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Roundtable Review 15-33

Galen Jackson. *A Lost Peace: Great Power Politics and the Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1967–1969*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2023.

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Introduction by Nathan J. Citino, Rice University

On 7 October 2023, militants led by *Harakat al-muqawama al-Islamiyya* (Hamas) broke through the blockade that Israel and Egypt had imposed on the Gaza strip since 2007. They killed some 1,200 people in southern Israel and seized more than two hundred hostages. In response, Israel bombarded and invaded Gaza, displacing more than a million Palestinian Arabs in the densely populated territory and killing untold thousands. On 29 November, the former Secretary of State and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger died at the age of 100. The coincidence of these events during the autumn of 2023 cast a harsh light on Kissinger's legacy in designing the American-orchestrated "peace process."

Kissinger's most lasting contribution was to restrict the "peace process" to the question of how much of the additional territory that Israel had occupied in 1967 it would be able to keep. Central to this approach was the exclusion of the official representatives of the Palestinian people from negotiations and the avoidance of any direct consideration of Palestinian dispossession as a consequence of Israel's founding in 1948.[1] While the 1993 and 1995 Oslo agreements partially diverged from the first part of Kissinger's formula, the second and more consequential obstacle to peace has never been overcome.[2] As bipartisan support for the 2020 "Abraham Accords" shows, American policy makers continue to adhere to the mistaken belief that a settlement between Israel and the Arab states can produce a stable, pro-American regional order.[3]

Galen Jackson's carefully researched book, *A Lost Peace: Great Power Politics and the Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1967–1979*, revisits US and Soviet diplomacy around the Arab-Israeli conflict and the early years of the "peace process." He seeks to understand "why the superpowers were unable to cooperate for Arab-Israeli peace, which might have served as the touchstone of a genuine US-Soviet détente" (4). He finds their failure to broker an agreement difficult to understand given the superpowers' shared interest in preventing regional conflict from escalating into a nuclear confrontation. Jackson cites domestic politics as an important reason why successive US administrations were unwilling to pressure Israel into making concessions. But he argues: "the main issue was that Kissinger's strategy…was designed to prevent the Soviet Union from playing a meaningful role in the peace process" (132). In other words, Kissinger was more interested in maximizing US advantage over the USSR in the Middle East than he was in concluding a peace agreement. Jackson's book joins a substantial body of literature examining how the Arab-Israeli conflict became embedded in the superpowers' cold war.[4] That conflict entered its most dangerous phase at a moment when the U.S. and USSR sought to pursue détente and reduce the threat of nuclear war. For Jackson, Kissinger's policymaking in the Middle East suggests that the US commitment to détente was "rhetoric" rather than substance. Kissinger and other officials regarded détente as "instrumental" to seeking mastery over the Soviets as opposed to an end in itself (193).

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[1] See the memoranda of agreements, 1 September 1975, between the US and Israel in which Kissinger pledged that the US would not recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as long as it "does not recognize Israel's right to exist and does not accept [United Nations] Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338." https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v26/d227. See also page 169 of the book under review.

[2] For a history of the "peace process" since Camp David, see Seth Anziska, *Preventing Palestine: A Political History from Camp David to Oslo* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).

[3] See Jon B. Alterman, "Biden's Efforts to Bring Saudi Arabia into the Abraham Accords," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 22 September 2023, https://www.csis.org/analysis/bidens-efforts-bring-saudi-arabia-abraham-accords.

[4] See Nathan J. Citino, "The Middle East and the Cold War," *Cold War History* 19:3 (2019): 441-56.

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The participants in this roundtable are accomplished scholars who have made important contributions of their own to the literature on US Middle East policy.[5] They find much to praise about Jackson's book and also offer critical responses. Benjamin V. Allison declares: "*A Lost Peace* is a great book about an irreducibly complex subject." He highlights "the richness of [Jackson's] primary source research," which is "made abundantly clear in his liberal use of revealing quotations throughout the text." Laila Ballout similarly cites Jackson's "enormously detailed" research. This archival work permits a "rigorous comparison of Kissinger's memoirs with historical documentation." Indeed, the sheer volume of declassified Kissinger records has given rise to a sizeable literature based on this approach, a trend which is sure to continue. Yet Allison and Ballout also recognize limitations in Jackson's research in Soviet sources. "The main point of weakness in *A Lost Peace*," writes Allison, "is its lack of Russian-language sources." This shortcoming has implications for Jackson's argument since it leads to a lack of discussion of how Soviet leaders also pursued security interests in the Middle East and an underplaying of Moscow's responsibility for the failure to reach a peace agreement. Ballout similarly notes the "limitations of the utility of Soviet memoirs without the similar research in contemporary Soviet archives."

Craig Daigle, author of a major book about the Arab-Israeli conflict and détente, offers the most critical assessment of *The Lost Peace*.[6] Daigle thinks that Jackson could have taken greater account of Cold War conflicts outside of the Arab-Israeli context, including in Africa. Soviet policies toward Libya, Angola, and the Horn of Africa held implications for the Soviet Union's relations with its Egyptian client. Most importantly, Daigle believes that Jackson's book "largely echoes what many other scholars have written on this subject over the past decade." Although Jackson claims to debunk "standard accounts" of Kissinger's statesmanship, Daigle asserts that a generation of scholarship that is critical of Kissinger's role in Arab-Israeli diplomacy, including books by Salim Yaqub, James Stocker, Paul Chamberlin, and Daigle himself, have become the standard accounts.[7] Jackson responds at length to this criticism; readers can judge for themselves the merits of both sides of this discussion.

The debates featured in this roundtable are possible only because the literature on Kissinger and the Middle East has reached a critical mass. The question of who views Kissinger's diplomacy as a "success" and who paid the price for that success is perhaps the most important question raised by scholars.[8] Just as scholarly publications on Kissinger's diplomacy will continue to appear, the Israel-Palestine conflict will go on producing violence whose victims will disproportionately be Palestinian. Fall 2023 dispensed some brutal lessons about the consequences of Kissinger's legacy for US Middle East policy. Real peace can result only from transcending the "peace process" and actually addressing the fundamental reasons for the conflict itself.

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[5] See Craig Daigle, *The Limits of Détente: the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1969–1973* (Yale University Press, 2012); Laila Ballout, "Vanguard of the Religious Right: U.S. Evangelicals in Israeli-Occupied South Lebanon," in *Diplomatic History* 46:3, (June 2022): 602-626; and Benjamin V. Allison, "The Devil's in the Details—or Is He? The Ethics and Politics of Terrorism Data," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 15 (April 2021): 125-141.

[6] Daigle, *The Limits of Détente*.

[7] Salim Yaqub, *Imperfect Strangers: Americans, Arabs, and U.S.-Middle East Relations in the 1970s* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016); Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); James Stocker, *Spheres of Intervention: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Collapse of Lebanon, 1967–1976* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016); and Daigle, *The Limits of Détente* .

[8] See Yaqub, "The Weight of Conquest: Henry Kissinger and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," in Fredrik Logevall and Andrew Preston, eds., *Nixon in the World: American Foreign Relations, 1969-1977* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 227-248.

