

INTERLOCKING CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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Although international conflicts are generally intractable and persist for long periods, they escalate and de-escalate in intensity—sometimes abruptly. To understand such variations, I argue in this paper, it is necessary to consider how each struggle is embedded within a wide variety of interlocking conflicts. Limiting attention to the over-simplified conception of a struggle as being only between two parties hampers comprehending the changes in the struggle. I will describe the variety of ways in which conflicts are interrelated and the ways in which their interlocking character affects many aspects of international struggles. In the second part of the paper, I will examine how the interlocking character of conflicts in the Middle East has effected the escalation and de-escalation of specific struggles, particularly the ones between the Egyptian and Israeli governments.

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In many ways, we carry with us an illusion that a conflict is two-sided. Partisans, of course, often insist on it. They ask, "Which side are you on?" or assert, "If you are not for us, you are against us." Even social scientists, in discussing conflict, for heuristic purposes, assume two sides. It is acknowledged to be an over-simplification, but it is so convenient that the complex reality is ignored. Some theorists—for example, Dahrendorf (1959)—even argue that ultimately every conflict is between two classes or groups. The elaboration of game theory and its application to social conflicts has also furthered the idea that conflicts are between two sides and often zero sum in their payoffs.

When pushed, we acknowledge that many conflicts are not simply a zero sum struggle between two antagonists. But we lack a systematic analysis of the many ways conflicts interlock and the consequences of their interlocking character for the emergence of conflicts, for the use of coercion, for the ways in which struggle escalate and de-escalate, and how they end. In this paper, I begin such an analysis.

Types of Interlocking Conflicts

Every specific social conflict *always* has more than two sides. This is true first because each party of any social conflict is made up of many component groups and those groups have somewhat different interests and views about the specific conflict. Each conflict party, in attacking or otherwise trying to get its adversary to change, could pay attention to the several groups making up the other side, differently attempting to threaten or persuade them. Each party to a conflict has allies or potential allies. Each adversary, therefore, has a somewhat different conflict with each member of the opposing coalition. A conflict generally involves several issues and the set of adversaries varies with the issues in dispute. Finally, conflicts generally occur in a series: each dispute may be seen as part of a long-run struggle.

This discussion does not deny that adversaries and observers generally regard one conflict as primary at a given time. Indeed, as we shall see, the shifts in what is regarded as the primary conflict are critical for changes in conflict intensity. For analytical purposes, here, I will consider one conflict as the primary or focal conflict and examine how it is interrelated with others.

Six ways in which conflicts are interlocked will be distinguished and discussed: (1) serial or nested in time; (2) converging or nested in social space; (3) superimposed or linking of issues; (4) cross-cutting; (5) internal; and (6) concurrent.

First, every conflict may be viewed as one in a series of fights between the same adversaries. Indeed, the adversaries may choose to bracket a given conflict within a variety of time periods. For example, the American-Soviet conflict may be viewed as occurring as a series of struggles, each enduring for several years,

or as a series of short, intermittent crises. In any case, each fight may be viewed as following and preceeding others.

Conflicts also converge. Separate groups may coalesce as allies against an adversary or coalition of adversaries. Such coalitions may be based on broadening collective identifications. Thus, the focal conflict may be between two governments, with the leaders of each government trying to mobilize their domestic constituency and other people who may share ethnic, religious, or ideological identifications. Adversary parties may also increase in number or scope as they converge on different sides of the issue in contention. Thus, a fight between one government and another may be defined by other governments, peoples, or political movements as a struggle between developed and developing countries and choose sides accordingly. The focal conflict may be between large entities and encompass a fight between relatively subordinate entities; in that case, we may speak of proxy wars or a struggle between pawns. Every focal conflict, then, may be embedded in a broader set of social conflicts or itself may encompass more limited ones.

Superimposition is the third way in which conflicts are interlocked. Few or many contentious issues may be superimposed on each other (Dahrendorf, 1959). Thus, two adversaries may be in a fight over one issue with other issues added to the struggle; or, conversely, particular issues may be separated out and put aside. In American-Soviet relations, this has sometimes been referred to as "linkage." At different times, issues about arms control, the war in Vietnam, human rights, and others have been linked or have been de-coupled in adversary negotiations.

Cross-cutting conflicts, the fourth type of interlocking conflict, has been particularly studied by sociologists (Simmel, 1955; Ross, 1920; Coser, 1956; Kriesberg, 1973). Cross-cutting conflicts may be based on divisions within and across adversaries or among a set of adversaries allying themselves differently on several issues of contention. In the first case, the protagonists in the focal conflict are each divided on other issues and the adversaries within each protagonist are allied with their counterparts elsewhere. For example, conflicts about petroleum prices and allocations involve governments, managers of multinational oil companies, consumers, and other collectivities which cut across country borders. Cross-cutting conflicts are also based on the multiplicity of issues in contention. Thus, if two governments are adversaries on one issue but on the same side against other governments on a different issue, conflicts related to those various issues are cross-cutting. For example, we can see some signs of East-West issues cross-cutting North-South (developed-developing country) issues.

