

The Seventh Isaiah Berlin Annual Lecture

Diplomacy and Intelligence in the Middle East

How and why are the two inexorably intertwined?

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As I speak to you here, this evening, I feel that I have come full circle from the days when I roamed through the streets and sidewalks in Hampstead as a young boy sixty to seventy years ago. So many images cloud my memory. World War Two, the devastating and heroic "Battle of Britain", the V1 and V2 missiles falling on London in a last frantic effort of Hitler to break the moral back of Britain as the allied forces advanced towards Berlin. In juxtaposition, the massive rallies of British Jewry in the streets demanding that the remnants of the terrible unprecedented holocaust be allowed to enter Palestine and join the small band of six hundred thousand Jews already there in establishing an independent state. And I remember the farewell dinner at the Dorchester Hotel in March 1948 where British Jewry said farewell to my parents, to my father who had been a leader of the British Zionist movement and one of its delegates to successive Zionist Congresses as of the twenties until the first post war congress held in Switzerland in the year 1946. The day after the dinner, my parents and I left for the Holy Land to experience and participate in a different war, the 'War of Independence of the State of Israel'. Isaiah Berlin and his parents, Masha and Mendel Berlin were at that dinner, just as they had been at my Bar Mitzvah, four months before that.

I shall stop just there because the purpose of my coming here this evening is not to evoke personal memories. It is to honour a man whom I knew quite well, a person with whom I was privileged to have a family relationship, and a figure who, in his own way and style, played at times a significant role in the modern history of the Jewish People. His relations with Chaim Weizman and David Ben Gurion, his unique friendship with Mayor Teddy Kollek, his involvement in the Rothschild Foundation over many years. Shaya, as we all called him, was not a neutral bystander as history unfolded before our eyes. He was often a player, at times a clandestine one, as when he met me in the nineties to hear reports of

my many meetings with the late King Hussein of Jordan and his brother Crown Prince Hassan, who had been his pupil at Oxford. In retrospect, I regret not taking with me one of my secret recording machines to allow for these titillating exchanges to become part of recorded history. Alas, one more Israeli intelligence failure.

Before proceeding, I wish to thank the Synagogue and Zaki Cooper for inviting me to deliver this lecture; I feel truly honoured and humbled. I acknowledge the presence here, this evening, of Martine and Peter Halban, Peter the step son of Shaya. My thanks to you as an audience and to the many personal friends I have spotted, who are here together with all of us. And now for the subject at hand.

During my career as an Intelligence officer spanning close to forty years I have been involved in most of the branches and aspects of this field of endeavour, whether as a case officer in the field, or as an analyst or handler at headquarters. As one who functioned at command level for thirty three years including four and a half years as Service chief and five as deputy Service chief, I have often dealt with political and diplomatic portfolios and have at times asked myself:

Why is it that especially inside the Middle East, intelligence and diplomacy have been so intertwined and why is it that so many fateful decisions have been made by intelligence services and often individual intelligence officers? How and why has this come about?

I would like to begin by defining a few premises and shall then proceed to examine them through a series of select cases which, so I hope, will prove and substantiate my hypotheses.

First, let it be said that the greater Middle East was governed for hundreds of years by systems and regimes which were defined neither by nationhood nor by state norms in the European or Asian sense of these terms. The Ottoman Empire which, in its heyday, practiced its writ over most of the territories in the area certainly did not ascribe to definitions of state or nation. There was no Ottoman nation and, in consequence, no state of the Ottoman people. It conducted relations with empires and states as its interests dictated. These interests were manifold, but the principal one, which transcended all others, was that of insuring the perpetuity of both the Empire and the ruling dynasty.

In pursuit of these twin aims, it was imperative to solidify the defence and international security of the Empire as an entity and at one and the same time to protect itself from internal threats of national, ideological or other forms of disloyalty and even insurrection. These necessities distinguished the nature of governance in the Middle East from that of Europe where states and empires evolved round peoples and national identities. In the Middle East, it was different.

The second premise that inevitably flows from the first was that the states and nations of Europe and Asia could not approach and deal with the Ottoman Empire as they might conduct their affairs between themselves. In order to cater to their interests, they had to deal with the Empire in the east as a conglomeration of tribes, religious groups and conflicting forces within that empire. This could not be accomplished through the traditional channels of diplomacy and certainly could not be adequately served by resorting to the means and instruments of diplomacy.

My third premise is that although the states of Europe had much knowledge about the Middle East, they had not nearly enough data either in depth or in quality to service their true requirements. Indeed, they viewed the Middle East more as an essential 'passage' to the Far East, to South East Asia, than as an area that was a desirable prize in itself. They knew much more about the Indian continent, about the South East Asian territories, about Indonesia or China or Japan than about the deserts of Arabia or the wilds of South West Asia, the Persian Gulf or the Sunnite and Shi'ite heartlands.