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Nathan J. Citino is the Barbara Kirkland Chiles Professor and Chair of the History Department at Rice University. He is the author of *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC: Eisenhower, King Sa'ud, and the Making of U.S.-Saudi Relations* (Indiana, 2002, 2010); and *Envisioning the Arab Future: Modernization in U.S.-Arab Relations, 1945–1967* (Cambridge, 2017). He is currently writing a book about the foundations of US empire in the Middle East.

Benjamin V. Allison is a PhD candidate in history at the University of Texas at Austin and a graduate fellow at the Clements Center for National Security. He specializes in US foreign and national security policy since 1945, especially toward the Middle East and Russia. His dissertation focuses on relations between the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Arab "rejectionists" that opposed the Egyptian-Israeli peace process. He also studies terrorism, and has been published by the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism and in *Perspectives on Terrorism*.

Laila Ballout is an Assistant Professor of History at Wichita State University. She is currently developing her book project, *Saving Lebanon: Religion, Ethnic Politics, and Human Rights in the Reagan Era,* arguing that the US relationship with Lebanon in the Reagan era defined several key transformations in US politics at the end of the twentieth century: the development of the role of religion, especially Christianity and Islam, in US foreign relations; the development of human rights politics and peace-making as US foreign policymaking frameworks; and the fight for Arab American political inclusion amid a rise in anti-Arab sentiment in the 1980s. Find her most recent article "Vanguard of the Religious Right: U.S. Evangelicals in Israeli-Occupied South Lebanon," in *Diplomatic History* 46: 3 (June 2022): 602-626.

Craig Daigle is a historian of US foreign relations who specializes in the history of the global Cold War, US-Middle East relations, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict. He is the author of *The Limits of Détente: the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1969–1973* (Yale University Press, 2012), and co-editor of *The Routledge Handbook of the Cold War* (2014).

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Review by Benjamin V. Allison, University of Texas at Austin

Galen Jackson has written an important account of the superpower dimensions of the Arab-Israeli conflict and peacemaking process, from the 1967 Arab-Israeli War to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. But it is also an account of how Soviet-American détente failed, using the Middle East as a "touchstone…to comprehend why Washington and Moscow ultimately could not reach a fundamental accommodation during this period of the Cold War" (4). The blame, in Jackson's view, falls squarely in the laps of American policymakers, particularly National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger.

Jackson takes a broadly chronological approach, beginning with the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. The Lyndon Johnson administration wanted to pursue an even-handed policy toward the Arab-Israeli dispute, fearing that without a political solution, another war was imminent. As for the Soviet Union, Jackson suggests that it wanted neither an Arab-Israeli War nor the destruction of Israel, and was pressuring the Arab states not to threaten its security.[1] Despite the desire of the Politburo to avoid war, he argues, Soviet leaders "were not fully prepared to give up their pro-Arab strategy," meaning that "Moscow allowed its clients to divert it from pursuing its interest in cooperating with the Americans for peace" (29). Soviet policymakers were "pulled in two directions": toward their pro-Arab stance, which was facilitated by Cold War thinking, and toward their desire to prevent regional and superpower conflict (32). Given that the parties to the conflict were not going to solve their differences on their own, the leaders of both superpowers concluded that their intervention was needed in order to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In its first two years, the Richard Nixon administration faced a conundrum. On the one hand, it viewed a political settlement as crucial to Israeli security, and considered Israeli intransigence to be a major obstacle to peace. On the other hand, neither Washington nor Tel Aviv had any desire to involve the Soviets in the peace process, lest this "legitimize" Moscow's presence in the Middle East. Concurrently, Nixon worried about the possibilities of a regional conflict turning into a superpower war, but also had to take domestic support for Israel into account. Jackson aptly notes Nixon's ever-shifting position on the peace process, which vacillated constantly between positions on the Israelis, the Arabs, the Soviets, and the American public. The Soviet deployment of military personnel to Egypt in 1971 "transformed both the political and military dimensions of the conflict," forcing the Americans to push for a peace deal requiring Soviet withdrawal (68). In September 1971, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko offered to accept such a deal.

But it was not to be. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat soon changed his policy, leaning toward the United States and away from the Soviet Union. Washington wanted the Soviets out of Egypt, but feared upsetting the Israelis by proposing a deal. Nixon and Kissinger had "a fundamental disagreement" on the order of things, as Nixon was comfortable with Secretary of State William Rogers pursuing a new interim agreement between Egypt and Israel, while Kissinger was not, instead viewing the Arab-Israeli conflict primarily in Cold War terms (77). Ultimately, Jackson argues, the United States did not move to make a deal involving Moscow largely due to domestic political pressures. Sadat therefore concluded that he needed to press the issue by going to war with Israel, which Soviet leaders unsuccessfully attempted to prevent.

Jackson shows that, prior to the outbreak of the October 1973 War, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev did more to try to head off the war than his American counterpart, again largely due to Nixon's domestic political concerns, both before and after Watergate. That scandal, Jackson argues, was crucially important "because it left Kissinger in command of US decision-making" (107). Kissinger intended to hold out on peace until Arab

[1] Jackson therefore joins the ranks of scholars who push back against the thesis that the Soviets were to blame for the conflict. For the most famous iteration of that thesis, see Isabella Ginor and Gideon Remez, *Foxbats over Dimona: The Soviets' Nuclear Gamble in the Six Day War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

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leaders tired of the Soviets' inability to deliver a political settlement and ran into the waiting arms of the United States. Jackson blames the United States, and especially Kissinger, for his encouragement of the Israeli violation of a ceasefire during the war, and for raising the DEFCON (Defense Readiness Condition) level during the conflict. "Kissinger," he argues, "actively worked to counteract Nixon's inclination to work with Moscow," because it was Kissinger's

> principal aim to exclude the Soviets from the [Arab-Israeli] negotiations—and to maneuver Egypt out of its partnership with Moscow and into alignment with Washington—even if doing so worked at cross-purposes with his goal of getting a fundamental settlement in the Middle East… His strategy was to make Washington's willingness to press Israel conditional upon the Arabs' agreement to downgrade their relations with Moscow. And it was only after it became clear that Kissinger intended to cut them out of the peace process that the Soviets began to oppose US diplomacy (128, 127).

When Gerald Ford succeeded Nixon, his administration wanted a step-by-step peace process, but Israeli intransigence and Kissinger's refusal to pressure the Israelis prevented such a development. Jackson reveals how "the administration came close to pursuing a comprehensive settlement in 1975," but opted not to for domestic political reasons, in addition to the challenge of having to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Ford's desire to win the 1976 election, and the mistaken assumption that such a move could be delayed until 1977. Additionally, Kissinger was still set on forcing the Soviets out of the Middle East.

In his final chapter, Jackson explores the "collapse" of the comprehensive framework. He argues that the Carter administration's October 1977 "reversal" on the Soviet-American Joint Communiqué on the Middle East, which declared their shared intent to reconvene the Geneva Conference in pursuit of a comprehensive peace, "killed once and for all any chance that the United States and the Soviet Union could cooperate for Arab-Israeli peace and, unsurprisingly, played a role in undermining whatever remained of détente by the end of the 1970s" (162). He attributes the Carter administration's reneging to domestic factors, particularly pressure from Cold War hardliners, and highlights the administration's "striking" failure to build domestic political support for cooperation with the USSR in the Middle East.