The fifth kind of interlocking conflicts are the ones which are internal to one of the adversaries. A number of writers have examined the way in which internal conflicts are linked to external ones (Simmel, 1955; Tanter, 1966; Wilkenfeld, 1969; Rosenau, 1973; Kriesberg, 1973). Most of this research has been concerned with countries as units and the relationship between domestic turmoil and

conflict with foreign conflict behavior. However, any major actor in international conflict can be considered to have subgroups within it which themselves may be *in contention*. Thus, a government consists of quarrelling agencies; a government is struggling against the opposition party; or ethnic and class divisions may be the basis for intense and even violent struggles. An internal conflict also may be an international one; it may occur within a coalition which is one side in a larger conflict. For example, consider the Cyprus dispute. The Greek and Turkish governments' fight about Cyprus may be regarded as internal to NATO, which is a protagonist in the focal conflict with the Warsaw Pact countries. If the struggle between Greek and Turkish ethnic organizations on Cyprus is considered the focal conflict, then each group's alliance with the governments of Greece and Turkey is the basis for a converging conflict.

Finally, the sixth kind of conflict I wish to distinguish is the concurrent conflict. A concurrent conflict is an external one occurring along with the focal one, but does not involve the primary adversaries in the focal struggle. Thus, one of the adversaries in the focal conflict has a side fight with another adversary who has no direct relevance to the adversary in the focal conflict. For example, the Egyptian government's involvement in the war in Yemen in the 1960s was concurrent with its conflict with Israel, but insofar as the Israelis were not involved in Yemen, the fight was concurrent to the focal conflict between Egypt and Israel. A concurrent conflict may involve none of the primary adversaries; it may be happening elsewhere in the world and preoccupying major powers elsewhere.

This discussion has pointed out the many ways in which international conflicts are interrelated. Observers and participants may be paying attention to different ones at different times. What we call a particular interlocking fight depends on which conflict we regard as salient or primary. Obviously, the participants in a struggle try to define one or another conflict as primary, depending on what they regard as best advancing their interests in the fight. I will use the term "focal conflict" to indicate that we must focus on one conflict at a time, but that other focuses are also, perhaps equally, valid.

Possible Effects of Interlocking Conflicts

International conflicts, like all social conflicts, have a variety of aspects. We can consider the underlying basis for the conflict, the coercive and non-coercive means used in pursuing the conflict, the processes of escalation and de-escalation, how agreements are reached, and what the terms of settlement are. To illustrate the relevance of taking into account the interrelated character of international conflicts, I will discuss some of the ways in which different kinds of interlocking conflicts can effect these aspects of international struggles.

It can be argued that if a focal conflict is seen as one in a series of fights, the focal conflict will tend to escalate because yielding on the issue in contention will appear to set a precedent for the next struggle and tend to weaken one's reputa-

tion (Jervis, 1976: 103). Each adversary would seek to appear tough. On the other hand, it is possible to treat sequential fights as the basis for trade-offs. This tends to limit escalation and hasten agreements which would be balanced. It would make integrative bargaining, rather than distributive bargaining, more feasible (Pruitt and Lewis, 1977: 164).

Whether seeing a focal conflict as one in a series facilitates or impedes de-escalation and integrative bargaining depends on other aspects of the focal conflict. If the issues in contention are viewed as very important, if relatively few common interests are recognized, if communication is sparse and hostility is high, considering the focal conflict as one in a series will make it more difficult to resolve the issues in contention than if the focal conflict were regarded as isolated in time. Under other conditions, viewing the focal conflict as one in a series will facilitate de-escalation and integrative bargaining.

The convergence of conflicts has effects on the means used and on the escalation of the focal conflict. Wallace and Wilson (1978) have studied arms races and found that they move in spurts. What triggers an arms race is the coalition of several powers against another collectivity. The target country or countries rapidly expand their military expenditures and this is met by further adversary expenditures. Convergence of conflicts generally means an expansion and an intensification of the conflict. Hopmann and Wallcott (1977), in their analyses of negotiations, find that when the larger conflict within which the negotiations are being conducted (the focal conflict) becomes more intense, this places a stress on the negotiations and makes them more difficult. This indicates that changes in the larger conflict are reflected in the conduct of the subsidiary ones.

The complexity of relations in any focal conflict arising from the convergence of conflicts also opens opportunities for a wide variety of inducements to be used by partisans in the fights (Kriesberg and Klein, forthcoming). Partisans of each side are aware that their adversaries are trying to gain adherents to their side. The adversaries, for example, are appealing to shared ideological and ethnic identifications. The partisans of each side then may seek to divide the opponents by offering concessions and arguing cogently. Non-coercive inducements, such as promises of rewards and persuasive efforts, are likely to be used to appeal to supporters of the core adversary if not to the core enemy itself.

The next kind of interlocking conflict whose implications I wish to note is superimposed conflict. It is plausibly argued that a dispute which is viewed in isolation is more readily settled than one which is seen as a symptom of a larger set of disputes (Jervis, 1976: 44). Analyses of the nuclear test ban negotiations indicate that when other disputes coincided, reaching agreements in the negotiations was made more difficult (Hopmann and Walcott, 1977). De-escalation and reaching agreements about disputes then, are likely to be enhanced by decoupling or isolating disputes.

Although, generally, superimposition of disputes hampers settling each dispute, under certain circumstances superimposition or the threat of it can limit

escalation or facilitate agreements. Sorenson (1965: 680), for example, notes that during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, U.S. leaders were inhibited from making a military attack on the Cuban missile bases partly because the Berlin crisis had alerted them to the possibility of Soviet pressure being brought on Berlin. Superimposition also seems to promise the possibility of trade-offs among the several matters in dispute. This is the kind of linkage in which a concession by one side on one issue is exchanged for a concession by the other side on another matter. Plausible as this may be, trade-offs among quite separate matters seem too difficult to effectuate, although they occur in the course of negotiating about a single matter, such as an arms limitation agreement.

