelle 1991). Yet these developments did not alter Shamir's positions, which remained remarkably consistent throughout the 1990s. If anything, he viewed the end of the Cold War's regional impact as reinforcing his hawkish views. After all, the Soviets ceased to be a regional superpower; they removed their backing from Iraq, which enabled the U.S. to easily defeat Saddam Hussein; and Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost brought a flood of Jewish immigration to Israel (Makovsky 1991). Despite the momentous international and regional events, Shamir saw no reason to alter Israel's policy toward the Palestinians. He clung to the notion that "the Arabs are the same Arabs, and the sea is the same sea."

Change, however, was what defined the 1992 election. Shamir, the status quo candidate, lost to Rabin, whose campaign theme revolved around change. Unlike Shamir, who did not embrace the view that the momentous events at the turn of the decade required Israel to alter its policies, Rabin emphasized that the world had changed, that an important window of opportunity for peace needed to be explored, and that Israel's national priorities needed to be altered accordingly. The scope of events and processes influencing Rabin's thinking was narrower than that which affected Peres's worldview. Rabin did not attribute much importance to the London Agreement (or its subsequent collapse).[22] Nor did he discuss the implications of long-range missiles on the significance of territory, as did Peres. However, both the end of the Cold War and the Persian Gulf War had a discernible impact on Rabin's thinking concerning Israel's role in the Middle East and the prospects for peace. To Rabin, these events offered Israel "tremendous opportunities" as the Arab world lost its chief military patron—the Soviet Union.[23] Addressing the Council of Europe, Rabin spoke of joining what he saw as a "new world order" in moral terms:

> In the last decade of our twentieth century, walls of hatred have fallen, peoples have been liberated and artificial barriers have disappeared, powers have crumbled and ideologies have collapsed. It is our sacred duty to ourselves and to our children to see the new world as it is now, to note its dangers, explore its prospects and do everything possible so that the State of Israel will fit into the changing face of the world. (MFA 1994)

Rabin also emphasized that recent developments between Israel and other countries had erased Israel's isolation in the international community. He made the following remarks to the Knesset on June 27, 1993:

> The train that travels toward peace has stopped this year at many stations that daily refute the time-worn canard—"the whole world is against us." The United States had improved its relations with us, has returned to a normal course of closer relations and sincere and open dialogue. The administration of President Bush approved guarantees worth 10 billion dollars. The Clinton administration has opened its heart and arms to us and is continuing the American tradition of support for Israel. In Europe our dialogue with the EC has been improved and deepened. We have been inundated by visiting heads of state —and we have responded to them with friendship and with economic and other links. We are no longer "a People that dwelleth alone." (MFA 1993)

The Intifada, moreover, had convinced Rabin that Israel could not continue to rule over the Palestinians by force indefinitely. And, like Peres, Rabin was concerned that the price of this

occupation would be costly to Israeli security in the long run, given the demographic realities that would, in time, compromise Israel's Jewish character.

In short, situational factors served as permissive conditions for Israel's leadership to change course in its policy toward the Palestinians. The Oslo accords did not, however, gain the acceptance of the Israeli right-wing parties, whose members, including former prime minister Shamir, voted against the agreements in the Knesset and spoke out against the Oslo process at every opportunity. Clearly, then, not everyone shared the view of Peres and Rabin that structural changes had provided Israel with an opportunity for a peace agreement with a severely weakened PLO.

Cognitive Openness: Peres's "Learning" from his Environment and the Influence of his Advisers

Peres's actions following King Hussein's announcement of July 31, 1988, effectively closing off "the Jordanian option," attests to his high level of cognitive openness and complexity. For years, Peres was the country's most ardent supporter of a confederation with Jordan, which he saw as the optimal solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By negotiating with King Hussein, Peres had hoped that Israel could avoid having to deal with the PLO's Yasser Arafat. The London Agreement of 1987 was the culmination of Peres's efforts in this regard, and to this day he laments its collapse, believing that it could have been a viable alternative to an independent Palestinian state.[24] However, the moment King Hussein relinquished his control of the West Bank was the moment that Peres began to reevaluate his position, as is evidenced by the special committee he set up whose purpose was to closely monitor developments within the PLO; his quick adoption of more nuanced rhetoric concerning the PLO; and his support—albeit largely behind the scenes—of the Mashov group's efforts to move the Labor Party in a more dovish direction. The end of the Cold War and the Persian Gulf War, moreover, convinced him that Israel was now in a strategically stronger position to negotiate with the PLO.

Peres's political activities since the late 1980s suggest that he was able to "learn" from these situational changes. His decades-old aversion to negotiating with the PLO was superseded by the new information he confronted; namely, that if Israel wanted a deal with the Palestinians, it no longer made sense to avoid dealing with the PLO. The alternative was no longer Jordan but, as Peres saw it, the rejectionist leadership of Hamas, a worse option—if an option at all—than the PLO.

In the 1977–1997 period, Peres displayed not only a high sensitivity to the environment in geopolitical terms, but also an unusually high degree of openness to what others were telling him—in particular, his political aides. "I think that Yossi Beilin's group influenced him greatly," recalled Gad Yaacobi, a former Labor Party colleague. "They sat with him a lot, spoke with him a lot, and tried to convince him to change his views, his positions, on the issue of negotiations with the PLO and a Palestinian state."[25] By the time Beilin informed his boss of the unofficial, backchannel negotiations that were taking place in Oslo, Peres had come to accept the notion of dealing with the PLO. Explains David Landau:

> In Oslo, Beilin managed to neutralize—at least for that crucial period—Peres's profound contempt for Arafat, which at that time was based on intelligence assessments. After 1988 and the change in the Palestinian ideology, Peres was under pressure from people in the peace camp to embrace the Palestinian option, Palestinian independence, negotiations with the PLO—expressly because the Jordanian option had been torpedoed. But he was

> very, very, very reluctant to do so. The reason he was reluctant to do so was no longer ideological; it was practical. He honestly believed that Yasser Arafat was a nincompoop, incompetent. Not merely a terrorist. Terrorist is for propaganda. Everybody is a terrorist. But he believed that … [Arafat] was personally, congenitally and politically incapable of delivering. … Peres allowed himself to be convinced that his [old] position was barren and would lead to nothing. And he was convinced by Beilin, because Uri Savir, on behalf of Beilin, was sitting with Abu Ala. And Abu Mazen was behind it. So these two guys looked far more serious than Arafat. Arafat was kind of in the background.[26]

Peres's cognitive openness facilitated his revised perspective on dealing with Arafat, a point emphasized by Oslo negotiator Ron Pundak: "Peres is somebody who learns and changes. He is somebody who is not stuck at any point with an ideology. He adapts, he learns, he listens, he upgrades himself." Asked if Peres's learning was done on a tactical level as opposed to a worldview level, Pundak responds unequivocally: "No, not tactics at all. Totally a worldview. The globalization suddenly hit him, so he adopted it in a few manners. The success of Europe, suddenly; the fall of the wall; the integration of East and West; the nuclear threat in the Middle East. … It's the entire world which has changed and, obviously, he changed with it."[27]

Cognitive Complexity: A Positive-Sum Interpretation of the Palestinian Question and a Multifaceted View of Security

Peres's high level of cognitive complexity can be seen clearly in his oral and written statements on the Palestinian issue throughout the 1990s. His comment that "one can say that the better off the Palestinians are, the better it will be for their Israeli neighbors" shows that Peres does not perceive the conflict as a zero-sum game.[28] If one side benefits, this does not necessarily mean that the other side loses; on the contrary, satisfying Palestinian national aspirations can make life better for Israelis. This attitude was manifested, most obviously, in Peres's 1993 book *The New Middle East*. In explaining his shift concerning the PLO, Peres wrote:

> I felt that the PLO was losing ground. For years, most people believed that relations between Israel and the PLO were at zero sum, whereby the advantages of one side automatically become the disadvantages of the other. Would a PLO collapse benefit Israel? If the great enemy against whom we had been fighting these many years suddenly disappeared, who would take its place? Was Hamas a preferable alternative? … Thus, circumstances at the time in the region and in the territories led us to conclude that perhaps it was in Israel's interest to have the PLO play a role on this political stage. (Peres 1993: 18–19)

In the early 1990s, Peres's cognitive complexity was reflected, also, in his multidimensional outlook concerning how best to provide Israel with the security it needed to survive in the decades ahead. The man who established the Israel Aircraft Industries and who was instrumental in turning Israel into a nuclear power had come to perceive security in much broader terms. "Missiles are impervious to maps of sovereignty and to obstacles, natural or man-made," he said, emphasizing the importance of collective security arrangements. His "grand design" for the Middle East would encompass regional security as well as a new system of economic relations, which could take the form of a common market or a free-trade zone.[29] Peres's vision of a "New

Middle East" was met with criticism and no small amount of ridicule. It was seen as "pie in the sky" to some, patronizing to others. Nevertheless, regardless of its feasibility, it is a sophisticated concept, a manifestation of a complex mind. Even tourism was included in Peres's revised definition of security because of the new environment an influx of tourists would foster (Peres 1993, 149–53).[30] "The world has changed," argued Peres. "And the process of change compels us to replace our outdated concepts with an approach tailored to the new reality" (Peres 1993, 34).

Peres's high levels of cognitive openness and complexity are critical for explaining why he was able to change his views and reach the conclusion at which other Israeli leaders arrived only later, if at all. Rabin, who also favored the Jordanian option, opposed dealing with the PLO, and rejected Palestinian statehood, demonstrated no signs of altering his stance following King Hussein's West Bank decision. Even four years later, after becoming prime minister, Rabin showed no inclination to change Israel's policy toward the PLO. Despite no real progress in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations—the so-called Washington talks begun in Madrid by the previous government—Rabin was convinced that a deal could still be reached with the local Palestinian leaders, thereby bypassing Arafat. It thus took him considerably longer than Peres to conclude that this formula would not bear fruit. However, once he gave the green light to Israel-PLO talks, he remained committed to this new policy despite the doubts he harbored about whether it would produce an agreement. He therefore proved to be more sensitive to environmental factors than was Shamir, whose positions remained the same despite regional and international changes, but less so than Peres, who displayed greater sensitivity to the environment. Says Moshe Maoz, "I think Peres was ahead of many on the Palestinian issue. He was more open and changed his mind earlier than others, like Rabin. I recall that [Gen. Aharon] Yariv and Lova Eliav—they were ahead of Peres. But Peres was ahead of Rabin on this issue."[31]

CONCLUSION

As shown throughout this chapter, the decade beginning in 1987 can be seen as the second and final phase in Peres's shift from a hawk to a dove. By 1997, Peres's dovish transformation can be seen as complete: the opponent of territorial compromise and founder of Jewish settlements in the mid-1970s had become a staunch supporter of the peace process, advocating an end to settlement construction, support for PLO talks, and the establishment of a Palestinian state in Gaza and most of the West Bank.[32] The defining turning point for him occurred in July 1988, following King Hussein's decision to cede authority for the West Bank to the PLO. It was at that point that Peres saw the writing on the wall: the "Jordanian option," which he had long championed, had collapsed; Israel would have no choice but to deal directly with the PLO—an idea most Israelis, including Peres, had long opposed. Negotiating with the PLO meant not only dealing with a terrorist organization but also tacitly accepting the notion of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (as opposed to a political confederation with Jordan). Indeed, in 1997, Peres began to speak of the need for such an independent Palestinian state.

The Oslo peace talks, which began in 1993, saw a shift in Israeli attitudes toward the PLO. To a large degree, Prime Minister and Defense Minister Rabin can be credited with this change given his credibility in Israeli society as a leader committed to Israel's security. The moment he authorized the secret talks in Oslo, which paved the way for the agreement he ultimately signed in September 1993, the long-held taboo against holding talks with the PLO was shattered. Yet Rabin was slow to accept the idea of engaging the PLO, choosing to do so only after

experiencing many months of deadlock in the so-called Washington talks between Israeli and local Palestinian leaders who would not make any moves without the approval of the PLO leadership in Tunis. Peres preceded Rabin by nearly five years on this issue. By contrast, longtime Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir remained as firmly opposed to Israel-PLO talks after they had already begun as he had been prior to the Oslo process. In contrast to Peres and Rabin, Shamir did not accept the notion that the momentous events of the late 1980s and early 1990s—the Intifada, the Persian Gulf War, and the collapse of the Soviet Union—necessitated a change in Israeli policy toward the Palestinians. Peres and Rabin changed their views; Shamir did not.

As in the previous chapter, the leader's cognitive structure emerges as the key causal variable that explains one's propensity to alter his views—or not to do so. Of the three leaders who dominated the Israeli political scene during most of this period—Shamir, Rabin, and Peres—Shamir was the least cognitively open and complex individual; Peres, the most. Thus, Shamir was the least affected by information he received from the environment, and he continued to view the conflict in zero-sum terms. His hawkish beliefs remained remarkably consistent despite events at home and abroad.

Rabin was a more cognitively open and complex individual. He thus displayed considerably greater sensitivity to the environment than did Shamir. His views changed based on a steady flow of information that challenged his long-held beliefs, ultimately convincing him that it was in his nation's best interest to negotiate a peace deal with the PLO.

Peres had an even higher level of cognitive openness and complexity than did Rabin. He showed himself to be a great listener who not only was open to hearing people's views (even those views that contradicted his own), but who actively sought them out. He also closely monitored international, regional, and technological trends, which provided him with a constant flow of new information, enabling him to adapt relatively quickly to changing circumstances. Finally, Peres's nuanced and layered interpretation of what he saw led him to perceive the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in positive-sum, as opposed to zero-sum, terms, a fact that enabled him to revise his long-held beliefs and seek creative, even if at times fanciful, solutions to Israel's security problems.

STILL A DOVE: PERES'S VIEWS TODAY

Although this chapter is focused on the 1987–1997 period, in which Peres's dovish transformation can be seen to be complete, it is useful to ask whether Peres has retained his dovish positions in the ensuing years. In other words, is Peres a case of a hawk-turned-dove or a hawk-turned-dove-turned-hawk? His decision in 2005 to leave the Labor Party, his political home for more than five decades, and join Ariel Sharon's newly formed Kadima party—prior to being elected the nation's ninth president on June 13, 2007—prompted considerable speculation as to whether he remains a dove or has reverted to more hawkish positions. "Today I don't know what he supports," commented longtime Peres acquaintance and former left-wing leader Shulamit Aloni shortly after Peres left Labor to join Kadima.[33]

Was Peres's move from the left of center to a more centrist party indicative of a hawkish turn? The preponderance of evidence indicates otherwise. Peres left Labor after his defeat in the party primary to Amir Perez. It was an expedient move that enabled him to become vice premier in a government headed by Sharon rather than remain a politician relegated to the sidelines. An old friend of Peres dismisses the notion that Peres's move to Kadima suggests a hawkish shift in

Peres's attitudes toward the Palestinians. The move was a domestic political move, this friend insists; Peres remains a committed dove.[34] Yael Dayan compares his move to her father's decision to join Menachem Begin when the latter became prime minister in 1977. Both men, she says, joined a right-wing government in order to be in a position that would enable them to push for peace.[35]

Based on his public remarks, Peres has not altered his views on any of the issues concerning Arab-Israeli peacemaking. As recent interviews make clear, he remains committed to the establishment of a Palestinian state.[36] Nor has he given up on the PLO. "We must choose the PLO or Hamas," he says (Miller 2007). After joining Kadima, Peres continued to speak out against settler activities, arguing that they had created an "unbearable situation" (Haaretz 2007). Peres has also expressed regret over his role in establishing Jewish settlements in the West Bank. "There are things I regret," Peres has stated. "For example, the settlements in the territories, that I, unfortunately, also had a hand in, which were a very big mistake" (Lam and Shuan 2007, M19). As president, Peres did not refrain from criticizing the settlements, warning that they could "jeopardize the Jewish majority in Israel" (Ravid 2012B).

Although the presidency is largely a ceremonial position, Peres did not refrain from regularly expressing his support for a two-state solution during his seven-year term in office. At an event marking the eighteenth anniversary of Rabin's death, for example, Peres said that "The two-state solution will maintain Israel's moral character and its future as a Jewish democratic state." Israelis "who delude themselves that the status quo" with the Palestinians can be sustained "may become a victim of their delusions," Peres warned (Ahren 2013).[37] When former president Bill Clinton visited Israel in June 2013, Peres presented him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Israel's highest distinction, telling him that the "two-state solution is your gift to Israel" (Dvir 2013).[38] Peres was alluding to the Clinton Parameters of December 2000, an American-proposed framework for a two-state solution that remains relevant today.

As the U.S.-brokered peace talks in 2013–14 broke down, Israelis and Palestinians were engaged in a familiar pattern of mutual recrimination. That there was "nobody with whom to negotiate" had become a familiar refrain in both societies. Yet Peres continually challenged the line heard by hawkish members of the Netanyahu government that Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas was not a partner for peace. Calling Abbas a "true partner for peace," Peres said it was imperative for Israel to negotiate "a solution of two states for two people" with him (Dvir 2014).[39] Following the collapse of the negotiations in April 2014, Peres revealed that, in 2011, he had reached a secret deal with Abbas in talks held in Jordan, but that Prime Minister Netanyahu, who authorized these talks, torpedoed the deal in the end (Times of Israel Staff and AFP 2014).[40] Lead Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat has backed Peres's claim (Miller 2014).[41]

In sum, on each criterion delineating hawk from dove—opposition to settlements, support for territorial compromise, negotiations with the PLO, and a Palestinian state—Peres has remained a dove. As Israel's elder statesman, he has continued to actively promote the peace process with the Palestinians at every opportunity, even when his message has at times contradicted the government line.

SIX

CONCLUSION

Why do some hawkish decision makers end up pursuing dramatically more dovish policies, whereas others who are witness to the same events do not? This question represents the central puzzle of this book—an important one given the historic changes that have resulted from leaders' dovish turns, from Richard Nixon's diplomatic breakthrough with China to Anwar Sadat's peace treaty with Israel to Mikhail Gorbachev's rapprochement with the United States.[1] It is a question that challenges scholars to focus on a level of analysis most political scientists avoid—that of the individual. In addressing this research question, agency is incorporated into the explanatory equation by offering a theoretical framework with the individual at its center. This framework proposes that a leader's cognitive structure—his or her levels of cognitive openness and complexity—is the critical causal variable in determining one's propensity to revise core positions in light of new information. Systemic-structural and domestic political factors are necessary but insufficient determinants of such a change; they are important permissive conditions. The key to understanding the hawk-to-dove shift lies in the cognitive structure of the leader.

Fred Greenstein long ago pointed out that the study of personality tends to be disparaged by political scientists. The overarching thrust of their criticisms, he noted, was that personality explanations of political behavior tend to be undemonstrated, unreplicable, and perhaps even arbitrary interpretations (Greenstein 1969, 17–20). Yet Greenstein rightly identified the prohibitive analytical price paid for ignoring the study of individuals, and he attempted to square the analytical circle. Greenstein was interested in the questions of *action dispensability*—the circumstances under which the actions of single individuals are likely to have a greater or lesser effect on the course of events—and *actor dispensability*—that of whether we need to explain the action in terms of the actor's personal characteristics (Greenstein 1969, 41). A growing number of scholars have followed Greenstein's lead by arguing that the study of individuals—their actions *and* their personalities—is critical to explaining certain political outcomes (Aronoff 2001; Byman and Pollack 2001; George 1993, 1994; Hermann and Hagan 1998; Hudson 2005, 2007; Ziv 2010, 2011). The present work is situated within this burgeoning literature on leaders.