Jackson concludes by highlighting the book's historical and conceptual findings. Its historical contribution is, simply put, that "the main reason that the superpowers could not cooperate in the Middle East had to do with US, rather than USSR, policy" (190). On the conceptual level, it shows that even when great powers have *realpolitik* reasons to cooperate, they still might choose to pursue power maximization over cooperation. He summarizes his findings by stating that

> standard accounts of why the United States and the Soviet Union could not work together for Arab-Israeli peace are wrong: wrong about Soviet policy, wrong about US policy, and wrong about what this story implies for how foreign policy should be conducted. The key takeaway is not that the philosophy that the détente policy was supposedly developed from cannot serve as an effective basis for foreign policy. To the contrary, it shows the opposite (193).

A Lost Peace is a great book about an irreducibly complex subject. Jackson has made a crucial contribution to the field with his argument for American complicity in the failure of both détente and the Middle East peace process. He does a tremendous job of showing how frequently Soviet and American positions on the Middle East aligned, underscoring the absurdity of their failure to come to some sort of agreement. He also deserves praise for mining American archives, something that political scientists have only recently started doing at scale. The richness of his primary source research is made abundantly clear in his liberal use of revealing quotations throughout the text.

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As with any monograph, however, this work has shortcomings. In the germane chapters, Jackson mentions only in passing the Geneva Conference of 1973, which was a critical turning point in the Arab-Israeli peace process (118-119, 128-129), and more fully discusses it in his chapter on the Soviet-American agreement to *resume* the conference than in any of the chapters on Kissinger.

Throughout the book, Jackson does well in discussing the domestic components of American policymaking, which were present and powerful (if not overriding) in just about every major US policy decision he includes. Given the clear and strong evidence of the vast importance of domestic politics in the cases he discussed, his assertion that "in the final analysis, the domestic factor was not decisive" is surprising (6).

What of the Soviet side? On the one hand, Jackson makes good use of translated Soviet primary sources, and he demonstrates a command of the historical literature on Soviet Middle East policy. But while the book gives some consideration to Moscow's ties with Damascus and Cairo throughout the text, it barely discusses Soviet relations with the other Arab states.[2] Nor does it mention the fact that the Soviet Union and Israel did not have diplomatic ties after the 1967 War. This surely did not help the peace process (more on this below).

Despite the strong argument of the first five chapters, the one devoted to the policies of President Jimmy Carter is somewhat disappointing. It offers little discussion of the regional and global situations: for example, the Soviet-American competition in the Horn of Africa, which had direct bearing on events in the Middle East and North Africa.[3] While Jackson considers the United States' reneging on the Joint Communique on the Middle East to have been the death of the comprehensive peace process, the argument does not include enough evidence that this was the case, summarizing the period from October 1977 through the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 in about three pages (185-187). Although Soviet and American leaders ultimately did not subsequently work together on a comprehensive peace process in the Middle East, this was far from a certainty by October 1977.

The Egyptian-Israeli peace process was an integral part of American strategy in the Middle East, particularly as a means of countering Soviet influence; indeed, it was a critical component in the expansion of the US presence in the region.[4] Not discussing the intervening period between the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and the Soviet-Afghan War obscures how Soviet-American relations deteriorated, and therefore how the Arab-Israeli peace process contributed to détente's collapse. Soviet leaders had multiple opportunities to help the United States expand the bilateral Egyptian-Israeli peace process into a comprehensive one. Instead, they

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[2] Roland Dannreuther, *The Soviet Union and the PLO* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); Robert O. Freedman, *Moscow and the Middle East: Soviet Policy since the Invasion of Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Freedman, *Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since 1970*, 3rd ed. (New York: Praeger, 1982); Efraim Karsh, *Soviet Policy towards Syria since 1970* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991); Hafeez Malik, ed., *Domestic Determinants of Soviet Foreign Policy towards South Asia and the Middle East* (New York: MacMillan, 1990); Haim Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988: In the Shadow of the Iran-Iraq Conflict* (Boulder: Lynn Rienner, 1992); Oles M. Smolansky with Bettie M. Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq: The Soviet Quest for Influence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991); Alexey Vasiliev, *Russia's Middle East Policy: From Lenin to Putin* (London: Routledge, 2018); Odd Arne Westad, ed. *The Fall of Détente: Soviet–American Relations during the Carter Years* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1997).

[3] On the relationship between US policy in the Middle East and the Soviet role in the Horn of Africa, see Benjamin V. Allison, "Through the Cracks of Détente: US Policy, the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front, and the Coming of the Second Cold War, 1977–1984," Master's thesis (Kent State University, 2020), 39-46. See also Nancy Mitchell, *Jimmy Carter in Africa: Race and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016); and Radoslav A. Yordanov, *The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa during the Cold War: Between Ideology and Pragmatism* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016), 181-199.

[4] Allison, "Through the Cracks of Détente." See also Allison, "Beyond the Arc of Crisis: Jimmy Carter and the Arab 'Radicals,' 1978–79," *Cold War History* (forthcoming).

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actively worked against it, for the sake of their prestige in the region.[5] While this was certainly a rational response, it was not constructive. Relatedly, the final chapter contains very little discussion of Soviet policy.

The main point of weakness in *A Lost Peace* is its lack of Russian-language sources. While no book can do everything—and Jackson's does a lot with the voluminous American sources he consulted—it is nearly impossible to write a fair and balanced account of superpower rivalry in the Middle East without consulting available Soviet primary sources, be they archival documents or memoirs. This is especially apparent in the last chapter. While Jackson could rely on the comparatively extensive archivally informed scholarship on, and translated documents from, Soviet policy in the pre-1977 period, there is far less of each available for the post-1977 period. Even then, the understandable reliance on translated documents and secondary sources to discuss Soviet policy in the 1967–1976 period, rather than on original archival research in Russian or other Eastern European materials, skews the book's analysis, as it minimizes the geopolitical machinations of the Soviets, and portrays the United States as the only actor with real power.

This is not to say that I disagree with Jackson's central thesis—I think he is right. But his account is far less nuanced than it could have been had he drawn on Russian-language sources.

For example, according to the memoirs of one Soviet official, Foreign Minister Gromyko intended the 1 October Joint Communiqué to create problems for the American-Israeli relationship and block the path to a separate Egyptian-Israeli peace, over a month before Sadat's visit to Jerusalem.[6] According to another memoir, the Central Committee staff were shocked but skeptical when the White House agreed to the communiqué.[7] After the Camp David Accords were signed in September 1978, the Soviet Foreign Ministry actively worked to prevent a comprehensive peace process.[8] In fact, in December of that year, the Soviet Foreign Ministry debated negotiating a "Camp Zavidovsky Deal" between the PLO and Israel (and later Syria), but abandoned the idea due to concerns about maintaining a united Arab front against the Camp David Accords.[9] Indeed, despite the presence of advocates for renewed Soviet-Israeli relations within the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Department, their suggestions were rebuffed, not least because of Israel's refusal to accept UN Security Council Resolution 242.[10]

Despite these shortcomings, Jackson has written a succinct, powerful work that demonstrates American complicity in both the perpetuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the collapse of détente. His book makes an outstanding contribution to those literatures. As great scholarship does, *A Lost Peace* provides many answers and provokes plenty of questions.