The implications of cross-cutting conflicts in international relations has been investigated in only a few areas. Most notably, attention is given to the mitigation of the East-West conflict by the increasing salience of the conflicts between industrialized and economically developing nations. The primacy of the Cold War issues in the United Nations, for example, has declined and increasingly voting cleavages are based on other cross-cutting issues. Of course, some of that change is due to the increase in the number of newly independent countries which have become members of the United Nations.

There are several implications of internal conflicts for the way in which a focal conflict is conducted. For example, domestic conflicts may weaken a conflict unit so that it avoids foreign adventures and hostility; but internal disorder and the resulting weakness may lead other conflict units to take advantage of the weakness and act aggressively toward it. Domestic conflict may also lead to external conflict because the country's leaders act aggressively internationally in order to unify the country. If the protagonists of an international conflict come to regard their conflict as internal to a more important shared international conflict, it is likely to be mitigated in intensity and subject to integrative rather than distributive bargaining (Pruitt and Lewis, 1977). Persuasive means will appear more pertinent in this context. On the other hand, an international conflict which is internal to one adversary coalition may be exacerbated when the larger conflict de-escalates. For example, detente between the U.S. and U.S.S.R., loosens cohesion within the blocs led by each. Holsti (1969) analyzed Sino-Soviet relations between 1950 and 1965 and found that during periods of low tension between the U.S. and U.S.S.R., Soviet and Chinese official statements tended to be divergent as regards the U.S. and sharp differences between them emerged. In 1964, Krushchev publically recognized that detente produced divisiveness, not only in the Capitalist camp, but also in the Socialist camp (Zimmerman, 1969: 100).

Finally, I will mention some implications of concurrent conflicts for the way in which a focal conflict is conducted. A concurrent conflict, like an internal one, may weaken a protagonist in the focal struggle and hence limit conflict escalation and hasten a resolution. On the other hand, a concurrent fight may be an inducement to the leaders of one adversary group to escalate the focal conflict as a way of drawing attention away from the concurrent one; this, however, is less likely

since the desire to do this would arise if the concurrent fight were not going well and that would not be viewed as a good time to become more entangled in foreign adventures. Concurrent conflicts may tend to limit conflicts in another way. If major powers are deeply involved in a major conflict, their attention and resources tend to be so engaged that an unconnected focal conflict is more likely to remain localized than if the major powers were less so engaged.

The concurrent conflicts, which each primary adversary has, may develop into a network of cross-cutting conflicts and hence bonds. For example, the United States and the Soviet governments have found in recent years that other powers are growing in significance, and hence in some ways challenging them. Consequently, they have a common interest in not cancelling each other out and retaining their relative power as much as possible (Young, 1967: 163-164). This has been one reason for the U.S. and the Soviet governments to cooperate with each other. But, as we noted earlier, that may lead to members of each camp intensifying their challenge of the dominant leader of their camp.

Interlocking conflicts have a variety of effects on the escalation, de-escalation, emergence, and resolution of international conflicts. Those effects depend partly on which conflict is considered the focal one. Adversaries shift in whatever struggle they regard as primary and those shifts are the basis for changes in the conflict. It is also important to recognize that protagonists may differ in what they regard as the primary conflict. They may also disagree about how many adversaries are involved in the conflict and how many issues are in contention. If protagonists differ in these matters, their bargaining strategies and means of conducting the struggle are likely to be different. For example, insofar as Soviet leaders view the world as made up of two blocs led by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., they will see each fight between them as converging and superimposed with other conflicts; hence, their bargaining demands are likely to be tougher and they are more likely to rely on coercive inducements. Insofar as they see multiple independent actors and cross-cutting conflicts, they are more likely to see integrative bargaining as possible.

In the second part of this paper, I will examine the escalation and de-escalation of Middle East conflicts and analyze how considering interlocking conflicts helps explain those changes. That analysis should also contribute to specifying the conditions under which particular kinds of interlocking conflicts tend to facilitate conflict escalation, termination, persistence, and de-escalation.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICTS

To assess how the interlocking character of conflicts helps our understanding of Arab-Israeli relations, I first examine the persistence and intractability of the conflicts and then their escalation and de-escalation. The struggle between Egyptian and Israeli governments will be regarded as the focal conflict.

Persistence of Arab-Israeli Conflict

Conflicts in the Middle East can be traced back to Biblical times. But in discussing the intractable character of the conflicts in the Middle East, I limit the analysis to the period since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The implications of each kind of interlocking conflict on the perpetuation of the struggle between the Israeli and Egyptian governments will be examined.

Conflicts *nested* in each other over time have several effects which tend to perpetuate a struggle. The way in which conflicts have been conducted and the goals for which they were fought tend to become fixed, since they are salient in the minds of all the participants and even observers. The current situation is then viewed through the lenses of the past fights; consequently, the means and, therefore, the appropriate resources tend to be the ones previously used. New circumstances and new kinds of resources are frequently not readily noted and all this contributes to ineffective ways of pursuing a goal. This is true of "victors" as well as "losers" in the preceding fight. For example, the organized violence of 1948 took on more salience than the processes of non-violent mutual adaptation which residents and immigrants to Palestine had been previously conducting. Each war seems to strengthen reliance on armed coercion.