In addressing the question of why some hawkish leaders turn to dovish policies, this book focuses on the oft-ignored individual level of analysis, though not at the dismissal of the systemic and domestic levels. The central conclusion emerging from this study is that the

cognitive structure of a leader—in particular, one's levels of cognitive openness and cognitive complexity—is a key causal variable for explaining that leader's propensity to shift his or her views on core issues (Greenstein's question of actor dispensability).

Longtime Israeli leader Shimon Peres is the primary case study chosen for this book. His six decades of public service, at the highest levels of the decision-making apparatus, provides the researcher with a rich array of valuable material conducive to the study of a contemporary decision maker. Moreover, since his late twenties, Peres has had a major impact on the direction of his country's foreign policy. His arms procurement deals with France, including the French-Israeli nuclear agreement that turned Israel into a nuclear weapons state; the founding of some of the first Jewish settlements in the West Bank; and the decision to hold direct, official talks with the PLO are among the significant events in which Peres played an instrumental role.

The Importance of Cognitive Factors in Foreign Policy Change

The overarching conclusion of this study is that a more robust explanation of foreign policy change must account for the personality characteristics of leaders. Specifically, leaders' levels of cognitive openness and cognitive complexity appear to hold great promise in determining the likelihood that they would opt to pursue a major foreign policy change. Cognitively open leaders tend to be receptive to new information that may revise their core beliefs; a cognitively closed person fails to assimilate new information, leaving one's beliefs intact (Farnham 2001; Finlay, Holsti, and Fagan 1967; Rokeach 1960). Similarly, a cognitively complex leader, who recognizes that distinct situations possess multiple dimensions, is associated with more sophisticated and more adaptive behavior than a cognitively simple individual, who perceives situations in binary terms (Hermann 1980; Shapiro and Bonham 1973; Stein 1994, 2002; Suedfeld and Wallace 1995; Tetlock 1984, 1985; Vertzberger 1990). Thus, a leader who possesses high levels of cognitive openness and cognitive complexity will be more likely to revise previously held beliefs when confronted with new circumstances than will his or her cognitively closed and cognitively simple counterpart.

This book has suggested a way in which to operationalize the cognitive structure of leaders. Determining a leader's levels of cognitive openness and complexity should not be done on the basis of the dependent variable(s) identified with the leader's foreign policy change; doing so would create a tautology. In chapter 2, therefore, Israeli leaders' cognitive structures were assessed not on the basis of their positions on territorial compromise, settlements, negotiations with the PLO, and Palestinian statehood, but rather on their outlooks on other issues and before the behavior in question took place (i.e., prior to Peres's and Rabin's dovish turns). Insiders have revealed useful information about the leaders' relevant personality characteristics, such as whether they were inclined to listen to viewpoints other than their own and whether they tended to make black and white judgments or judgments entailing multiple dimensions.

EXPLAINING THE HAWK-TO-DOVE SHIFT: CENTRAL FINDINGS

Three sets of factors emerge as key elements of a leader's dovish shift. First, the more cognitively open and cognitively complex a leader is, the more likely that leader is to change his or her foreign policy preferences, becoming more dovish (or more hawkish) toward an adversary. Of the four leaders whose cognitive structure was analyzed in chapter 2, only Rabin and Peres agreed to make significant compromises with the enemy. Begin and Shamir were found to be less cognitively open and complex than were Rabin and Peres; whereas the former

pair of leaders never budged from their opposition to dealing with the PLO, the latter pair reversed their previous beliefs that peace could not be attained with the PLO. By 1993, Peres and Rabin both had concluded that peace could *only* be attained through negotiations with the PLO. Begin died in 1992, so it is not possible to state with absolute certainty that he would have rejected the negotiations with the PLO that took place the following year in Oslo. However, until the day he died, Begin, like Shamir, remained an unreconstructed hawk. Neither Begin nor Shamir had indicated, at any point, a willingness to deal with the PLO or to reconsider his longstanding support for annexing the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Peres, the most cognitively open and complex leader of the four prime ministers examined here, underwent the more profound reversal in his beliefs than did Rabin—and did so earlier. As chapters 3 and 4 make clear, when Peres began his dovish turn, he was more hawkish than Rabin. Until the late 1970s, Peres, in contrast to Rabin, opposed the concept of territorial compromise and promoted the establishment of settlements in the West Bank. In chapter 5, it is shown that by the late 1980s it was Peres who had emerged as the more dovish of the two leaders, as is evidenced by his tacit, if not explicit, support for changing the status quo concerning Israel's PLO policy.

While one must be careful not to generalize from a small number of cases, the research findings presented herein suggest that leaders' cognitive structure is important in enabling us to understand not only why some leaders are more inclined to change their views than others, but also why some do so earlier than others. A decision maker's cognitive structure can shed light on both the *why* and the *when* questions. On the issue that led to the most significant policy reversal regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—talking to the PLO—Peres had come to the conclusion that Israel needed to change course nearly five years before Rabin reached this conclusion. His high levels of cognitive openness and complexity facilitated his openness to new information. He proved to be sensitive to local, regional, and international developments, as well as to the ideas of both foreign leaders with whom he engaged regularly and his own team of talented aides who openly challenged Peres's positions on such matters as his preference for concluding a deal with Jordan's King Hussein at the expense of the Palestinians. After the collapse of the Jordanian option in 1988, Peres quickly adapted to the new realities and began, as foreign minister, to lay the groundwork for eventual PLO talks. Rabin, whose levels of cognitive openness and complexity were lower, tended not to solicit the views of others and did not welcome dissenting opinions from his much more limited circle of aides. It is not surprising, therefore, that even after he became prime minister, leading a left-of-center government, Rabin showed no inclination to change Israel's policy toward the PLO. He rejected calls from within his own party to change direction. However, once he experienced the gridlock in the Washington talks for himself, he was able to come to terms with the need to directly engage the PLO in order to make headway in the peace process. He therefore proved to be more sensitive to environmental factors than were either Begin or Shamir, whose positions remained the same despite regional and international changes, but less so than Peres, who displayed greater sensitivity to the environment. As former U.S. ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis has said: "You can find lots of evidence of other Israeli ex-military and some politicians who made this same evolution much faster than Peres did. But he made it. And he made it faster than Rabin did. The Likud guys never made it, basically."[2]

The second major finding is that how a particular leader perceives the impact of a shift in the distribution of power on the state's security interests is critical in determining whether he or she will opt for the status quo or to change foreign policy direction. The PLO's politically and financially weakened status following the Gulf War, in which it had backed Saddam Hussein, cost it the support of Arab donor governments. That, coupled with the end of the Soviet Union's

support (following its demise in 1991), meant that Israel was in a politically (not to mention militarily) superior position to its adversary—the PLO—even more so than it had been prior to these events. Indeed, the Rabin government pursued peace with the PLO just as the organization was verging on collapse. For Rabin and Peres, a weakened PLO meant that Israel had a chance to reach an agreement with a humbled adversary whose demands and expectations would likely be more realistic—that is, more inclined toward compromise—than they had been in the past.

But what would compel the Rabin government to essentially rescue an organization that seemed doomed to oblivion and to pursue policies of accommodation with this organization at a time when the international environment was widely deemed favorable to Israeli security interests? The answer lies in the leader's perception of what the country's long-term security interests entailed. A key permissive condition for Rabin's dovish turn—and the dovish foreign policy his government adopted—was the first Palestinian Intifada, which affected him deeply. As defense minister when the Intifada began, he became convinced that Israel would not be able to rule by force indefinitely over one and a half million Palestinians (Slater 1996, 416). For Rabin, the Intifada served as a wakeup call that, notwithstanding Israel's favorable position in the international environment, the demographic time bomb in the occupied territories threatened Israel's security in the long run. As far as he was concerned, Israel would be less secure by failing to opt for a more conciliatory approach toward the Palestinians.[3]

However, these events occurred prior to the premiership of Rabin, during the government of Yitzhak Shamir. Yet Shamir, who was witness to these same structural changes, did *not* opt to change course, sticking instead to the status quo. He did not perceive the state's security to be threatened by the status quo, particularly since the distribution of power was such that Israel had become significantly superior to its enemies. Why make concessions when Israel had attained such strength? To Shamir, the PLO was "still the same terrorist organization"—just a much weaker one. Resuscitating the PLO by granting it legitimacy and territory was not a rational option given the organization's continued commitment (as he saw it) to Israel's destruction. For Shamir, Israel's long-term security needs required Israeli retention of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, rather than relinquishing these territories to the PLO.

In the cases examined here, therefore, a purely systemic-structural account is unsatisfactory in explaining Israel's significant foreign policy change in the early 1990s. The unitary rational actor model does not work given that different leaders interpreted the same events quite differently and pursued, therefore, dissimilar policies. These findings suggest that when a particular leader perceives the state's security to be significantly threatened, he or she will then opt to change foreign policy directions. However, when a leader does not perceive the state's security to be significantly threatened, he or she will not seek to alter the status quo. In short, systemic-structural conditions are an inadequate predictor of foreign policy change.

The third key finding is that, to the extent that Israel's leaders have changed from hawks to doves, they have done so following domestic political realignments that favored more dovish policies. Domestic politics precipitated foreign policy change in Israel. In chapter 4, it was shown that internal Labor Party politics compelled Peres to soften his hard-line stance toward the Palestinians. Until the late 1970s, Peres was a hawk, whose positions were to the right of the Labor Party mainstream. He could not continue to oppose territorial compromise—a central tenet of Labor's platform—and, at the same time, hope to have a realistic chance at leading the party. In February 1977, on the eve of his challenge to Rabin for the chairmanship of the party, Peres thus declared his support for territorial compromise, reversing his position on this issue. When he became the party's chairman several months later, following Rabin's resignation, he soon found

himself in the role of the opposition leader and adapted accordingly. He swiftly emerged as a firm supporter of Arab-Israeli peacemaking, opposed the expansion of settlements in the West Bank—another major policy reversal—and adopted a more conciliatory tone toward the Palestinians. These domestic political developments can be seen as the triggering events for Peres's dovish turn in the first half of 1977.

The 1992 elections in Israel, which brought about Labor's return to power, facilitated the Rabin government's decision to change course in longstanding Israeli policy toward the Palestinians by agreeing to conduct direct negotiations with the PLO, leading both parties to mutually recognize each other. Had the Likud's Shamir won reelection that year, or had there been another "national unity" government with the Likud and Labor sharing power, it is highly improbable that Israel would have reversed its policy on this issue. In this case, the key domestic political development—Labor's ascent to power—can be seen as a permissive condition for Rabin's dovish turn. After all, Rabin did not reverse course immediately following his election despite the fact that he had a coalition in place that enabled him to do so. Labor's rank and file supported such a change, but Rabin, in the early 1990s, was a hawk, whose positions were somewhat to the right of the party's mainstream. Rabin had to be convinced that the Washington talks, which sidelined the PLO, was a recipe for continued stalemate before he agreed to give direct talks with the PLO a chance.[4] The 1992 election ought to be seen, therefore, as a permissive condition for the Rabin government's dramatic policy shift; without a Labor victory, the government would not have changed course on this issue. But this event, while facilitating the policy shift, did not trigger the change, which took place many months later.

The empirical findings in this study suggest that systemic-structural and domestic political factors serve as permissive conditions or triggering events for a leader's dovish turn. In the cases examined here, they are shown to be necessary but insufficient conditions for determining whether a leader will take steps to change foreign policy directions. In this study, what differentiates leaders who pursued a dramatically different foreign policy direction from those who opted for the status quo is their quite different cognitive structures. In particular, the Israeli leaders' levels of cognitive openness and complexity is found to determine their propensity for altering their views; the more cognitively closed and simple leaders did not do so regardless of changes in the strategic environment, such as the Intifada, the Persian Gulf War, and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Traditional explanations of foreign policy change, which rely solely on systemic-structural factors or domestic political factors—or both—are therefore inadequate in explaining the hawk-to-dove shifts in Israel.

One of the most widely articulated arguments against cognitive approaches to foreign policy decision making centers on theoretical parsimony and research economy, as Ole Holsti observed nearly forty years ago (Holsti 1976). Indeed, the explanation offered here does not match the parsimony of neorealism and could thus be vulnerable to such arguments. Yet, while parsimony is an important criterion for good theory, it is not the only one, as Holsti and other scholars have stressed (Byman and Pollack 2001; Holsti 1976; Hudson 2005; Wolfers 1962). Write King, Keohane and Verba:

> To maximize leverage, we should attempt to formulate theories that explain as much as possible with as little as possible. Sometimes this formulation is achieved via parsimony, but sometimes not. We can conceive of examples by which a slightly more complicated theory will explain vastly more of the world. In such a situation, we would surely use the nonparsimonious theory, since it maximizes leverage more than the more parsimonious

theory. (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 104–105)

This book attempts to explain a leader's dramatic foreign policy reorientation with "as little as possible," yet the empirical findings reported in this study lead to the conclusion that an adequate explanation of a decision maker's foreign policy change must account not only for systemic-structural and domestic political factors but—most importantly—for his or her cognitive structure. Parsimony may be compromised in such an explanation, but accuracy is more important than parsimony, as Byman and Pollack point out in their argument for incorporating leaders into international relations theory (Byman and Pollack 2001, 113). The added layers of complexity promise a more accurate explanation of foreign policy change.

APPLICATION OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK TO OTHER CASES

How can the explanation for Shimon Peres's dovish turn that is offered in this book be used to elucidate the larger universe of cases in which decision makers have pursued major foreign policy changes while in office? The vignettes below illustrate the potential application of the theoretical explanation offered here for other cases of leaders who have dramatically altered their states' foreign policies. The first two vignettes below examine more recent Israeli prime ministers' attitudes toward the Palestinian issue. The added value of exploring Ariel Sharon's dovish shift, in particular, is that—in contrast to Peres and Rabin—Sharon spent the bulk of his career in the right-wing Likud party. I then examine three additional vignettes based on recent scholarly work concerning world leaders outside of the Israeli context who switched course midway through their terms in office, pursuing very different policies than those they had set out to follow when elected.

Other Israeli Cases

Since the turn of the century, the meanings of "hawk" and "dove" in the Israeli context have evolved to a certain extent. The second Intifada, which began in September 2000 and petered out in early 2005, led many Israelis to conclude that "there is no partner" with whom to negotiate. At the same time, however, attitudes have shifted in Israel with regard to territorial compromise. The divide over settlements and Palestinian statehood largely remains, although a clear majority of Israelis today support a two-state solution to the conflict.[5] Significantly, many legislators formerly with Likud have distanced themselves from the settlement enterprise and endorsed the idea of a future Palestinian state; moreover, every prime minister since the late 1990s has publicly stated his support for such a state.

Ariel Sharon, Benjamin Netanyahu, and the Acceptance of a Palestinian State

Throughout the 1990s and well into the 2000s, Sharon and Netanyahu battled each other for leadership of the Likud party, each trying to "out-hawk" the other. Belonging to different generations, both men had unassailable hawkish credentials. For most of his life, Sharon had been known for his tough, aggressive approach toward Arab enemies of the Jewish state. In the early 1950s, as a young company commander, Sharon directed controversial counterterror raids beyond Israel's borders that resulted in large numbers of civilian casualties. Upon retiring from the IDF, he entered politics, becoming a founder of the right-wing Likud party. He rose to the

post of defense minister in Menachem Begin's second government, which was marked by the Lebanon War, often referred to as Israel's Vietnam. In February 1983, the Kahan Commission, which investigated the previous year's Sabra and Shatila massacre of Lebanese forces against the civilian population in these refugee camps, submitted its report that found Sharon personally responsible for failing to protect the civilian population of Beirut, which was under Israeli control at the time. Sharon was compelled to step down as minister of defense. Often referred to as "the bulldozer," he became committed to building Jewish settlements throughout the West Bank and Gaza, a cause he pursued vigorously in his various government capacities. In September 2000, as leader of the opposition, Sharon took the provocative step of visiting the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif, sparking the bloody al-Aqsa Intifada. He was elected prime minister in February 2001 in the wake of the collapse of the peace process and a rightist shift in the Israeli electorate.[6]

By then, Sharon's views on the Palestinian issue were well known. In his autobiography, he wrote that "a Palestinian state has existed since 1922, when Great Britain split off 78 percent of Palestine to create Transjordan" (Sharon 2001, 545). He argued that "concern for our own survival does not permit the establishment of a second Palestinian state on the West Bank" (Sharon 2001, 553). He had long been a fervent advocate for the construction of Jewish settlements, arguing that the correct path was "the widespread settlement in Samaria and Judea on the hilltop and west of the hilltop."[7] He had opposed the peace talks with the PLO during the Oslo years, and he had urged Prime Minister Rabin to annex significant portions of the West Bank (Hefez and Bloom 2006, 304).

Sharon's rival, Benjamin Netanyahu, grew up in an ideologically right-wing household. His father was a noted historian, a Revisionist Zionist who shared Ze'ev Jabotinsky's vision of territorial maximalism—a single Jewish state situated on both sides of the Jordan River. Deeply affected by the loss of his older brother, Yonatan, who was killed during the July 1976 hostage rescue mission in Entebbe, Uganda, Netanyahu became devoted to the cause of fighting terrorism. In 1988, he entered the political arena, becoming a rising star in the Likud party. Following Yitzhak Shamir's retirement in March 1993, Netanyahu became the party's chairman.

As leader of the opposition during the Rabin government, Netanyahu was a fierce critic of the Oslo process. In a book he wrote prior to the historic agreements with the PLO, Netanyahu argued that a Palestinian state "would nullify the whole value of the buffer area on Israel's eastern front" (Netanyahu 1993, 288). Rather than a "third independent state in what was once Palestine," he wrote, it was Jordan that "is a two-state solution to resolve a conflict between two peoples" (Netanyahu 1993, 329–31, 351). Although, as prime minister from 1996 until 1999, he ultimately carried out Israel's territorial commitments under the Oslo agreements, he did so with much reluctance and under significant pressure from the Clinton administration (Ross 2004, 387–93). He remained steadfastly opposed to a Palestinian state well into the 2000s, even after Sharon—who had replaced him as Likud party chairman—endorsed it.

When Sharon ascended to the premiership in February 2001, few expected him to abandon his hawkish positions. Sharon raised eyebrows when, that September, he declared at a teachers' conference that "the state of Israel wants to give the Palestinians what nobody had given them before—the possibility of establishing a state" (Burston and Haaretz Correspondent 2001). The following year, Netanyahu proposed a resolution at the Likud Central Committee forum to restate the party's opposition to the creation of a Palestinian state. Netanyahu warned that a Palestinian state would be a mortal danger to Israel. His resolution passed despite the objections of Prime Minister Sharon (Susser 2002).

