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Revisiting Egyptian Foreign Policy towards Israel under Mubarak: From Cold Peace to Strategic Peace

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ABSTRACT This article is the first academic study of Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel under Hosni Mubarak (1981–2011). It challenges a deeply entrenched conventional wisdom that Egypt pursued a cold-peace foreign policy towards Israel throughout this period. We demonstrate that Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel was dynamic – comprising cold peace (1981–91), a hybrid foreign policy of cold peace and strategic peace (1991–2003), and a pure strategic peace posture (2003–11). We also use the case of Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel as a heuristic to develop a conception of a new type of peace, strategic peace, as an intermediary analytical category between cold and stable peace.

KEY WORDS: Egypt, Israel, Cold Peace, Strategic Peace, Arab-Israeli Conflict

This article examines Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel under former President Hosni Mubarak (1981–2011). Drawing on primary sources in Hebrew, Arabic and English, much of which have not yet been utilized, and interviews conducted in Israel and Egypt, it challenges a deeply entrenched and, we believe, mistaken view that Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel under Mubarak consisted of cold peace.[1] We demonstrate that since the early 1990s to the

[1]The cold peace school of thought includes: Abdul-Monem Al-Mashat, 'Egyptian Attitudes toward the Peace Process: Views of an "Alert Elite"', *Middle East Journal* 37/3 (1983), 394–411; Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, 'Egyptian Foreign Policy since Camp David', in William B. Quandt (ed), *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution 1988); Fawaz A. Gerges, 'Egyptian-Israeli Relations Turn Sour', *Foreign Affairs* 74/3 (1995), 69–78; Kenneth W. Stein, 'Continuity and Change in Egyptian-Israeli Relations, 1973–1997', *Israel Affairs* 3/3–4 (1997), 297–320; Shawn Pine, 'Myopic Vision: Whither Israeli-Egyptian Relations?' *Israel Affairs* 3/3–4 (1997), 321–34; Duncan L. Clarke, 'US Security

ousting of Mubarak in January 2011, Egypt's foreign policy towards Israel consisted of what we term as *strategic peace*. Informed by this finding, we use the case of Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel as a heuristic to develop a conception of a new type of peace, *strategic peace*, as an intermediary category between cold and stable peace. This conception, we argue, is particularly useful for explaining a somewhat overlooked aspect in the growing international relations (IR) literature[2] on the evolution of peaceful foreign policy orientations between states: how and why, when liberal and constructivist mechanisms are limited or non-existent, do former foes' foreign policy stances progress from one type of peace to a more robust kind of peace? We show that the notion of strategic peace rather than cold peace or types of stable peace – for example, rapprochement, security communities, unions – better explains this phenomenon, and focus on four analytical explanatory variables: impact of great powers, propensity to revert to war, and the roles played by statecraft and the social context, with special reference to the economic and intellectual elites.

How does IR Conceptualize Peace Categories?

The study of peace is central to the IR discipline, but how and why peace *between* states emerges, stabilizes and consolidates has received scant attention.[3] The war/peace dichotomy typical of IR, is criticized by Miller[4] as being too broad and imprecise to capture the different types of peace-oriented foreign policy stances that states pursue. Also,

Assistance to Egypt and Israel: Politically Untouchable?', *Middle East Journal* 51/2 (1997), 200–14; Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, 'Israel-Egypt Peace: Stable Peace?', in Arie M. Kacowicz, Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, Ole Elgstrom, Magnus Jerneck (eds), *Stable Peace Among Nations* (London: Rowman & Littlefield 2000); Jacob Abadi, 'Egypt's Policy Toward Israel: The Impact of Foreign and Domestic Constraints', *Israel Affairs* 12 (2006), 156–176; Ewan Stein, 'The "Camp David Consensus": Ideas, Intellectuals, and the Division of Labor in Egypt's Foreign Policy toward Israel', *International Studies Quarterly* 55 (2011), 737–58.

[2]See Karl. W. Deutsch, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (Princeton UP 1957); Kenneth Boulding, *Stable Peace* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press 1978); Stephen R. Rock, *Why Peace Breaks Out: Great Power Rapprochement in Historical Perspective* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press 1989); Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds), *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1998); Stephen R. Rock, *Appeasement in International Politics* (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press 2000); Arie Kacowicz, Yaakov Bar-Siman-Tov, Ole Elgstrom, and Magnus Jerneck (eds), *Stable Peace Among Nations* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield 2000); Charles A. Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends: The Sources of Stable Peace* (Princeton UP 2010).

[3]Kacowicz *et al.*, *Stable Peace;* Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*, 21.

[4]Benjamin Miller, *States, Nations, and the Great Powers* (Cambridge: CUP 2007).

Kacowitz and Kupchan demonstrate that most of the literature on this topic draws on the experience of the industrialized, democratic West, not undemocratic and poor states.[5] However, a burgeoning body of work seeks to address these gaps by distinguishing theoretically, conceptually, and analytically between different categories of peace. [6]

On one side of the debate is the notion of *cold peace*, which has been theoretically and empirically applied to a range of cross-regional case studies.[7] Cold peace describes the type of peace that emerges in a period at the conclusion of war between two or more states, and is based on formal agreements and diplomatic relations. Former foes commonly assume that a resumption of war in the short run is unlikely. However, it remains subject to the parties' calculations and is reflected in the deployment of international border forces, contingency plans, military doctrine, war planning, training and deployment of weapons. Kacowitz *et al.* underline that cold peace does not involve use of force as a foreign policy tool, not even for signalling or show-of-force purposes. Rather, the focus is diplomacy aimed at conflict reduction, negotiation and crisis-prevention. This excellent study also emphasizes the tenuousness of cold peace; it lacks cooperative institutions, confidence-building measures and cooperation over non-security issues. Relations are almost exclusively at intergovernmental level and characterized by suspicion and uncertainty between former foes; cooperation does not extend to non-state actors. In addition, its social context does not reflect the shift from conflict to peace. Thus, historical narratives, media coverage, symbols, for example, charters and flags, that shaped the former period of conflict, remain unchanged.[8]

Regional factors further weaken cold peace; regional conflicts may have been mitigated but are not resolved and belligerent groups opposed to cold peace could resurge in one or more states in the region and push for a renewal of hostilities or even war.[9] Consequently, as Bull's work anticipated, the special responsibilities of the great powers are significant for upholding cold peace and promoting international order, peace and stability.[10] Miller[11] draws on collective goods theory, arguing that cold peace

[5]Ibid., 44; Kacowitz *et al.*, *Stable Peace*, 11; Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*, 21.

[6]Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*, fn. 2.

[7]Miller, *States, Nations, and the Great Powers*, 46, 219–56, 308–8; Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*, 30.

[8]Kacowicz *et al., Stable Peace*, 11.

[9]Miller, *States, Nations, and the Great Powers*, 20, 45.

[10]Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan Press 1977), 194–23.

[11]Michael C. Desch, *When the World Matters: Latin America and United States Grand Strategy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP 1993), 10; Paul A. Papayoanou, 'Great

requires a global hegemon with clear advantages relative to other powers, *and* an intrinsic interest in producing the common good of peace and stability.[12] Intrinsic interest refers to the material resources in the region and the potential security threats posed by certain regional actors. Stein and Tuval demonstrate that the great powers can exert influence by providing material support, mediation among the parties, moderate pressure on allies, deterring potential peace spoilers and reassurance to its supporters.[13] A hegemon, thus, enables a strategic environment that, for security and economic reasons, makes it profitable to reinforce peace-oriented foreign policy stances and costly to resist them.[14]

Gradually, cold peace can develop into more robust types of peace. Deutsch and Kupchan employ *realism* to highlight the use of statecraft in this process. They emphasize that, provided the country in question has a stable regime – which we argue was the perception of Egypt throughout Mubarak's Presidency – deliberate restraint via acts of accommodation and cooperation, signals to former adversaries benign intent and consolidation of a basis for stable and positive evaluation of each other's motivations. This generates common recognition of a relationship driven not mainly by geopolitical competition, but by the pursuit of mutually reinforcing interests.[15]

Constructivist scholarship[16] examines the role of social context in the evolution from cold peace to more robust types of peace. They highlight as a major achievement, the transformation in foreign policy-makers' perceptions of the relationship with a former foe, from belligerence to peace based. This 'strategic learning' process required some redefinition of the parties' national interests since maintaining mutual peace was crucial for common understanding of security, increased trade and societal integration. Consequently, the parties had to commit to political settlement and the new status quo; acceptance developed into

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Powers and Regional Orders: Possibilities and Prospects After the Cold War', in David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan (eds), *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World* (University Park, PA: Penn State UP 1997).