Conflicts nested in each other over time, as in a war series, also tend to generate grievances and so perpetuate conflicts. One way this occurs is that the conduct of a struggle and its outcome may become grievances for at least one party. For example, shame or loss of resources needs to be redressed and losers seek revenge, try to restore honor, or to regain lost territory. As Sadat wrote about planning for the October, 1973 War, "The basic task was to wipe out the disgrace and humiliation from the 1967 defeat" (Sadat, 1978). Thus, too, wars and hostilities have generated Arab refugees whose grievances are the source of uncompromising demands which, in turn, are unacceptable to many Israelis.

Defeats which are viewed as one in a series, rather than as final, are the grounds for new efforts to redress grievances. The defeat of Arab armies in 1948 by Israeli forces contributed to the changes in the governments of Egypt and Syria. The new ruling groups then had a vested interest in renewing a struggle with Israel which they might win (Heikal, 1975). Partisans in the Middle East anticipate recurrent escalations of the conflicts in which they are engaged. Conflicts nested over time also tend to become superimposed as cross-cutting conflicts decrease and more issues become matters of contention among adversaries.

The *convergence* of conflicts in the Middle East has tended to perpetuate Arab-Israeli conflicts in two contradictory ways. On the one hand, the extended coalitions of adversaries associated with the Israeli and Egyptian governments gives them the resources to persist. On the other hand, the diversity of the adherents to each coalition makes it difficult for particular pairs of adversaries to reach an agreement to resolve conflicting issues. Each of these ideas requires some elaboration.

As each adversary seeks wider support from other groups, its adversaries also

seek to extend their support. The drive to find allies by one side is an incentive for the other side to seek allies. This tends to perpetuate a struggle, because it broadens the goals and enlarges the resources available for the struggle. The extension of the number of conflict groups engaged in a struggle in itself makes for conflict persistence, because the conflict can pass from one pair of antagonists to another, never allowing the conflict between any one pair to become stabilized. Thus, if Israel is in an adversary relationship with Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, and Syria obtains support from the Soviet Union to counter American support to Israel, stabilization of the conflict between Israel and Jordan could be undermined by Soviet-supported Syrian opposition to Israeli objectives.

Related to this is the effort by each party in the conflict to broaden its collective identity in order to gain support and in so doing generalize its grievance. Thus, one or another party in the Middle East may claim to be representing democracy, socialism, anti-imperialism, national liberation, self-determination, Islam, Arabs, Jews, or Western Civilization. Insofar as groups elsewhere in the world share such identifications, they suffer some of the same grievances that others with the same collective identity do. Reaching an acceptable agreement about an issue in contention, then, is made more difficult.

Interlocking conflicts help perpetuate each other by providing a basis upon which resources are provided to the partisans so they can continue their struggle. This has been true in the Middle East throughout the period we are discussing. In 1948, Jews in Palestine received aid from Jews and non-Jews from elsewhere, while Arabs in Palestine were aided by Arab governments in the area by the dispatch of troops. Without these interventions, the various local groups would have achieved a settlement closer to their immediate interests.

In succeeding years, too, resources were provided to all major parties sufficiently to maintain the expectations of each that it would be able to attain its objectives in the future. The provision of such resources was often linked to other conflicts—for example, American-Soviet rivalry and world-wide divisions about colonialism and national independence (Laqueur, 1969; Campbell, 1961).

On the other hand, the looseness of coalitions and the diversity of interests among all the parties to the conflicts makes it difficult to form a binding conclusion to a major dispute between the Israeli government and representatives of an Arab collectivity. The looseness of the convergence, reflecting in part the ambiguity of which conflict was paramount, has hampered a settlement of the struggles in the Middle East. Thus, in 1948 and 1949, the Arab Palestinians were not clearly bounded and organized with unambiguous representatives. Syria, the Hashemite rulers of Transjordan, and Arabs in general each were in a somewhat different conflict with Jews, Zionists, the newly emerged Israeli government, and the West generally. Consequently, an authoritative agreement was made even more difficult than if the antagonists were not part of such extensive coalitions and were not nested in wider and wider identities.

The accretion of parties to a specific struggle so that it involves extensive

coalitions also tends to perpetuate an international conflict since maintaining the solidarity of a broad coalition is difficult. If a coalition is divided by conflicts among its own members, reaching agreement about the terms of settlement with the common enemy is quite difficult. For example, in World War II, the allies insisted on unconditional surrender of Germany and Japan partly to avoid the risks of a separate peace by any of the allies and to avoid disputes among the allies about the peace terms. Similarly, the Arab governments and the Arab Palestinian groups, faced with disputes and mistrust among themselves, have often found it advisable to insist on no compromise with Israel. In the past, this has been a factor in expanding the coalition's objectives against Israel.

Taking the conflict between the Egyptian and Israeli governments as the focal one, many issues have been *superimposed* and made the conflict difficult to resolve. Thus, there have been several ideological or value issues: religious differences, differences in orientation to the West, and ties to various third world collectivities, as well as Arab ones. In addition, issues have existed about military security, rights of passage through territories controlled by the adversary or potentially so controlled, and control of land relevant to security as well as settlement. I will consider in the next section how the extent of superimposition of these and other issues has varied over time, and consequently, the intensity of the conflict.

On the whole, there have been few *cross-cutting* conflicts between Egypt and Israel. As we shall see in the next section, only rarely have significant cross-cutting conflicts emerged, but with important de-escalatory consequences. Thus, the two governments sometimes have shared opposition to Soviet involvement in the Middle East or each thought that economic and political radicals were threats to stability of their own or of the other's governments.