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[5] Andreĭ Andreevich Gromyko, *Pami͡atnoe. Kniga vtorai͡a* [Memories. Book two] (Moscow: Izdatelʹstvo politicheskoĭ literatury, 1988), 178, 195.

[6] Oleg Grinevsky, *Taĭny sovetskoĭ diplomatii* [*Secrets of Soviet diplomacy*] (Moscow: Izdatelʹstvo «VAGRIUS», 2000), 30-33.

[7] Karen Brutents, *Tridt͡satʹ let na staroĭ ploshchadi* [*Thirty years on the old square*] (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheni͡ia, 1998),

[8] Benjamin V. Allison, "From Camp David to Baghdad: Scrambling for and Against Peace in the Middle East, Fall 1978," *Not Even Past*, 19 January 2023, https://notevenpast.org/from-camp-david-to-baghdad-scrambling-for-peace-in-the-middle-east-fall-1978/.

[9] Grinevsky, Tainy sovetskoĭ diplomatii, 158-163.

[10] Brutents, *Tridt͡satʹ let*, 385-387; Grinevsky, *Taĭny sovetskoĭ diplomatii*; Tarasenko and Kornienko, in *US-Soviet Relations and Soviet Foreign Policy toward the Middle East and Africa in the 1970s: Transcript from a Workshop at Lysebu, October 1–3, 1994*, transcr. Gail Adams Kvam, ed. Odd Arne Westad (Oslo, NO: The Norwegian Nobel Institute, 1995), 61.

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Review by Laila Ballout, Wichita State University

In *A Lost Peace: Great Power Politics and the Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1967–1979,* Galen Jackson presents an enormously detailed analysis of critical moments in US-Soviet Middle East policymaking. By narrowly focusing on the question of why the two superpowers, who had a mutual interest in resolving Middle East conflict in the 1970s, did not develop a durable solution, he meticulously revises the persistent narrative that Soviet obstruction prevented Middle East peace at end of the Cold War. Instead, Jackson demonstrates convincingly that Soviet leaders largely agreed with the US on the peace terms for the conflict, and that it was the US that proved obstructionist by seeking Cold War gains at critical moments that undermined negotiation (190).

This project is an important contribution to a growing body of scholarship examining the disjunct between the United States' purported interest in pursuing Arab-Israeli peace and the substance of US policy. Significant works in this project include Seth Anziska's *Preventing Palestine*, and Salim Yaqub's *Imperfect Strangers*.[1] As Jackson notes, numerous works continue to be published that reinforce the narrative, which is rooted in the memoirs of former Secretary of State and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, that Soviet ideology was inherently confrontational and indulgent of Arab radicalism, and that despite sincere US efforts towards peace, détente emboldened the USSR to become more expansionist.[2]

A Lost Peace begins by demonstrating that even prior to détente, both the United States and the Soviet Union wanted to avoid military escalation in the Middle East, and encouraged their client states to invest in the peace process after the 1967 war. The fear of military escalation by client states meant that both the US and USSR had a mutual interest in setting aside ideology in order to solve the conflict, and to consistently discourage military confrontation. When, in 1968–1970, it became clear that neither the Arab states nor Israel were willing to meaningfully engage in peace negotiations, both superpowers recognized that they would need to direct negotiations for any progress to be made. Nevertheless, both states also sought keep their clients armed enough to maintain their influence. It was in this delicate balance between encouraging negotiations and maintaining influence through military aid that obstacles to peace often emerged.

Critically, Jackson demonstrates that the Soviets were often more willing to restrain their Arab state clients in this period than the US was willing to restrain Israel. To make this argument, he re-assesses a few critical moments in which Kissinger's memoirs characterize Soviet leaders as seeking Cold War gains that scuttled chances for peace. For example, Jackson demonstrates that in 1970, the arming of Egypt and Syria by the Soviet Union, and the stationing of Soviet troops in the region, ought to better be understood as a defensive, rather than an offensive, move. Soviet leaders acted to prevent their Arab allies from becoming so weakened that the Soviet military would have to intervene militarily to save face. This critical weakening happened with the blessing of Kissinger and President Richard Nixon, who recognized the destabilizing effect that relentless Israeli attacks were having on Egypt and took no steps to pressure Israel to step back. Officials in both the

[1] Seth Anziska, *Preventing Palestine: A Political History from Camp David to Oslo* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018); Salim Yaqub, *Imperfect Strangers: Americans, Arabs, and U.S.-Middle East Relations in the 1970s* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016); Shaul Mitelpunkt, *Israel in the American Mind: The Cultural Politics of U.S.-Israeli Relations, 1958–1988* (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Jorgen Jensehaugen, "Smokescreen Diplomacy: Excluding the Palestinians by Self-Rule," *The Middle East Journal* 73:2 (Summer 2019): 224-241.

[2] Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979); Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982). Works that continue to replicate these narratives include: Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (New York: Basic, 2017); William Inboden, *The Peacemaker: Ronald Reagan, the Cold War, and the World on the Brink* (New York, N.Y., Penguin Random House, 2022); and the continued frequent citation of John Lewis Gaddis' canonical works, such as *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2005).

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Soviet Union and the United States thought that it was possible that Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser could be deposed in these circumstances. This was an unacceptable outcome for Soviet leaders, and led them to station troops in Egypt (60-61).

This type of detailed re-assessment demonstrates the greatest strength of Jackson's work: his rigorous comparison of Kissinger's memoirs with historical documentation. He draws heavily on documents included in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series and materials from presidential libraries to demonstrate the revisionism that has become canon.[3] Jackson uses Kissinger's own words to dismantle Kissinger's later claims that the Soviets were obstructionists who often encouraged the intransigence of the most radical Arab states for Cold War gain.

This strength of *A Lost Peace*, however, draws attention to Jackson's reliance on the memoirs of former Soviet officials rather than internal Soviet documentation for some of his assessment of Soviet intentions.[4] There is much convincing evidence that Jackson marshals, but especially given the rigor with which he dismantles Kissinger's retrospective accounts, some acknowledgement of the limitations of the utility of Soviet memoirs without the similar research in contemporary Soviet archives would have been helpful. For example, just as Kissinger's memoirs create a revisionist account of Soviet intransigence, might there be some logic that would lead Soviet leaders to retrospectively emphasize their flexibility (110)?

Jackson also weighs in on the critical question of how domestic politics influenced US-Middle East policymaking during this period, and the shift in policymaking from Nixon to Kissinger in 1973 after the Watergate hearings sidelined the president. His close readings of the source material from the period provide detailed evidence that with Nixon playing a vastly reduced role in foreign policymaking, Kissinger pursued a Middle East policy that pushed Egypt to declare war in 1973. He argues that Nixon had been eager to pressure the Israelis to the negotiating table in 1973, which he viewed as a key year, in part because of the US election calendar, but also because he genuinely felt that it was in US interest that progress be made towards Arab-Israeli peace. Jackson writes, however, that "the policy that Kissinger pursued once the scandal exploded suggests that domestic politics was not the main consideration that affected US policy. Instead, the evidence indicates that Kissinger's differences with Nixon—especially with respect to geopolitical calculations the two men made about the Soviet Union—played a very key role in US policy before the October War" (107-8).