[12]Benjamin Miller, 'Sources of Regional Peace', in Kacowicz *et al.*, *Stable Peace among Nations*, 63; Miller, *States, Nations and the Great Powers*, 208–11.

[13]Janice G. Stein, 'Deterrence and Reassurance', in Philip Tetlock *et al.*, *Behaviour, Society, and International Conflict* (Oxford: OUP 1991); Saadia Touval, 'The Superpowers as Mediators', in Jacob Bercovitch and Jeffrey Z. Rubin (eds), *Mediation in International Relations: Multiple Approaches to Conflict Management* (New York: St Martin's Press 1992).

[14]Miller, *States, Nations and the Great Powers*, 219–20.

[15]Deutsch, *Political Community*, 30–1, 40, 66; Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*, 44–5,

[16]We draw on: Kacowicz *et al.*, *Stable Peace*, 25–6, 31; Boulding, *Stable Peace*, 112–13; Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*, 24.

satisfaction with peace, manifested in the declarations and actions of the ruling and oppositional elites, interest groups and the general public. Trust and respect among the parties evolved and reinforced the predictability and confidence underpinning peace. The confluence of these perceptual changes produced a common normative framework that informed the perceptions and actions of the states involved in routine interactions. Though highly significant, these constructivist dynamics took effect only after statecraft was harnessed to promotion of mutually reinforcing strategic interests.

Despite drawing almost exclusively on the experience of rich Western democratic states, *liberal* perspectives[17] on shifts in peaceful foreign policy stances are also pertinent. They highlight the role played by supranational institutions in fostering cooperation, opening communication channels and deepening the economic ties employed to establish a common balance of prosperity rather than power, threat or terror.[18] In this context, cooperation extends beyond the realm of security, which may lead to societal integration via travel, communication and economic interdependence. Class-based alliances and interest groups working towards consolidation of peace may emerge, generating a spillover effect and trickle down of non-military public goods that reinforces societal integration. Liberal accounts also pay attention to the influence of the nature of the regime on transitions within the peace spectrum. Adherents of Democratic Peace Theory, for instance, argue that democracies have intrinsic pacific features including use of institutional restraint, power checking devices, transparency, which encourage a peace-oriented type of international behaviour. This literature argues that the proliferation of democracies helps to consolidate peace-oriented foreign policy stances.[19]

Kupchan demonstrates that the convergence of these realist, constructivist and liberal dynamics results in states' cold peace foreign policy stances being replaced by stable peace: 'groupings of two or more states that succeed in escaping the logic of power and significantly muting if not altogether eliminating geopolitical competition'.[20] Stable peace is a

[17]E.g. Boulding, *Stable Peace*, 17–18, 63; Deutsch, *Political Community*, 5, 36, 176–9; Kacowicz *et al.*, *Stable Peace,* 14, 28; Bruce Russet, and Harvey Star, *World Politics: The Menu of Choice*, 4th ed. (New York: W.H. Freeman 1992), 376–98; Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*, 46–50.

[18]Alfred Tovias, 'The Economic Aspects of Stable Peace-Making', in Kacowicz *et al.*, *Stable Peace*, 150–65.

[19]On democratic peace theory see Christopher Layne, 'Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace', *International Security* 19/2 (1994), 5–49.

[20]Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*, 30. Some, e.g., Miller, *States, Nations, and the Great Powers*, 48–9, have opted for the notion of 'warm peace'. However, the term stable peace is more common in debates and thus is adopted here.

broad category that includes different types of peace. Some of them, for example, unions[21] and security communities,[22] are irrelevant to the case of Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel.

Therefore, we focus on the type of peace denoted by the notion of rapprochement – developed by Deutsch, Boulding, George, Russet *et al.* and Kupchan. Rapprochement entails longevity which indicates the consolidation of peace. During periods of rapprochement, in regions where violent disputes have been mitigated or resolved, long-standing adversaries retreat from armed rivalry and their expectations shift from conflict to peaceful coexistence.[23] Hence, rapprochement involves a significant cognitive shift such that the possibility of war is so small as not to enter the calculations of the involved states or peoples. It withstands elite changes and regional and/or international shifts, rendering support from a hegemon unnecessary.[24] Rapprochement also involves a shift in social context from conflict to reconciliation and deepening societal integration. This includes increased presence of officialdom, interest groups' lobbying for peace, and ties among commercial elites, intellectuals and ordinary citizens. New narratives and identities are generated via elite statements, popular culture and the adoption of new political symbols – flags, charters, anthems, and new domestic discourses are adopted that alter perceptions of 'the other' that underpinned former relationships between states and peoples.[25] In a context of rapprochement, any persisting conflicts are resolved through the employment of non-violent foreign policy tools mentioned earlier, but also international institutions, which open communication channels. Deepening economic ties are used to establish a common prosperity rather than power, threat or terror.[26] The result is a relationship between governmental and non-governmental elites that is based on trust, respect and routine flows of information and is, therefore, predictable.[27]

[21]See Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*, 8–9.
[22]See Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds), *Security Communities* (Cambridge: CUP 1998).
[23]Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*, 30.
[24]Deutsch, *Political Community*, 5, 36; Boulding, *Stable Peace*, 13. See also Alexander L. George, 'From Conflict to Peace: Stages along the Road', *United States Institute of Peace Journal* 5/6 (1992), 7–9; Russet and Starr, *World Politics: A Menu for Choice* (New York: W.H. Freeman 1992), 356.
[25]Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*, 6.
[26]Tovias, 'The Economic Aspects', 150–65; Kacowicz *et al.*, *Stable Peace*, 17; Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*, 31.
[27]Adler and Barnett, *Security Communities*, 3, 7.

Current Conceptualization and Explanations of Egyptian Foreign Policy towards Israel under Mubarak: The Cold Peace School of Thought

We turn from the IR literature's conception and explanation of the evolution of peaceful foreign policy-orientations between states, to current debate on Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel under Mubarak. This has been explained exclusively through the prism of cold peace. Steven Cook highlights the hegemonic role of the US, which produced a strategic environment that provided security and economic incentives for Egypt to maintain a cold peace towards Israel, and made resistance costly. Specifically, US civilian aid increased from $85 million annually following the 1974 Sinai I Agreement, to $1 billion following the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli Camp David Agreement. The US aid package also included a military component, which, by the 1980s, amounted to $1.3 billion in grants.[28] In line with cold peace, as Eilts shows, the thrust of US aid was towards conflict reduction, and rewarding Egypt for not re-engaging in war with Israel; broader strategic concerns, such as containing Soviet influence on the Middle East and securing the free flow of oil via the Suez Canal, though important were secondary.[29]

Hasan Ali, Stein and Abadi identify a second pillar of Egypt's cold peace stance towards Israel: commitment not to revert to war, strongly reflected in President Mubarak's statements,[30] and Egypt's foreign policy behaviour. Egypt responded to several foreign policy challenges from Israel[31] using non-violent foreign policy tools, and the Sinai Peninsula remained a virtual demilitarized zone. These accounts provide reasons for why, throughout the period, Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel consisted of cold peace. Specifically, following the signing of the Camp David Accords, most Arab states severed diplomatic relations with Egypt. Thus, one of Mubarak's fundamental foreign policy goals on assuming power, was to re-integrate Egypt into the Arab fold. However, the Arab

[28]Data retrieved from Steven A. Cook, *The Struggle for Egypt: From Nasser to Tahrir Square* (Oxford: OUP 2011), 219–20.