My fourth premise is that as the Ottoman Empire began to show signs of weakness and disintegration, it became essential for the nations surrounding it to gather vital information on the peoples and

conflicting interests inside the body of this faltering giant. It became necessary to obtain both basic in depth information and operational information, what in these modern times we call intelligence and this could not be done through hitherto conventional means.

My fifth premise is that as a result of this clear need, the creation of a new arm of both intelligence gathering and its operational exploitation became a pressing need and due to these circumstances, the two necessities were combined into one. Diplomacy in the Middle East became, first and foremost, the combined task of Intelligence. A host of consequences flowed from the fusion of the two disciplines.

And **my sixth and last premise** is that the unique character of the Middle Eastern 'State' that came into being after World War One, dictated a system of governance wherein intelligence and security were accorded a predominant role. In order to deal with such a 'state' it became essential to set up channels and methodology that conformed, at least in part to that of the correspondent.

When Theodor Herzl embarked upon the treacherous path leading his people to independence in the Holy Land he quickly reached the conclusion that he would have to enter the game of nations as soon as possible and make contact with the powers that be who were in possession of the Holy Land – the rulers of the Ottoman Empire. He began visiting Constantinople where he established contact with the court of the Sultan. He forged a strategy whereby he would present the Sultan with a comprehensive offer that would, inter alia, take care of a massive foreign debt that the empire had incurred over the years. Very soon, he realised that he had to reach the Sultan himself; the courtiers he dealt with showed scant enthusiasm to pave the way. Enter Arminius Vambery, of Jewish extraction, born Herman Bamberger in the Kingdom of Hungary. He began life as an apprentice to a ladies' tailor, went on to be the tutor of the village innkeeper's son. He found support to enter High School and by the age of sixteen acquired knowledge of more than ten languages. By the age of twenty, his knowledge of the Ottoman language and its culture enabled him to travel to Constantinople where, within a short time he became a full Osmanli and a secretary to an Ottoman General. In rapid progression, he acquired over twenty Ottoman languages and dialects, produced a Turkish-German dictionary, disguised himself as a Sunnite Derwish and set out for a journey never before taken by a European. Joining a

band of pilgrims returning from Mecca, he spent months travelling across Iran and thence northwards to Khiva, Bochara and Samarkand. His book 'Travels in Central Asia' was published in the year 1864. It is a canonical opus to this very day. A year later, he was appointed professor of oriental languages at the University of Budapest, a post he held for forty years. He converted four times and simultaneous with his academic duties was recruited and acted as an agent both for the Ottomans and for British Intelligence. He was not a double agent; he acted separately on different issues for different masters. But he was a double dealer and when Herzl approached him and recruited him to obtain an audience with Sultan Abdul Hamid the second, he asked for and received a hefty sum for the service performed. By the time he was working for Great Britain, he was not only collecting and passing information, he was also involved in combating Russian attempts to gain ground in Central Asia, where they posed a potential threat to the British position on the Indian sub continent. He became a prototype of an 'agent', who could both collect information and put it immediately to good use. Today we would classify him as both a source and an 'agent of influence'.

Herzl did see the Sultan ultimately in the month of May 1901 but the meeting failed to produce the desired result, inter alia because Vambery had not been properly briefed and had not adequately prepared either Herzl or the Sultan for the fateful meeting. From a professional point of view, Herzl was no match for double dealing Vambery. In order to extract maximum potential from Vambery, Herzl would have to devote so much more time and effort to 'handling and running' this elusive pimpernel. He would have to employ a capable and strong case officer to be alongside Vambery almost at all times. This Herzl, as the leader of an embryonic national movement could ill afford and might not even understand. It would also require a large financial investment the like of which Herzl did not have at his disposal.

In many respects, Vambery was a model for generations to come. He often assumed the ways and religion of his targets; he earned their trust and respect. However, in one aspect he differed from those who were to follow in his footsteps – he had no real basic loyalty to any one cause he promoted and his sole interest was to extract as much financial returns as he could.

As the Ottoman Empire slowly approached its demise, in the first two decades of the twentieth

century, the Middle East assumed greater prominence and importance for the interests of the great powers of the day, Great Britain, France, Russia and gradually, the more distant United States of America.

Both substantively and as case studies, I wish to focus on two British figures who played a crucial role in forging the political and strategic contours of modern day middle east, T. E. Lawrence, commonly known as 'Lawrence of Arabia' and Gertrude Bell the founding mother of the Kingdom of Iraq. As we shall see, they became role models for key figures in the trade who still walk the streets of London in these very days, the beginning of the twenty first century.