On June 24, 2002, U.S. president George W. Bush laid out a vision of “two states, living side by side, in peace and security” in his “Road Map for Middle East Peace,” which Sharon accepted.[8] Sharon was easily reelected on January 28, 2003. In his speech at the swearing-in of the new government, he acknowledged that “creating a Palestinian state under limited conditions in the framework of a political process” was “controversial among members of the coalition,” but noted that “the people of Israel seek peace, and I am convinced that there is a willingness to make painful concessions” (IsraelNN.com 2003). On May 25, the Sharon government formally approved the Road Map, the first time an Israeli government had officially accepted the principle of establishing a Palestinian state (Dan 2006, 220). The following year, at a Likud Knesset faction meeting, Sharon even uttered the word *occupation*—highly unusual in right-wing discourse—telling his colleagues that Israel could not continue “to hold 3.5 million Palestinians under occupation. I believe that is a terrible thing for Israel and for the Palestinians” (Wallace 2003).

In June 2004, the Sharon government adopted a controversial plan to withdraw unilaterally from the Gaza Strip and from four settlements in the West Bank. The plan was carried out the following summer despite the vehement objections from Sharon’s traditional right-wing constituency. Sharon further alienated his base by continually promoting a two-state solution, warning that “the alternative of one nation, where one rules over another, would be a horrible disaster for both peoples” (Benn 2004). On September 15, 2005, Sharon spoke at the UN General Assembly, where he gave a speech emphasizing his willingness

> to make concessions for the sake of peace between us and our Palestinian neighbors. The right of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel does not mean disregarding the rights of others in the land. The Palestinians will always be our neighbors. We respect them, and have no aspirations to rule over them. They are also entitled to freedom and to a national, sovereign existence in a state of their own.[9]

That November, the rift with Likud was formalized when Sharon left the party he had founded and formed a new centrist party, Kadima (“forward”), whose platform called for achieving “two states for two nations” (Mualem 2005). The new party consisted of mostly moderate Likud MKs; several Labor Party MKs (including Peres) joined as well. In January 2006, Sharon suffered a massive stroke, incapacitating him and thus abruptly ending his political career. He passed away eight years later.

What explains Sharon’s about-face on these core issues? Circumstances had changed by the time Sharon came to power. The taboo concerning direct contact with the PLO had already been shattered during the Oslo years. Despite sometimes severe criticism leveled against PLO chairman and president of the Palestinian Authority Yasser Arafat, each of Rabin’s successors maintained some form of communication with him and his subordinates.[10] Repeated warnings by Israeli demographers that the Palestinian population was growing at a much faster rate than the Jewish one, which threatened to erode Israel’s Jewish character, was a factor not lost on politicians and the general public alike. Similarly, Sharon was undoubtedly aware of polls indicating that, by 2001, a majority of Israelis favored the creation of a Palestinian state (Arian 2003; Lavie 2001).

These structural changes and shifts in the domestic incentive structure serve as permissive factors for Sharon’s dovish turn; necessary, but insufficient in explaining it. After all, Sharon was in the minority among his Likud colleagues in adopting these more dovish positions and

concluded, therefore, that he was left with no alternative but to bolt his longtime political home. Netanyahu largely retained his old positions despite witnessing the same regional and domestic political shifts. Sharon's Gaza pullout plan led to Netanyahu's resignation as finance minister in August 2005. Sharon, Netanyahu alleged, had "abandoned the way of Likud, and chose another way, the way of the left" (Myre 2005). After his election in February 2009, Netanyahu continued to oppose a Palestinian state.

It was four months into his second term as prime minister, on June 14, when Netanyahu finally endorsed a future Palestinian state in a historic speech at Bar-Ilan University. "In my vision of peace, two peoples live freely, side-by-side, in amity and mutual respect. Each will have its own flag, its own national anthem, its own government" (MFA 2009). Netanyahu's formal acceptance of the two-state solution was widely interpreted at the time as a response to heavy pressure by U.S. president Barack Obama, rather than a sincere change of heart on this issue (Barnea 2009; Kershner 2009; Lewis 2009).[11] As one Knesset member from Netanyahu's Likud party has put it, the Bar-Ilan speech was a "tactical move" that was "intended for the world" (Sheizaf 2013).

To date, Netanyahu's public declaration of support for a Palestinian state has been inconsistent with his actions. On the one hand, he has modified his rhetoric to a certain extent, substituting the biblical reference to "Judea and Samaria" with the commonly used "West Bank" (Bronner 2010) and warning about the dangers of a binational state (Benn 2011; Cesana, Allon, and Israel Hayom Staff 2013; Ravid 2012A). However, in contrast to the premiers who preceded him—Shimon Peres, Ehud Barak, Ariel Sharon, and Ehud Olmert, a longtime Likud legislator who bolted the party in 2005 to join Sharon's Kadima party—Netanyahu has done relatively little to promote a two-state solution while posing significant obstacles to its realization.

Unlike his predecessors, who consistently emphasized the importance of a two-state solution for Israel's future in their public pronouncements, Netanyahu has deemphasized it. As a *New York Times* editorial put it, during Netanyahu's visit to the White House in July 2010, "each time he neglects to repeat it [his support for a two-state solution], he feeds doubts about his government's sincerity" (*New York Times* 2010). Instead, Netanyahu has stressed that the Palestinians would have to recognize Israel as the state of the Jewish people as a condition for a peace deal—a demand not made of the Palestinians during the Oslo negotiations in the 1990s nor with the Egyptians or the Jordanians as part of their peace treaties with Israel. It is a demand that no Palestinian leader is likely to accept given the implications such a declaration would have on the status of Arab citizens of Israel. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, for his part, has made it clear that there is "no way" he would accede to Netanyahu's demand that he recognize Israel as a Jewish state (AP and *Times of Israel* 2014)."[12] Netanyahu also has rejected a withdrawal to the 1967 borders, which are widely regarded as the basis for a peace agreement but which he has called "indefensible" (Mualem and News Agencies 2011; Reuters 2013). In a less guarded moment, Netanyahu told Israeli writer Etgar Keret that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was "insoluble" because "it is not about territory" but, rather, Palestinian unwillingness to accept Israel as a Jewish state (Keret 2011).[13] Netanyahu has even stated that he shares the outlook of former hardline prime minister Yitzhak Shamir with regard to the Middle East (Allon and Cesana 2013). A senior government minister from Netanyahu's Likud party has reportedly stated that Netanyahu's intention in renewing peace talks with the Palestinians in the summer 2013 was aimed solely for the sake of appearances but that he had no intention of making any far-reaching diplomatic moves (JPost.com 2013A).

Four years following his historic Bar-Ilan speech, Netanyahu returned to the university to

give a hard-line and pessimistic speech. While not disavowing his support for a two-state solution, he emphasized, instead, his demand that the Palestinians recognize the Jewish state—or there will not be peace. "After generations of incitement we have no confidence that such recognition will percolate down to the Palestinian people," Netanyahu said. At the same time, he stressed that the "occupation and settlements" were not the core of the conflict (Ravid 2013). The following year, Netanyahu delivered an address at the Institute for National Security Studies in Tel Aviv in which he called for the construction of a security fence along Israel's border with Jordan—in effect, turning the Jordan River into Israel's eastern border—and insisted that the IDF would need to "retain military control in the territory up to the Jordan River for a very long time" (Ahren 2014). It is difficult to imagine how a viable Palestinian state could be established if these proposed measures are adopted.

Save for a partial ten-month settlement freeze initiated in November 2009, Netanyahu has routinely approved the construction of thousands of new Jewish homes in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, the number of Jewish homes in the West Bank grew by 132 percent in the first three quarters of 2013 compared with the same time period in 2012—in contrast to the rest of the country, which registered 5.5 percent growth in housing starts (Lazaroff 2013). During the nine-month negotiating period that began in July 2013 and terminated in April 2014, Netanyahu's government increased settlement work fourfold, constructing nearly fourteen thousand new homes in the West Bank and East Jerusalem" (Federman 2014).[14] Netanyahu's settlement policy has contributed to tense personal relations between him and President Obama and has prompted rebukes from various administration officials as well as Israel's other major allies (Benhorin 2011; JPost.com Staff 2013B; Mitnick 2010; Mozgovaya and Reuters 2011; Times of Israel Staff and AP 2013). The expansion of settlements has resulted in Israel's increasing isolation, while eroding the Palestinians' trust in peaceful negotiations. Netanyahu's settlement policy, moreover, has diminished the prospect of establishing a viable, contiguous Palestinian state.

Adding to the doubts about Netanyahu's intentions are the coalitions he cobbled together following his election in 2009 and reelection in 2013. In both cases, Netanyahu established right-wing governments in which the majority of both coalition MKs and cabinet members opposed a two-state solution. To date, there has been no cabinet decision in support of such a solution, so support for a Palestinian state has never actually been the official position of Netanyahu's government (Ravid 2012A). The governing Likud party remains largely opposed to a Palestinian state (Harkov 2013; Somfalvi 2012). Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman—a West Bank settler—has suggested that a peace deal with the Palestinians is "impossible" (Williams 2013). Similarly, Netanyahu's defense minister, Moshe Ya'alon, has argued that Israel should focus on deterrence rather than on a peace agreement. "Judea and Samaria are Israel's homefront and therefore we must make them stronger," he has said (Israel Hayom Staff 2013). Ofir Akunis, Netanyahu's protégé and a deputy minister, has made his stance on a two-state solution clear. "He [Netanyahu] was the first to hear from me that if a [two-state] agreement comes to a vote in the Knesset, I'll vote against it," he has stated. "Not abstain, vote against it, because I resolutely oppose the establishment of a Palestinian state in the place where our nation was born," Akunis emphasizes (Harkov 2014).[15] Economy and Trade Minister Naftali Bennett, leader of the pro-settler Jewish Home party, also has repeatedly expressed his opposition to Palestinian statehood (Azulay 2013). Indicative of the opposition within Netanyahu's government toward Palestinian statehood was a letter, dated September 2013, sent to the prime minister by seventeen members of his coalition, including five deputy ministers, urging him to refuse any deal that would involve

ceding land to the Palestinians (Lis 2013).

In short, the extent to which Netanyahu has truly evolved on the issue of a Palestinian state is far from clear. Why did it take him an additional eight years to state publicly what Sharon had declared in 2001? And what explains his hardline rhetoric and actions that appear to undermine his stated support for a Palestinian state? Likud party ideology is unsatisfying as a complete explanation given that Sharon, Olmert, and other longtime Likud members changed their approach toward the Palestinian issue. As Sharon's biographers make clear, Sharon was not motivated by a firm ideology, but rather by "maximum security for the Jews" (Hefez and Bloom 2006, xv–xvi).

The prime ministers' differing cognitive structures may shed light on why Sharon was more amenable to changing his views than Netanyahu. Sharon's former media adviser, Asi Shariv, describes his former boss as someone who "understood that he was not the smartest man in the room" and thus tended to defer to the views of his aides—even if he did not initially agree with them.[16] According to Shariv, Sharon made it a point to surround himself with aides who did not necessarily agree with him. When Shariv, upon being hired by Sharon, disclosed that he had not voted for his new boss, he was told, "Most of the people around here didn't vote for me. I know what I think. I don't need people to tell me that I'm great. … I want to hear other views. I want to listen to what you have to say." Shariv notes that Sharon was a good listener and that it was quite possible to get him to change his mind. This characterization of Sharon is corroborated by Majali Wahabe, an Israeli Druze who was friends with Sharon and served as his liaison to the Arab world. Wahabe also describes Sharon as "a good listener" who "never looks down on people" (Susser 2001, 17). He relates that the Jordanians were impressed that Sharon was not only open to Wahabe's views—on more than one occasion, they witnessed Wahabe tell Sharon to his face that he was wrong—but also because he insisted on broadening a meeting with King Hussein to include Wahabe, demonstrating a greater openness—toward an Arab, no less—than they had anticipated.

Netanyahu, too, has been described as a good listener by those who have worked with him. However, Netanyahu's rather unique style of listening—he is notorious for taking the advice of the last person with whom he consulted—has often proved to be a source of deep frustration for those competing for his attention.[17] On more than one occasion, his chief of staff would try to separate him from other staff members in an effort to get his boss to stick with a particular decision, lest he be swayed at the last minute by someone else's argument.[18] However, in contrast to Sharon, professional considerations appear to be habitually overshadowed by two factors that are reportedly critical to Netanyahu: personal loyalty and an affiliation with the Likud party (Bassok 2011). A former senior aide acknowledges that Netanyahu tends to associate himself with, and listen to, religious nationalists in particular.[19] The range of perspectives he regularly hears is thus limited to primarily hawkish voices on the major policy issues of the day. "Netanyahu puts himself in a position in which he cannot change," says Asi Shariv, a former Sharon and Olmert aide who got to know Netanyahu's modus operandi from up close over the years. "He surrounds himself with rightist kind of guys … he is the most liberal guy in this group," Shariv notes.[20]

Netanyahu's inner circle of advisers not only lacks diversity, it is said to be lacking in quality as well. One journalist has written that Netanyahu's "complete blindness about other people, coupled with his exaggerated suspicions of other people" has produced a provincial environment in Netanyahu's bureau, one in which he has surrounded himself with few suitable people. His own father, who had an indelible influence on Netanyahu's worldview, once

purportedly remarked: “The biggest problem with my son is his inability to choose worthy people” (Shavit 2012).

In summary, Sharon’s cognitive structure appears to have been more open than Netanyahu’s in at least one important respect: the criteria each decision maker uses for selecting his advisers. Sharon’s willingness to hire and entrust professional aides—including those who did not share his views—can explain, at least in part, why he was more likely to change his worldview than Netanyahu, who chooses to surround himself with loyal political supporters who largely identify with his worldview. Sharon’s seemingly higher level of cognitive openness may help to explain why he was able to change his belief on a core issue such as Palestinian statehood more readily than Netanyahu.

Jimmy Carter and U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet Union

In contrast to the cases explored in this book of hawkish leaders whose foreign policy changes moved in a decidedly more dovish direction, Jimmy Carter has been described by some scholars as a dove who, as president, became significantly more hawkish toward the Soviet Union.[21] Foreign policy change can move, of course, in either direction, although there appear to be many more instances of hawks becoming doves than doves becoming hawks.

Carter entered office with a more optimistic assessment of the Soviet Union than his predecessors; he had relatively little interest in containment; and he aimed to establish a sort of global community that would entail improved relations with the Soviet leadership (Rosati 1987). Carter’s attitude toward the Soviet Union differed markedly from the zero-sum foreign policy approach of Henry Kissinger. The following excerpt from an interview in *Time* magazine with the newly elected president illustrates Carter’s generally dovish worldview:

> I think there has been in Kissinger’s foreign policy an inclination to divide the world into two major power blocs and almost force nations to take a stand: “I’m for the U.S., I’m against the Soviet Union.” “I’m for the Soviet Union, I’m against the U.S.” I think that this is a permanently divisive attitude to take in world affairs, and what I’ll do is try to get away from that position and deal with nations on an individual basis as far as what is best for their own people. Not force them to chose between us and the Soviet Union but let them choose our country because our system works best and because their trade with us and their open feeling for us would be in their best interest. (Gart and Cloud 1976)

From the beginning of Carter’s presidency, two senior aides with starkly differing worldviews competed for Carter’s attention. The low-key secretary of state, Cyrus Vance, held views similar to Carter’s. He advocated diplomacy, arms control, and economic deals in the expectation that a conciliatory approach toward the Soviets would ultimately benefit both sides. By contrast, the boisterous national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, was a committed hawk who strongly distrusted Soviet intentions; he advocated a much harder line. It was Brzezinski who succeeded in winning Carter over to his approach toward the Soviet Union. Of Vance, Carter reportedly once said that, because their worldview was so much alike, his opinion on foreign affairs wasn’t “as necessary for me to understand. His worldview mirrored my own” (Brinkley 2002). Brzezinski quickly emerged as the adviser closest to Carter (Vance resigned in frustration in April 1980) and used his clout to persuade the president to adopt a more hawkish approach toward the Soviets (Aronoff 2006; Glad 1980, 1989; Lebow and Stein 1993; McClellan

1985). Carter became increasingly frustrated with the Soviet leadership due to a number of incidents—their "uncooperative" and "heavy-handed" conduct during the SALT II talks and Soviet intervention in the Ogaden region in Africa are but two examples. Consequently, his image of the Soviet Union worsened (Aronoff 2006, 440–41).

Carter's altered *Weltanschauung* was a harbinger of changes in his Soviet policy, with a key turning point being the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. On January 23, 1980, he announced the Carter Doctrine, which stated that "an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force" (Carter 1980). Moreover, Carter adopted a variety of measures aimed at punishing the Soviets, such as shelving the SALT II treaty (which was never ratified by the Senate), terminating eleven working groups on trade, cultural exchanges, and arms control talks; and recalling the American ambassador from Moscow (Aronoff 2006, 445).

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan appears to have served as the triggering event for Carter's abrupt foreign policy change. According to this account, belligerent Soviet behavior and Brzezinski's continuous efforts to convince Carter of the Soviets' aggressive designs (the most significant domestic political factor) served as permissive conditions for Carter's hawkish shift. The key causal variable appears to lie, however, in Carter's cognitive structure. Aronoff, in her study of Carter's foreign policy shift, argues that "his moderate cognitive flexibility contributed to his dramatic change toward the Soviet Union" (Aronoff 2006, 435). That Carter made it a point to listen to Brzezinski's counsel, knowing that he would give him a different perspective than the one he already shared with Vance, attests to Carter's openness to ideas that contradicted his own beliefs. At the same time, the level of Carter's cognitive complexity is assumed to be somewhat limited given his tendency to be quick to judge and his generally black and white interpretation of character (Aronoff 2006, 438).

Ronald Reagan and U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet Union

Ronald Reagan entered office as a dedicated anticommunist and foe of the Soviet Union, to which he famously referred, in a March 1983 speech, as the "Evil Empire." He was an "essentialist" who viewed the Soviet Union as a dangerous totalitarian regime that left the United States with no alternative to a prolonged confrontation with the Soviet regime and no possibility for real accommodation (Garthoff 1994, 767). The United States, in Reagan's view, had an obligation to strengthen its military power in light of its implacable enemy.

During his first term, however, Reagan changed both his rhetoric and his administration's policies toward the Soviet Union. Forgoing his earlier antagonistic approach, he began to speak in terms of "dangerous misunderstandings" and the "common interests" between the two superpowers (Fischer 1997, 3). Reducing the risk of war, and especially nuclear war, emerged as "priority number one" for the Reagan administration (Garthoff 1994, 144–45). As early as 1982, Reagan pointed out that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought"—a theme he repeated and on which he elaborated in a direct appeal to the Soviet people during his 1984 State of the Union address (Pearl 2011, 11). Within a relatively short period of time, Reagan became a strong supporter of arms control.