Kissinger dramatically changed the negotiating timeline when he was in charge of policy. He saw no need to rush to the negotiating table, and felt that further delay could yield a better deal for the United States and Israel. Kissinger's lack of urgency led the Soviets to warn the US that President Anwar Sadat in Egypt was growing impatient with the persistent lack of progress in the superpower led peace process. This was especially frustrating to Sadat, given that he had made genuinely new offers to get negotiations moving, which even Kissinger recognized at the time (109).[5] Kissinger was unswayed. Jackson argues that US obstructionism

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[3] Jackson cites Paul Lettow, *Ronald Reagan and His Quest to Abolish Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Random House, 2005); Robert D. English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 200); and John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2005) among others.

[4] Jackson cites Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to Six Cold War Presidents, 1962–1986* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995); Yevgeny Primakov, *Russia and the Arabs: Behind the Scenes in the Middle East from the Cold War to the Present* (New York: Basic, 2009); Victor Israelyan, *On the Battlefields of the Cold War: A Soviet Ambassador's Confession* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

[5] In recounting Sadat's proposal for peace in 1973, delivered by his National Security Advisor, Hafez Ismail, Kissinger writes in *Years of Upheaval* that the proposal was "a polite ultimatum for terms beyond our capacity to fulfill." Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 215-216. While in documentary evidence from the time, he expressed the view that the

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was a key cause of Sadat's decision to initiate war with Israel in 1973, which he viewed as a last resort in his move to force movement on the critical issue of the Egyptian-Israeli border (109).

Ultimately, Jackson has provided a highly usable, thoughtful, and close reading of the primary source material on the substance of US realpolitik in Middle East peace negotiations, which he finds lacking, and an essential comparative reading of Kissinger's memoirs and the contemporary historical record. The assessment of the impact of domestic politics on Middle East policymaking is less comprehensive, but his analysis adds critical detail to the lead-up to the outbreak of the October 1973 War and the significance of Nixon's sidelining by Watergate. In his conclusion, he asserts that the United States did not truly set aside Cold War ideology. He makes the further case that condemnations of *realpolitik* based on the failures of Middle East peacemaking in the 1970s are grounded not in failures of a "businesslike" US foreign policy, which was exploited by Soviet leaders, as the Kissinger memoirs have suggested (192). Instead, Jackson clearly demonstrates that because US policymakers failed to truly engage in *realpolitik* in the Middle East, *realpolitik* was unable to produce a durable Arab-Israeli peace.

Egyptian offer was sincere, reporting to Nixon Ismail "didn't give us the same old…Arab procedures" and "Egypt is already willing to make a separate peace." Memcon, 25 February 1973.

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Review by Craig Daigle, City College of New York and Graduate Center, CUNY

In *A Lost Peace: Great Power Politics and the Arab-Israeli Dispute*, *1967–1969*, Galen Jackson uses a wealth of US archival records to answer why, during the high point of détente, the United States and the Soviet Union failed to reach a comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. If both superpowers believed that the outbreak of another Middle East war had the potential to erupt into a major confrontation, with United States and Soviet forces on opposing sides, why didn't leaders in Washington and Moscow go out their way to avoid such a scenario? Why did the ideology and principles of détente apply to arms control, the Helsinki Accords, cultural exchanges, and economic and trade relations, but fail to extend to such geopolitical hotspots like the Middle East? These are perfectly reasonable and important questions. The answers, however, repeat familiar ground and do little to add to the existing narrative.

Jackson, like several other previous scholars, lays the blame squarely on US policymakers for failing to achieve a comprehensive settlement and for the "deeply imperfect negotiating outcome" (185) that produced the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty. Although Presidents Richard M. Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, and Jimmy Carter, as well as many of their foreign policy advisers, repeatedly professed to want to cooperate with the Soviet Union in reaching an agreement that ended the Arab-Israeli impasse, each administration instead adopted policies that sought to undermine the Soviet position in the region. After mid-1971, argues Jackson, the Soviets were open to a comprehensive peace agreement that was in line the basic American concept of such a settlement. But time-and-again, officials in Washington rejected Soviet overtures. Jackson notes that "it turns out that US decision makers…were not interested in working with the Soviets, and instead sought to expel them from the Middle East, with the aim of making unilateral Cold War gains at their expense" (6).

Perhaps the biggest culprit in cutting the Soviet Union out of the Middle East negotiations was one of the chief architects of détente: National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger. Kissinger's refusal to see the Arab-Israeli negotiations as anything other than zero-sum game of power politics between the United States and the Soviet Union left Israel in firm control of the Arab territories they captured during the 1967 war. "Kissinger's aim, then, was to hurt the Soviet Union in the Middle East by perpetuating the deadlock—which would demonstrate Moscow's inability to deliver a settlement—until the Arabs had no choice but to abandon their USSR connection in favor of the United States" (109). Thus, rather than use the burgeoning détente to reach a Middle East settlement, and avoid another regional war, Kissinger instead used the administration's détente policy "quite ruthlessly" to undermine the position of the Soviet Union with the Arab states. "The Americans ultimately rejected every constructive course that the Soviets and Egyptians suggested," he argues, concluding that "the results…[were] that Egypt and Syria (in October 1973) decided to pursue their political objectives through military action" (109).

Carter's election to the presidency in 1977, Jackson contends, offered "new possibilities" for the superpowers to work together (162). Carter initially set out to do so, agreeing on 1 October 1977, to a joint statement with Moscow calling for the reconvening of the Geneva conference which would be operated under joint US-Soviet auspices. But much like Kissinger, the Carter administration abandoned the statement immediately after it was issued in favor of a bilateral Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement. In other words, Carter opted for Kissinger's step-by-step approach and therefore left the Palestinian question unresolved, forcing Soviet leaders to turn decisively against the American peacemaking efforts. "The administration's reversal," says Jackson, "in effect killed once and for all any chance that the United States and the Soviet Union could cooperate or Arab-Israeli peace and, unsurprisingly, played a role in undermining whatever remained of détente" (183).

To be sure, Jackson is correct that détente never extended to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Americans, particularly after the Kremlin dispatched approximately 15,000 troops to Egypt in early 1970, were

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determined to expel the Soviet military presence from the region and to make inroads with the Arab states. And Kissinger's extraordinary efforts to ensure that the Israelis held on to Arab territory, as Jackson rightly argues, clearly inflamed tensions and compelled the Arabs to take military action to break the stalemate and end the "no war, no peace," situation that paralyzed Egyptian president Anwar el-Sadat's efforts at domestic reform. But laying the blame almost solely on US policy makers for failing to pursue a comprehensive peace agreement not only fails to adequately consider Egyptian and Israeli agency in the process, but it largely echoes what many other scholars have written on this subject over the past decade.[1]

It is clear that Nixon and Kissinger failed to work for a comprehensive peace agreement that compelled Israel to withdraw from all Arab land seized in 1967, and to address the future status of the Palestinians. They accepted the stalemate in the region and perpetuated the status quo, particularly before the 1973 War, and "shuttle diplomacy" negotiations did little to change the existing situation in the region while leaving the Soviets on the outside looking in. And the Camp David Accords and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty were imperfect documents that "complicated the task of reaching a more fundamental settlement." Salim Yaqub, Paul Chamberlin, James Stocker, Seth Anziska, Jorgen Jensehaugen, and Victor Nemchenok, among others, have all made these arguments in some fashion, over the past decade.[2] Jackson, though, argues against the "standard accounts" which were written largely in the 1980s and 1990s, and without the advantage of declassified archival material. Left unclear is how his scholarship differs from the more recent studies—studies that have debunked many of the earlier myths and, in my view, become the "standard accounts."