Allow me please, a modern day diversion. In the year 2004 Mark Allen retired as deputy director of MI6 and was knighted shortly afterwards. Until then it had not been the custom to bestow knighthoods on persons other than Heads of Service. But Sir Mark has been a recent exception; he spent many years in the Middle East, speaks perfect Arabic has learned the ways of the Arabs and has enjoyed, at times dressing like them. At the height of his career, it was he, together with an American Counterpart who persuaded the Libyan leader Mo'amar Qadaffi, to bring his nuclear military programmes to an end. This rare achievement of a modern day Lawrence of Arabia has drawn a line across one hundred years of endeavour. It warrants our delving into the past in order to understand the present.

And now back to T. E. Lawrence who entered the middle east arena as an archaeologist, just as did his close friend and collaborator, Gertrude Bell. His interest brought him to Damascus, Beirut and Carcemish in Northern Syria. He mastered Arabic and the ways, habits, garb and lifestyle of the Arabian Desert. He took special interest in the railroads that connected Northern Turkey to Hijaz in the Arabian Peninsula. He served British Intelligence as far back as the year 1914 when he carried out a survey of the Negev desert, now the southern part of Israel. At a very early stage he determined that the Negev would be of immense strategic importance; the Ottoman Empire could not exercise its control over Arabia without maintaining control of this strategic 'essential pass' as it is called in professional language. Lawrence saw to it in all subsequent discussions and decisions that there be no direct passage from Asia into the Sinai desert and thence to the African continent. Therefore, Aqaba and Um Rashrash, Eilat of today, had to be separated by an international boundary and Trans Jordan had to become, after world war one a

separate national entity, notwithstanding the fact that both it and Palestine had been part of the Ottoman Empire and both were subsequently placed under a British Mandate. Lawrence, subsequently, promoted a strategy that was to strive for a united Arabia but, at the same time, to ensure that such a united Arabia be not truly unified.

World War One saw Lawrence leading elements of the famous 'Arab Revolt' under the nominal command of Emir Faisal, the son of the Hashemite Sherif Hussein of Mecca against the Ottoman Armed Forces. He determined their combat strategies and in the year 1917 promoted a joint operation with irregular forces previously loyal to the Turks. An elaborate plan involving surprise attacks at unexpected locations resulted in the fall of strategic Aqaba to the British. For this, Lawrence was promoted to the rank of ... major. A year later, he was to be a key figure in the capture of Damascus. This time he was promoted to the rank of ... Lieutenant Colonel. By then Lawrence had become a legendary figure who simultaneously enjoyed the trust of both his commander in chief, General Allenby, and his desert friend and partner Prince Faisal.

Lawrence had far outgrown his role as a practitioner of non conventional warfare. He had become the master strategist of the imperial designs of the British Empire in the Middle East. He took decisions in the field that led Britain to its ultimate near supremacy in the entire region. Within the space of ten years or less, this novice in archaeology had become the epitome of the grand intelligence officer who created and destroyed the destinies of nations, peoples and leaders.

General Allenby, his commander, said of him;

"I gave him a free hand. His cooperation was marked by the utmost loyalty and I had never had anything but praise for his work, which, indeed, was invaluable throughout the campaign".

Lawrence participated at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 that marked the end of World War one as a member of the delegation of Emir Faisal; by the year 1921 he was back at the side of the then secretary of the colonies, Winston Churchill, as his chief expert (today we would call him the principal intelligence advisor) in the role of a major participant in the Cairo conference. It was convened by Churchill and chaired by him with the aim of finalising the post World War One political contours of the Middle East.

Ostensibly, switching roles became one of the most valuable tools of a seasoned intelligence officer in the Middle East; no pinstripe diplomat could act in this way. I myself practised this on more than one occasion.

Within a time span of two years Lawrence and Gertrude Bell had at first succeeded and subsequently failed in installing Emir Faisal as King of Syria. Damascus ultimately came under French mandate, and Faisal was deposed and went into exile. The architecture for the Kingdom of Arabia nurtured by Lawrence had come apart – an architecture for which he had received a free hand from his political masters.

It was at this juncture that the Cairo conference of 1921 I mentioned earlier, was convened. This was a truly bizarre event. It included a mix of commanding generals, high commissioners, officials of various levels local leaders and close to forty experts that Churchill nicknamed his 'forty thieves', intelligence officers of one colour or other.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the two key figures at the conference were Gertrude Bell and T. E. Lawrence.