Why did Reagan reverse course on an issue on which he had displayed such conviction? Systemic-structural factors appear to have served as the permissive conditions in Reagan's policy reversal. In the first years of his administration, Reagan pursued the greatest peacetime military

buildup in history. He modernized the Army, Navy, and Air Force; brought back the B-1 bomber program, which had been canceled by the Carter administration; expanded the nuclear missile program; approved NATO's deployment of the Pershing II missile in West Germany; and promoted his Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), also known as "Star Wars," which was intended to prevent missile attacks by the Soviet Union. Reagan's massive military buildup may have given him the confidence that the United States had become powerful enough to pursue peace diplomacy with the Soviets. His belief in "peace through strength," coupled with his fear that the long-term security interests of the United States would be severely compromised under the threat of nuclear annihilation, may therefore have been a permissive, and possibly a necessary, condition for his willingness to negotiate (Farnham 2003, 159).

Domestic political factors also seem to have played at least a partial role in the administration's embrace of rapprochement with the Soviets. Reagan's rhetorical changes coincided with the 1984 presidential campaign. Polls indicated that nearly half of the American public believed that Reagan's policies had brought the U.S. closer to war. Concerned with Reagan's "warmonger image," it is very likely, therefore, that his campaign strategists urged him to tone down his belligerent rhetoric toward the Soviets (Smith 1983, 1). The 1984 election campaign thus appears to have been a triggering event in Reagan's shift.

Most importantly, Reagan has been portrayed in recent scholarly works as a cognitively open and complex individual. Reagan was considered a good listener, open-minded, able to show empathy to others, and possessed with an emotional, as well as political intelligence (Farnham 2003, 169–71). His cognitive structure, moreover, appears to have been more complex than has usually been attributed to him (Farnham 2003; Fischer 1997). These qualities were conducive to his learning while in office. For example, due to his relatively high levels of cognitive complexity, Reagan was able to differentiate the Soviet leadership from "communists" more generally (Fischer 1997).

A series of events took place in his first term that highlighted to Reagan the danger of nuclear weapons. First, there was the KAL 007 episode, in which a Korean airliner that strayed into Soviet airspace in September 1983 was shot down by the Soviets. To Reagan, this event "demonstrated how close the world had come to the precipice and how much we needed nuclear arms control" (Reagan 1990, 584, quoted in Farnham 2003, 158). Second, the made-for-television movie *The Day After*, a dark portrayal of the effects of nuclear war, had a profound impact on Reagan, leaving him "deeply depressed" (Reagan 1990, 585, quoted in Farnham 2003, 158). Third, Reagan received a sobering briefing from the military on the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) in the event of a nuclear attack. Finally, in November 1983, NATO launched its "Able Archer 83" war games, which were designed to test nuclear release procedures. This simulation was seen by the Soviet government as a cover for an imminent U.S. nuclear attack on the Soviet Union, leading the Soviets to make preparations for a nuclear war. Reagan perceived the Soviet reaction to Able Archer to be a nuclear "near-miss" (Fischer 1997, 135).

These events had a profound impact on Reagan's views concerning the threat of nuclear warfare. He began to alter his public rhetoric with regard to arms control talks, which he supported with greater determination. In a December 1983 news conference, Reagan expressed his strong support for "the reduction particularly of nuclear weapons" and said, "[W]e must come to the realization that those weapons should be outlawed worldwide forever."[22] Within a relatively short period of time, the nuclear threat, rather than the Soviet threat, had thus emerged as Reagan's greatest fear (Farnham 2003, 160; Garthoff 1994, 144–45).[23]

In conclusion, Reagan's massive arms buildup (e.g., systemic-structural factors), coupled with the fear of nuclear devastation if the arms race continued, served as the permissive conditions for this reversal; the 1984 presidential campaign (i.e., domestic political factors), as well as the nuclear-related incidents—the KAL 007 episode, *The Day After* movie, the SIOP briefing, and "Able Archer 83"—served as the triggering factors for this shift; and Reagan's purportedly high levels of cognitive openness and complexity can be seen as the causal factors that enabled him to "learn" while he was in office.

Mikhail Gorbachev and Soviet Policy Toward the United States

When Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko spoke out on Mikhail Gorbachev's behalf as a candidate for leader of the Soviet Union, he famously remarked that behind Gorbachev's smile lay "iron teeth" (English 2000, 198). Elected as general secretary of the Communist Party on March 11, 1985, Gorbachev was not as hard-line as many of his contemporaries, but he also was far from being a liberal democrat. He was a communist who intended for communism to survive. The reforms he initiated were meant to fix what was wrong with the Soviet system, rather than to do away with the system altogether. In fact, in late 1985, Gorbachev's outlook was still class-based, and America was still portrayed as the center of global imperialism (English 2000, 205).

By 1989, Gorbachev had undertaken radical policy changes that led to the end of the Cold War. He had initiated deep cuts in both nuclear and conventional arms; withdrawn the Soviet Union from Afghanistan; reduced the Soviet naval presence at sea; abandoned Cold War and imperialist stereotypes that had been used to define regional situations; and accepted socialism's collapse in Eastern Europe (English 2000, 222; Herrmann 1992, 457–59; Lynch 1992, 33). New priorities included economic integration, expanded cultural ties, and cooperation with the West in the struggle against terrorism and the promotion of human rights (English 2000, 220). His foreign policy, in short, had undergone a radical restructuring.

The pace and breadth of Gorbachev's changes shocked not only foreign observers and hard-line opponents, but also Gorbachev's own reformist allies, some of whom tried to dissuade their leader from pursuing his new policies (English 2000, 193; Stein 1994).[24] Robert English aptly describes Gorbachev's bold foreign policy initiatives:

> Initial moves, such as halting nuclear tests in August 1985 and a grand disarmament plan in January 1986, were soon followed by even more substantial steps: acceptance of unprecedented military-verification measures in mid 1986; agreement to eliminate all medium-range nuclear missiles in 1987; deep, unilateral conventional force cuts in 1988; and, by early 1989, a complete exit in Afghanistan (as well as disengagement from other conflicts in the third world). Later in 1989, if any still doubted that the cold war had ended, the iron curtain came down on its final act. (English 2000, 193–94)

Neorealists' focus on the balance of capabilities appears to hold at least part of the explanation for Soviet foreign policy change. According to this logic, a fundamental cause of Soviet "new thinking" was a diminished perception of threat. Richard K. Herrmann quotes then-foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze addressing the Supreme Soviet on October 23, 1989:

> In the fifties and sixties there were different realities and different ideas about the external threat. There was no sense of firm national security, and the threat of war was seen as immediate and even inevitable reality. … It was necessary to acquire confidence

and to eschew, if you will, our weakness complex so as to assess the situation objectively in a balanced way. (Herrmann 1992, 462–63)

Thus, Glasnost led to a debate over national interests, in which new thinkers criticized past Soviet leaders for exaggerating threats and misreading bipolar concerns into regional conflicts (Herrmann 1992, 463).

An additional materialist explanation focuses on Soviet economic constraints. Some scholars maintain that the Soviet Union was constrained economically and that these constraints influenced strategic choices that were made (Brooks and Wohlforth 2000/01; Spanier 1991). According to this view, it was the material pressures facing the Soviet leadership that compelled Gorbachev to undertake a radical shift toward retrenchment; material factors were "endogenous" to Gorbachev's new thinking. Brooks and Wohlforth point to Gorbachev's pronouncements—for example, in a speech he delivered on December 10, 1984—that restoring growth was necessary for preserving the Soviet Union's status as a great power (Brooks and Wohlforth 2000–01, 21). The Soviet Union's economic decline was significant, particularly when compared to its archrival, the United States (Brooks and Wohlforth 2000–01, 22). The defense burden was astoundingly high, constituting about 40 percent of the budget and 15–20 percent of GDP in the early 1980s—at least four times the U.S. level; Soviet foreign aid spending and subsidies to Eastern Europe were high as well, contributing to the untenable economic burden Gorbachev was forced to confront (Brooks and Wohlforth 2000–01, 22–23). The Soviet Union also lagged technologically behind its Western rivals in areas such as information processing—for example, there was a significant disparity in the number of computers—a fact that made Soviet policymakers very uneasy (Brooks and Wohlforth 2000–01, 24–25, 37, 40–42). Only by 1988, argue Brooks and Wohlforth, did Gorbachev's foreign policy proposals begin to move in a more radical direction, with Soviet policymakers—and even many within the Soviet military—repeatedly asserting that the Soviet Union could no longer bear the costs of its international position (Brooks and Wohlforth 2000–01, 31–32).

These neorealist explanations point to permissive conditions that facilitated Gorbachev's foreign policy change; at the same time, however, they are underdetermined. Janice Gross Stein (1994) reminds us that Soviet officials disagreed fundamentally about the appropriate direction of Soviet foreign and defense policy. Stein's argument applies to the economic argument as well. The Soviet Union may certainly have faced severe economic constraints, which prompted *some* Soviet officials to question the wisdom of maintaining an expensive arms race. Yet Stein points to the wide variation of responses to the Soviet Union's economic decline. Gorbachev's immediate predecessors, Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko, responded quite differently than he did to fundamentally the same set of international conditions (Stein 1994, 158–59).

More importantly, however, as Robert Snyder (2005) has argued, materialist explanations are insufficient because they cannot explain the magnitude of Gorbachev's foreign policy change. Gorbachev's dramatic changes surprised even his own supporters among the political elite in the Soviet Union. His changes were met with powerful resistance from conservative politicians and from the Soviet military-industrial complex; popular pressures to pursue Gorbachev's changes were negligible (English 2000, 195, 201, 205). To quote Robert English, "He [Gorbachev] could have sat idle and enjoyed his reign in regal comfort" (English 2000, 195). The policies undertaken by Gorbachev were thus not inevitable. Gorbachev went well beyond "retrenchment," promoting a revolution in foreign policy in his advocacy of common security, universal human rights, and the renunciation of nuclear weapons (Snyder 2005, 57). With glasnost in full swing, Gorbachev unjammed foreign radio broadcasts and freed political

prisoners, among them Andrei Sakharov (English 2000, 223). His changes were transformative. Many of his moves were unilateral, originating with Gorbachev himself and bypassing ministry and Central Committee channels (English 2000, 201).

Domestic political factors also served as permissive conditions in the case of Gorbachev's shift. Specifically, the group of people known as "new thinkers" in foreign policy proved to be a significant source of domestic support for disarmament and great power cooperation (rather than confrontation). New thinkers held that Soviet interests lay in rapprochement with the West—above all, with America—and liberalization at home (English 2000, 221; Lynch 1992, 32). Gorbachev became convinced that the confrontation of European blocs needed to be radically transformed in order to develop his goal of normal political and economic relations with the West (English 2000, 203). According to Gorbachev aide Anatoly Chernyaev, the new-thinking intellectuals forced him to come to terms with their liberal-integrationist *Weltanschauung* (English 2000, 215). Yet, as William Zimmerman and Deborah Yarsike emphasize, there was an identifiable group of people who had been "new thinkers" in foreign policy long before Gorbachev's ascent (1992, 4).

The most important factor that explains Gorbachev's dramatic foreign policy change appears to be Gorbachev himself. Gorbachev is widely regarded as an individual with high levels of cognitive openness and complexity. He was a good listener and open to new ideas, qualities that enabled him to learn from the massive amount of information he accumulated as the leader of the Soviet Union. Janice Gross Stein points out that Gorbachev, unlike some of his predecessors, was an "uncommitted thinker" on security issues. By being receptive to new representations of security problems, Stein argues, Gorbachev was able to learn from Soviet failures, such as in Afghanistan (Stein 1994, 173–80). From 1985–86, Gorbachev engaged intensively in the study of international relations, and he met, with increasing frequency, with representatives of foreign countries; foreign leaders and statesman; and members of the international scientific community (English 2000, 212–15; Stein 1994, 178–80). Gorbachev became convinced that the confrontation between European blocs needed to be radically transformed in order to develop his goal of normal political and economic relations with the West (English 2000, 203). He sought to strike a modus vivendi with the United States, which he came to believe was critical to bringing about predictability in Soviet foreign affairs (Lynch 1992, 32). Finally, the Chernobyl accident had a profound impact on Gorbachev's learning as well. Gorbachev spoke somberly about this tragic incident and about the need to do everything possible to prevent nuclear war. At the Reykjavik summit of October 1986, he stunned Reagan and his advisers with his willingness to make huge concessions in his effort to achieve total nuclear disarmament (English 2000, 217). Policies associated with the new thinking ultimately replaced those of Gorbachev's predecessors, first in the realm of domestic policy, and then with regard to foreign policy.

In short, Gorbachev's diminished perception of threat coupled with severe economic constraints can be seen as permissive conditions for his policy shift, as was the growing influence of the "new thinkers," who pushed for a different direction in Soviet foreign policy. Gorbachev's highly complex cognitive structure, however, was the key causal factor that explains why he (rather than any of his predecessors) opted for a radically new course in Soviet foreign policy.

Future Cases

In its examination of a select number of cases, this book has aimed to provide an in-depth interpretive account of the dovish shifts undergone by Shimon Peres and, to a lesser extent, Yitzhak Rabin. These shifts led, in turn, to one of the most dramatic foreign policy changes in Israel's history: the Oslo accords. Systemic-structural and domestic political changes in the late 1980s and early 1990s provided the necessary permissive conditions that led Peres and Rabin to dramatically alter their approach toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But it is their relatively high degree of cognitive openness and complexity that explains why they revised their core beliefs while Begin and Shamir did not. Similarly, the vignettes presented above serve to illustrate why two other Israeli leaders, Sharon and Netanyahu, perceived and responded to the same geopolitical environment somewhat differently. Significantly, each man served as a longtime leader of the Likud party, demonstrating the idea that a foreign policy hawk even from an ideologically rightist party can adopt dovish policies. It is one's cognitive structure, rather than one's ideology, that determines the likelihood of his or her foreign policy reorientation. Beyond the Israeli cases, other world leaders—U.S. presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, as well as Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev—have each been portrayed as leaders whose relatively high levels of cognitive openness and complexity can help to shed light on the dramatic foreign policy shifts they undertook during their time in office.

A similar application of cognitive structural analysis to other cases would be beneficial to scholars seeking a richer understanding of foreign policy change. The actor-specific approach suggested here sheds light on the thinking behind an individual's propensity to update his or her core beliefs or remain committed to them regardless of the circumstances. The policy implications of this approach are significant. Cognitively open and complex decision makers who come across new information are more likely to revise even their most deeply held views concerning an enemy than their more cognitively closed and simple counterparts. How a decision maker reacts to changed circumstances—be it an adversary who adopts less hostile policies, a more favorable strategic environment, domestic political changes—is of critical importance. It can ultimately make the difference between initiating or continuing a protracted conflict and ending it.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION

1. It is important to note that leaders of authoritarian states cannot *always* act on all their whims. For example, even at the peak of his power, Soviet leader Nikita S. Khrushchev still had to contend with political rivals in the Presidium. Today, Iran—a modern-day authoritarian regime—has a president who is unable to make significant decisions without the approval of the mullahs of the Guardian Council.

2. For a useful review of the key arguments made in these earlier works, see Jerel A. Rosati, Martin W. Sampson III, and Joe D. Hagan, “The Study of Change in Foreign Policy,” in *Foreign Policy Restructuring: How Governments Respond to Global Change,* ed. Rosati, Hagan, and Sampson (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 3–21.

3. Although this approach is now out of favor, earlier works on foreign policy change employed a largely systemic framework. See, for example, R. J. Barry Jones, “Concepts and Models of Change in International Relations,” in *Change and the Study of International Relations: The Evaded Dimension,* ed. Barry Buzan and Barry Jones (New Cambridge University Press, 1981); and John Gerard Ruggie, “Continuity and Transformation in the International Polity: Toward a Neorealist Synthesis,” in *Neorealism and Its Critics,* ed. Robert O. Keohane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 131–57.

4. The failure of realism to predict the end of the Cold War might be said to not only have called into question realist notions but also to have provided the major impetus for the development of constructivism (e.g., Wendt 1992).

5. The operational code, a concept developed by Nathan Leites in 1951 and revised by George (1969), is designed to provide the researcher with a picture of a leader’s belief system by investigating the decision maker’s philosophical beliefs about the nature of the political universe (e.g., conflictual or harmonious) with his or her set of instrumental beliefs (e.g., how best to deal with enemies). Applied over time, operational code analysis makes it possible to trace changes in that belief system (Bennett 1999; Malici and Malici 2005; Malici 2008).

6. There is no unified theory of learning, and learning theorists do not even agree on a set definition for “learning” (See Levy 1994, 283; Breslauer and Tetlock 1991, 3–19).

7. Banning N. Garrett reaches a very different conclusion. He writes, “In U.S. policymaking toward China, learning has not been primarily the result of repeated failures at the tactical level leading to a search for a new strategy or reconsideration of basic goals. On the contrary, a perceived need or opportunity for a change in goals and strategies has led to a willingness to engage in cognitive-structural learning—developing a more nuanced, differentiated, and integrated view of one’s environment—and then to consideration of tactical policy shifts as a means of implementing a new strategy or achieving new strategic objectives” (1991, 242).

8. Author’s interview with Nimrod Novik, 23 October 2006, Herzliya Pituach, Israel.

9. As is shown in chapters 3–5, attitudes concerning negotiations with the PLO and the establishment of a Palestinian state have seen shifts in support over time. Until the early 1990s, a majority of Israelis, including those identifying with the dovish Labor Party, opposed negotiations with the PLO. Mainstream Israelis supported negotiations with local Palestinians who were not officially identified with the PLO; only the left-wing and a minority within Labor advocated direct PLO talks. The notion of an independent Palestinian state was arguably an even greater taboo until the mid- to late-1990s. It was only in 1997 that the Labor Party endorsed such a state in its platform; the centrist Kadima party, formed by Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert, highlighted the idea of a two-state solution in its 2005 platform.

10. As the majority of interviews for this project were conducted in 2006, some of the interviewees are now deceased.

11. Although Weizman attained senior positions in the government, he is considered by some political elites to have been a marginal foreign policy player, even during the years in which he served as minister of defense, when he was a member of the negotiating team at Camp David. See interviews with Zalman Shoval, 20 November 2006, Tel Aviv; and Gad Yaacobi, 9 October 2006, Tel Aviv. As is shown in chapter 3, Peres was instrumental in forging an alliance—albeit a tacit one—with France in the 1950s, which provided Israel with a significant source of arms and which led to the construction of a nuclear reactor in the 1960s. Peres the hawk was also a central figure in the establishment of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. His influence on Israeli foreign policy did not diminish after he became a dove. As is shown in chapter 5, Peres was the key figure in the Rabin government’s dramatic foreign policy change vis-à-vis the PLO in 1993.

CHAPTER TWO. ASSESSING COGNITIVE STRUCTURE

1. Cognitive openness is closely related to what some writers refer to as a leader's "sensitivity to the environment." An actor who is sensitive to his or her environment will be inclined to reassess his or her beliefs in light of new information, whereas an actor who is insensitive to the environment will ignore or reject additional information.