If we consider the conflict between the Israeli and Egyptian governments as the focal conflict, then *internal* conflicts occur within Egypt and Israel. If the focal conflict is between the Arabs and Jews, internal conflicts include those among Arab governments. In the present context, I will discuss such intra-Arab conflicts as concurrent ones. There is systematic evidence about the relationship of domestic conflict behavior with foreign conflict behavior. Wilkenfeld, Lussier, and Tahtinen (1972) conducted a study of conflict interaction in the Middle East between 1949 and 1967, analyzing systematically gathered daily events data. Using regression analysis, they distinguished two major factors of *domestic* conflict: government instability and domestic violence. *Foreign* conflict included the factors of military actions, active hostility, and verbal hostility. Then they regressed on each country's foreign conflict behavior, prior conflict behavior, domestic conflict behavior, and the foreign conflict behavior of other Middle East countries.

For the Arab governments, but not for the Israeli government, domestic conflicts are *significantly and positively* related to foreign conflict behavior. Thus, Egyptian military activity is significantly and positively related to domestic vio-

lence and Jordanian verbal hostility and Jordanian military activities are each related to domestic violence; Syrian verbal hostility, Israeli verbal hostility, and Lebanese verbal hostility are also each related to domestic violence. This suggests that domestic violence leads Arab government leaders to rally support by increasing hostile activity toward Israel or another Middle Eastern country. This is an example of linked conflicts which can foster conflict escalation when there is a ready external target. Domestic conflict, however, is not positively related to Israeli external conflict behavior; in fact, Israeli government instability is slightly negatively related to external conflict. Perhaps, in Israel the existence of competing political parties inhibits government leaders from trying to use foreign conflict behavior as a means to unify the country.

Finally, I comment on the way in which *concurrent* conflicts have perpetuated the Egyptian-Israeli conflicts. As already noted, Arab governments, Arab and Palestinian political organizations, various social strata within Arab societies, and other groupings have diverse interests and goals in their conflicts with Israel. Moreover, they are often in conflict with each other. They struggle with each other to advance their own ideologies and interests and for leadership and deference. As noted in the discussion of converging conflicts, the looseness of the anti-Israeli coalition impedes fashioning a common and realizable set of goals. Conflicts among members of the coalitions have several contradictory effects upon the focal conflict. In some ways they tend to inhibit escalation. This is true insofar as the conflicts drain attention and resources. For example, if Egypt is involved in a war in Yemen or if Jordan and Syria are fighting each other, the possibilities of Egypt alone or in alliance with Jordan and Syria to escalate the conflict with Israel are lessened. On the other hand, conflict among Arab countries has often taken the form of competing for leadership against Israel. One related effect of this is to give a veto power to the most intransigent of the coalition partners. All this tends to prevent de-escalation of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Egyptian-Israeli conflict.

Variations in Israeli-Egyptian Conflicts

Now I turn to major escalations and de-escalations since 1953 in the struggle between the Egyptian and Israeli governments. I will examine changes in the interlocking character of the conflicts that may have affected the escalations and de-escalations of the focal conflict.

During the summer of 1953 through the spring of 1954, several actions were taken and indirect negotiations conducted which constituted a de-escalation of hostility and movement toward settlement of several issues in contention between the Israeli and Egyptian governments. Negotiations pertained to compensation for Arab Palestinian refugees and a land link between Egypt and Jordan; in the summer of 1953, an agreement was reached regarding shipping (Berger, 1965; Avnery, 1971).

The change in the Egyptian regime, the overthrow of the monarchy by Nasser

and his military colleagues in 1952, was critical in this de-escalatory shift. The Israeli government leaders, with their socialist orientation, saw hope of agreement with the new anti-reactionary government. There seemed to be the possibility of a common interest in working toward economic development and allying with each other against the British. One of the most important immediate objectives of the revolutionary Egyptian government was to remove the British troops stationed at the Suez Canal (Sadat, 1978). For the new Egyptian government, the concurrent struggle with the British had the highest priority for their resources and attention.

Negotiations broke down after the July 27, 1954 initialing of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement regarding the departure of British soldiers (Khoury, 1976; 300-301). Propaganda attacks on Israel grew and marauding squads began to make deep penetration raids into Israel (Dayan, 1977: 221-222). The resolution of the concurrent fight with the British freed the Egyptian government to turn its attention to the conflict with Israel. Perhaps, the divided Israeli leadership, with Ben Gurion on the sidelines while Sharett was Prime Minister between January 26, 1954 and June 29, 1955, contributed to a mixed and uncertain effort at de-escalation. In July, 1954, Israeli agents tried to discredit Egyptian efforts to draw closer to the U.S. by committing sabotage against American targets in Cairo and Alexander. This was discovered in Egypt and later became known in Israel as the Lavon Affair (Khoury, 1976; Berger, 1965).

The deterioration in Israeli and Egyptian relations in 1954 and 1955 suddenly escalated with the October, 1956 Israeli attack in the Sinai. That escalation was very strongly linked to the convergence of several wider conflicts. The catalyst for the Sinai war was the offer by the French and British leaders to cooperate with the Israelis in attacking Nasser and Egypt (Dayan, 1977; Brecher, 1975; Berger, 1965). The French and British governments, seeking to overthrow the Egyptian government in order to rescind the nationalization of the Suez canal, sought the aid of the Israeli government, led by Ben Gurion, to initiate hostilities to give a cover for their attack. The Israeli government saw this as an opportunity to get allies in its efforts to open the waterways for the new port, Elath, and to control the attacks being launched particularly from Gaza.