Gertrude Bell first visited the region in 1892 going to Iran, and yet again in 1899 when she visited Palestine, and Syria. She befriended persons like the Druze King Yahya Bey, a potential key player in southern Syria. Her travels took her to Babylon and Najaf, the Shi'ite holy city, and Carcemish, the ancient Hittite city where she first met Lawrence.

When world war one broke out she was conscripted in 1915 to what was then called 'the Arab Bureau' headed by General Gilbert Clayton. As of then on, she rapidly advanced to be one of the two major intelligence strategists of the British Empire in the Middle East.

In 1916, she was posted to Mesopotamia and as of then began her deep involvement in determining the future of both Iraq and Transjordan. She established deep contacts with all the figures in Baghdad; she had supported the move of the Hashemite Emir Faisal to Damascus and when he was expelled from there, she championed his transfer to Iraq as King and the move of his brother, Emir Abdullah to Amman as Hashemite King of Jordan. She drew up the boundaries of the two states; it was she who determined that although the newly born State of Iraq would have a clear Shi'ite majority, it should be

governed by a Sunnite minority. In a letter to her father she wrote, and I quote:

"I do not for a moment doubt that the final authority must be in the hands of the Sunnis in spite of their numerical inferiority. Otherwise you will have a Mujtahid-run, a theocratic state which is the very devil".

How profound, see Tehran of today!

At the Cairo conference Bell and Lawrence triumphed; Faisal became king of Iraq, of a country he never knew, of a people he had never led and as a result of what would be billed in years to come as just one more chapter in the Arabic 'Mu'amara', the conspiracies of the Middle East.

Bell evolved into a truly professional intelligence officer. She schooled Harry St. John Philby as his field controller, a third figure that I must mention

It was he who was responsible for the ultimate switch in British policy that gave preference to the Saudi dynasty in South Arabia over the original favourite Hashemite Sheikh Hussein, father of Faisal and Abdullah. He was the first director of the British Intelligence Service of mandated Palestine and Transjordan and bitterly opposed Jewish immigration into Palestine. He maintained an illicit correspondence with Ibn Saud in Riyadh while he was still in office in Palestine. Because of this, he was later dismissed and it was said that he had 'gone native'. His son, the notorious Kim Philby, later surpassed his father in extreme acts of treachery. Philby senior maintained very close contact with Allen Dulles of the United States who served in post world war one in Turkey and who was already then a rising star in the, as yet, nonexistent American Intelligence Service.

Bell and Philby bitterly opposed the idea of granting the Jews a national home in Palestine. It is noteworthy that notwithstanding their tremendous clout and influence, they did not prevail on this count. Did Lawrence share their view? Sir Martin Gilbert, the official historian of Sir Winston Churchill, claims that quote:

"Lawrence like Churchill saw virtue in the Zionist enterprise".

In any event, Bell campaigned directly at British cabinet level against the Balfour Declaration and established a working relationship on this issue with Sir Edwin Montague, Secretary of State for India, a

British Jew vehemently opposed to Zionism. He read out to the British Cabinet a strongly argued letter in which she wrote to him and I quote:

"Palestine for the Jews has always seemed to us (who is 'us'? EH) to be an impossible proposition. I don't believe it can be carried out – personally, I do not want it to be carried out. To gratify Jewish sentiment you would have to override every conceivable political consideration".

Rank and hierarchy never stood in the way of a key intelligence officer in his desire to contact the very top.

Bell was not an anti-semite. In Baghdad she befriended key Jewish figures whom she thought could give vital support to the nascent State of Iraq, first and foremost among them Sassoon Eskell Effendi, of the renowned Sassoon dynasty, a cousin of British poet Siegfried Sassoon, and the son of the former chief Rabbi of Baghdad. Handpicked by Bell, he served as Iraqi minister of Finance in the five cabinets following independence. He was decorated in Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Britain and knighted by King George V. His last decoration was given him, posthumously, by Sadaam Hussein Al Takriti!

As I have demonstrated the international structure of the Middle East created largely but not entirely based on the work of intelligence officers, was not the product of indigenous liberation movements. Therefore, in many cases the very existence of regimes and systems depended from the outset on the successful functioning of those governmental arms that protected Kings, Presidents and semi democratic systems at best from internal threats no less than external ones. Intelligence and Security Chiefs in monarchies and non democratic systems very often accumulated vast power and or influence, only to find themselves summarily dismissed for no apparent reason or, in some cases, physically eliminated because they knew too much or came themselves to be regarded as threats to the ruler of the day. In some cases, absolute rulers did not content themselves with the creation of a unified internal systematic security system. The deep mistrust they harboured for their intelligence chiefs led them to set up rival services which competed with each other, spied on each other and in some cases mounted operations against each other that resulted in physical conflict and fatalities. It may be said that the most extreme example of this phenomenon was forged by none other than Yasser Arafat. When George Tenet, Director of the CIA was

dispatched to the Middle East by the President of the United States in 2001 with the task of creating a framework that would lower extreme tensions prevailing between Israel and the Palestinians at the height of the second 'Intifada', he was able to identify no less than thirteen separate intelligence and security elements reporting directly to the President. He recommended reducing the number to three but this became possible only after the demise of the Palestinian President.