2. Some analysts do not distinguish cognitive complexity from cognitive openness, treating them as one analytical unit (Cottam, Dietz-Uhler, Mastors, and Preston 2004, 29).

3. This is how other political scientists who focus on the individual level of analysis have gotten around the potential tautological problem involving personal characteristics of leaders. The outcome must not be the same as the evidence used to explain it. See, for example, Brent E. Sasley's dissertation (2006).

4. The group was referred to as the "Stern Gang" by the British authorities.

5. Author's interview with David Kimche, 8 November 2006, Tel Aviv.

6. Shamir never had any intention of meeting the minimal demands of Arab leaders concerning the ceding of territory. As he later told an interviewer: "In the Madrid Conference, I stated in my opening speech that they should not expect any territorial compromises. That's not on our agenda. We can find different ways to live together. But with regards to territorial issues, these are things that cannot be changed" (Misgav 2000, 156). Shortly after his defeat in the 1992 elections, Shamir made the following revelation to an Israeli reporter concerning his intentions at Madrid: "I would have carried on autonomy talks for ten years and meanwhile we would have reached half a million Jews in Judea and Samaria." See Yosef Harif, "Interview with Yitzhak Shamir," *Ma'ariv,* 26 June 1992.

7. Author's interview with David Kimche.

8. Unlike some of his colleagues, Shamir lacked his own "camp" of supporters within his party and probably would not have been able to easily (or quickly) replace members of Dayan's staff with his own people. He acknowledges that he had none of his own people in any case (Shamir 1994, 110).

9. Author's interview with Dennis Ross, 25 July 2007, Washington, D.C.

10. Author's interview with Tom Pickering, 16 July 2007, Washington, D.C.

11. Shamir's Lehi decided to assassinate him following his proposal to divide up Jerusalem.

12. His reference point was the Munich Pact, reached by Neville Chamberlain with Hitler, an agreement that sealed the fate of Czechoslovakia and is, perhaps, the most commonly used analogy to describe a policy of appeasement.

13. To mitigate the methodological danger of selecting only those data that illustrate anecdotes, remarks, and descriptions that fit my argument, this author has searched thoroughly for counterexamples, poring over Shamir's spoken and written words, yet evidence to the contrary was not found. The examples described above are highly representative of Shamir's rhetoric. Moreover, this analysis of Shamir's certitude, lack of openness toward those with other viewpoints, and undifferentiated worldview is in harmony with the general interpretations of others who have written about him (Frankel 1994; Margalit 1992; Shlaim 2001).

14. See, for example, David Ignatius, "Menachem Begin: Shaped by Holocaust," *The Washington Post,* 10 March 1992. In this piece, Ignatius relates that Begin had told him of his plans to write a book entitled *The Generation of Holocaust and Redemption.*

15. The King David Hotel served as the site of the British military command.

16. Herut merged with another party, the Liberals, to form Gahal, which subsequently became the Likud party.

17. According to Yechiel Kadishai, head of the Prime Minister's Office under Begin, notwithstanding Begin's decision to relinquish the Sinai peninsula to Egypt under the terms of the peace agreement, Begin never had any intention to cede parts of the West Bank or Gaza Strip, which were an integral part of the Jabotinsky vision of a Greater Israel. See author's interview with Kadishai, 26 November 2006, Tel Aviv.

18. Since Shamir later split from Jabotinsky's Irgun to join Avraham (Yair) Stern's more radical group, both men played a critical role in shaping his views.

19. Author's interview with Harold Saunders, 18 July 2007, Washington, D.C.

20. Interestingly, Shamir, in his autobiography, suggests that Begin tended to annoy his listeners by preaching to them about the Holocaust (Shamir 1994, 90). See also Raymond Carroll, Milan J. Kubic, Eleanor Clift, and Thomas M. DeFrank, "Why Begin is Tough," *Newsweek,* 30 January 1978, 42.

21. "Operational Opera: The Israeli Raid on the Osirak Reactor," *Jewish Virtual Library*. Available at http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/osirak1.html#_ftn14.

22. Author's interview with Tom Pickering.

23. Author's interview with Dennis Ross.

24. Ibid.

25. Interview with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Israel Television, 7 June 1974. See also Avner (2010, 271).

26. In her study, Aronoff examines prime ministers Shamir, Rabin, Peres and Netanyahu. (She does not focus on Begin.) See Yael S. Aronoff, "When and Why Do Hard-Liners Become Soft? An Examination of Israeli Prime Ministers Shamir, Rabin, Peres, and Netanyahu," in *Profiling Political Leaders and the Analysis of Political Leadership: The Cross-Cultural Study of Personality and Behavior,* ed. Ofer Feldman and Linda Velenty (Westport: Praeger, 2001), 185–201.

27. Author's interviews with Yossi Beilin, 6 December 2006, Tel Aviv; Yael Dayan, 16 December 2006, Tel Aviv; Aliza Eshed, 19 November 2006, Jerusalem; Moshe Maoz, 18 April 2007 (telephone interview); Israel Peleg, 21 December 2006, Shfayim; Tom Pickering; and Dennis Ross.

28. Author's interviews with Yishayahu Ben-Porat, 17 November 2006, Herzliya Pituach; Avraham Katz-Oz, 3 December 2006, Tel Aviv; Nimrod Novik; Alon Pinkas, 17 October 2006, Tel Aviv; and Gad Yaacobi.

29. Author's interviews with Ben-Porat; and Ron Pundak, 31 October 2006, Tel Aviv.

30. Author's interviews with David Landau, 21 November 2006, Tel Aviv; Pinkas; Ephraim Sneh, 22 January 2007, Tel Aviv; and Yaacobi.

31. Author's interview with Israel Peleg.

32. Author's interview with Ben-Porat.

33. Author's interview with Moshe Maoz.

34. Author's interview with Aliza Eshed.

35. Author's interview with James Schlesinger, 27 April 2007, Washington, D.C. See also interviews with Dennis Ross; Tom Pickering; and Harold Saunders. One notable exception is Martin Indyk, who claims that "Peres wouldn't listen at all" to what he had to say. On this point, Indyk's assessment runs counter to the widespread view of Peres as an especially good listener. Indyk himself notes that Peres was actually quite attentive to Yasser Arafat, although he listened to him so that he could "out-manipulate" him. See author's interview with Martin Indyk, 28 August 2007, Washington, D.C.

36. Author's interview with Yael Dayan.

37. Author's interview with Gad Yaacobi.

38. See also Ilan Kafir, "A Year Alongside Shimon Peres," *Yedioth Ahronoth, Seven Days* [Hebrew weekly magazine], 9 January 1976, 5–7; Michael Miron, "Peres's Boys," [Hebrew] *Ma'ariv,* 16 December 1980, 17–19; and interview with Tom Pickering.

39. See also interview with Yishayahu Ben-Porat. "Shimon did not go to Entebbe until he consulted with Dayan—something people did not know," recalls Ben-Porat. "He invited Dayan to dinner prior to the decision on the operation and was not confident in himself until Dayan told him to go for it." The Dayan-Peres alliance disappeared after Dayan became foreign minister in Begin's Likud government following Labor's debacle in the 1977 national elections.

40. While the cabinet ultimately voted in favor of the war, Peres was one of three ministers who abstained in the vote.

41. Author's interview with Ron Pundak.

42. Author's interview with Israel Peleg.

43. Ibid.

44. Author's interview with Nimrod Novik.

45. Peres lecture on 22 January 1956, IDFA Archives, File #13, Batch #101042, 1965.

46. Author's interview with Shimon Peres, 3 November 2006, Tel Aviv.

CHAPTER THREE. PERES: THE HAWKISH YEARS (1953–1977)

1. Peres was still in the Rafi party in 1967. While it is conceivable to divide up Peres's career differently, this particular division makes sense in terms of explaining the hawk-to-dove shift, which occurs after 1977. The 1967 War is a logical place to divide the two earlier parts of Peres's career, since it was after Israel's victory in this war that the terms *hawk* and *dove* became part of the Israeli political lexicon.

2. "Activists" were precursors to "hawks" in pre-1967 Israel.

3. In Hebrew, *bitachon* means security. In Israel, the ministry of defense is, in essence, also the ministry of security. See author's interview with Zeev Schiff, 10 November 2006, Ramat Aviv Gimel.

4. Peres's article in the Kibbutz journal *Niv Hakvutza,* June 1954, File #2, Batch #101042, 1965, IDFA Archives.

5. Peres's lecture in Yifat, 8 September 1955, IDFA Archives, File #10, Batch #101042, 1965, IDFA Archives.

6. Peres's article in *Niv Hakvutza,* June 1954, IDFA Archives, File #2, Batch #101042, IDFA Archives; see also Shimon Peres, "Present and Future in Franco-Israel Relations," *The Jerusalem Post,* 12 June 1957.

7. Peres's speech, "A Day that is Close and a Day that is Far Away," 19 July 1966, File #5-008-1965-56, Labor Party Archive.

8. Shimon Peres's lecture to trade association *Moadon Hamischari,* 16 November 1956, File #26, Batch #101042, 1965, IDFA Archives.

9. Peres's lecture at the Mugrabi Hall, 16 November 1956, File #27, Batch #101042, 1965, IDFA Archives.

10. See Shimon Peres's Lecture, "The Arms Program for the Year 1955–56," 19 June 1955, File #30, Batch #101042, 1965, IDFA Archives. See also "Shimon Peres, Deputy Defense Minister: The Missile Race Began Before 'Shavit 2,' " *Ma'ariv,* 27 July 1962.

11. Author's interview with former Ben-Gurion aide and veteran journalist Elkana Galli, 5 July 2001, Tel Aviv.

12. Peres's Speech, "A Day that Is Close and a Day that Is Far Away," 19 July 1966, File #5-008-1965-56, Labor Party Archive.

13. Author's interview with Shimon Peres, 3 November 2006, Tel Aviv.

14. Shimon Peres's lecture to senior defense ministry officials on his trip abroad, 30 April 1956, File #37, Batch #101042, 1965, IDFA Archives.

15. Peres, Comments in Senior Meeting of the Defense Ministry, 29 October 1954, File #469, Batch #101042, 1965, IDFA Archives.

16. Author's interview with Mordechai Bar-On, 16 October 2006, Jerusalem.

17. The secret test of a nuclear device reportedly took place on 2 November 1966.

18. Rafi stands for *Reshimat Poalei Israel* (Israel Workers' List).

19. The move was precipitated by Ben-Gurion's split with his successor, Levi Eshkol, in the wake of the Lavon Affair, a political scandal that rocked the political establishment.

20. See also, author's interviews with Peres's colleague in Rafi, Zalman Shoval, and longtime Ben-Gurion aide Haim Israeli, 22 November 2006, Tel Aviv.

21. Knesset deliberations during the Sixth Knesset, First Session, 16 March 1966, R.G. 156, File Kaf-10, Israel State Archives.

22. Peres's Speech, "A Day that Is Close and a Day that Is Far Away," 19 July 1966, File #5-008-1965-56, Labor Party Archive.

23. In 1968, Mapai was joined by Mapam and Rafi, becoming the Alignment. Soon thereafter, Mapai, Ahdut Ha'avodah and Rafi merged into the Israel Labor Party.

24. While the majority in the Labor movement opposed annexing the territories, a number of prominent personalities affiliated with Mapai—most notably, poets and writers such as Natan Alterman, Moshe Shamir, and Haim Gouri—called for retaining the newly conquered territories. Similarly, the Ahdut Ha'avodah faction of the Labor movement supported the notion of a Greater Israel. See author's interview with Eitan Haber, 21 November 2006, Ramat Gan.

25. Allon served as deputy prime minister in the governments of Levi Eshkol and Golda Meir, and as minister of foreign affairs in the first Rabin government (1974–77).

26. See author's interviews with Eitan Haber; Haim Israeli; and former Labor legislators Shulamit Aloni, 1 November 2006, Kfar Shmaryahu; and Gad Yaacobi.

27. Knesset Deliberations, Eighth Knesset, Second Session, 13 January 1975, Registry Group 215, File Kaf-9, Israel State Archives.

28. See author's interviews with Mordechai Bar-On; Yishayahu Ben-Porat; Ruth Dayan, Dayan's widow, 30 November 2006, Tel Aviv; Jean Frydman, 21 November 2006, Jaffa; Avraham Katz-Oz, 3 December 2006, Tel Aviv; Samuel Lewis, 28 August 2006, Washington, D.C.; Shlomo Nakdimon, 26 November 2006, Ramat Aviv; and Zalman Shoval.

29. Rafi Secretariat Meeting, 3 September 1967, File #5-003-1967-24, Labor Party Archive.

30. Party Forum Entitled "Jewish Ideology and Israeli Policy," 28 December 1967, File #5-008-1966-57, Labor Party Archive.

31. Author's interviews with Yossi Beilin; Gad Yaacobi; and Nissim Zvili, 4 December 2006, Tel Aviv.

32. In one party forum, for example, Peres says that while Israel has a right to all of the land, it must square that right with Israel's desire for peace should that opportunity arise. See Party Forum, entitled "Jewish Ideology and Israeli Policy," 28 December 1967, File #5-008-1966-52, Labor Party Archive.

33. Labor Party Subcommittee on Political Matters, 7 January 1977, File #2-021-1977-133, Labor Party Archive.

34. Peres was a junior minister in Golda Meir's government from March 1969 to June 1974.

35. See also author's interview with Aliza Eshed, 19 November 2006, Jerusalem.

36. The first settlement was Kiryat Arba, near Hebron, which was established in 1968.

37. Gush Emunim was not formally established as a movement until 1974, in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War. Nevertheless, its leaders actively promoted the establishment of Jewish settlements in the West Bank after the 1967 War.

38. See author's interviews with Shulamit Aloni and Naphtali Lavie, 19 November 2006, Jerusalem.

39. Dayan was then out of the government, having resigned as defense minister in the wake of the Yom Kippur War.

40. Author's interview with Shimon Peres, 3 November 2006, Tel Aviv.

41. Author's interview with Naphtali Lavie.

42. See also author's interview with Peres, 3 November 2006.

43. According to a former aide to the then-defense minister, Peres felt it was important that the region not be left *Judenrein* (free of Jews). This helps to explain why Peres did not object to the settlers' activities. See interview with Naphtali Lavie.

44. The first 105 housing units were ready by 1972 (Sedan 1997).

45. Peres's address to the Labor Party Subcommittee on Political Matters, 7 January 1977, File #2-021-1977-133, Labor Party Archive.

46. Peres's address to the Labor Party Central Committee Meeting, 12 January 1977, File #2-23-1977-117-B, Labor Party Archive.

47. Author's interview with Naphtali Lavie.

48. Author's interview with Dan Margalit, 23 November 2006 (telephone interview). A notable exception was Arie "Lova" Eliav, who stated that Israel must "never repress the rights of the Palestinians to national self-determination" and ought to "help them establish a state" (Gorenberg 2006, 175). Because Eliav's positions were outside of the Labor Party's mainstream, he was forced to give up his position as secretary-general of the party.

49. Peres's address to Labor Party Subcommittee on Political Matters, 7 January 1977, File #2-21-1977-133, Labor Party Archive.

50. Peres's address to Labor Party Subcommittee on Political Matters, 7 January 1977, File #2-21-1977-133, Labor Party Archive.

51. Author's interview with Gad Yaacobi.

52. It was not until 1980 that Kreisky would grant the PLO informal diplomatic recognition.

CHAPTER FOUR. PERES'S DOVISH TURN, PHASE I (1977–1987)

1. See Peres's address to the Knesset, 20 June 1977, File #108, Batch #1090, 2004, IDFA Archives; "Interview with Shimon Peres," *Davar*, 31 March 1978; "Peres: Labor Party Ready to Concede Territory," *The Washington Post*, 7 July 1978; and Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 30 December 1979, File #2-23-1979-120 (bet), Labor Party Archive.

2. Labor Party Central Committee Meeting, 23 July 1978, File #2-23-1977-118-B, Labor Party Archive, Beit Berl; Labor Party Central Committee Meeting, 25 December 1977, File #2-23-1977-117-B, Labor Party Archive, Beit Berl; Labor Party Forum, 25 September 1979, File #2-23-1979-120-A (aleph), Labor Party Archive; Labor Party Convention, 1980, File #2-021-1980-140, Labor Party Archive; Labor Party Convention, 23 February 1977, File #23, Batch 31, 1980, IDFA Archives.

3. Labor Party Central Committee Meeting, 25 November 1979, File #2-23-1979-120-B (bet), Labor Party Archive.

4. Labor Party Central Committee Meeting, 22 October 1981, File #2-23-1981-123, Labor Party Archive; Labor Party Central Committee Meeting, 30 December 1979, File #2-23-1979-120-B (bet), Labor Party Archive; Labor Party Central Committee Meeting, 26 November 1981, File #2-23-1981-123, Labor Party Archive.

5. Peres's address at Labor Party Central Committee, 23 July 1978, File #2-23-1977-118 (bet), Labor Party Archive.

6. Labor Party Central Committee Meeting, 25 November 1979, File #2-23-1979-120-B (bet), Labor Party Archive.

7. Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 17 September 1981, File #2-23-1981-123, Labor Party Archive.

8. Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 19 May 1977, File #2-23-1977-116 (aleph), Labor Party Archive.

9. Peres address to Labor Party Central Committee, 23 April 1981, File #2-23-1981-122, Labor Party Archive.

10. "Israeli Labor Stressing Dovish Image, but Doubts Remain," *The New York Times,* 13 June 1980.

11. Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 23 July 1978, File #2-23-1977-118 (bet), Labor Party Archive.

12. Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 6 December 1978, Labor Party Central Committee, Labor Party Archive.

13. This passage, from Peres's book *Tomorrow Is Now,* was translated by Martin Sherman and quoted in his op-ed, "Peres vs. Peres," *Jerusalem Post,* 13 December 2003.

14. *Moshavim* are a type of cooperative agricultural communities of small, individual farms, while *kibbutzim* are collective communities. See Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 18 November 1982, File #2-23-1982-124 (gimel), Labor Party Archive.

15. "An Interview with Shimon Peres," *Time,* 9 July 1984, 32; "Begin's Rhetoric: Missing in Shamir-Peres Debate," *Los Angeles Times,* 11 July 1984, 6, 13.

16. Labor Party Central Committee Meeting, 10 September 1984, File #2-23-1984-126 (aleph), Labor Party Archive.

17. Author's Interview with Gad Yaacobi.

18. Author's interview with Nissim Zvili.

19. Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 25 December 1977, File #2-23-1977-117 (bet), Labor Party Archive.

20. "Israeli Labor Stressing Dovish Image, but Doubts Remain"; see also Peres's Address to Labor Party Central Committee, 7 September 1980, File #2-23-981-121 (bet), Labor Party Archive.

21. Labor Party Subcommittee on Political Matters, 7 January 1977, File #2-021-1977-133, Labor Party Archive.

22. Labor Party Central Committee Meeting, 25 November 1979, File #2-23-1979-120-B (bet), Labor Party Archive; Third Labor Party Convention in Binyanei Ha'uma, Jerusalem, 17 December 1980, File #2-021-1980-140, Labor Party Archive.

23. Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 25 November 1979, File #2-23-1979-120 (bet), Labor Party Archive.

24. Peres's address to the Third Labor Party Convention in Binyanei Ha'uma in Jerusalem, 17 December 1980, File #2-021-1980-140, Labor Party Archive.

25. Peres's address to the Labor Party Central Committee, 26 November 1981, File #2-23-1981-123, Labor Party Archive.

26. See, for example, Labor Party Platform, Fourth Congress, 8–10 April 1986, Labor Party Archive. See, also, "A Bitter Divorce," *Time,* 31 October 1988, 26.

27. Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 27 October 1977, File #2-23-1977-117 (bet), Labor Party Archive.

28. See Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 8 July 1979, File #2-23-1979-119 (bet), Labor Party Archive; Ohed Zmoreh, "A plan for difficult years," [Interview with Labor Party Chairman Shimon Peres], *Davar Hashavua,* 10 September 1980, 5–7; Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 6 September 1981, File #2-23-1981-122, Labor Party Archive; Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 20 February 1986, File #2-23-1986-129 (aleph), Labor Party Archive.

29. "Step by Step with Shimon Peres," *Time,* 18 April 1977, 24; Peres's address to the Labor Party Central Committee, 17 September 1981, File #2-23-1981-123, Labor Party Archive.

30. Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 6 September 1981, File #2-23-1981-122, Labor Party Archive. For additional expressions of disagreement with the Socialist International leadership over the matter of the PLO, see Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 23 July 1978, File #2-23-1977-118 (bet), Labor Party Archive; Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 8 July 1979, File #2-23-1979-119 (bet), Labor Party Archive; Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 17 September 1981, File #2-23-1981-123, Labor Party Archive; Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 22 October 1981, File #2-23-1981-123, Labor Party Archive; Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 26 November 1981, File #2-23-1981-123, Labor Party Archive; and Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 18 November 1982, File #2-23-1982-124, Labor Party Archive.

31. "Mideast Peace Prospects: 'The Same Old Dark Picture,' " *U.S. News & World Report,* 14 October 1985, 49.

32. Labor Party Central Committee Meeting, 22 October 1981, File #2-23-1981-123, Labor Party Archive.

33. See, for example, the Labor Party Platform of the Fourth Congress, 8–10 April 1986, Labor Party Archive.

34. Labor Party Central Committee Meeting, March 18, 1979, File #2-23-1979-119-B (bet), Labor Party Archive.

35. Labor Party Central Committee Meeting, October 22, 1981, File #2-23-1981-123, Labor Party Archive.

36. Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 23 July 1978, File #2-23-1977-118 (bet), Labor Party Archive. See also Peres's address to Labor Party Central Committee, 6 December 1978, File #2-23-1977-118 (gimel), Labor Party Archive.

37. Author's interviews with Yossi Beilin; Gideon Levy, 14 November 2006, Tel Aviv; Israel Peleg.

38. Author's interview with Gideon Levy.

39. Author's interview with Israel Peleg.

40. Author's interview with Moshe Shachal, 30 October 2006, Tel Aviv.

41. Ibid.

42. See author's interviews with Gad Yaacobi, Nissim Zvili, and Yossi Beilin.

43. File #23, Batch 31, 1980, IDFA Archives.

44. Author's interview with Yossi Beilin.

45. See, for example, Peres's address to the Knesset, 20 June 1977, File #108, Batch 1090, 2004, IDFA Archives; Peres's address to the Labor Party Central Committee, 21 July 1977, File #2-23-1977-117-A.

46. Ibid.; see also "Interview with Shimon Peres," *Davar,* 31 March 1978; "Peres: Labor Party Ready to Concede Territory," *The Washington Post,* 7 July 1978 (interview).

47. Labor Party Central Committee Meeting, 24 September 1978, File #2-23-1977-118-C (gimel), Labor Party Archive.

48. Author's interview with Israel Peleg. Nissim Zvili, too, points out that, while domestic political factors undoubtedly played a role in his embrace of territorial compromise, "Shimon began to understand more and more the meaning of what ought to happen." See author's interview with Nissim Zvili.

49. Labor Party Subcommittee on Political Matters, 7 January 1977, File #2-021-1977-133, Labor Party Archive.

50. Second Labor Party Convention, Sixth Session, 24 February 1977, File #2-021-1977-133, Labor Party Archive.

51. Ibid.

52. Author's interview with Shimon Peres, 3 November 2006, Tel Aviv.

53. Labor Party Central Committee Meeting, 23 July 23 1978, File #2-23-1977-118-B, Labor Party Archive. Peres claims he came to this conclusion shortly after the 1973 War. See author's 2006 interview with Peres.

54. Author's interviews with Yossi Beilin and Israel Peleg.

55. Author's 2006 interview with Peres. In his book *The New Middle East,* Peres writes that one of Sadat's assistants admitted to Yadin and to then-defense minister Ezer Weizman that Egypt's decision to talk peace had definitely been influenced by the Dimona project (Peres 1993, 4–5).

56. Since Peres was involved in the nuclear program from the start, it might be reasonable to assume that, by the very nature of nuclear strategic logic, his experience could have made him more nuanced as a hawk. Many Israeli doves have long suggested that Israel's status as a nuclear power reduces the risk for Israel to retain buffers of territory. However, although Peres's intimacy with the Dimona project seems to have been an important *permissive condition* for his dovish turn, it does not appear to have been a *causal* factor for his revised positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. After all, other hawkish figures involved in the Dimona project never changed their hawkish views. For example, Yuval Ne'eman, an Israeli physicist who helped pioneer this project, went on to lead Tehiya (Renaissance), a far-Right party, in 1979. Ne'eman founded this party as a protest against Israel's peace treaty with Egypt. Moreover, Peres himself did not moderate his views until a decade following the completion of the Dimona project; as has been shown, from 1967 until 1977, he was very much a hawk. Finally, there are indications that Peres has viewed the Dimona project in tactical terms, as when, for instance, he once commented, "Give me peace and we'll give up the nuclear program. That's the whole story." See Serge Schmemann, "Peres Says Israel, With Regional Pact, Would End Atom Effort," *The New York Times,* 23 December 1995.

57. Author's interview with Yossi Beilin.

58. Author's interview with Yael Dayan.

59. Author's interview with Yishayahu Ben-Porat.

60. Author's interview with Israel Peleg.

61. Author's interview with Samuel Lewis.

62. Author's interview with Yael Dayan.

63. See also author's interview with Yishayahu Ben-Porat.

64. Author's interview with Samuel Lewis.

65. Author's interview with Shlomo Nakdimon, 26 November 2006, Ramat Aviv.

66. Author's interview with Zeev Schiff.

67. Author's interview with Shlomo Nakdimon.

68. Author's interview with Yishayahu Ben-Porat.

69. Author's interview with Shulamit Aloni.

70. Author's interview with David Landau.

71. Author's interviews with Aliza Eshed, Gideon Levy, Nimrod Novik, and Israel Peleg.

72. *Mashov* is a Hebrew word that roughly translates to "feedback."

73. Author's interview with Nimrod Novik.

74. Author's interview with Yossi Beilin.

75. Author's interview with Israel Peleg.

76. Author's interview with Avraham Katz-Oz, 3 December 2006, Tel Aviv.

77. Labor Party Forum, "Jewish Ideology and Israeli Policy," 28 December 1967, File #5-008-1966-57, Labor Party Archive.

78. Rafi Secretariat Meeting, 3 September 1967, File #5-003-1967-24, Labor Party Archive.

CHAPTER FIVE. PERES'S DOVISH TURN, PHASE II (1987–1997)

1. While the leadership of the Labor Party (including both Peres and Rabin) had endorsed the Jordanian option, this so-

called option was by no means viewed by everyone as a viable solution to the conflict. Those on the Right tended to view Jordan as the Palestinian state and thus saw no need to negotiate a return of any territory to the Hashemite Kingdom. Those on the Left, by contrast, argued that negotiating with the Palestinian leadership, rather than with Jordan, was the key to peace.

2. Author's interview with Nissim Zvili.

3. Notwithstanding the slow growth of new settlements during this period, the population in existing ones grew substantially. From 1984–88, the number of Israelis living in West Bank settlements (beyond East Jerusalem) rose 80 percent, a fact not lost on the leadership of the first Palestinian Intifada (Gorenberg 2006, 369).

4. Labor Party Central Committee, 11 February 1988, File #2-23-1988-135 (aleph), Labor Party Archive.

5. Labor Party Central Committee, 21 December 1988, File #2-23-1988-137 (bet), Labor Party Archive.

6. Author's interviews with Moshe Shachal; Zalman Shoval; and Nissim Zvili.

7. Author's interview with David Kimche.

8. See also author's interviews with Shimon Peres, 3 November 2006, Tel Aviv; and Yossi Beilin.

9. See author's interviews with Jean Frydman; David Landau; Nimrod Novik; and Nissim Zvili.

10. Author's interview with Nimrod Novik.

11. Address to Labor Party Central Committee, 21 December 1988, File #2-23-1988-137 (bet), Labor Party Archive.

12. The reality was that the 1988–1990 national unity government headed by Shamir was conducting negotiations with the PLO via an assortment of intermediaries despite the denials by its leadership. As Beilin, then the deputy finance minister, pointed out, "Whoever doesn't admit or recognize this, whoever tries to ignore it, is like a small boy who closes his eyes and thinks the world doesn't see him." In January 1990, Bassam Abu Sherif, an aide to Arafat, alleged that Shamir knew "more than anybody else that even those Palestinians he himself had met represented the PLO." Several months later, Arafat made a similar assertion. "With whom are they going to make peace? With phantoms? With me" (AP 1989; Black 1990; Sheridan 1990).

13. The Labor Party's Old Guard managed to defeat the dovish wing on one matter: Beilin's proposal concerning a Palestinian state.

14. Nor was Israel's chief negotiator, Elyakim Rubenstein, a former Likud government official whom Rabin had retained, inclined to compromise.

15. Author's interview with Alon Pinkas. Purim is a Jewish holiday on which people don masks and often attend masquerade parties.

16. Author's interview with Shimon Peres, 3 November 2006, Tel Aviv.

17. Author's interview with Nimrod Novik.

18. Sixth Labor Party Convention, Third Session, 7 December 1997, File #2-021-1997-191, Labor Party Archive; see also Peres (1998).

19. Peres did not endorse the idea of a Palestinian state in his memoirs either, written two years after the Declaration of Principles was signed.

20. Author's interview with Nissim Zvili.

21. This was a theme to which Peres returned many times throughout the decade. In his acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994, Peres declared that "territorial frontiers are no obstacle to ballistic missiles" and that "the battle for survival must be based on political wisdom and moral vision no less than on military might." See http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1994/peres-lecture.html.

22. See author's interviews with Moshe Shachal and Nissim Zvili.

23. Richard Z. Chesnoff and David Makovsky, "Israel's Search for Security," *U.S. News & World Report,* 17 August 1992. See, also, David Makovsky, "The Once and Future Prime Minister," *The Jerusalem Post,* 19 June 1992; and David Makovsky, "Changes in Attitude," *U.S. News & World Report,* 12 October 1992.

24. Peres is not alone in viewing the collapse of the London Agreement as a missed opportunity for peace. Even some officials affiliated with Likud concede that Shamir's rejection of Peres's agreement with King Hussein was, in retrospect, a serious mistake. See, for example, author's interview with Zalman Shoval.

25. Author's interview with Gaad Yaacobi. See also author's interviews with Nimrod Novik; Gideon Levy; David Landau; Israel Peleg; and Alon Pinkas.

26. Author's interview with David Landau.

27. Author's interview with Ron Pundak.

28. Shimon Peres, "On the Path to Capitulation … or Peace?" *The Washington Times,* 21 May 1999, A15.

29. Leslie Susser, "Peres's Grand Design," *The Jerusalem Report,* 6 May 1993.

30. See, also, Melissa Healy, "Israel's Peres Says He Backs Jordanian-Palestinian State," *Los Angeles Times,* 6 September 1993.

31. Author's interview with Moshe Maoz, 18 April 2007 (telephone interview). See also, interview with Samuel Lewis. Dennis Ross agrees that Rabin was slower to come along than Peres with regard to the PLO. See author's interview with Dennis Ross.

32. Peres has always been ambiguous about the precise extent to which he would be willing to part with the West Bank, believing that this important detail is best left to the negotiations.

33. Author's interview with Shulamit Aloni.

34. Author's interview with Jean Frydman.

35. Author's interview with Yael Dayan.

36. Author's interviews with Vice Premier Shimon Peres on 3 November 2006, Tel Aviv; and President Shimon Peres on 3 April 2012, Jerusalem. See also author's interview with Labor Party MK Isaac Herzog, 13 June 2012.

37. Raphael Ahren, “Status quo with Palestinians won’t hold, Peres cautions,” *The Times of Israel*, October 16, 2013. Available at http://www.timesofisrael.com/status-quo-with-palestinians-wont-hold-peres-cautions/.

38. Noam Dvir, “Peres Tells Clinton ‘2-state solution is your gift to Israel,’ ” *Ynet News*, June 19, 2013. Available at http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4394385,00.html.

39. Noam (Dabul) Dvir, “ ‘Abbas is a true partner for peace,’ Says Peres,” *Ynet News*, March 17, 2014. Available at http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4499946,00.html.

40. *Times of Israel* Staff and AFP, “Peres: Netanyahu Torpedoed Peace Deal 3 Years Ago,” *The Times of Israel*, May 6, 2014. Available at http://www.timesofisrael.com/peres-netanyahu-torpedoed-peace-deal-3-years-ago/.

41. Elhanan Miller, “Erekat: Netanyahu Kept Peres from Meeting Abbas,” *The Times of Israel*, May 9, 2014. Available at http://www.timesofisrael.com/erekat-netanyahu-kept-peres-from-meeting-abbas/.

CHAPTER SIX. CONCLUSION

1. However, equally valid is the question of what would lead a dove to pursue hawkish policies, as illustrated in the vignette concerning President Jimmy Carter below.

2. See author’s interview with former U.S. ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis. Dennis Ross agrees that Rabin was slower to come along than Peres with regard to the PLO. See also author’s interviews with Dennis Ross and Moshe Maoz.

3. Peres, who served as foreign minister in Rabin’s second government, agreed with Rabin’s perception of Israel’s long-term security needs. Unlike Rabin, however, the signal event affecting Peres’s strategic calculus was the collapse of the Jordanian option, following King Hussein’s decision of July 1988 to sever administrative and legal ties to the West Bank. The king’s announcement, which followed on the heels of the ill-fated London Agreement, can be seen as an important turning point—a *triggering event*—for Peres’s dovish turn; it was at that juncture that he accepted the notion of Israel-PLO talks, because he concluded that the alternative to negotiating with the PLO would be to negotiate with the far more radical Hamas. Moreover, Peres repeatedly has emphasized that territorial depth is no longer critical to Israeli security in the age of missiles. What would be costly to Israel’s security, in the long term, would be the demographic time bomb Israel faced by continuing to hold on to the occupied territories given the much higher birth rate of the Palestinians.

4. In reality, the PLO was very much involved in the negotiations, directing the Palestinian negotiating team.

5. See, for example, Aaron Kalman, “Survey: Most Israelis, Palestinians support 2 states,” *The Times of Israel*, 3 July 2013. http://www.timesofisrael.com/survey-most-israelis-palestinians-support-2-states/.

6. This rightist shift occurred, simultaneously, with growing support for the two-state solution.

7. Knesset Deliberations, Eighth Knesset, First Session, 31 July 1974, Israel State Archives, R.G. 212, Kaf-5.

8. For text of President Bush’s speech, see “Text of President George W. Bush’s Middle East speech,” Bitterlemons.org,24 June 2002. Available at http://www.bitterlemons.org/docs/bush.html. On Sharon’s endorsement of a Palestinian state, see “Sharon backs Bush plan for a Palestinian state,” *CNN*, 4 December 2002. Available at http://archives.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/meast/12/04/sharon.palestinian.state/.

9. See http://www.un.org/webcast/summit2005/statements15/israel050915eng.pdf.

10. Although Sharon later abandoned talks with Arafat when he felt that the latter was continuing to support terrorism during the second Intifada, his objection was toward Arafat personally, not to dealing with the PLO as an organization.

11. See also author’s interviews with Aviv Bushinsky, Tel Aviv, 21 June 2011; and Asi Shariv, Tel Aviv, 26 June 2011.

12. AP and *Times of Israel* Staff, “Abbas: No Recognition of Israel as Jewish State,” *The Times of Israe*l, March 7, 2014. Available at http://www.timesofisrael.com/abbas-no-recognition-of-israel-as-jewish-state/.

13. Netanyahu’s comments to Keret led to an exceptionally critical *Haaretz* editorial blasting Netanyahu for “dooming Israel to live eternally by the sword” (*Haaretz* 2011).

14. Josef Federman, “Watchdog Says Israel Increased Settlement Work Four-fold during Recent Round of Peace Talks,” Associated Press, April 29, 2014. Available at http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2014/04/29/group-israel-upped-settlement-work-during-talks.

15. Lahav Harkov, “Stepping out of Netanyahu’s Shadow—but Still Enjoying the Shade,” *The Jerusalem Post*, March 8, 2014. Available at http://www.jpost.com/Features/Front-Lines/Politics-Stepping-out-of-Netanyahus-shadow-but-still-enjoying-the-shade-344602.

16. Author’s interview with Asi Shariv.

17. Author’s interviews with Asi Shariv and Aviv Bushinsky.

18. Author’s interview with Aviv Bushinsky.

19. Ibid.

20. Author’s interview with Asi Shariv. See also, Gil Ronen, “Video: Half of Netanyahu’s Inner Circle are Kippah-Wearers,” *Arutz Sheva*, 22 May 2011.

21. Carter’s hawkish shift is not necessarily a case of a complete shift in worldview. It may have been merely short-term and narrow, nowhere comparable to the scope and magnitude of Peres’s broad foreign policy transformation, which took place over a number of decades.

22. Transcript of Reagan’s White House News Parley, *The New York Times*, 15 December 1983, Late City Final Edition, Section B, 12.

23. For an alternative perspective, see Paul Lettow’s *Ronald Reagan and His Quest to Abolish Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Random House, 2005). Lettow argues that Reagan’s belief in abolishing nuclear weapons can be traced to the 1960s and that, as president, Reagan tried to use the arms race to bankrupt the Soviet Union. The problem with Lettow’s argument is that, even if

Reagan's intention all along was to invest heavily in a massive military buildup only to rid the world of nuclear weapons once the Soviet Union was in financial ruin, the bulk of the evidence seems to point to the huge impact that the series of nuclear-related events that marked Reagan's first term had on Reagan's thinking and on his subsequent actions.

24. Brooks and Wohlforth claim the opposite was the case—that even progressive new thinkers such as Edvard Shevardnadze and Aleksandr Yakovlev believed that Gorbachev's intellectual shift was slower than theirs (2000, 43).