I would also argue that Jackson could have engaged more significantly with Cold War scholarship outside of Arab-Israeli conflict. Many scholars, for example, have demonstrated that while officials in Washington and Moscow continued to pursue détente and improve US-Soviet relations on a global strategic level, competition between the superpowers persisted on a regional level.[3] The Soviets, for example, took aggressive steps in the mid-to-late 1970s to reclaim the strategic ground they had lost in the Middle East and North Africa as a result of détente. Coinciding with its deteriorating relationship with Cairo and the expulsion of its military presence from Egypt, Moscow increased military aid to Aden, signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Baath party in Iraq, and sent massive amounts arms to Libya in 1974 and 1975.[4] Outside of the Middle East and North Africa, Soviet-American competition accelerated during the mid-to-late 1970s in Angola, the Horn of Africa, and Afghanistan.[5] These interventions did not happen in a vacuum. Several of them directly

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[1] Salim Yaqub*, Imperfect Stranger: Americans, Arabs, and U.S.-Middle East Relations in the 1970s* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016); Paul Thomas Chamberlin*, The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); James Stocker, *Spheres of Intervention: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Collapse of Lebanon, 1967–1976* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016); Seth Anziska, *Preventing Palestine: A Political History from Camp David to Oslo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018); Jorgen Jensehaugen, *Arab-Israeli Diplomacy under Carter: The US, Israel and the Palestinians* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018); Victor Nemchenok, "'These People Have an Irrevocable Right to Self-Government': United States Policy and the Palestinian Question, 1977–1979," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 20:4 (2009): 595–618.

[2] See note 1.

[3] Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Nancy Mitchell, *Jimmy Carter and Africa: Race and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016); Radoslav A. Yordanov, *The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa during the Cold War: Between Ideology and Pragmatism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016); Louise Woodroofe, *'Buried in the Sands of the Ogaden': The United States, the Horn of Africa, and the Demise of Détente* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2013); Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Cold War's Killing Fields: Rethinking the Long Peace* (New York: Harper Collins, 2019).

[4] Galia Golan*, Soviet Policies in the Middle East: From World War II to Gorbachev* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Craig Daigle, "Sadat's African Dilemma: Libya, Ethiopia, and the Making of the Camp David Accords," *Cold War History* 19:2 (2019): 295-313.

[5] Piero Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria and the Struggle for Southern Africa* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*; Yardonov, *The Soviet Union and the Horn of*

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impacted the ability to achieve a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace settlement. Did the Soviets really expect Sadat to welcome their efforts to negotiate a comprehensive settlement when the Kremlin was effectively aiding Libyan President Mu'ammar Qadhafi's efforts to oust him from power? Soviet policy, I would argue, pushed Sadat closer to accepting a bilateral peace agreement with Israel than pursuing a comprehensive agreement.

Thus, Jackson's book will certainly be added to those of the growing list of scholars who are critical of US policy during the decade and who continue to erroneously insist that a comprehensive peace was achievable during the 1970s. But *A Lost Peace*, unfortunately, does little to move beyond these works or tell a more compelling story about superpower relations in the Middle East.

Africa; Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 316-326.

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Response by Galen Jackson, Williams College

I would like to thank Benjamin Allison, Laila Ballout, and Craig Daigle for the time and effort they put into reading and reviewing my book. I am also grateful to Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse for organizing this roundtable, and to Nathan Citino for writing the introduction. As someone who deeply values the work that *H-Diplo* does, I am extremely appreciative to have my book be the subject of one of its roundtables and to have other scholars engaging with its arguments.

Allison's evaluation of my book is extremely generous. "*A Lost Peace*," he writes,

> is a great book about an irreducibly complex subject. Jackson has made a crucial contribution to the field with his argument for American complicity in the failure of both détente and the Middle East peace process. He does a tremendous job of showing how frequently Soviet and American positions on the Middle East aligned, underscoring the absurdity of their failure to come to some sort of agreement.

Ballout's reaction to my book is similarly very positive. In her view, *A Lost Peace*

> presents an enormously detailed analysis of critical moments in US-Soviet Middle East policymaking. By narrowly focusing on the question of why the two superpowers, who had a mutual interest in resolving Middle East conflict in the 1970s, did not develop a durable solution, [Jackson] meticulously revises the persistent narrative that Soviet obstruction prevented Middle East peace at the end of the Cold War.

The book, she concludes, "demonstrates convincingly that Soviet leaders largely agreed with the US on the peace terms for the conflict and that it was the US that proved obstructionist by seeking Cold War gains at critical moments that undermined negotiation."

I deeply appreciate what Allison and Ballout write about my book. Indeed, it is difficult to put into words just how much it means to me to receive reviews such as these, and am very grateful to each of them.

Daigle's review, however, takes a quite different view, claiming that my research largely rehashes what other scholars working in this area have already said. My arguments, he writes, "repeat familiar ground and do little to add to the existing narrative." The book's analysis, he adds, "not only fails to adequately consider Egyptian and Israeli agency in the process, but it largely echoes what many other scholars have written on this subject over the past decade." In his view, it is "unclear… how [Jackson's] scholarship differs from the more recent studies." "*A Lost Peace*," he concludes, "unfortunately, does little to move beyond these works or tell a more compelling story about superpower relations in the Middle East."

I dispute the claim that my book simply rehashes what has now become the standard wisdom about the Arab-Israeli conflict between the June 1967 war and the signing of the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. To be sure, I would never argue that everything in the book is totally new. A number of the key points, in fact, have indeed been made previously by other scholars, including Daigle himself.[1] But that scarcely means that my book merely represents a rehash of some of the recent work that has been done on this issue. In fact, a

[1] Craig Daigle, *The Limits of Détente: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1969–1973* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012).

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number of the most important arguments that I make in the book are new and, indeed, at odds with what many analysts have written about it in recent years in some major ways.

The core claim that I make in *A Lost Peace* is that the United States and the Soviet Union were ultimately unable to cooperate in order to secure an Arab-Israeli peace agreement after the June 1967 war primarily because of strategic calculations on the US side. Soviet leaders, I argue, were willing by 1971 to work with the Americans for Middle East peace, and had more or less the same views as Washington did regarding the terms of a comprehensive settlement. US officials, however, were simply not willing to collaborate with Moscow on the issue, and instead sought to expel them from the region, with the goal of making Cold War gains at the Soviet Union's expense. A sort of Cold War mentality—one that prioritized seeking unilateral advantage—ultimately counted for more than a philosophy that emphasized the need for the superpowers to put ideology to the side and have a more businesslike relationship, one that would allow them to respect one another's core political concerns and cooperate on key geopolitical issues where they had overlapping interests. In other words, my argument is that the actual substance of American policy was very different from what US officials emphasized rhetorically during this period. And an important consequence of that policy is that Washington and Moscow might have missed a major opportunity to not only get a comprehensive Arab-Israeli settlement, but also to come to a genuine political accommodation with one another.

