PARTY Factionalism AND Foreign Policy Making:
The CASE OF ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES,
1967-1977

by

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ABSTRACT

The period 1967-1977 witnessed the inauguration, expansion, and consolidation of Israel's presence in and control of the territories which it had occupied during the course of the Six Day War. This was not, however, the result of any broad systematic plan formulated and implemented by the Israeli government. Indeed, the Labor-dominated government of Israel decided not to make any fundamental political or strategic decisions regarding the future status of the territories with the exception of the decision to annex East Jerusalem. The reasons behind the decision of the Israel Labor Party "not to decide" are the subject of this study.

This study seeks to explain the sources of decision, that is to say, the pressures stemming from the real and perceived environments resulting in a choice among policy options. To this end, the author focuses first on Israeli attitudes toward the foreign policy issues stemming from the fact of the territories: military-security; economic; political-diplomatic; and, cultural-status. The author then discusses the constraints imposed on Israel's policy-making process by its pattern of domestic politics. In particular, the study focuses on the multi-party nature of Israel's political system, the general
character of its coalition governments, and factional political competition within the dominant Labor Party. The main thesis of this study is that the Labor-dominated government of Israel failed to produce a substantive and coherent policy regarding the future of the occupied territories because of its inability or unwillingness to overcome interfactional competition for power and influence.

The conclusions that can be derived from this study are intended to supplement our knowledge of the role intraparty factional activity plays in the policy-making process in parliamentary democracies in general and in Israel in particular. With regard to the latter, this knowledge is critical in terms of assessing the ability of any Israeli government to negotiate a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. The chances for peace will be measured, to a large degree, by the ability or willingness of the government of Israel to overcome interfactional differences and competition for power and to come to terms with the crucial issues emanating from the Arab-Israeli conflict.