But we must first go back to the aftermath of World War Two.

The role of intelligence in the foreign policy and diplomatic field took an acute turn in the early fifties of the previous century when the middle east became increasingly drawn into the the east-west cold war that followed in the footsteps of world war two. Of the many examples of this, I should like to focus on Iran.

At the beginning of the fifties British influence in Tehran rose to an all time high. The Anglo Iranian Oil Company under British domination controlled this key Iranian asset. In 1951, popular sentiment produced an electoral sea change and nationalist Dr Mossadeq became Prime Minister under the Shah and proceeded at once to nationalise the oil industry. The decision was greeted in Tehran by tremendous public support and an outburst of deep hatred for the British. A series of demonstrative British counter measures produced no result and in their despair, British Intelligence officers approached their American counterparts and suggested a joint regime change operation. Whereas this line of action clearly appealed to Prime Minister Winston Churchill who had just returned to power after a six year stint as leader of the opposition, American President Truman, in the last months of his second and last term of office had no stomach for a renewed bout of 'British Imperialism'.

Intelligence officers on both sides of the Atlantic bided their time. When Dwight Eisenhower assumed the presidency at the beginning of 1953, much changed. Not only were Churchill and the American President at idem on the local situation in Iran but they similarly saw the Iranian profile in the light of the East- West struggle, which by then, was gaining momentum in the Middle East as well. A regime change in Tehran now shed its restricted character and was translated into a prime interest in the war against international communism; the

Iranian Tudeh Party, in effect a pro Soviet communist proxy had become an ally of Dr. Mossadeq, so the lines of battle between Moscow and Washington emerged in stark reality. American Intelligence led by Kermit Roosevelt, the near east director of the CIA and Norman Derbyshire of British MI 6 teamed together to pull off a counter coup that would unseat Mossadeq and restore the true power of the Shah of Iran. What was required for this to come about were three elements, the willingness of the Shah to dismiss his radical Prime Minister, a credible figure who could take over, and a massive operation designed to create a popular climate that would welcome the desired change. Kim Roosevelt began his nightly meetings with the Shah in Tehran, aimed at convincing him to take action and primarily designed to bolster his self confidence which was at a very low ebb. Simultaneously, an Iranian General, Zahedi, came forward and volunteered to take over when appointed. The streets of Tehran were seething with rising tension as the CIA and others ploughed finances and political action devices into key areas of influence in the Iranian capital. Mossadeq and forces loyal to him prepared to defend the regime and police and army units began to take sides. Large psychological operations were launched, newspaper editors were recruited, street leaders were paid off and all this unfolded as the Shah hesitated to sign Mossadeq's dismissal order. In Washington and London, opinion was divided as to whether the impending 'coup' would succeed.

This was undoubtedly the largest political action intelligence operation hitherto mounted in modern history. Intelligence had hatched the plot and had pursued political approval until it was given and the subsequent tableau of events involved tens of thousands of ordinary men and women whose behaviour would determine its outcome.

After much hesitation the Shah signed the dismissal order on 15th August 1953; After it became public knowledge, forces loyal to Mossadeq arrested those who had come to arrest him; General Zahedi and a band of followers repaired to the American Embassy to seek and receive asylum, the Shah fled to Baghdad on the 17th and the CIA forward command post informed Washington that the coup had failed. On the 18th of August the Shah flew to Rome where he was met by the then Deputy Director of the CIA, Allen Dulles, whose post world war one role I mentioned before. He succeeded in persuading the fearful and hesitant Shah to return to Tehran and when he did so, the tide began to change. Pro Shah forces gained the upper hand and routed the pro Mossadeq groups in the city. The coup had

succeeded and the Shah was destined to reign for twenty five fateful years until he was overthrown by a combination of religious and radically anti American elements in Iran. This time round, the CIA and the British Intelligence services had neither the capacity nor the support of their political masters to 'do' another Zahedi. There was nobody further from President Eisenhower than President Jimmy Carter and Great Britain of the seventies and eighties was no longer an Empire and was shorn of all its political and clandestine capabilities in the Middle East. Iran had been the greatest triumph of Anglo-American Intelligence cooperation in the field in 1953; it evolved into its greatest disaster in 1978 and 1979.