The emergence of concurrent as well as converging conflicts established the conditions which could be triggered into a war. The U.S., led by Dulles, fostered the Baghdad Pact as a Middle East alliance against Soviet Russia. Egyptian competition with Iraq for Arab leadership contributed to the Egyptian search for military assistance from the adversary of the U.S., Soviet Russia. Pressure from the U.S. (withdrawal of support for the Assawn High Dam) and from France and Great Britain also helped introduce the Cold War dispute to overlap the Egyptian-Israeli conflict. The Egyptian announcement in September, 1955 that it would receive military weapons from Czechoslovakia raised Israeli fears of growing Egyptian military might. The French government had an

additional grievance against Nasser, based on his support of the Algerians who were fighting against the French government's control of Algeria.

Upon the insistence of the U.S. government, the fruits of the Israeli defeat of the Egyptian armed forces in the Sinai campaign were denied the Israeli government, with two exceptions. A United Nations Expeditionary Force (UNEF) was stationed at Sharm el-Sheikh to ensure the free passage of Israeli vessels to the port of Elath and forces were also stationed along the Sinai-Israeli border. Between 1956 and 1967, there were no major de-escalatory or escalatory shifts. In the summer of 1963, the new Israeli Prime Minister, Eshkol, did make some statements which suggested de-escalatory possibilities, but they were not pursued and were not built upon by Egyptian officials (Prittie, 1967: 211; Khouri, 1976: 307).

A major and well-documented escalation occurred with the events which led to the war of 1967 when Israeli military forces fought the armies of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. The escalation began with intensification of hostilities between Syrians and Israelis on local issues pertaining to water rights. The recently renewed coalition of Arab governments was the basis for Arab expectations that Egypt would pressure Israel in order to reduce its pressure on Syria. The convergence of several conflicts, as Israel's neighboring governments coalesced, was the basis for the large-scale escalation. Nasser, as leader of the Arab collectivity, requested the removal of UNEF from the Sinai. UNEF withdrew and then Egypt closed the Strait of Tiran for Israeli passage to Elath. This was understood by Nasser and his aides to inevitably result in war with Israel (Heikal, 1975). The U.S. President did not act to forestall Israeli action and did not warn or move quickly to prevent the UNEF withdrawal or to re-open the strait of Tiran. President Johnson was concerned about the Vietnam war and feared loss of Congressional support (Quandt, 1977). That concurrent conflict was sufficiently distracting to interfere with more active intermediary roles.

Following the Six Day War of 1967, the Israeli armed forces were in control of the entire Sinai, all of Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. Earlier, there may have been few positive inducements the Israeli government had to offer its Arab neighbors to gain recognition. Now, there was little that the Arabs could offer as valuable as what Israel already controlled. Egypt tried to raise the cost of Israeli occupation of the Sinai by launching a War of Attrition, in March, 1969. Israel reciprocated, the violence escalated, and the costs of the War of Attrition in destroyed Egyptian cities and in the deaths of Israelis and Egyptians mounted.

By the Spring of 1970, a major de-escalatory shift began, culminating in a ceasefire late in the summer. The U.S.-Soviet conflict in some ways cross-cut the Egyptian-Israeli War of Attrition and in some ways converged with it. These interlocking conflicts were critical in the de-escalation. Early in President Nixon's administration, exploratory conversations were held between high U.S.

and Soviet officials about a common policy for the Middle East (Szulc, 1978). The U.S. administration was testing the seriousness of Soviet interest in detente. The efforts to impose an American-Soviet Middle East policy floundered, but the movement toward detente may have helped set some limits on Soviet support for Egypt. Thus, U.S. Secretary of State Rogers, in June, 1970, called for a 90-day cease fire; this was rejected by President Nasser, but following a trip to Moscow, where he failed to win the commitment to the additional military support he requested, he agreed to the cease fire (Kriesberg and Klein, forthcoming).

The convergence of the Soviet-American conflict on the Egyptian-Israeli struggle became more salient with the failure of common U.S.-Soviet policy. For the U.S., this meant increased interest in drawing Egypt away from its dependence on the Soviet Union. The U.S. government could and did influence the Israeli government to accept the cease fire and promised military aid to compensate for the risks and losses entailed by Egyptian respite from the War of Attrition and the possible build-up of Egyptian forces against the Israelis. The Egyptians thought, too, that "a positive approach to the Americans would prevent new shipments of Phantoms to Israel" (Quandt, 1977: 98).

The cease fire led to a further change in the interlocking set of conflicts. The Egyptian acceptance of the cease fire was seen by other Arab groups as conciliatory toward Israel. It probably contributed to the PLO's increased militance which precipitated the violent September showdown between King Hussein and the Arab Palestinian militia units in Jordan. On the Israeli side, Begin and his party, Herut, which had been part of the governing coalition, left the government in protest against acceptance of the cease fire and the possibility of withdrawing from the West Bank (Meir, 1975: 385; Brecher, 1975).

In his autobiography, Sadat (1978) stresses a peace initiative which he launched soon after becoming President in late 1970. On February 4, 1971, Sadat proposed to again extend the expiring cease fire and begin work on clearing the Suez Canal if Israel would make a partial withdrawal in Sinai. Some of his colleagues in the government strongly objected to what they regarded as conciliatory proposals (Heikal, 1975: 116). On the Israeli side, there were also discussions of a partial withdrawal as a step toward a peace settlement. Dayan raised this idea publicly in November, 1970 and it was discussed with Eban who transmitted the idea to the United States President in January (Quandt, 1977: 136; Eban, 1977: 472).