[29]Hermann Frederick Eilts, 'The United States and Egypt', in William B. Quandt (ed.), *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution 1988), 111–50.

[30]See e.g., Mubarak's speech on the anniversary of Nasser's death, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/1986/11/86CAIRO26111.html>; memoirs of the then Egyptian Foreign Minister, Kamal Hasan Ali, *Warriors and Peace Makers* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Centre 1986), 265; Interviews with Mubarak by al-Tadamun, 5 Nov. 1983 and al-Ra'i al-'Am, 8 Oct. 1986 quoted in Stein, 'Continuity and Change', 307.

[31]The challenges include: 1981 bombing of the Iraqi Osirak reactor in Baghdad; annexation of the Golan Heights by Israel in 1981; 1982 invasion of Lebanon and the Beirut siege; the territorial dispute with Israel over Taba; repression of the 1987 Palestinian Intifada. Stein, 'Continuity and Change', 305–6; Abadi, 'Egypt's Policy', 171.

states made it clear that further normalization with Israel would result in reinforcement of their boycott of Egypt.[32] This rendered rapprochement with Israel, and Egypt's re-integration with the Arab states mutually exclusive foreign policies. Also, the Camp David Agreement reflected Egypt's stance that rapprochement with Israel was inextricably linked with achieving a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.[33] In the first instance, this included implementation of the autonomy plan for the Palestinians stipulated by the Camp David Accords. However, this was hampered by Israeli settlement expansions and ongoing conflict with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Thus, in 1982 the Egyptian–Israeli 'normalization' process had ground to a halt.[34]

Sultan and Dowek argue that another major impediment to this process was the immoveable character of the social context of Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel, which was reflective more of conflict than peace. Senior Egyptian diplomats described relations with the Israelis as rife with 'fear' and 'suspicion',[35] while Israeli diplomats failed to establish meaningful dialogue with their Egyptian counterparts.[36] Stein argues that such attitudes institutionalized the 'norm of distrustful relations',[37] which resulted in no meetings at head-of-state level during the first decade under Mubarak.[38]

Concurrently, the cold peace stance was reflected in deliberate measures taken by Egypt to reduce the scope for societal integration. For example, the chairs of the upper and lower Egyptian parliaments were banned from visiting Israel, businessmen and industrialists trying to forge economic relations with Israelis found the barriers almost insurmountable,[39] and Egyptian universities refused to cooperate with Israeli academic institutions. Professional associations and trade unions passed official resolutions rejecting peace with Israel and outlawing relations with Israelis, and the

[32]See Egyptian and Israeli sources respectively: Ali, *Warriors and Peace Makers*, 247–51; Ephraim Dowek, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations, 1980–2000* (London: Frank Cass 2001), 310–11.

[33]See full text in: <http://new.mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Peace/Guide/Pages/Camp%20David%20Accords.aspx>.

[34]E.g., by 1990 all cultural and social contacts had ceased, trade fell from US $80 million in 1982 to US $12 million in 1990, requirements for exit visas from Egypt to enter Israel remained in place. Dowek, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations*, 110–15.

[35]Nabil Fahmy quoted in David Sultan, *Between Cairo and Jerusalem: The Normalisation between the Arab States and Israel – the Case of Egypt* (Tel Aviv: The Institute for Diplomacy and Regional Cooperation 2007), 24.

[36]Dowek, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations*, 67–8.

[37]Stein, 'Continuity and Change', 304.

[38]Ibid., 128.

[39]Interview with Mr Mayor Admon, Deputy Head of International Department, Israeli Ministry of Finance, 16 Aug. 2012.

government-controlled Egyptian media were highly critical of Israel and Israelis.[40]

The cold peace school of thought also devotes attention to Egypt's foreign policy towards Israel *during the 1990s*, arguing that it remained unchanged. Stein and Abadi contend that, throughout the Israeli–PLO peace negotiations, Egypt kept the 'minimum substance' required by the Camp David agreement while regularly criticizing Israel. Following the victory of the Binyamin Netanyahu's right-wing party, Egypt continuously berated Israel for reneging on the Oslo Process and trying to sabotage the peace talks.[41] Also, Gerges argues that the cold peace became freezing due to several points of contention between Egypt and Israel. These included Egyptian fears that Israel was using the peace process to establish itself as an economic power in the Middle East at the expense of Egypt and that direct negotiations between Israel and Arab states would marginalize the role of Egypt in the Middle East. Egypt also demanded that Israel disarms its alleged nuclear arsenal and that the Middle East should become a nuclear weapons-free zone.[42] Bar Siman-Tov characterizes Egyptian-Israeli relations during the 1990s as a 'competition' likely to turn cold peace into cold war[43] while Pine, reflecting the narrow focus of the 1990s debates, is primarily concerned about 'whither Egyptian-Israeli relations?'[44] Towards the end of the 1990s, research on Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel was minimal, with Ginat's and Noeima's (2011) *Egypt and the Second Palestinian Intifada*, the only academic study devoted to Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel post 2000.[45]

Revisiting Egyptian Foreign Policy towards Israel during the 1990s: The Emergence of Egypt's Hybrid Foreign Policy Stance

Against this backdrop the following section challenges the conventional wisdom that throughout the 1990s Egypt retained its cold peace foreign policy posture towards Israel. We do not dispute claims that, during the 1990s, Egypt's foreign policy towards Israel contained some elements of cold peace. However, as we show in this section, there were concurrent changes to key determinants of Egyptian foreign policy, which in our view, demonstrate that Egypt adopted a hybrid foreign policy

[40]Dowek, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations*, 67–8, 85–99.
[41]Stein, 'Continuity and Change'; Abadi, 'Egypt's Policy towards Israel', 173.
[42]Gerges, 'Egyptian-Israeli Relations', 69–73, 75–8.
[43]Siman-Tov, 'Israel-Egypt Peace', 231–5.
[44]Pine, 'Myopic Vision'.
[45]Rami Ginat and Meir Noema, *Egypt and the Second Palestinian Intifada: Policymaking with Multifaceted Commitments* (Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic Press 2011).

towards Israel. This resulted in a more robust type of peaceful foreign policy stance towards Israel than cold peace, but one that was more tenuous than stable peace. We illustrate our claim in relation to four explanatory variables, the first being the role of the superpowers in the form of the US.

After the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US consolidated its position as a global hegemon, especially in the Middle East, strengthening its strategic relationship with Egypt. During the 1990–91 US-led Gulf War, Egypt's contribution (the 4th largest) of 35,000 soldiers to the US-led coalition, significantly enhanced the political legitimacy of the military campaign to oust Iraqi forces from Kuwait. In return, the US, Japan, Arab and European creditor countries, agreed to write off $30 billion of Egyptian debt over a period of four years.[46] Simultaneously, beginning in the early 1990s, the US Treasury, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank put pressure on Egypt to restructure its economy in line with the then prevailing 'Washington Consensus' – which was urging fiscal austerity, privatization and market liberalization. Thus, in addition to the debt relief and direct US aid on-going since the 1970s, Egypt was dependent on the US for securing economic support from international financial institutions.[47]

These developments cast Egyptian-US relations in a new light. During the 1980s, as expected from the role played by the superpowers in the context of cold peace, US support to Egypt was geared primarily towards conflict reduction. However, after the 1990–91 Gulf War, the thrust of US support for Egypt was promoting mutually reinforcing strategic interests; Egypt became one of the key Arab states supporting post-Cold War US policy in the Middle East, and the US became the main international guarantor of the feeble Egyptian economy and its security needs. This qualitative shift in US-Egyptian relationships was linked inextricably with Egypt's pursuit of a foreign policy towards Israel, based on a more robust type of peace, which ensured US commitment to supporting Egypt's financial and security needs, and vice versa. In this respect, the US role of a superpower sustaining and rewarding Egypt's peaceful foreign policy stance towards Israel, was more forceful than its role during cold peace. Rather than being geared only towards conflict reduction, it promoted mutually reinforcing strategic interests. However, Egypt's peaceful foreign policy stance fell short of rapprochement, which would not require the support of a great power.