It is now thirty years hence and yet again forces inside and outside Iran are pitted against each other in a totally different context. Can modern day intelligence confound Iran as its extremist regime tries to obtain a nuclear military capability? The jury is still out on that but my gut feeling is that it is our turn to emerge with the upper hand. The stakes are different, the methods and political and intelligence weaponry are different and the less we say about this here today – the better.

Among the American Intelligence officers involved in operation Ajax in Iran was Miles Copeland. He too had dabbled in archaeology and he too had studied and mastered Arabic. In the early fifties, he was one of a small group who maintained contact with a few Egyptian army officers who were plotting to overthrow the monarchical regime of King Farouk of Egypt. The coup succeeded and shortly after the army junta took power Gamal Abd al Nasser emerged as the leader of Egypt. Miles Copeland was allotted a room at the seat of power right next to Nasser and for several years was a key clandestine figure in the life of modern day Egypt. He played a role in crafting the configuration and functions of the 'Mukhabarat', the dreaded secret service of the country just as his colleagues in Tehran had played a role in the creation of the 'Savak', the much feared secret service of the Shah. These organs of the state were key to preserving the existence of these regimes; to a large extent, the CIA had superseded the British in their traditional role between the two world wars.

One of the key contacts that Copeland maintained at the highest level in Cairo was Hassan Tuhami, an original member of the free officers group and a person who enjoyed the complete trust of Nasser. He was a very extreme figure, noted, inter alia, for his implacable rejection of Israel's right to exist; he attached enormous weight to 'Jones', the codename

given to Copeland. In the fateful year of 1955, Egypt was pursued both by the Soviet Union and the United States and was presented by two distinct offers of arms and economic assistance. The key civilian project proposed was the construction of a hydro- electric dam across the river Nile at Aswan. In a top secret brief sent to Nasser by Tuhami, then head of the intelligence branch in President Nasser's office he reported on a conversation with 'Jones' as follows :

"I met with Jones and it appears the Americans are convinced that exerting pressure on the Egyptian Government would yield only contrary results."

His recommendation was to pursue the arms deals with Moscow on the assumption that this would push the Pentagon to act against State Department policies and thus offset American future pressure on Cairo.

His conclusion was and I quote:

"Egypt will reap great benefits from the rapprochement with Russia ... we will ensure that both Cold War camps keep on struggling over control of our area. This, in turn will keep Egypt free from the influence of either camp."

Tuhami was motivated primarily by his desire to assure Egypt a dependable source of state of the art weaponry that would enable Egypt to fight a successful second round war against Israel and thus to redeem the defeat of Cairo in Israel's war of independence.

Nasser adopted the recommendation but the course of history that Tuhami dreamt of, never materialised. The USA did not play the game and Egypt slid into dependence on Moscow for fifteen years.

This episode reflects how far Intelligence was a crucial and influential player inside the Arab world, proposing political strategies and trying to ensure not only the internal stability of the regime but also the basic external interests of the State as seen through the eyes of an intelligence officer.

Tuhami rose in the ranks and in the seventies became one of those who counselled Egypt to seek an accommodation with Washington. In 1972, the Soviet Union under the leadership of Leonid Brezhnev had rejected President Sadaat's request for

deep penetration fighter bomber aircraft that could allow Cairo to attack Israeli civilian population centres. Sadaat decided on a major change in strategy, a move towards the United States and a twin effort to attempt a peace with Israel. This could only come about after a limited military confrontation with Israel by means of a surprise attack obtaining partial results. This changed policy unbeknown to Israel produced the Yom Kippur war. Twenty two years after Tuhami had written his report to Nasser, President Sadaat, who had replaced the dead Nasser and had led Egypt in battle with initial success, was to choose a reliable and capable emissary to meet with Mossad Chief General Hoffi in Morocco, to launch the secret Egyptian- Israeli bid for a peace treaty. He dispatched none other than Hassan Tuhami who had become deputy Prime minister of Egypt. The two seasoned Intelligence chiefs met under the auspices of their host, King Hassan II of Morocco and when the circumstances were ripe, Tuhami met Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan in Marrakesh and the way was opened for the historic and dramatic visit of Sadaat to Jerusalem in 1977.