Have any other scholars actually made this kind of argument, such that my book simply represents a rehash of what has already been written about this issue in recent years? I have enormous respect for scholars working in this area, including the ones that Daigle mentions in his review, and have certainly learned a great deal from their respective accounts.[2] But I do not think that any other scholar has made the sort of argument that I do in my book—certainly neither Daigle himself nor any of the writers that he cites in his review have said anything of the sort. In fact, several of the works that Daigle cites focus on issues that are quite distinct from the ones that I am concerned with in my own research.

Salim Yaqub's *Imperfect Strangers* is a good case in point. Of the scholars that Daigle cites in his review, Yaqub deals most directly with the matters with which I am interested in the book.[3] I hold Yaqub's work in very high regard—indeed, *Imperfect Strangers* is in my view among the best accounts of this period of the Arab-

[2] See, for example, Salim Yaqub, *Imperfect Strangers: Americans, Arabs, and U.S.-Middle East Relations in the 1970s* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016); Seth Anziska, *Preventing Palestine: A Political History from Camp David to Oslo* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018); Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Martin Indyk, *Master of the Game: Henry Kissinger and the Art of Middle East Diplomacy* (New York: Knopf, 2021); Jørgen Jensehaugen, *Arab-Israeli Diplomacy under Carter: The US, Israel and the Palestinians* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018); Yigal Kipnis, *1973: The Road to War* (Charlottesville, VA: Just World, 2013); Kenneth Kolander, *America's Israel: The US Congress and America-Israeli Relations, 1967–1975* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2020); Aaron David Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace* (New York: Bantam, 2008); Dennis Ross, *Doomed to Succeed: The U.S.-Israel Relationship from Truman to Obama* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2015); Daniel Strieff, *Jimmy Carter and the Middle East: The Politics of Presidential Diplomacy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Alexandra T. Evans, "Carter's Compromise: Cowardice or Calculation?" *Texas National Security Review Book Review Roundtable*, 19 December 2019; Victor Nemchenok, "'These People Have an Irrevocable Right to Self-Government': United States Policy and the Palestinian Question, 1977–1979," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 20:4 (2009): 595-618; Jeremy Pressman, "Explaining the Carter Administration's Israeli-Palestinian Solution," *Diplomatic History* 37:5 (2013): 1117-1147; James Stocker, "A Historical Inevitability? Kissinger and US Contacts with the Palestinians, 1973-76," *International History Review* 39:2 (2017): 316-337; Simen Zernichow and Hilde Henriksen Waage, "The Palestine Option: Nixon, the National Security Council, and the Search for a New Policy, 1970," *Diplomatic History* 38:1 (2014): 182-209.

[3] Yaqub, *Imperfect Strangers.*

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Israeli conflict—and his findings have certainly influenced how I think about these matters. Likewise, I am deeply appreciative of his generous reviews of my work.[4]

But Yaqub and I disagree on some of the major issues related to the question of why a comprehensive Arab-Israeli settlement ultimately was not reached during the 1970s. For example, Yaqub's argument differs from mine when it comes to the nature of American policy. Specifically, he believes "that [Secretary of State Henry] Kissinger *deliberately* designed [the peace] process to enable Israel's indefinite occupation of Arab land."[5] "Kissinger," he writes, "was a knowing and systematic enabler of Israeli annexationism."[6]

My view is quite different (149-151). Although I certainly believe that Kissinger wanted to work closely with Israel in the aftermath of the October 1973 war, my reading of the evidence is that he felt that Israel would eventually have to carry out a full withdrawal to the 1967 lines as part of a peace settlement. The United States, Kissinger wrote in May 1975, would have to make clear that it was "not prepared to support an Israel with boundaries much beyond the 1967 borders" (150-51). Indeed, in a memorandum to President Gerald Ford, he referred to the administration's "view that the Israelis will have to withdraw essentially to pre-1967 borders if there is to be peace" (151).

To reiterate, I believe that Yaqub has done some of the very best work among scholars working on these issues. But the claim that my book represents a mere rehash of Yaqub's research does not make much sense, given that—as I make clear in the book—it can scarcely be said that our views on some of the most important questions related to this issue are totally aligned.

Beyond this point, and perhaps more importantly, Daigle's own book can be taken as representative of what he considers to be the dominant interpretation of how superpower diplomacy in the Middle East ran its course after June 1967. Indeed, he writes that the studies that he cites in his review have now "become the 'standard accounts.'" If he disagreed with those accounts, he surely would have emphasized that, and his review treats the general view that they espouse as essentially correct. With that in mind, let me explain in greater detail how my interpretation of these matters differs from his.

The core argument that Daigle makes in his book is that both the United States and the Soviet Union were genuinely committed to détente, but that this very commitment ultimately "undermined progress toward an Arab-Israeli peace settlement and in so doing helped trigger the October War."[7] In other words, Daigle's fundamental claim is that because the superpowers did not want to jeopardize détente, they mutually agreed, in effect, to put the problem of the Middle East on ice, rather than to make a joint effort to try to resolve it, with the result that war broke out in the region in October 1973. Détente, he writes, played a very key "role in contributing to the outbreak of the 1973 October War" since that conflict "was in large part a product of Soviet-American relations and decision-making during the previous four and a half years and thus was a *consequence* of détente."[8] The superpowers, Daigle argues, "accepted agreements in 1972 and 1973 that solidified an untenable status quo in the region rather than promote a lasting Arab-Israeli peace agreement."

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[4] Yaqub blurbed the book, writing, "With boldness, nuance, and unflagging thoroughness, Galen Jackson dismantles conventional wisdom on the US role in the Arab-Israeli conflict, showing how Cold War thinking prevented Washington from pursuing an eminently achievable political settlement." See also Salim Yaqub, "Book Review: American and Israeli Intransigence Prevented Peace in the Middle East," *Catalyst*, 29 June 2023, https://catalyst-journal.com/2023/06/galen-jackson-a-lost-peace-review.

[5] Yaqub, *Imperfect Strangers*, 13 (emphasis in the original).

[6] Salim Yaqub, *H-Diplo Roundtable Review* 19:2 (September 2017), https://networks.h-net.org/system/files/contributed-files/roundtable-xix-2.pdf, 29.

[7] Daigle, *The Limits of Détente*, 9.

[8] Daigle, *The Limits of Détente*, 6, 330-331 (emphasis in the original).

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The superpowers, moreover, "largely ignored [Egyptian President Anwar] Sadat's threats that he would take his country to war with Israel if Washington and Moscow did not actively attempt to resolve the dispute." Thus, he concludes that "by effectively telling Arab leaders that Israel would indefinitely retain possession of their land, the Soviets alienated their clients in the Middle East and pushed the Egyptians and Syrians into another war."[9]

A number of very clear differences between Daigle's interpretation of these matters and my own emerge when one examines these specific claims. For starters, Daigle posits that both superpowers were genuinely committed to détente. By contrast, my argument is that although Soviet leaders were committed by 1971, the attitude on the US side was more ambivalent.