Concurrently, a more significant shift in the determinants of Egypt's foreign policy towards Israel was underway. During the 1980s Egyptian and Israeli foreign policy interests were mutually exclusive, which

[46]Cook, *The Struggle for Egypt*, 161–2; Dowek, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations*, 306–8.
[47]Alan Richards and John Waterbury, *A Political Economy of the Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Westview 2008), 248–52.

meant that neither could harness statecraft to forge a more robust type of peace. This situation changed in the 1990s; the experience of fighting alongside the US to defeat Saddam Hussein was auspicious for Egypt's involvement in Arab-Israeli peace negotiations. Thus, Egypt's participation in the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations in the 1990s was secondary only to the US in relation to negotiating the milestones in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, for example, the 4 May 1994 Israeli-Palestinian Agreement (signed in Cairo); the September 1995 Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza; and the 1994/1995/1996 Middle East and North Africa Economic summits.[48] Between and during these events Egyptian foreign policy-makers hosted high level diplomatic summits, mediated between Israel and the Palestinians, and afforded legitimacy to the Oslo Process.

Egypt's part in these events reflects a significant shift in the nature of Egypt's relationship with Israel. From *reluctant peace partner* during the 1980s, Egypt emerged in the early 1990s as *active peace mediator* and legitimator of the political dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians. Furthermore, the 1980s' tensions over deepening of Egypt's relations with the Arab states and rapprochement with Israel were significantly reduced as Egypt's decisions to open negotiations with Israel to regain its lost territories, accept US military and economic support, and ally with the West in exchange for signing the peace with Israel were vindicated by the concurrent actions of other Arab players.[49] Although during the 1980s Egypt could not use statecraft to shift its foreign policy stance towards Israel from cold peace to a more robust type of peace, the conditions in the 1990s were conducive. Thus, our account directly challenges the cold peace school which portrays the changing context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as having little or no impact on Egypt's stance towards Israel.

A second site of Egyptian-Israeli foreign policy cooperation developed during the 1990s, overlooked by the literature until now, was Egypt's and Israel's common interest in containing Iran. Iran's threat to

[48]On the Egyptian role in Madrid see Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux 2004), 71–81; Ephraim Halevy, *Man in the Shadows: Inside the Middle East Crisis with a Man who Led the Mossad* (Tel Aviv: Matar 2006), 101; on the 4 May agreement see Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 134–6; Uri Savir, *The Process* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Achronot 1998), 162–7; on the interim agreement see Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 207; Savir, *The Process*, 259–76; On Egyptian contribution see also Bill Clinton, *My Life* (London: Arrow Books 2004), 702.

[49]E.g., Jordan signing a peace with Israel in 1994, initiation of relations between Israel, the Gulf, and the Maghreb states, and intermittent Israeli-Syrian negotiations. See Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/Among+the+Nations/ISRAEL+AMONG+THE+NATIONS-+Middle+East+-+North+Afri.htm>.

Egypt consisted of the military and economic assistance Iran was providing to militant Islamic groups, such as Islamic Jihad and al-Jama'a al-Islamiya, who were trained in Sudan and engaged in terrorist attacks against Egyptian targets on the mainland and abroad. President Mubarak directly linked Iran with terrorist activities in accusing the Iranians of being behind the failed attempt to assassinate him in Addis Ababa in 1995.[50] At the same time, Iran's support for Hizballah in Lebanon and the Palestinian Hamas, directly challenged the Egyptian-led Middle Eastern foreign policy approach of alliance with the US and continued peace with Israel.[51] It is against this backdrop that Egypt's foreign policy response to Israel's 'Accountability' (1993) and 'Grapes of Wrath' (1996) operations against Hizballah – Iran's proxy – should be understood. Privately, Egypt supported the Israeli military offensive, and exerted pressure on Syria and Lebanon to rein in Hizballah. Publicly, its response was restricted to diplomatic condemnation of the Israeli assaults, particularly after the surge in Lebanese civilian casualties.[52] It is not self-evident that the common interest towards Iran would immediately translate into Egyptian-Israeli cooperation; from the Egyptian perspective, the gains of cooperating with Israel on this matter might have been perceived as less than the advantages of containing Israel. It is precisely for this reason that the Egyptian decision to tacitly support the Israeli battering of Iran's proxy, Hizballah, is significant. It was a signal from Egypt to Israeli policy-makers that cooperation in relation to a common strategic concern – Iranian politico-military influence – was possible.

Our analysis of diplomats' memoirs shows that the scope for foreign policy convergence around Iran and Israeli-PLO negotiations generated a third trend, which the cold peace school of thought too easily overlooks. These accounts reveal extensive frequent and routine meetings between Egyptian and Israeli politicians, diplomats and civil servants at the highest levels contrast with the almost total absence of political dialogue in the 1981–91 period. Consequently, particularly from 1992 to 1996, routine flows of information and levels of trust and

[50]Interview with former Israeli Ambassador to Egypt, Mr Zvi Mazel, Oct. 2012, Jerusalem. See also Ronen Bergman, *The Point of No Return* (Tel Aviv: Kineret, Zmora-Bitan 2007), 266–7; For a different view see Fawaz Gerges, 'The End of the Islamist Insurgency in Egypt? Costs and Prospects', *Middle East Journal* 54/4 (2000), 604–5.

[51]Anoushiravan Etheshami, 'The Foreign Policy of Iran', in Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Etheshami, *The Foreign Policy of Middle Eastern States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner 2002), 300.

[52]Sultan, *Between Cairo and Jerusalem*, 89–91; for a broader overview of Egyptian attitudes to Hizballah, see Gawdat Bahgat, 'Egyptian-Iranian Relations: Retrospect and Prospect', *Journal of Social, Political and Economic Studies* 35/1 (2010), 15.

predictability in Egyptian-Israeli relations increased.[53] In contrast to what the notion of cold peace suggests, the change in the social context of Egyptian foreign policy was not confined to the intergovernmental level. Analysis of publications and statements from leading Egyptian intellectuals during the 1990s, points to an interesting development: the circle of intellectuals that since the 1970s[54] had argued for normalization of relations with Israel, expanded significantly throughout the 1990s. This group of prominent Egyptian intellectuals vigorously promoted a set of ideas that based the aforementioned changes in Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel in an ideational template that challenged Egyptian society's customary opposition to normalization with Israel. They emphasized the strategic benefits of Egypt's adoption of a more robust peace-oriented stance towards Israel. For example, the novelist and Nobel Prize Laureate, Naguib Mahfouz, contended that 'peace begins with face to face encounters, intercultural dialogue, economic and scientific cooperation – elements that will enable the Middle East achieve the progress and development the region deserved'.[55] The publicist and author, Anis Mansur, argued that it was in Egypt's interest to have peace with Israel and that war was Egypt's greatest enemy.[56] And the author and playwright, 'Ali Salim, documented his visit to Israel in a book, *Rihla Ila Isra'il*, as a first step in forging relations between the peoples by liberating them from mutual hatred.[57] Academics, such as Lutfi al-Khuli – one of Egypt's foremost intellectuals in the latter part of the twentieth century – explained that Israel under Rabin was a 'new Israel' and that in an era of globalization economic ties had become more important than past political disagreements with Israel.[58]

It is essential, however, to put these interventions into context. The societal norm within the Egyptian intelligentsia of opposing normalization with Israel continued, as expressed in media interviews and the basic laws of professional syndicates.[59] Nevertheless, the reactions to

[53]Dowek, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations*, 275–301; Halevy, *Man in the Shadows*, 108–10; Sultan, *Between Cairo and Jerusalem*, 39–46, 98, 102; briefing with Israeli security official, 29 Oct. 2013, Tel Aviv.