Sadaat travelled a second time to Israel and Hoffi met him in Haifa. Tuhami joined Sadaat on this second trip. A few weeks ago, I spoke to my warmly respected former chief, Hoffi, and told him about the early history of Tuhami. He had no recollection of ever having known about the man's past history. What he did remember was that he had used the occasion of the Haifa visit to ask Tuhami if he had any regrets about the move taken to secure a peace between Israel and Egypt. "None whatsoever" was the reply. He had only one personal request – to travel to Karnei Hiitim, the Horns of Hittim in the north of Israel where Salah El Din had triumphed in his last battle against the crusaders. Like many others of his profession, he had always known how to keep an open mind, how to detect impending changes and how to forge new, sometimes revolutionary, policies when necessary.

Now, more than thirty years later, the present Intelligence Chief of Egypt, General Omar Suleiman not only oversees the security of the realm but also presides over the most sensitive foreign policy portfolios of President Mubaraq. The Israel-Arab conflict, the Fatah-Hamas conflict and its resolution, the issues of the river Nile and Sudan, Egyptian-Libyan relations, all of these complex issues that require close hands on attention. This time, in bright contrast to the past, Suleiman conducts much of his activities in broad daylight and he also deals directly

with the media. I wonder if this a model for the years to come?

One other contact that Miles Copeland nurtured in Cairo was that with an Iraqi exile who had fled there after trying to carry out a coup in Baghdad against the then ruler of Iraq Abdul Qarim Qassem, the man who in turn, had deposed King Faisal of Iraq and had destroyed the monarchy in the year 1958. Saddam Hussein was a member of a small nationalist party, the Ba'ath Party which had its origins in Syria. After his failed attempt to oust Qassem, the CIA first through Copeland and subsequently through others cultivated Sadaam and his Ba'ath Party. When the opportunity arose, the CIA supported and abetted a coup that brought the Ba'ath Party and its leaders to power in 1963. Sadaam Hussein became head of Iraq's secret service. The United States hoped to establish its influence in Baghdad similarly to the way it had solidified its overall control of events with the restoration of the Shah's reign in Tehran in the coup of 1953. None other than the then secretary general of the Ba'ath Party in Baghdad was known to have said that "we came to power on a CIA train". However, as the years went by, Sadaam removed himself from the American orbit and adopted evermore radical nationalistic policies, especially against Israel. In a rapid turn of events, the Shah of Iran was overthrown in 1979 and war soon broke out between Iraq and Iran then under the violent rule of the extremist shi'ite Ayatollah Khomeini. This war raged for eight years and the fortunes changed back and forth until the CIA began supplying the Iraqi forces with high quality intelligence that enabled Baghdad to target key points in Tehran with great accuracy. The regime in Iran was unable to sustain the rain of ballistic missiles on its capital and quickly opted for a cease fire. Sadaam had won the war with the help of the USA and its clandestine service- the CIA. The key figure in this endeavour was the then CIA deputy Director for Intelligence, Robert Gates, presently Secretary of Defence of the United States of America.

After the triumph of Sadaam over Iran events unfolded in an unexpected fashion. Sadaam invaded Kuwait, President George Bush, the elder, assembled a grand coalition of forces and defeated Iraq in 1991, liberated Kuwait, and destroyed the military non conventional nuclear and chemical warfare capabilities that Iraq was assembling and developing. Twelve years later a second round of war ended in the ouster of Sadaam Hussein and the redemption of Iraq from the tentacles of the Ba'ath

Party, the Party that the CIA had helped bring to power forty years before.

How ironic that the de Ba'athification policy pursued by President George W. Bush five years ago has proven a major mistake in the light of subsequent events in Baghdad. And how even more ironic that the U turn in American and British policy in Iraq in the last two years has been based, inter alia, on resurrecting the power of the Sunnite minority triangle in the centre of the country.

One more example of the confluence between Intelligence and diplomacy in the current history of the Middle East focuses on Lebanon, and its capital, Beirut. For so many years, this bustling metropolis in the Levant has been a hotbed of espionage, intrigue, and the scene of many a hostage and political drama played out in the entire region. It is there that the Americans and Russians clashed so often, the city from where Kim Philby, an ex senior M I 6 officer with a long global career behind him, absconded in 1963 ... only to turn up in Moscow and reveal himself as a veteran agent of the KGB, a member of the 'Cambridge Five' which had penetrated the inner sanctum of British Intelligence.