As for Daigle's claim that the superpowers "accepted agreements in 1972 and 1973 that solidified an untenable status quo in the region," in effect putting the Middle East "on ice,"[10] in my view, that was not the case. Instead, I argue that the superpowers were working together secretly during that period, and that they had agreed to move ahead with a joint action, but only in 1973, after the 1972 US presidential election had taken place and President Richard Nixon no longer had to take domestic political considerations into account to the same degree. Nor do I think, as Daigle argues, that there was a "rigid adherence to the status quo" on the superpowers' part.[11] Soviet officials, in my view, were pressing the Americans very hard to join forces for an agreement in the Middle East. Although Nixon and Kissinger were relatively more ambivalent, their qualms, which stemmed from Nixon's reelection concerns, had more to do with the timing of a joint superpower initiative than with substantive considerations. And the fact that the Americans subsequently reneged on what had been discussed in 1972 does not mean that an important set of agreements had not been reached.

Third, can it be argued that "both superpowers ignored Sadat's threats?" The evidence very clearly indicates that the reverse was true. Soviet officials repeatedly warned throughout this period that the Middle East would erupt in war if no diplomatic progress was made. Absent a political settlement, General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev emphasized time and again that "All good things done by us in the direction at the [1972 Moscow] Summit of achieving détente and avoiding confrontation, will all be scrapped" (99). As for Nixon, his feeling was the Middle East was "getting ready to blow" (97). As early as May 1971, he wrote—in a document that Daigle describes as "perhaps the most clear expression of his thinking on the Middle East during his entire presidency"—that without any movement in the negotiations, "another Mideast war will be inevitable" (101).[12]

As for whether Soviet leaders were "effectively telling Arab leaders that Israel would indefinitely retain possession of their land," which ultimately pushed Egypt and Syria into another war, again, I do not make that argument. My view is that Moscow was working hard throughout this period to try to convince American officials to come to an agreement, one that would certainly involve Israel's withdrawal to roughly the 1967 lines and that the superpowers would mutually pressure the Arabs and Israelis to accept. I see no evidence that Soviet leaders led either Egypt or Syria to believe that they had given up on a political solution that would involve the return of the territories the two countries had lost in June 1967. To be sure, Moscow agreed to resupply the Arabs with military equipment both prior to and during the October 1973 war, but that was not because they wanted a conflict or had given up on negotiating a political settlement. As Kissinger acknowledged, the whole idea that the Soviet leadership had sought war in the Middle East was "absolutely

[9] Daigle, *The Limits of Détente*, 8.
[10] Daigle, *The Limits of Détente*, 5, 8.
[11] Daigle, *The Limits of Détente*, 7.
[12] Daigle, *The Limits of Détente*, 179.

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preposterous" (111). Instead, Moscow had acted as it did because it believed, with justification, that US officials had gone back on what they had said over the course of the previous year. It was therefore not surprising that the Soviet leaders decided to take a somewhat tougher line. Were it not for Watergate, Nixon might have been interested in working with Soviet officials in 1973, but because the president was so preoccupied with the scandal, Kissinger was the key decision-maker on the US side, and his attitude toward cooperating with Moscow was very different from that of Nixon.

In short, I do not believe that the October 1973 Middle East war was the result of détente. From September 1971 onward, Soviet leaders, who were committed to détente, were pushing for a reasonable settlement on terms that were more or less the same as the ones that the Americans favored—a key point, incidentally, that I would argue the recent literature has largely ignored. The fact that the United States, and especially Kissinger, was unwilling to go that route did not indicate that Washington was genuinely committed to détente. To the contrary, it revealed that in practice, American policy was cut from a different cloth and did not actually align with how top US officials spoke about superpower relations at a rhetorical level. If both Washington and Moscow had been as committed to détente as many analysts have claimed they were, then they would have worked together for peace in the Middle East. In my view, détente was not the problem, as Daigle claims; the problem was that the Americans were insufficiently committed to it.

All of these points relate to another key difference in how Daigle and I view these matters, which has to do with whether there was a genuine possibility to reach a comprehensive Arab-Israeli settlement during this period. Whereas I believe such a deal was possible, Daigle argues that it "was simply never in the cards." "A comprehensive peace," he adds, "is a noble goal, but unfortunately it was not tied to the reality on the ground."[13] And it is in this respect that Daigle's claim in his review that my book fails "to adequately consider Egyptian and Israeli agency in the process" comes into play, for he places special emphasis on Sadat's preferences in explaining the ultimate outcome.

First, I find Daigle's claim about my failure to include a thorough analysis of the Egyptian and Israeli roles in this story puzzling, for I dedicate quite a bit of attention to each of them in the book. In the case of Sadat, I lay out the ways in which my interpretation differs from those of other analyses, including Daigle's, in some detail. And in my view, the evidence suggests that Sadat, even in 1977–1978, was both interested in a comprehensive solution and at least somewhat disappointed when he ultimately decided that he had to settle for less (179-181).

The more important difference, however, is that I believe that the United States and the Soviet Union came closer to bringing about a fundamental settlement than most scholars realize. Again, Moscow was very interested in a peace agreement, and its terms were more or less identical to the ones that Washington had in mind. For their part, American officials were more ambivalent than other scholars have described. And if various circumstances—such as the effects of Watergate and domestic political factors—had played out differently, the United States might have gone the other route and decided to make a joint effort with the Soviet leadership to reach a comprehensive Arab-Israeli agreement. Indeed, I believe that my book highlights several instances in which the Americans came close to taking that basic approach.

So, I think that the analysis in my book is a bit more than a rehash of what other scholars have already said.

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[13] Craig Daigle, *H-Diplo Roundtable Review* 19:2 (September 2017) of Salim Yaqub, *Imperfect Strangers: Americans, Arabs, and U.S.-Middle East Relations in the 1970s*; 15; http://www.tiny.cc/Roundtable-XIX-2, https://networks.h-net.org/system/files/contributed-files/roundtable-xix-2.pdf.

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Let me conclude by responding to a point that both Allison and Ballout make, which has to do with my use of Russian documents in the book. In their view, my analysis would have been stronger had I accessed and made greater use of sources that could reveal more about Soviet policy.

That is certainly a fair criticism. I am the first to admit that it would be nice to know more about Soviet policy and that my analysis would be stronger had I been able to collect more of the relevant records to that part of the story. For example, it is somewhat hard to understand why Moscow continued to support Egypt during the October 1973 war, given how Sadat had treated Soviet officials up until that point. Perhaps additional Russian records will ultimately become available that shed important light on that sort of question. Allison and Ballout make a reasonable point.

That said, my book does analyze a variety of documents from the Soviet side. In addition to memoirs and secondary accounts, some of which contain primary Russian sources, my analysis relies on Anatoly Chernyaev's diaries; the Wilson Center's Cold War International History Project's collections; and Soviet documents from the State Department's *Soviet-American Relations* volume.[14] One can, moreover, glean a great deal about Soviet policy just from reading US records, and I am confident that I had enough information to answer most of the key questions that my book is concerned with.

I would like to once again thank both the organizers and the reviewers for the time and effort they have dedicated to this roundtable. I am very grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this conversation and hope to have the chance to engage on these matters again in the future.

[14] Anatoly Chernyaev Diary, National Security Archive, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/anatoly-chernyaev-diary; Wilson Center, Cold War International History Project, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/program/cold-war-international-history-project; United States Department of State, *Soviet-American Relations: The Détente Years, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2007).

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