[54]E.g. Muhammad Sid Ahmad, *Ba'du An taskuta al-madafi'a* (Beirut: Dar al-Qadaya 1975).

[55]*Al-Ahram*, 14 Oct. 1994.

[56]*Al-Ahram*, 7 Oct. 1994, 1 Oct. 1995, 18 Oct. 1995.

[57]Ali Salem, *Rihala Ila Israil* (Cairo: Akhbar al-Yawm 1994).

[58]Lutfi al-Khuli, *Arab? Na'am, wa-Sharq Awsatiun Aydan* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq 1997); see also Sa'id al-Najjar, *Tajdid al-Nitham al-Iqtisadi wa-al-siyasi fi Misr* Vol. 1 (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq 1997).

[59]Ewan Stein, 'The Camp David Consensus: Ideas, Intellectuals, and the Division of Labor in Egypt's Foreign Policy towards Israel', *International Studies Quarterly* 55 (2011), 752

the statements and publications of the intellectuals supporting a more robust type of peace with Israel demonstrate that they penetrated and influenced Egyptian intellectual debate. For example, in 1994, Naguib Mahfouz survived an assassination attempt following his criticism of Islamists and support for the peace accord with Israel, while 'Ali Salim embarked on a long (and ultimately successful) legal battle to avoid expulsion from the Egyptian council of authors following his visit to Israel.

Furthermore, despite the opposition in Egyptian civil society to normalization,[60] towards the late 1990s the work of the intellectuals who supported the policy shift towards strategic peace with Israel gathered momentum. In 1998, the Cairo Peace Movement (CPM) was formally established under the leadership of Lutfi al-Khuli, former ambassadors, and the head of the influential Al-Ahram Centre for Strategic Studies. In June 1998, the Cairo Peace and Israeli Peace Now movements formulated a document laying down the principles for a comprehensive Israeli-Arab peace.[61] This impressive, but understudied initiative, was accelerated by the Israeli and Arab peace activities which continued until the outbreak of the Second Palestinian Intifada.[62] Thus, we argue that the activity of this significant circle of intellectuals led to a partial but significant change in the social context of Egyptian foreign policy, which rendered it incommensurate with the social context characterizing cold peace. However, this change fell short of what would be typical of rapprochement in that it did not involve revision to historical narratives, symbols, anthems, flags, etc.

There was also more scope for liberal dynamics as space for social interaction between elites expanded. In November 1993, the requirement of a special permit for Egyptians wanting to travel to Israel, was annulled, as were the special procedures referring to Israel's imports and exports of goods.[63] Prominent Egyptian businessmen advocated for closer ties with Israel.[64] These efforts were significant: the Egyptian business sector gained more political and economic influence in the early 1990s compared to the 1980s due to the

[60]Stein, 'The Camp David Consensus', 750–4.

[61]Lutfi al-Khuli's private papers obtained by authors.

[62]For details see <www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/990707/1999070753.html>.

[63]Sultan, *Between Cairo and Jerusalem*, 103.

[64]E.g., comments made by Kamel Diab, *Akhbar al-Yawm*, 12 Feb. 1994; similar views were aired by Hasin Sabur, President of the Egyptian-US Chamber of Commerce, and his deputy, Mahmud Shafik Jaber, Ahbar. See respectively, *Akhbar al-Yawm*, 5 Feb. 1994, and 19 Feb. 1994. See also the prominent Egyptian businessman and thinker, Tarek Heggy, <www.tarek-heggy.com/>, and Mahmoud Abd-Al-Aziz, a key figure in the Egyptian banking community and former chair of the board of directors of Al-Ahali Bank see *Akhbar al-Yawm*, 26 Feb. 1994.

Infitah reforms enacted by Sadat, and the economic restructuring under Mubarak.[65] The strenuous arguments proposed by parts of the Egyptian business community were reflected in the growing numbers of prominent businessmen visiting Israel, and the first economic delegations to Israel (1995–96) under Mubarak's presidency to discuss further expansion of joint economic activity.[66] These efforts, which were led by the Egyptian agriculture and trade ministers, led to an increased number of Egyptian-Israeli agricultural joint ventures compared to activity in the 1980s, and included joint research on agriculture in semi-arid and salt-water conditions, and development of efficient irrigation systems. By 1996, Israel had trained more Egyptian graduates (2,031) than *had been trained in any other country* – compared with 51 graduates between the launch of the programme in 1987 and 1991.[67] The agricultural cooperation programme continued and, between 1997 and 2000, 1,367 Egyptian graduates received training in Israel.[68]

The improved social relations between officials and businesspeople not only engendered greater trust, predictability and routine flows of information via meetings between politicians and civil servants, they also translated into increased economic activity and joint initiatives. For example, the Israeli businessman, Yossi Meiman, and his Egyptian counterpart, Hussein Salem, launched a joint venture to refurbish an oil refinery in Alexandria and, by 1995, had raised $300 million for this project.[69] The Israeli textile manufacturer, Delta, opened several factories in north-east Cairo, which became flagships of the Egyptian textile industry.[70] In 1996 to 2000, Egyptian-Israeli economic activity *increased* continuously. Egyptian imports of Israeli goods rose from $23 millionin 1995 to $60 millionin 2000, and between 1995 and 2000 Egyptian exports to Israel were maintained at around $20 million.[71] These figures might seem modest for a country that in the late 1990s

[65]On the rise of the Egyptian business elite and its ties with the Mubarak regime see Cook, *The Struggle for Egypt*, 159–61.

[66]Interview with Mr Gabby Bar, Senior Regional Director Middle East & North Africa Division, Israeli Ministry of Trade, Jerusalem, 30 Oct. 2012.

[67]'Egyptian-Israeli Cooperation Review', Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, document obtained by the author; see also comments by Advisor to the Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation Engineer Fouad Abou-Hadab, <www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Mashav%20–%20International%20Development/Publications/1998/Agricultural%20Cooperation%20Between%20Israel%20and%20Egypt>.

[68]'Egyptian-Israeli Cooperation Review', Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[69]Sultan, *Between Cairo and Jerusalem*, 105.

[70]Carmit Gai, *Dov Lautman* (Or Yehuda: Kineret Bitan 2011), 192–9.

[71]Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, <www1.cbs.gov.il/www/statistical/ftrade2005_e.pdf>.

had over 70 million inhabitants; however, in the context of the low levels of inter-regional trade that characterized the Middle East, this volume of economic activity for Egypt was significant, and Israel was Egypt's second ranked regional trading partner after Saudi Arabia.[72] Thus, although not reflecting the societal integration typical of rapprochement, economic activity between Egyptian and Israeli elites went beyond that typical of cold peace.

Consolidating Foreign Policy Change

In demonstrating that new elements in Egyptian foreign policy were irreconcilable with a cold peace thesis, the previous section challenged the conventional wisdom that Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel during the 1990s remained a cold peace policy. The post 2000 period provides an excellent opportunity to test this claim further. Following the logic of the cold peace thesis, the collapse of the peace process and the eruption of the second Intifada would have led to the cold peace elements in Egyptian foreign policy overriding the new elements that emerged in the 1990s. This section challenges this assumption, and shows that the reverse obtained. We exploit our analytical framework to demonstrate how and why the factors that initiated the change in Egyptian foreign policy in the early 1990s away from cold peace, combined to consolidate the shift from cold peace to a more robust peaceful foreign policy stance towards Israel.