But beyond all of that, Beirut has become the symbol of the foreign and defence policy of a neighbouring country, Syria, which has not recognised Lebanon's right to sovereign independence. For decades, there was no Syrian Embassy in Beirut; for that long period of time, Syrian Intelligence ruled Lebanon with an iron fist, eliminating any figure considered hostile to Damascus. In the wake of the first Lebanese war of 1982, Prime Minister Begin of Israel met secretly with the newly elected President of Lebanon, Bashir Jumayyil. Within days, Bashir was assassinated in a car bomb explosion perpetrated by Syrian intelligence in Lebanon under the command of Colonel Ghazi Cana'an. This operation had to receive the approval of Hafez Al Assad, President of Syria. When former Lebanese Prime Minister Harriri, began agitating against Syria in the year 2005 he was murdered at the behest of current Syrian President Bashaar Assad, the son of Hafez. An international investigation was launched to apprehend the culprits, and it began to close in on Syrian Intelligence. Within days, Ghazi Cana'an was found dead in Damascus, shot in the head. Cabinet ministers, journalists, members of parliament, scores have met their death in Lebanon under the iron fist of an Intelligence Service determined to serve its master and secure Syrian interests in a bordering State whatever the human cost.

As my presentation draws to a close, I must mention a host of aspects not covered here, this evening; the sustained efforts of the Russians and the Soviets, the widespread activities of Iranian Intelligence and its proxies, like the Hizbullah and to a lesser extent, the Hamas. I have not spoken of the extensive operations of the CIA in Afghanistan which hastened the downfall of the Soviet Empire less than twenty years ago, nor have I made mention of Chinese intelligence efforts to further the strategic and diplomatic interests of Beijing in south west Asia and the Middle East. Many of these subjects need to be visited at some other time.

I have hardly mentioned Israel Intelligence which has played a key role in the diplomatic battles of the Middle East. I have tried to illustrate the nature of the unique phenomenon that I have described in the title of my presentation and to define its outer limits rather than to don the hat of a locale patriot.

But I cannot resist the temptation so I have chosen Morocco as both a case in point and as a symbol of the enormous variety of activities mounted in the last sixty years by Israel Intelligence.

Very briefly, for over fifty years Israel has cultivated its relations with the Kingdom of Morocco a Muslim state and a member of the Arab League. From the outset two distinct avenues of action had to be pursued the rescue of hundreds of thousands of Jews from Morocco and the cultivation of Morocco as a strategic partner and asset for Israel. I shall only address the second task, the strategic one although both were entrusted to the Mossad. Contact was made as far back as the fifties but it was only in the sixties that a unique relationship was forged with King Hassan the Second. Every Mossad chief as of then was a regular and welcome guest in the King's palaces. The sixties were dark days in the history of the country. Algerian armed forces reinforced by Egyptian Armour Units were fighting Morocco deep in the latter's territory and the Moroccan armed forces were hard put to protect vital centres in the Kingdom. At this critical moment, King Hassan turned to the Mossad who rapidly organised an airlift of military and intelligence experts who assembled in Rabat, the capital to advise in times of extreme necessity. The tide of war changed; King Hassan was forever grateful for the crucial function that we had played and from that time on, an ever growing volume of secret cooperation developed between Jerusalem and Rabat. He knew he could always turn to us in times of adversity, and there were several such occasions, and he knew that he would receive support, regardless of transient

interests of one kind or another. Morocco has played a great traditional role in the life of the Muslim world; several Saudi princes maintained palaces in the country, prominent figures, including Egyptian Hassan Tuhami, married Moroccan wives and the temperate climate of the country attracted many an Arab dignitary or ordinary tourist. This was the very first Israeli inroad into the Arab world. It preceded the well publicised relationship with King Hussein by almost ten years and it provided Israel through the Mossad with a unique window into the Arab world. It also became a case study for the Mossad on how to launch, cultivate and maintain relationships with so many Heads of State in years to come. Israel's approach to Morocco was long term, strategic; it maintained fruitful relationships with a wide range of key figures in the kingdom. Among them was General Oufkir, the overall Defence and Security Chief who unsuccessfully attempted to seize power in 1972 and shoot down an aircraft carrying the King himself. King Hassan never for a moment suspected Israel of collusion with Oufkir. The beauty

of Israel's foreign Intelligence architecture lies in its capacity to cultivate friends but never to assume the cloak of a power bent on imperialistic designs. When the late Yitschak Rabin paid a surprise nocturnal visit to Oman and met with the ruler, Sultan Qaboos in his capital, Muscat, near the southern tip of the Persian Gulf in 1994, the Mossad could not have been far behind. When Rabin touched down in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia en route from a state visit to Beijing, years of clandestine endeavour suddenly appeared briefly on the surface. And when the time came to arrange a first series of secret meetings between the Egyptian and Israeli leaderships, it was only the Mossad that had the contacts and the goodwill of all concerned to pull it all off.

All that I have related here this evening is just a small fraction of the contribution Intelligence has made to the art and substance of diplomacy in the Middle East. So much more remains to be said.