Proposals and counter-proposals were made through U.S. officials, indicating some movement regarding a possible partial withdrawal. In March, 1971, the Israeli cabinet accepted the principle of a partial withdrawal from the Suez Canal (Eban, 1977:474) and after additional arms had been authorized for Israel by the U.S., it offered a formal proposal on April 19. Egypt responded to the Israeli proposal by pointing out the areas of disagreement between the two governments. In hopes of moderating the Egyptian and Israeli positions, Rogers and Undersecretary of State Sisco traveled to the Middle East in May. Rogers and

Sisco continued meeting with Israel and Egyptian officials through August; although the Egyptian government made some conciliatory movement, the Israeli leaders would not budge from their March position. No direct negotiations or even partial agreement was reached, and Rogers and Sisco returned home in defeat. By this time, the Egyptian government had turned its attention to strengthening its relations with other Arab nations and strengthening its internal unity after a government shakeup in May resulting in the removal of anti-Sadat forces.

What accounts for the apparent de-escalatory movements? Sadat in his autobiography explains that it was important as a leader to take action and the war option was not available because his military forces needed to be strengthened. Therefore, he launched his peace initiative. His suspicion of the Soviet Union and his desire to move closer to the United States government were also very significant (Heikal, 1975). If Israel was to be moved, United States support was vital and, therefore, he had to convince the United States government that his objectives were reasonable and did not threaten the existence of the State of Israel. It would be essential to weaken and perhaps break the special bond between the Israeli and the United States government.

Conversely, Dayan reasoned that a partial withdrawal in the Sinai and the reopening of the Suez Canal would reduce pressure for a total withdrawal (Eban, 1977). He thought that the Soviet Union's interest in getting Egypt to try to make Israel abandon the Sinai would be reduced once its vessels could again use the Suez Canal.

Sadat and Dayan each viewed the Egyptian-Israeli conflict as converging with the Soviet-U.S. conflicts. But they each were also shifting to view the Egyptian-Israeli conflict as primary and sought conflicts (and therefore bonds) which cross-cut the U.S.-Soviet conflict.

The next major escalation of the conflict between the Israeli and Egyptian governments was the October, 1973 war, when Egyptian and Syrian forces suddenly attacked Israel. The eruption of that war was premised upon an underlying stalemate and the convergence of a new set of conflicts. Clearly, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan had little to offer to induce Israelis to make concessions and withdraw from Sinai, the West Bank, and the Golan heights. A major military action which would produce a new reality promised a favorable break out of an unsatisfactory deadlock.

Two related shifts in the conflicts in the Middle East preceded war. Sadat had inherited from Nasser a close military and political link with the Soviet Union. This link set the Egyptian-Israeli conflict within the context of the Soviet-American struggle. This meant Soviet support for Egyptian armed forces, but also limits and constraints to avoid a direct Soviet confrontation with the U.S. Sadat, himself, was unwilling to rely on the Soviets. Sadat grew increasingly dissatisfied with the Soviet lack of military support and limits on Egyptian military plans. Sadat broke dramatically with the USSR in 1972, sending the

Soviet military personnel out of the country. Sadat (1978) argues that reducing the bonds to the Soviet Union freed him to escalate the conflict with Israel. He could give it the central importance it had for him, rather than the peripheral role it had in the context of American-Soviet relations.

At the same time, Sadat worked to build a new coalition of Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia and its agreement to use oil as a weapon (McLaurin, Mughisuddin, and Wagner, 1977: 60-61). Egypt then received military and economic aid from several, ideologically diverse Arab states. Coalescence with the Saudis in the struggle against Israel required concessions, including expelling Soviet soldiers. This new Arab united front created obligations for forceful action as well as the support that made it seem more likely to be successful.

The most spectacular de-escalation of the Middle East conflicts was the visit of President Sadat to Jerusalem in November, 1977 and the related negotiations. Underlying as well as precipitating conditions produced those radically new peace efforts. Several basic factors underlie President Sadat's decision to undertake a break with the past. The Egyptian military effort in 1973, although not a clear victory, demonstrated military prowess and the ability to inflict heavy damage and gain political fruits from beginning a war. A concession could more readily appear to be coming from strength and equality and not from weakness and dishonor (Sadat, 1978). The movement of the Egyptian government away from reliance on the Soviet Union, however, limited future military strength. The U.S. could not be expected to replace the Soviet Union as a military supplier without a demonstration of Egyptian willingness to make peace with Israel. The economic conditions in Egypt were extremely poor and even aid from the oil-rich Arab countries seemed inadequate, especially when tied to military preparedness to wage war against Israel. The U.S. government seemed more and more the essential source for assistance in developing the economy.

The underlying conditions for Israel had also changed since 1971. The costs of the 1973 war and the demonstration of the oil-producing Arab countries' power raised the specter of further costly wars and isolation from allies, even from the U.S. Consequently, Israeli dependence on the U.S. increased as did the importance of seeming reasonable and flexible to the U.S. government and public. The new Israeli government was led by a party and a leader who had always seemed particularly intransigent about making concessions. But the legacy in some ways gave the government more freedom of movement since the opposition was not likely to decry concessions which would make peace attainable (Avishai, 1979). Moreover, the Likud and its coalition partners were particularly concerned with the West Bank for ideological and religious reasons and these were of less significance for the Sinai.