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INDEX

Abbas, Mahmoud (Abu Mazen), 109, 114, 126
“Able Archer 83” war games, 133
Abramovitz, Amnon, 26–27
Adenauer, Konrad, 34
Afghanistan, 2, 131, 135, 137
Ahdut Ha’avodah faction, 50, 144nn23, 24
Ahimeir, Abba, 31–32
Akunis, Ofir, 128
Algeria (French-Occupied), 1, 9, 54
Allon Plan, 57, 59
Allon, Yigal, 57, 63, 78, 144n25
Aloni, Shulamit, 66, 113
Andropov, Yuri, 136
Anglo-Jordanian Treaty, 53
al-Aqsa Intifada (second Intifada), 122, 123
Arab-Israeli peace talks (1991), 22. *See also* Madrid Conference (1991)
Arab-Israeli peace talks (broad): Peres’s activist years and, 51–53; PLO exclusion from, 67; Rabin and, 38–39
Arab oil embargo, 65
Arabs, attitudes toward, 27; Begin and, 33, 67; Meir and, 65; Peres and, 16, 50–53, 55–56, 58–60, 67, 68–69, 71, 79, 82–83; Rabin and, 38–39, 40; Shamir and, 107; Sharon and, 122–123
Arab states, Soviet Union and, 105–106
Arab Summit (Seventh, 1974), 66
Arafat, Yasser, 66, 77, 125; Begin and, 78; Israel-PLO talks and, 96, 99, 102, 151n12; Nobel Peace Prize and, 42; Peres and, 96, 108–110, 142n35; Rabin and, 37, 111; Sharon and, 153n10; terrorism and, 109. *See also* Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)
Ariel (settlement), 64
arms source for Israel: by France, 11, 41, 53, 54, 68, 116; Peres and, 11, 53, 58–59; by U.S., 53–54
Aronoff, Yael, 13, 42, 131, 142n26
Assad, Hafez al-, 37
Atomic Energy Commission (France), 54
Attali, Jacques, 84
attribution theory, 6
Auerbach, Yehudit, 40
Avnery, Uri, 32–33

Barak, Ehud, 20, 43, 126
Bar-Ilan University speech of Netanyahu, 126, 127
Barnea, Nahum, 23
Begin, Menachem, 11, 13, 20–22, 28–35; absolutist language of, 46; Camp David Accords and, 78–79; Dayan and, 86, 113, 143n39; death of, 20; Gahal and, 56; Greater Israel and, 28–29, 50, 56, 63, 81, 141n17; Holocaust and, 28, 33–34, 142n20; interaction with aides, 30, 32–33, 36, 37, 85; Jabotinsky and, 28–29, 30–31, 50, 141n17; Palestinian state opposition by, 76; Peres and, 73; PLO negotiations and, 67, 78, 117; Rabin and, 40, 61; settlements and, 61, 63–64, 73, 80, 104, 141n17; Shamir and, 23; Shamir’s eulogy of, 26; Sharon and, 123; stubbornness of, 31–35, 38, 69, 85, 89–90; territorial compromise and, 28–29, 63–64, 90; UN and, 42; West Bank settlements and, 61, 63–64, 73, 80, 141n17. *See also* cognitive structure of Begin
Beilin, Yossi, 81, 84, 97, 109; consultation with Peres, 85–86, 87–88; Israel-PLO talks and, 99–100, 150n12; Larsen meetings with, 99; Mashov and, 98; Oslo backchannel negotiations and, 99–100, 150n12
Ben-Gurion, David, 33–34, 42, 46; arms provision by France and, 54; Dayan and, 58; nuclear power and, 54; Peres and, 41, 45, 50–55, 67–68, 86; Rafi and, 55–56, 86; territorial compromise and, 81
Bennett, Andrew, 14

Bennett, Naftali, 128
Ben-Porat, Yishayahu, 84, 86
Bernadotte, Count Folke, 24
Betar (Revisionist Zionist movement), 28, 32
black/white terms, 7, 10; absolutist language and, 21, 46; Begin and, 31, 40; Peres and, 45; Rabin and, 40; Shamir and, 22–28, 40
Brandt, Willie, 66, 83–84
Britain, Sinai Campaign and, 54
British Mandatory Palestine, 22, 28, 33
Brooks, Stephen G., 135–136, 154n24
Brzezinski, Zbigniew, 131–132
Bush, George H. W., 22, 27, 108
Bush, George W., 6–7, 8, 124
Byman, Daniel L., 122

Camp David Accords, 78–79
Carter, Jimmy, 2, 7, 33, 130–132, 153n21; cognitive structure of, 17, 131–132, 138
Chernenko, Konstantin, 136
Citizens Rights Movement (political party), 94
Clinton, Bill, 37, 108, 114, 124
cognitive complexity, 19–47, 90, 116–118, 121, 140n2; of Begin (*See* cognitive structure of Begin); of Carter, 17, 131–132, 138; definition of, 7; discourse analysis and, 14; of Gorbachev, 17, 137–138; of Jabotinsky, 30; language use and, 21; of Netanyahu, 129–130, 138; of Peres (*See* cognitive complexity of Peres); of Rabin (*See* cognitive structure of Rabin); of Reagan, 17, 133–134, 138; of Shamir (*See* cognitive structure of Shamir); of Sharon, 128–129, 138
cognitive complexity of Peres, 13, 14, 44–46, 47, 138; during activist and hawkish years, 49, 58, 68–69; during dovish shift, 71–72, 88–89, 90, 108, 110–111, 112, 113, 118. *See also* cognitive openness of Peres; Peres, Shimon
cognitive consistency theory, 6
cognitive openness, 19–47, 83–88, 90, 116–118, 121, 140nn1, 2; of Begin (*See* cognitive structure of Begin); of Carter, 17, 131–132, 138; definition of, 7; discourse analysis and, 14; of Gorbachev, 17, 137–138; language use and, 21; of Netanyahu, 129–130, 138; of Peres (*See* cognitive openness of Peres); of Rabin (*See* cognitive structure of Rabin); of Reagan, 17, 133–134, 138; of Shamir (*See* cognitive structure of Shamir); of Sharon, 128–129, 138
cognitive openness of Peres, 14, 42–44, 46, 47, 138; during activist and hawkish years, 49, 60–65, 68–69; during dovish shift, 71–72, 83–88, 90, 108–110, 111, 112, 113, 118. *See also* cognitive complexity of Peres; Peres, Shimon
cognitive structure of Begin, 15, 20, 29–35, 46, 47, 83, 138; as compared to Peres's, 85, 117, 118; as compared to Rabin's, 36, 37, 38, 39–40, 41, 118; as compared to Shamir's, 28, 29, 31, 33, 34–35, 117, 118; Peres on, 45
cognitive structure of leaders as foreign policy shift indicator, 6–9, 10. *See also* cognitive complexity; cognitive openness; domestic political conditions; systemic-structural conditions
cognitive structure of Peres. *See* cognitive complexity of Peres; cognitive openness of Peres
cognitive structure of Rabin, 13, 35–41, 42, 44, 47, 117, 138; as compared to Begin's, 36, 37, 38, 39–40, 41, 118; as compared to Peres's, 15, 83, 85; as compared to Shamir's, 36, 37, 39–40, 41, 111, 112
cognitive structure of Shamir, 13, 14, 15, 22–28, 47, 119, 138; as compared to Begin's, 28, 29, 31, 33, 34–35, 117, 118; as compared to Peres's, 44, 83, 112; as compared to Rabin's, 36, 37, 39–40, 41, 111, 112
Cold War, 39, 105, 107, 109, 134, 135
Conversations with Yitzhak Shamir (Misgav), 24–26
Crichlow, Scott, 12–13

Dayan, Moshe, 23, 32, 54, 101, 141n8, 145n39; activist approach and, 50; Begin and, 86, 113, 143n39; Elon Moreh settlement and, 61; Peres's consultation with, 43, 57–59, 69, 86, 143n39; territorial compromise and, 72; on West Bank occupation, 89
Dayan, Yael, 84, 85, 113
Declaration of Principles between Israel and PLO (1993), 20, 42, 100, 151n19. *See also* Oslo Accords (1993)
de Gaulle, Charles, 1
Deir Yassin massacre (1948), 31
Dimona nuclear reactor project, 41, 55, 82, 83, 149nn55, 56
domestic political conditions, 4–7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 120–122; Gorbachev and, 137; Greenstein and, 115–116; Peres and Rabin and, 138; Peres's dovish shift and, 80–81, 104–105; Reagan and, 133–134; Sharon and, 125
Dorsey, Ellen, 5
dove, definition of, 9–10, 122
Dulles, John Foster, 54

Eban, Abba, 53, 55–56
economic stabilization, Peres and, 44
Egeland, Jan, 99
Egypt, 27, 56; arms and, 53, 82; Nasser and, 51–52, 53, 54; Peres and, 51–52, 79; Rabin and, 40; Sinai Campaign and, 54, 58; Sinai Interim Agreement and, 35. *See also* Sadat, Anwar

Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty (1979), 1, 28, 29
Eisenhower administration, 39
Eitan, Rafael, 34
Eitan, Rafi, 94–95
Eliav, Arieh "Lova," 63, 111, 145n48
Elon Moreh settlement, 61, 62–63, 68; Sebastia protest rally, 62–63, 68
English, Robert, 135, 136
Entebbe rescue operation ("Operation Thunderbolt"), 37–38, 43, 57–58, 69, 86
Erekat, Saeb, 114
Eretz Yisrael Hashlema. See Greater Israel *(Eretz Yisrael Hashlema)*
Eshed, Aliza, 60–61

foreign policy transformations, 49–50; dove-to-hawk, 2, 130–132; hawk-todove, 1–2
France, 1, 9, 25; arms provision by, 11, 41, 53, 54, 68, 116; Dimona project and, 41, 55, 82, 83, 149nn55, 56; IDF and, 39; Israeli-French alliance, 53–55, 116; Peres and, 41, 54–55, 68, 84, 116, 140n11
"functional arrangement," 59, 60, 68, 86

Gaddafi, Muammar, 27
Gahal (political party, forerunner to Likud), 56
Gaza settlements. See settlements
Gaza Strip, 9, 56; demilitarization of, 103; first Intifada and, 95; Mashov and, 87; Palestinian self-rule in, 100; Peres and, 59–60; withdrawal from, 72, 124–125. *See also* settlements; West Bank
Germany, 33–34, 66, 132
Giladi, Eliahu, 24
glasnost, 107, 135, 136
Golan Heights, 34, 56, 63, 64, 75; Labor Party support for settlements in, 92–93, 98; return of to Syria, 87, 93; territorial compromise and, 80
Goldmann, Nahum, 52
Gorbachev, Mikhail, 1, 2, 107, 115, 134–138, 154n24; cognitive structure of, 17, 137–138
Gore, Al, 44
Goren, Aliza, 45
Greater Israel (Eretz Yisrael Hashlema), 144n24; Begin and, 28–29, 50, 56, 63, 81, 141n17; Jabotinsky and, 28–29, 50, 141n17; Netanyahu and, 123; 1967 War and, 61; Peres and, 63
Green Line, 93
Greenstein, Fred, 115–116
Gur, Mordechai, 78, 97
Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful) settlers' movement, 61, 145n37

Haas, Ernst B., 8
Haganah (predecessor to IDF), 22, 35, 41
Hamas, 9, 95, 100, 101, 109
Haniyeh, Ismail, 101
Ha'Oved, Hanoar (youth movement), 41
hawk, definition of, 9–10, 122
Hebron (Kiryat Arba settlement), 63
Herrmann, Richard K., 135
Herut (right-wing political party), 28, 29, 32, 50
Hezbollah, 43
Hirschfeld, Yair, 99
Histadrut labor federation, 44
Hitler, Adolf, 27, 34, 52
Holsti, Ole, 121
Hussein, King of Jordan, 16, 77, 94–95, 118, 129, 151n24; severing of West Bank ties by, 95, 101, 104–105, 108, 111–112, 152n3
Hussein, Saddam, 27, 100, 106, 107, 119
Husseini, Faisal, 97, 101

IDF (Israel Defense Forces). See Israel Defense Forces (IDF)
Indyk, Martin, 37, 142n35
interaction between leaders and aides: Begin and, 30, 32–33, 36, 37, 85; Netanyahu and, 129–130; Rabin and, 36–37, 39, 85; Shamir and, 22–23, 141n8. *See also* Peres, Shimon, interaction with aides
Intifada: first, 22, 26, 35, 95–96, 108, 119; second (al-Aqsa), 122, 123
Iraq, 107; bombing of nuclear reactor in, 28, 34
Irgun (militant group), 22, 28, 30, 32

Israel, 20, 66–67, 119, 126–127; establishment of, 28; Israeli-French alliance, 53–55, 116; recognition of PLO by, 91, 100; Sadat and, 1, 115. *See also* arms source for Israel
Israel Aircraft Industries, 41, 110–111
Israel Defense Forces (IDF), 22; archives of, 13–14; Dayan and, 54, 58; Elon Moreh settlement rally and, 62; Entebbe rescue operation and, 38; Gur and, 78; Netanyahu and, 127; Peres on, activist years, 52; Rabin and, 35, 39; Sharon and, 123
Israel-PLO talks, 94–102, 104–105, 120; Arafat and, 96, 99, 102, 151n12; backchannel negotiation of, 16, 36, 99–102, 109, 112, 150n12; Begin and, 67, 78; Beilin and, 99–100, 150n12; Knesset and, 94, 99; Labor Party and, 67, 94–104; Likud and, 67, 96; London Agreement collapse and, 16, 77, 91, 97, 108, 151n24, 152n3; Shamir and, 95, 97, 98, 100, 111, 112, 117, 119, 150n12
Israel-PLO talks, Peres and, 117; cognitive complexity and, 110–111; opposition to, during dovish shift, 77–78, 80, 81; support for, during and after dovish shift, 94–102, 104–105, 111–112, 114, 119
Israel-PLO talks, Rabin and, 91, 117; backchannel negotiations and, 16, 36, 100, 102, 105, 112; opposition to, 67, 78, 96, 97–99, 101, 111; shift in views of, 102, 119, 120–121

Jabotinsky, Ze’ev, 123, 142n18; Begin and, 28–29, 30–31, 50, 141n17; Netanyahu and, 123; Revisionist Zionism, 22, 28–29, 50; Shamir and, 22, 28, 29. *See also* Greater Israel *(Eretz Yisrael Hashlema)*
Jackson, Henry, 35
Jericho, 100
Jerusalem, Israel, 1, 56
Jervis, Robert, 7
Jewish Home (political party), 128
Jewish people, 56–57; Begin and, 30; compromise and, 34; Rabin and, 39; Shamir and, 24, 25, 26–27, 29–30; Zionism and, 22, 25, 31–32
Jewish settlements. *See* settlements
Jordan, 56, 57, 66, 87, 104, 124
Jordanian option: collapse of, as turning point for Peres, 91, 94, 95, 97, 105, 108, 111, 112, 152n3; Labor Party’s endorsement for, 66, 76–77, 150n1
Jordan River, 127

Kadima (political party), 17, 42, 113, 125, 126, 140n9
Kadishai, Yehiel, 30, 141n17
Kahan Commission (1983), 123
KAL 007 episode, 133
Katzover, Benny, 61
Keohane, Robert, 5, 121
Keret, Etgar, 127, 153n13
Kimche, David, 23
King, Gary, 121
Kiryat Arba settlement, 63, 145n36
Kissinger, Henry, 35, 39, 66, 130
Knesset, 22, 30, 33; Israel-PLO talks and, 94, 99; Peres and, 42, 51, 55; Rabin and, 35; Sadat’s peace call at, 71, 83; transcripts of, 13–14
Kook, Zvi Yehuda, 61
Kreisky, Bruno, 65, 66, 77, 83–84, 146n52
Kurzman, Dan, 36

Labor Party, 13–14, 20, 44, 151n13; Allon Plan and, 59; Central Committee meetings, 77, 92; internal politics of, 120; Israel-PLO talks and, 67, 94–104; Jordanian option endorsement by, 66, 76–77, 150n1; Kadima and, 125; Likud defeat of (1977), 71; Mashov and, 109; “national unity government” and, 92, 97, 104, 120; 1984 elections and, 87; 1992 victory of, 104–105, 107, 120; Oslo talks and, 105; Palestinian state opposition by, 65–66, 75–77, 103; Palestinian state support by, 102, 104; Peres’s campaign for prime minister of, 71, 74–75, 80; Peres’s dovish shift and, 80–81; Peres’s leaving, 42, 113; Peres’s rebuilding of, 86–87; Rabin and, 35, 36, 80, 93; settlement expansion and, 11, 60–65, 92–93, 98; territorial compromise and, 11, 41, 72, 80; Young Guard of, 87
Labor Zionist youth movement, 41
Landau, David, 87, 109
Larsen, Terje, 99
Lavi fighter bomber project, 38
leaders’ hawk-to-dove shifts, factors in, 3–9. *See also* cognitive complexity; cognitive openness; cognitive structure of leaders as foreign policy shift indicator; domestic political conditions; systemic-structural conditions
learning, 7–8, 84–85, 108–111, 110; definition of, 8; of Reagan, 133–134; simple *vs.* complex, 8
Lebanon War (1982), 24, 28, 123
Lebanon War (Second, 2006), 43
Lehi (“Stern Gang”) (militant group), 22, 28, 30, 33, 141n4
Le Pen, Jean-Marie, 25

Levinger, Moshe, 62
Levy, Gideon, 79
Levy, Jack, 8
Lewis, Samuel, 85, 118
Lieberman, Avigdor, 128
Likud (political party), 20, 22, 23, 46, 86, 118; Central Committee forum of, 124; defeat of Labor Party by (1977), 71; Kadima and, 17, 125; “national unity government” and, 97, 104, 120; Netanyahu and, 16, 123, 138; 1984 elections and, 87; Oslo talks and, 105; Palestinian state opposition by, 76, 128; PLO negotiations and, 67, 96; settlement policy of, 63–64, 73–74, 92–93, 104; Shamir and, 106, 120; Sharon and, 16, 122, 123, 138; territorial compromise and, 80; territory annexation objective by, 72, 104
Livni, Tzipi, 29
London Agreement (1987), collapse of as Peres’s turning point, 16, 77, 91, 97, 108, 152n3; Rabin and, 94–95, 105, 107; Shamir and, 94–95, 151n24

Madrid Conference (1991), 22, 98, 141n6
Makovsky, David, 98, 99, 100, 107
Maoz, Moshe, 111
Mapai (political party), 50, 57, 58, 144nn23, 24
Mapam (political party), 50, 94, 144n23
Margalit, Avishai, 30
Mashov (group), 87, 98, 109
Mazen, Abu (Mahmoud Abbas), 109, 114, 126
Meir, Golda, 35, 42, 63, 65; Peres and, 43, 145n34
Merlin, Shmuel, 33
Meshal, Khaled, 101
militancy: Begin and, 31–32; of Irgun, 22, 28, 30, 32; Peres and, activist years, 51–53; Peres and, dovish years, 106; Rabin and, 35; Reagan and, 132; Shamir and, 22, 106–107; Sharon and, 123
Misgav, Haim, 24
Mishcon, Victor, 94
Mitterand, François, 27, 83–84
Mollet, Guy, 54
Mossad secret intelligence service, 22