As in the previous sections we begin our analysis by accounting for the role of great powers in the form of the US. On numerous occasions, President Mubarak confirmed that US aid objectives – during the 1980s conflict reduction, and during the 1990s promoting mutually reinforcing Egyptian-US strategic interests – continued into the 2000s.[73] The 9/11 attacks added another dimension, and throughout the Global War on Terrorism (GWoT), US officials stressed strategic cooperation with Egypt, and their country's appreciation of Egypt's centrality in the Middle East.[74] For instance, in 2005, a confidential cable from the US embassy in Cairo described Egypt-US cooperation over terrorism as 'excellent' and as constituting 'one of the pillars of the US-Egyptian strategic relationship'.[75] Egypt also played a key role in the US 'secret

[72]Interview with Abdel Moneim Said, conducted on 5 November 2012, in Cairo.
[73]'Ziyara laha ahamiyatha al-siyasiyya waal-iqtisadiyya', *al-Ahram*, 9 March 2001; Al-'alaqat al-misriyya al-amrikiyya', *al-Ahram*, 19, 23 March 2001.
[74]Cable 01CAIRO6321, US Embassy, Cairo, 4 Oct. 2001, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2001/10/01CAIRO6321.html>.
[75]Cable 05CAIRO2693, US Embassy, Cairo, 'Egypt and the Fight against Terrorism', 6 April 2005, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2005/04/05CAIRO2693.html>.

detention' and 'extraordinary rendition' programmes.[76] Thus, the US maintained its hegemonic position and its ability to create a strategic environment that rewarded/exacted costs, in return for pursing mutually reinforcing strategic interests. This projected onto relations with Israel, which portrayed its response to Palestinian terrorist attacks in the Second Intifada as part of the GWoT. Thus, the dynamic whereby Egyptian rapprochement with Israel and Egyptian-US strategic cooperation was further reinforced.

Sceptical readers might argue that the increasing cooperation with the US and the projection of relations with Israel were a result of complete Egyptian dependence on the US, which meant that it had to follow Washington's dictates. However, this claim seems to be challenged by the fact that the Mubarak regime *did* resist US demands on issues it deemed key for its survival, most crucially US demands to improve its human rights record and enhance democratic reforms. The friction between Egypt and the US on this issue peaked in 2008 when Congress introduced the Consolidated Appropriations Act, which called for $200 million of aid to be withheld until Egypt fulfilled certain conditions including safeguarding judicial independence, and curbing police abuses. In response, citing Egypt's importance to US national security, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice used the administration's prerogative and waived congressional restrictions on the delivery of aid.[77]

We next examine the role of statecraft. As already noted, advocates of the cold peace school of thought point out that, from the mid-1990s, Egypt's role as an active peace mediator diminished, and it was absent from the signing of the Wye Memorandum in 1998, and from the 2000 Camp David Peace summit. However, the cold peace school of thought fails to notice that this trend was short lived. Indeed, from 2003 onwards the role of statecraft in Egyptian foreign policy reflected a fundamental departure from the cold peace foreign policy stance; rather than being merely geared towards avoiding war Egypt sought to use statecraft to cooperate with Israel on key strategic issues. For instance, in the midst of the Second Palestinian Intifada, Egypt resumed the role of active mediator in the relationship between Israel and the Palestinians. In 2003, it hosted the diplomatic summit designed to support President George W. Bush's recently announced 'road map

[76]For an extensive discussion of this issue see Open Society Justice Initiative 'Globalizing Torture': CIA Secret Detention and Extraordinary Rendition, <www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/globalizing-torture-20120205.pdf>.

[77]Reuters, 'US Waived Congress Restriction on Egyptian Aid', <www.reuters.com/article/2008/03/04/us-egypt-us-waiver-idUSL0482173620080304>. Cook, *The Struggle for Egypt*, 220–30.

for peace'.[78] In 2005, Egypt hosted another conference aimed at 'empowering' the road map and officially ending the Second Palestinian Intifada.[79]

Furthermore, unlike the previous decade, the foreign policy change entailed by Egypt's behaviour did not merely amount to its emergence as an active mediator. Rather, by the mid-2000s, Egypt emerged as Israel's strategic partner. This is strongly reflected in the part played by Egypt in the most significant Israeli foreign policy initiative since the signing of the Oslo process: unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip. The then Chief of Staff to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Dov Weisglass, explained that: 'although the prospect of an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza raised some concerns in Egypt, President Mubarak perceived it as a crucial step for promoting peace. As part of normal practice, Sharon asked me [Weissglass] to fly to Cairo and talk to President Mubarak in … confidence [about] the plan "before others were told"'.[80] Former Israeli Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon sheds further light on this point, admitting that 'the Egyptians were given details of the plans to withdraw from the Gaza Strip *before* the Israeli military top brass were told about it'.[81]

It is significant that this strategic cooperation began before the withdrawal took place; it attests to the level of confidence, trust, routine flows of information and predictability between Egypt and Israel. It is important, however, to place these developments in context. Mubarak himself never visited Israel for meetings about the disengagement. Such a move of the Egyptian Head of State would have afforded Israel and its policies a degree of legitimacy that Mubarak was unprepared to give at this moment in time. Rather, the then head of the Egyptian security forces, Omar Suleiman, was dispatched to Israel. He played a key role in mediating between Israel and the Palestinians to negotiate the withdrawal, and oversee arrangements following its completion.[82] Eventually, Egypt was entrusted with managing security arrangements at the Sinai–Gaza Strip border.

The record of Egypt in successfully implementing its role is hotly contested. Top Israeli security officials and politicians have accused Egypt of 'not doing enough'.[83] However, Israeli officials within the

[78]'Bush calls for moral vision in the Middle East', CNN, <http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/06/03/bush.egypt/index.html?_s=PM:WORLD>.
[79]Abbas, Sharon, 'Declare an end to violence', Ynet, <www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3042665,00.html>.
[80]Dov Weissglass, *Ariel Sharon: A Prime Minister* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Ahronoth 2012), 269.
[81]Moshe Ya'alon, *The Longer Shorter Way* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Ahronoth 2008), 171–2.
[82]Weissglass, *Ariel Sharon*, 270.
[83]Interview with senior security Israeli official, 29 Oct. 2012, Tel Aviv.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintain that Egypt 'was doing what it could' and, with more resources, could have done more.[84] The US Ambassador to Cairo agreed, arguing that, following supply in 2007–08 of special US equipment to detect tunnel construction, cooperation between Egypt and Israel over security along the Gaza border increased.[85]

The evidence would seem to support the claims of the US ambassador and officials from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs rather than Israel's security establishment, which reinforces our argument that, by 2003, Egypt replaced its cold peace foreign policy stance towards Israel with a more robust type of peace. Significantly, after Hamas's takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007, Egypt effectively became a junior partner in enforcing the Israeli siege over the Strip. Egypt blocked Palestinian attempts to breach the Egypt–Gaza Strip border,[86] and its Foreign Minister, Ahmed Abdoul Gheit, threatened to 'break the arms and legs' of anyone who tried to use force to cross the border.[87] Egyptian cooperation with Israel continued even during the Israeli onslaught on the Gaza Strip, Operation 'Cast Lead'.