The efforts of President Carter and his new Administration to bring about a comprehensive settlement to the Middle East conflicts posed problems for President Sadat and for the new Israeli government led by Prime Minister Begin. The proposed Geneva conference would bring the Soviet government more actively into the conflict, which both parties would rather not happen. In addition, for

President Sadat, participation, even indirectly, by the PLO, by Syria, and by other hard-line Arab groups would put them in a position to veto any settlement, thus restricting Egypt's freedom of movement. For the Israeli government, the participation of these groups at a Geneva conference would isolate it and might be a step toward recognition of the PLO and toward the creation of a Palestinian state.

Preliminary soundings between Egyptian and Israeli leaders indicated a common interest in a direct bilateral effort to reach an agreement (Zion and Dan, 1979). For Sadat, a dramatic concession such as going to Jerusalem promised to bring the U.S. government and public sufficiently to his side to bring pressure on Israel to make the concessions he sought. For Begin and the Israeli government, welcoming Sadat and making concessions to him, promised to split the Arab camp and ensure Israeli security from a major war. Both leaders viewed the focal conflict as one between Egypt and Israel rather than between Arabs and Zionists or between Communism and the West.

The gains each side might expect from this first step and the likely subsequent ones entailed risks for the other side. Thus, President Sadat risked accusations from other Arab leaders of making a separate peace and facing a reduction or cessation of economic ties and aid. The Israeli government risked giving up real estate and military security for an agreement which might be repudiated by a new Egyptian government.

Once a mutual commitment to conduct negotiations had been made, the representatives of Egypt and Israel could view their conflict as a series of disputes trailing off into the future and amenable to extensive trade offs. Integrative bargaining was more likely if concessions on one dispute could be compensated for by gains in another and even more fundamentally when a problem was seen as shared. The representatives of each side then had an interest in discovering solutions which were at least acceptable to both focal parties and their domestic constituencies. Previously, mistrust and hostility made concessions and any dispute difficult because that seemed to be yielding a hard-won past claim.

The actual consequences of the initial visit and negotiations provided the gains each side would have liked. Sadat won widespread approval from the U.S. public and more active support from the U.S. government; he also convinced many Israelis that he could be trusted and wanted peace. This was essential to gain the kind of concessions he sought from the Israeli government. The Israeli government gained a rupture in the Arab camp which made a war against Israel unlikely and gained a possible Arab ally to influence other Arab groups to make an acceptable settlement.

CONCLUSIONS

Every conflict is always embedded in a set of serial, superimposed, converging, cross-cutting, internal, and concurrent conflicts. At any given moment, we may focus upon a single set of adversaries in dispute over a particular issue. But

single-minded attention to the conflict will not prepare us to understand the sometimes sudden and radical changes in a struggle. Even in the Middle East, intractable as its conflicts may be, there are periods of escalation and de-escalation. Some of these shifts occur abruptly. We have seen how attention to the interlocking character of conflicts helps us to understand the rapid changes in the Middle East conflicts in 1949, 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1977. We will be better able to understand, and even anticipate, the terms of settlements in a dispute and the sudden escalatory and de-escalatory shifts if we consider the interlocking nature of conflicts than if we do not.

Paying attention to the interlocking character of social conflicts helps resolve several difficulties. One theoretical problem in the study of social conflicts relates to the distinction between realistic and unrealistic conflict. A realistic conflict refers to one which is based on an objective, underlying condition in which the adversaries have incompatible interests or values. In an unrealistic conflict, one or more parties is acting on the basis of internal factors rather than from those relating to the relationship among collectivities; it appears to result from domestic forces. Whether a particular conflict is realistic or unrealistic seems then to depend on the observer's assessment of the true bases for a social conflict; whether conflicts are realistic or not depends on the theoretical stance the analyst takes. But his conceptualization makes it difficult to assess the theories.

Attention to the interlocking conflict offers a way to extricate us from conceptual and operational difficulties in distinguishing between realistic and unrealistic conflicts. It suggests that when an observer considers a conflict to be unrealistic, he or she is attending to a different conflict than the one the adversaries are considering as most salient. But conflicts always are multiple and interlocking. Adversaries, it should be noted, always characterize the conflict in which they are engaged as realistic: they are mobilizing and organizing themselves in terms of one set of conflicts, even if some observers think those are trivial ones. I think it is useful to regard every conflict as having important realistic components, since that is how the partisans see the conflict. Furthermore, there always are some incompatible goals for every pair of adversaries. It is also useful to note the unrealistic components, since they reflect other conflicts to which adversaries are giving attention but are peripheral to the focal one. A shift in the adversaries' views of the set of conflicts that engage them may facilitate the resolution of one or two of them.

Unrealistic conflict sometimes is used in a very different sense; it may refer to excessive means of getting what the adversaries seek. In other words, the observer thinks the partisans are spending more resources in the fight than their ostensible goals warrant. In that sense, many conflicts might well be regarded as unrealistic, but that is a quite different meaning to the term.

In this paper, we have seen how the interlocking character of conflicts in the Middle East contributes to their persistence, escalation, and de-escalation. Shifts

in the way conflicts converge and redefine the focal conflict has been particularly important in accounting for changes in the intensity of the Israeli-Egyptian struggle. To what extent interlocking conflicts make for persistence, escalation, or de-escalation of international conflicts depends on a variety of particular circumstances. Specifying those conditions is an important next task.

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