Nakdimon, Shlomo, 86
nanotechnology, 44
Nasser, Gamal Abdel, 51–52, 53, 54
“national unity government,” 35, 92, 97, 104, 120, 150n12
NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), 132, 133
Navon, Yitzhak, 55, 75
Nazis, 22, 26–27, 33–34, 67
neorealism, 5
Netanyahu, Benjamin, 12, 16–17, 114, 122–130, 153n13; cognitive structure of, 129–130, 138; influence of advisers on, 129–130; Oslo opposition by, 20, 123–124; Palestinian state opposition by, 123–124, 125–126; Palestinian state support by, 102, 126–128; settlement policy and, 127–128; two-state solution and, 124, 126, 127, 128
Netanyahu, Benzion, 129–130. *See also* Greater Israel *(Eretz Yisrael Hashlema);* Jabotinsky, Ze’ev
Netanyahu, Yonatan, 123
“New Middle East” vision of Peres, 103, 110, 111, 149n55
“new thinkers” (Soviet Union), 137, 138 9/11, 8
1948 Arab-Israeli War (War of Independence), 35
1967 Arab-Israeli War (Six-Day War), 9, 11, 35, 49, 68; Dayan and Peres and, 58; Greater Israel and, 61; Israel’s victory in, 56; territory captured during, 69
Nixon, Richard, 1, 35, 115
Nobel Peace Prize, 42, 151n21
Norway, 99. *See also* Oslo Accords (1993); Oslo backchannel negotiations (Oslo talks)
Novik, Nimrod, 87–88
nuclear reactor: Dimona, 55, 82, 83, 149nn55, 56; Israeli-French alliance and, 53–55, 116; Osirak, Iraq, 28, 34
nuclear weapons, 144n17; Reagan and, 132, 133–134
Nye, Joseph S., 8

Obama, Barack, 126, 127
occupation: Peres’s rejection of term, 57, 72–73, 84; Sharon’s use of term, 124; of West Bank, 9, 89
Ofra settlement, 61–62, 68
Olmert, Ehud, 29, 43, 126, 129

operational code framework, 6–7
Operation Peace for Galilee (1982 Lebanon War), 24, 28, 123
“Operation Thunderbolt” (Entebbe rescue operation), 37–38, 43, 57–58, 69, 86
Oslo Accords (1993), 2, 138; Netanyahu’s implementation of, 20; Netanyahu’s opposition to, 20, 123–124; Palestinian state support and, 102–104, 112; PLO-Israel mutual recognition in, 91; Rabin and, 36, 105; Shamir’s opposition to, 20, 108, 112; Sharon’s opposition to, 123, 125
Oslo backchannel negotiations (Oslo talks), 99–102, 150n12; Beilin and, 99–100, 109; Hirschfeld and, 99; Peres’s influence in, 42; Peres’s pressure on Rabin to formalize, 16, 100, 102, 105; Pundak and, 44, 99, 110; Rabin’s authorization of, 36, 102, 112; Savir, Uri and, 109. *See also* Israel-PLO talks; Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)
Oz, Amos, 46

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), 9–10, 20, 42, 117; Begin and, 67, 78, 117; Mashov and, 87; Peres’s dovish shift and, 9, 77–78, 80, 84, 94–102, 104–105, 111–112, 113–114, 119; Peres’s hawkish years and, 16, 64, 66–67, 69; recognition of Israel by, 91, 100; Shamir and, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 112, 117, 119, 150n12; Soviet Union and, 106; U.S. talks with, 96–97, 98–99, 100, 114. *See also* Arafat, Yasser; Israel-PLO talks; Israel-PLO talks, Peres and; Israel-PLO talks, Rabin and
Palestinian Authority, 100, 103, 114, 125
Palestinian National Covenant, 78
Palestinian state, 10, 20–21, 105, 122; Gaza and West Bank settlements and, 66, 112; moderate residents of, 69; Netanyahu and, 102, 123–128, 130; Rabin and, 66, 102–104, 105
Palestinian state opposition: by Begin, 76; by Labor Party, 65–66, 75–77, 103; by Likud, 76, 128; by Netanyahu, 123–124, 125–126; by Peres, during dovish shift, 11, 75–77, 80, 84, 151n19; by Peres, during hawkish years, 11, 16, 49, 64, 65–66, 68; by Rabin, 36, 67, 102–104; by Sharon, 16
Palestinian state support: by Labor Party, 102, 104; by Netanyahu, 102, 126–128; by Peres, 9, 11, 16, 91, 102–104, 105, 111–112, 113–114; by Rabin, 102–104, 105; by Sharon, 16–17, 123, 124, 125, 128, 130
Palmach (Haganah fighting unit), 35
Palme, Olaf, 83–84
Pazner, Avi, 23
peace process: Peres’s prioritizing during dovish shift, 71, 78–79, 80, 113–114; Rabin on, 38–39; Sadat and, 71, 78, 83
Peleg, Ilan, 28–29
Peleg, Israel, 44, 81, 84–85
Peres, Shimon, 8, 10, 11–13, 14, 20, 117–119; activist years of, 49, 50–55, 67–69, 143n2; Arafat and, 96, 108–110, 142n35; arms acquisition by, 11, 53, 58–59; Beilin and, 87–88; Ben-Gurion and, 41, 45, 50–55, 67–68, 86; biographical history of, 41–46; *David’s Sling* (Peres), 59, 81–82; Dayan and, 43, 57–59, 69, 86, 143n39; Meir and, 43, 145n34; *New Middle East, The* (Peres), 103, 110, 149n55; Nobel Peace Prize and, 42, 151n21; occupation, rejection of term by, 57, 72–73, 84; operational code framework and, 7; optimism of, 53; Rabin as foreign minister to, 42; Rabin’s defeat of, 35, 80, 93, 98; as Rabin’s defense minister, 49, 60–66, 68, 105; Rabin’s opinions of, 39, 43; as Rabin’s successor (1977), 81; Rafi and, 55–56, 86; two-state solution and, 65, 105, 112, 114, 126; U.S.-PLO dialogue and, 96–97. *See also* cognitive complexity of Peres; cognitive openness of Peres; Israel-PLO talks, Peres and; Peres, Shimon, dovish shift of; Peres, Shimon, hawkish years of; Peres, Shimon, impact of during 1953–1977; Peres, Shimon, interaction with aides
Peres, Shimon, dovish shift of, 15, 41–42, 71–114, 138; analysis of 1977–1987 period of, 16, 80–89; analysis of 1987–1997 period of, 16, 104–111; Beilin and, 87–88; cognitive complexity and, 71–72, 88–89, 90, 108, 110–111, 112, 113, 118; cognitive openness and, 71–72, 83–88, 90, 108–110, 111, 112, 113, 118; domestic political factors in, 80–81, 104–105; interaction with aides during, 108–111; Jordanian option collapse, as turning point for, 91, 94, 95, 97, 105, 108, 111, 112, 152n3; 1977–1987 period of, 71–90; 1977 turning point of, 71–72; 1987–1997 period of, 91–114; Palestinian state, opposition to, 9, 11, 75–77, 80, 84, 151n19; Palestinian state, support for, 9, 11, 16, 91, 102–104, 111–112, 113–114; peace as priority and, 71, 78–79, 80, 113–114; PLO negotiations, opposition to, 77–78, 80, 84; PLO negotiations, support for, 94–102, 104–105, 111–112, 114, 119; settlements, diminished support for, 9, 11, 71, 73–76, 120; settlements, opposition to, 9, 11, 20, 42, 92–93, 111; Socialist International and, 83–85, 88, 90; as still a dove, 113–114; systemicstructural factors in, 81–83, 105–108; technological progress and, 106; territorial compromise, support for, 9, 11, 41, 71, 72–73, 80, 120, 148n48; West Bank settlements and, 71, 80, 92–93, 98
Peres, Shimon, hawkish years of, 15–16, 49, 56–67, 67–69, 120; opposition to territorial compromise during, 9, 16, 41, 56–60, 64, 68, 80, 120; Palestinian state, opposition to, 9, 11, 16, 49, 64, 65–66, 68; PLO negotiations, opposition to, 16, 66–67, 68; settlement policy, support for, 9, 16, 41, 60–65, 68, 94
Peres, Shimon, impact of during 1953–1977, 49–69, 116; 1953–1967 (activist years), 49, 50–55, 67–69, 143n2; 1965–1968 (Rafi years), 55–56, 67–69. *See also* Peres, Shimon, hawkish years of
Peres, Shimon, interaction with aides, 83–84, 108–111, 118; Beilin, 85–86, 87–88; Ben-Gurion, 41, 45, 50–55, 67–68, 86; with contrary viewpoints, 16, 42–44, 90; Dayan, 43, 57–59, 69, 86, 143n39
Peretz, Amir, 113
Persian Gulf War (1991), 27, 100, 106, 107, 109, 119
PLO negotiations. *See* Israel-PLO talks
Pollack, Kenneth M., 122
Pundak, Ron, 44, 99, 110

Qurai, Ahmed (Abu Ala), 100, 109

Rabin, Leah, 36, 81
Rabin, Yitzhak, 10, 11, 13, 20–22, 35–41, 138; Arafat and, 37, 111; Begin and, 40, 61; death of, 36, 102, 114; defeat of Peres by, 35, 80, 93, 98; defeat of Shamir by, 93, 98, 107; first Intifada and, 108, 119; flexibility of, 37–39, 40–41; interaction with aides, 36–37, 39, 85; Labor Party and, 14, 35, 36, 80, 93; London Agreement and, 94–95, 105, 107; Nobel Peace Prize and, 42; operational code framework and, 7; opinions of Peres by, 39, 43; Oslo talks and, 16, 36, 100, 102, 105, 112; Palestinian state and, 36, 66, 67, 102–104, 105; Peres as foreign minister for, 42; Peres as minister of defense for, 49, 60–66, 68, 105; resignation of, 49, 81, 120; on security of Israel, 40–41; settlement policy and, 60–65, 75, 90, 93, 104; Sharon and, 123; stubbornness of, 37, 38, 85, 90; U.S. and, 35, 36–37, 38, 39; U.S.-PLO dialogue and, 96–97; Washington talks and, 94, 98–99, 101, 105, 111, 118, 120. *See also* cognitive structure of Rabin; Israel-PLO talks, Rabin and
Rafi (political party), 55–56, 86, 144n18, 144n23
Reagan, Ronald, 1–2, 132–134, 137, 153n23; Begin and, 34; cognitive structure of, 17, 133–134, 138; PLO negotiations and, 96
Revisionist Zionism, 22, 28–29, 50. *See also* Greater Israel *(Eretz Yisrael Hashlema);* Jabotinsky, Ze'ev
Reykjavik summit (1986), 137
"Road Map for Middle East Peace" (Bush's plan), 124
Rosenau, James N., 5
Ross, Dennis, 37, 40
Rowland, Robert C., 31

Sabra and Shatila massacre, 123
Sadat, Anwar, 1, 33, 40, 115, 149n55; peace initiatives of, 71, 78, 83; Peres and, 79; Yom Kippur War and, 63, 65, 82. *See also* Egypt
SALT II talks, 131
Sapir, Pinhas, 63
Sarid, Yossi, 63, 78
Saudi Arabia, 53
Savir, Uri, 109
Schiff, Zeev, 86
Sebastia protest rally, 62–63, 68; Elon Moreh settlement, 61, 62–63, 68
security of Israel, 118–120, 143n3; Dayan and Peres on, 59; Peres's cognitive complexity and, 110–111; Rabin on, 40–41; settlements and, 63–64, 73, 92, 93; territorial compromise and, 72
September 11, 2001, 8
settlements, 9–10, 117, 122, 145n43; Ariel, 64; Begin and, 61, 63–64, 73, 80, 104, 141n17; Camp David Accords and, 79; development in, 92; Elon Moreh, 61, 62–63, 68; Gush Emunim movement, 61, 145n37; in Jordan Valley, 63, 75; Kiryat Arba, 63, 145n36; Labor Party and, 11, 60–65, 92–93, 98; Levinger and, 62; Likud and, 63–64, 73–74, 92–93, 104; Netanyahu and, 127–128; Ofra, 61–62, 68; Palestinian state and, 66, 112; Peres's diminished support for, 71, 80, 92–93; Peres's dovish shift and, 9, 11, 20, 42, 71, 73–76, 92–93, 111, 120; Peres's hawkish years and, 9, 16, 41, 60–65, 68, 94; Peres's opposition to, 98; PLO negotiations and, 99; population growth in, 150n3; Rabin and, 60–65, 75, 90, 93, 104; security of Israel and, 63–64, 73, 92, 93; Shamir and, 22, 74–75, 93, 104, 119; Sharon and, 123, 124–125
Shachal, Moshe, 79
Shamir, Yitzhak, 10, 11, 20–28, 83, 142n18; absolutist language of, 46; Aronoff on, 13; Begin and, 23, 26; Camp David Accords and, 78–79; debate with Rabin, 102; interaction with aides, 22–23, 141n8; Jewish people and, 24, 25, 26–27, 29–30; Likud and, 106, 120; London Agreement and, 94–95; militancy and, 22, 106–107; "national unity government" and, 92, 150n12; Netanyahu and, 127; opinions of Peres by, 43, 93; PLO negotiations and, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 112, 117, 119, 150n12; Rabin's defeat of, 93, 98, 107; rhetoric of, 141n13; security of Israel and, 119; settlement policy and, 74–75, 93, 104, 119; stubbornness of, 22–25, 31, 38, 40, 90, 107; territorial compromise and, 22–28, 141n6; U.S.-PLO dialogue and, 96–97; WWII and, 24, 25, 26–27. *See also* cognitive structure of Shamir
Sharett, Moshe, 43, 50, 51, 52, 53
Shariv, Asi, 128–129
Sharon, Ariel, 12, 16–17, 23, 42, 46; Arafat and, 153n10; cognitive structure of, 128–129, 138; dovish shift of, 122–130; Kadima and, 17, 113, 125; Likud and, 16, 122, 123, 138; Palestinian state and, 16–17, 123, 124, 125, 128, 130; settlements and, 73, 92
Shevardnadze, Eduard, 135, 154n24
Sheves, Shimon, 39
Shin Bet, 30
Shlaim, Avi, 26, 27
Sinai Campaign (Suez Crisis, 1956), 11, 54, 58
Sinai Interim Agreement (1975), 35
Sinai Peninsula, 29, 40, 56, 80
Six-Day War. *See* 1967 Arab-Israeli War (Six-Day War)
Snyder, Robert, 136
Soares, Mario, 83
Socialist International, 16, 83–85, 88, 90; Brandt and, 83–84; Kreisky and, 65, 77, 83–84; Mitterand and, 83–84; Palme and,

83–84; Soares and, 83–84
socioeconomic changes in Arab world, 82–88
Sofer, Sasson, 31
Soviet Union, 1–2, 105–106, 107, 119; Arafat and, 66; Carter and, 130–132; defense costs in, 135–136, 138; Peres's fears of involvement by, 65, 76; Rabin and, 39; Reagan and, 132–134; U.S. and, 9, 130–138
Spain, Madrid Conference and, 98, 141n6
Stein, Janice Gross, 136, 137
Stern, Avraham "Yair," 22, 142n18
Suez Canal, 35, 40, 54
Syria, 41, 56; Golan Heights and, 87, 93
systemic-structural conditions, 4–7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 118–120, 121; Peres and Rabin and, 138; Peres's dovish shift and, 81–83, 105–108; Reagan and, 132, 134; Shamier and, 106–107

Taba Summit, 26, 27
technological progress, 44, 106; in U.S. *vs.* Soviet Union, 136
territorial compromise, 9–10, 81, 117, 122, 144n24; Begin's opposition to, 28–29, 63–64, 90; demographic argument in, 72; Labor Party and, 11, 41, 72, 80; Likud and, 80; Peres's dovish shift and, 9, 11, 41, 71, 72–73, 80, 120, 148n48; Peres's hawkish years and, 9, 16, 41, 56–60, 64, 68, 120; Rabin's support of, 90; Shamir's opposition to, 22–28, 141n6
terrorism, 109; activist policy and, 50–51; Air France flight hijacking and, 37–38; Arafat's denouncement of, 96; counterterrorism and, 50–51, 68, 123; Peres's fears of, 65; PLO and, 77, 78, 96, 100
two-state solution, 10, 122; Kadima and, 17, 140n9; Netanyahu and, 124, 126, 127, 128; Peres and, 65, 103–104, 105, 112, 114, 126; Rabin and, 103–104; Sharon and, 124–125

United Nations General Assembly, 42, 66, 96, 125
UN Partition Plan (1947), 29
UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, 66, 96
United States: Bush, George H. W. and, 22, 27, 108; Bush, George W. and, 6–7, 8, 124; Carter and, 2, 7, 17, 33, 130–132, 138, 153n21; Clinton and, 37, 108, 114, 124; Eisenhower and, 39; foreign policy reversals in, 1–2; Gorbachev and, 115; Israeli arms provision by, 53–54; Netanyahu and, 126; Nixon and, 1, 35, 115; PLO's nonrecognition by, 66; PLO talks with, 96–97, 98–99, 100, 114; Rabin and, 35, 36–37, 38, 39; Reagan's military buildup of, 132–133; Saddam Hussein and, 107; settlements and, 92; Shamir and, 27; Soviet Union and, 9, 130–138; two-state solution and, 114. *See also* Reagan, Ronald

Vance, Cyrus, 131–132
Verba, Sidney, 121
Voss, James. F., 5

Wahabe, Majali, 129
Waltz, Kenneth, 5
War of Independence (1948), 35
Washington talks, 112, 120–121; deadlock of, 94, 100, 101, 105, 111, 118, 120; Peres's criticism of, 99; Rabin's dovish shift and, 94, 98–99, 101, 105, 111, 118, 120
Weizman, Ezer, 32, 97–98, 149n55
West Bank, 56, 57, 59–60, 151n32; demilitarization of, 103; first Intifada and, 95; Jordan's severing of connection to, 95, 101, 104–105, 108, 111–112, 152n3; Mashov and, 87; occupation of, 9, 89; Palestinian self-rule in, 100; territorial compromise and, 80; withdrawal from, 72. *See also* settlements
West Bank settlements. *See* settlements
West Germany, 33–34, 132
Wohlforth, William Curti, 135–136, 154n24
World War II: Begin and, 28, 33–34, 142n20; Shamir and, 24, 25, 26–27

Yaacobi, Gad, 43, 75, 109
Ya'alon, Moshe, 128
Yadin, Yigal, 83
Yalin-Mor, Natan, 33
Yariv, Aharon, 111
Yarsike, Deborah, 137
Yom Kippur War (1973), 63, 65, 82
Young Guard (of Labor Party), 87

Zayad, Ziad Abu, 97
Zimmerman, William, 137
Zionism, 22, 25, 31–32; Revisionist, 22, 28–29, 50
Zvili, Nissim, 103, 148n48

MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES / POLITICAL SCIENCE

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