There is clear explanation for why did this progression in Egyptian-Israeli relations happen as and when it did. First, Egypt and Israel developed a common interest in containing Hamas.[88] As one Egyptian policy-maker put it, 'the whole Gaza issue needs a lot of cooperation between Egypt and Israel … because Gaza was a problem for us and the Israelis … Egypt sought to keep the pressure on Hamas whilst preventing a humanitarian disaster occurring'.[89] US Ambassador to Egypt, Margaret Scobey, reveals another dimension. In a confidential correspondence she observed that since Hamas's takeover of Gaza in June 2007, Egypt had rejected the organization, regarding it as an Iranian and Syrian proxy and took pains to isolate and weaken Hamas.[90]

Use of statecraft to replace cold peace with a more peacefully robust foreign policy stance was a result also of growing Israeli *and* Egyptian

[84]Interview with senior Israeli diplomat prominent in the Egyptian-Israeli relationship since 2000, 31 Oct. 2012, Jerusalem.
[85]Cable 08CAIRO1878, Scobey, Cairo, 'Strategy for the Gaza border', 25 Aug. 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/08/08CAIRO1878.html>.
[86]Cable 08CAIRO561, from US Embassy, Cairo, 'Gaza Border update', 19 March 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/03/08CAIRO561.html>
[87]Yoav Stern and Avi Issascharof, 'Egypt: we will break the hand of those who cross the border', <www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/objectives/pages>.
[88]Congressional Research Service, Report RL33003, 23–4, <http://wikileaks.org/wiki/CRS-RL33003>.
[89]Interview Moneim Said.
[90]Cable 08CAIRO2255, US Embassy, Cairo, 'A/S Welch's meeting with Field Marshal Tantawi', 26 Oct. 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/10/08CAIRO2255.html>.

interests in containing Iran, which at this point exhibited clear signs of cooperation. Accordingly, notwithstanding condemnation of Israel for the rise in civilian casualties, Ehud Olmert's government declared it was 'pleased overall' with the Egyptian government's response during the 2006 Lebanon war between Israel and Iran's proxy, Hizballah.[91] The joint efforts to contain Iran continued and, in 2008, Egypt and Israel cooperated to expose a group of Hizballah operatives who were planning an attack on tourist sites in the Sinai and, possibly, on shipping through the Suez Canal.[92] This common interest in containing Iran is relevant also to Egyptian-Israeli cooperation during Operation 'Cast Lead'. Reflecting on Egypt's stance during the operation, US Ambassador Scobey remarked that Egypt was seeking 'to thwart Iranian attempts to further their influence – via Syria, Hizballah, and Hamas – in the region'. Scobey maintained that 'For Egypt, the greatest strategic threat is from Iran, and they will do everything in their power to prevent Iranian influence from spreading.'[93] Field Marshal Tantawi echoed Scobey's opinion in a confidential meeting with US officials where he announced that a nuclear Iran was not an option.[94] The fact that the comments on Iran were all made by US and Egyptian officials in confidential forums is significant. It suggests that the comments were *not* made for public relations purposes, but rather authentically reflected Egypt's foreign policy orientation towards Iran, which converged with the Israeli stance.

The growing scope for using statecraft to pursue mutually reinforcing strategic interests, created the conditions for constructivist and liberal dynamics to contribute to consolidating the shift from a cold peace to a foreign policy stance based on a more robust type of peace. For instance, social relations between Egyptian and Israeli leaders and officials demonstrated the intimacy, confidence, trust and predictability that characterized interactions in the early 1990s, rather than the lack of contact during the 1980s era of cold peace. Sharon's Chief of Staff observed that 'Mubarak showed a great deal of affection to Sharon; the meetings between them were full of mutual compliments and jokes, especially at the expense of other

[91]Cable 06CAIRO5031, US Embassy, Cairo, 'Israeli Embassy on Status relations with Egypt', 14 Aug. 2006, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/08/06CAIRO5031.html>; interview senior Israeli diplomat, 13 Oct. 2012, Jerusalem.

[92]Zvi Barel, 'Egypt's Top Enemy', *Ha'aretz*, 10 April 2009, <www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/egypt-s-top-enemy-1.273841>.

[93]Cable 09CAIRO358, Scobey, Cairo, 'What does Egypt want out of the Gaza', 26 Feb. 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/02/09CAIRO358.html>.

[94]Cable 09CAIRO667, Scobey, Cairo, 'CODEL Tauscher's meeting with MINDEF Tantawi', 16 April 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/04/09CAIRO667.html>.

leaders'.[95] 'There was a kind of "old-boy camaraderie" between Sharon and Mubarak, of officers who in the past had fought each other and now engaged in discussion.'[96]

The social context of Egyptian foreign policy changed in another sense. Specifically, Egyptian-Israeli ties in key economically strategic arenas strengthened, as exemplified by the joint signing of the Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ) agreement on 14 December 2004. The QIZ agreement allowed Egypt non-reciprocal, duty-free access to US markets for products containing at least 11.7 per cent Egyptian and 11.7 per cent Israeli components, and was designed to avert a potential crisis in Egypt's textile industry[97] related to mandated liberalization of the textile quota system. This would have made Egypt liable for up to 35 per cent duty on certain textile manufactures, at a time when the textile sector accounted for 150,000 jobs in the private sector, or 27 per cent of industrial production and 25 per cent of manufacturing employment in Egypt. The industry generated $558.3 million in exports – just over 10 per cent of non-oil exports.[98] The potential blow to the textile industry would have been not just economic but also would have had strategic implications for the Mubarak regime. In this context, the process leading to the signing of the QIZ, and its completion, is pertinent to our discussion in several ways. First, the impetus for the agreement came from two leading Egyptian textile tycoons – Jalal-Al-Zorba and Dr Ala Arafa. They led efforts that eventually were successful in persuading the Egyptian government – most crucially the President – to support its signing.[99] This form of non-state activity in relation to an economic matter with strategic implications, significantly exceeds the cooperation remit entailed by a cold peace.

Second, Egyptian trade union representatives and textile workers demonstrated in Cairo. However, Israeli and Egyptian sources independently confirm that the demonstrators were protesting *not against* the signing of the agreement, but rather because their factories were not

[95]Weissglass, *Ariel Sharon*, 117.

[96]Weissglass, *Ariel Sharon*, 268; Close relations existed also between Israeli and Egyptian security officials; see reports on quadrilateral security meetings (Egypt, Israel, the US, and the Palestinians conducted on 11 March and 3 April 2007 before Hamas's takeover of the Gaza Strip; memorandum to Saeb Erekat from Palestinian Negotiations Support Unit, a meeting report – 2nd quadrilateral Security Meeting, 3 April 2007, <www.ajtransparency.com/files/1617.PDF;content> of the 1st quadrilateral Security Meeting of 11 March 2007, <www.ajtransparency.com/files/5135.PDF>.)

[97]On the QIZ see Vikash Yadav, 'The Political Economy of the Egyptian-Israeli QIZ Trade Agreement', *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 11/1 (2007), 74–92.

[98]Yadav, 'The Political Economy', 74.

[99]Interview Mr Gabby Bar, who coordinated the signing of the QIZ on the Israeli side.

included in the QIZ.[100] Demands for participation in a joint Egyptian-Israeli venture can perhaps be explained by the public relations campaign the Egyptian government had conducted.[101] However, they also reflect the degree to which establishing closer relations than had existed during the era of cold peace was less of a taboo among parts of Egyptian society. Indicatively, the signing of the QIZ agreement in Cairo was well publicized and included a well-attended press briefing.[102]

Third, the signing of the QIZ stipulated that Egyptian and Israeli officials should hold quarterly meetings. Thus, it extended social relations at the political and military levels, to a significant part of Egyptian-Israeli trade officials. However, and this chimes with our depiction of Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel as falling short of rapprochement, Egypt resisted Israeli attempts to broaden the economic activities that developed around the QIZ to other economic fields.[103]

The signing of the QIZ was not the only cement in Egyptian-Israeli relations and the shift away from cold peace. Since the early 2000s, Egyptian and Israeli businessmen had been negotiating the direct supply of gas between Egypt and Israel. In 2005, the Egyptian energy consortium, EMG, which had liaised with Israeli gas consumers, signed a commercial treaty with the Israel Electric Company (IEF).[104] It obliged EMG to supply some 25 billion cubic metres of gas over 15 years at an annual rate of 1.7 billion cubic metres.[105] The deal was expected to generate $2.5 billion.[106] On 1 May 2008, supply of natural gas to Israel began, although not at the volume stipulated in the agreement. Egypt's political opposition contested the agreement, arguing it was unconstitutional because it had not been approved by the Egyptian parliament. However, its legal challenge to implementation failed.[107] In August

[100]Gabby Bar and Abdel Moneim Said interviews.
[101]Interview Muneim Said who presided over the campaign.
[102]Interview Gabby Bar.
[103]Interview Gabby Bar.
[104]Holdings in EMG included: The Egyptian business man, Hussein Salem (28 per cent); the Egyptian national gas company (10 per cent) the Thai company, PTT; Sam Zel and David Fisher (12 per cent); Israeli institutional investors and the private company, Ampel, an Israeli consortium controlled by Yossi Meiman (25 per cent). See Avi Bar-Eli, 'Egypt demands to open agreement with the Israeli Electrical Company', *Haaretz*, 10 June 2008.
[105]Shmuel Even, 'Egypt's Revocation of the Natural Gas Agreement with Israel: Strategic Implications', *INSS Insight*, No. 332, 6 May 2012, <www.inss.org.il/publications.php?cat=21&incat=&read=6488>.
[106]Avi Bar-Eli, 'Gas supply from Egypt to Israel commences', *Haaretz*, 30 April 2008.
[107]In Feb. 2009, the Egyptian Supreme Court rejected an appeal and put an end to the legal challenges opposing the deal. Avi Bar-Eli, 'The Egyptian Supreme Court authorizes gas supply to Israel', *Haaretz*, 2 Feb. 2009.

2009, the IEF signed an updated agreement with EMG, which mandated a higher price for the gas provided and was in line with the rise in global energy prices.[108] Gas supplies continued until the ousting of President Mubarak in January 2011.

Consolidation of the gas deal between IEF and EMG further disproves the cold peace theory. In contrast to what a cold peace foreign policy would allow, the gas deal was a commercial, not an intergovernmental agreement. It represented a further strengthening of the commercial ties between Egyptian and Israeli business elites – beyond the levels conforming to a cold peace. Israel's agreeing to Egypt becoming its main supplier of gas for the following 15 years demonstrates the high levels of trust and confidence in the relationships that had developed between the Egyptian and the Israeli political-security elites. By the same token, the Egyptian government and the businesspeople concerned were unperturbed by the political and legal challenges mounted by the Egyptian opposition.

Towards a New Concept of Strategic Peace

Our analysis of Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel reveals that, since the early 1990s, Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel has reflected a more robust type of peace than cold peace, but a more tenuous type than rapprochement. This suggests that Egypt's new stance towards Israel falls into some intermediary type on the continuum between a cold peace type and rapprochement, and tied to the period of stabilization of peaceful foreign policy positions. The current IR literature on peace between states lacks a conception of this category of peace. Therefore, in what follows we use the empirical analysis as a heuristic to conceptualize this type of peaceful foreign policy stance, which we term *strategic peace*.

The first element we explore is the role of the superpower. Drawing on our analysis of the role of the US, we would argue that the superpower's role in strategic peace was significant for producing an economic environment that, for security and financial reasons, made reinforcement of a peaceful foreign policy profitable and its resistance costly. However, the influence of the great powers in strategic peace and cold peace differs. Material support in strategic peace is not merely geared towards reducing conflict, but even more towards promoting mutual politico-military and economic strategic interests. Thus, it is more forceful than in cold peace where support is focused only on conflict reduction. This should be compared to rapprochement where the support of a superpower is unnecessary.

[108]Avi Bar-Eli, 'Meiman returns to the market: Egypt and EMG signed the new gas prices', *Haaretz*, 23 Feb. 2009.

The role of statecraft is the next feature we examine. The case of Egypt's foreign policy towards Israel demonstrates that strategic peace is grounded in formal agreements that entail use only of non-violent foreign policy tools. Unlike cold peace, cooperation between states is not confined to the intergovernmental level or aimed only at conflict reduction; it includes cooperation between governmental and non-governmental business and intellectual elites, generating social interaction through the pursuit of mutually reinforcing political, military and economic strategic interests. Arguably, routine activity, over a long period of time, to promote mutually reinforcing strategic interests, creates ties that bind officials, politicians and elites outside of government, generating trust, respect, routine information flow and predictability. Thus, in contrast to cold peace, in strategic peace – although regional conflicts may persist – the probability of war is so small as not to enter the calculations of the involved parties. This consequence of strategic peace is significant in a context of limited liberal and constructivist resources to develop cooperation compared to those entailed by rapprochement, which is regulated by: common rules, norms, transparency and trust generated by supranational institutions, full societal integration via economic ties and social interactions such as travel, cultural exchanges, etc.

Similarly, the social contexts of strategic peace, cold peace and rapprochement are different. Unlike rapprochement, strategic peace generates neither new narratives nor popular cultural symbols that subsequently promote erosion of self and other, nor does it create full societal integration. However, the social context of strategic peace is not static as in cold peace. This partial yet significant difference is generated by the process of strategic learning that political elites go through, ideas disseminated by intellectuals who articulate the salience of peace as reinforcing the strategic interests of the countries involved, and the commercial ties among elites.

Conclusion

The relationship between theory and case studies should be perceived as a dialogue. From this perspective, it is worth reflecting on the degree to which, according to the data in this article, the notion of strategic peace has been used to refute current perceptions of Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel. In this context, we demonstrated that the conventional wisdom that Egypt employed a cold peace foreign policy towards Israel throughout the period under Mubarak is mistaken and deeply flawed. Rather, Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel was dynamic – comprising cold peace (1981–91), a hybrid foreign policy of cold peace and strategic peace (1991–2003), and a pure strategic peace posture (2003–11). Crucially, as we have shown, competing conceptions, such as

rapprochement, security communities and unions, could not have captured the shift in the causes and consequences entailed by the changes we have identified in Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel.

Therefore, through the prism of strategic peace this article casts new light on an under-researched aspect of foreign policy which is at the heart of the international security of the Middle East. First, the role of the US, from the 1990s onwards, went far beyond what could be expected within a cold peace paradigm of involvement geared towards conflict reduction. From the early 1990s and especially in the 2000s, US support was designed to support Egypt's peaceful stance towards Israel by promoting mutually reinforcing strategic interests. Second, Egypt's foreign policy behaviour towards Israel since the early 1990s constituted a more robust form of peace than cold peace, although it fell short of rapprochement. Rather than pursuing a foreign policy towards Israel designed merely to reduce conflict, the trajectory of Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel followed the direction of increased strategic cooperation. Thus, Egypt's position towards Israel shifted from reluctant peace partner during the 1980s, to active mediator in the 1990s, to strategic partner from 2003. We identified this shift in Egyptian-Israeli-Palestinian relations and foreign policy towards Iran. Hence, from a relationship based, during the 1980s, on what Stein brands as the 'institutionalized norm of distrust', since the 1990s, relations between Egyptian and Israeli officials increasingly were founded on trust, mutual respect and routine information exchange.

Third, from the 1990s, the social context of Egyptian foreign policy did not resemble a cold peace context. The work of a small yet significant group of intellectuals, over more than two decades, set Egypt's increasing strategic cooperation with Israel according to an ideational template. Concurrently, from the early 1990s, economic cooperation progressed in a number of areas (agriculture, textiles, gas exports) deemed by the Mubarak regime to be strategically significant. While the intellectual discourse backing peace, and the level of economic cooperation, fell short of what was required for rapprochement, they constituted a degree of societal integration between parts of the Israeli and Egyptian elites that cannot be explained in cold peace foreign policy terms. Fourth, the notion of strategic peace helps us to understand how the shift from cold peace to strategic peace rendered the propensity to revert to war so small that it did not enter Egyptian or Israeli calculations.

The notion of strategic peace also constitutes a critique of liberal and constructivist accounts of how and why shifts across the peace spectrum occur. It emphasizes that the realist dynamics brought by the impact of great powers and bilateral foreign policy cooperation, and the social relations they engender within elites, are the main motivation for a shift

from a cold peace foreign policy to a more robust peace-oriented foreign policy. As these dynamics are set in motion, they prompt a change in the social context of foreign policy, which is evidenced by the emergence of trust, predictability and routine interaction among governmental officials, the ideas generated by intellectuals who articulate foreign policy in terms of strategic interests, and societal integration among elites. That said, the social context never transcended the contours of strategic peace, which was strongly reflected in Mubarak's insistence not to visit Israel throughout his presidency.

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