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THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT (3 volumes)

edited by JOHN NORTON MOORE

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Even with the new subway spreading in tentacle-like fashion throughout Washington and the enveloping suburbia (a short 4-mile section is already whisking bi-centennial tourists around in air-conditioned comfort), the American capital retains many features linking it with its southern-town origins.

The geographical compactness of office locations helps give the city much of its small-town flavor. Most colleagues are only a short lunch-hop away. Anyone living near

the Dupont Circle area and concerned with developments in the Middle East has within walking distance the great majority of embassies, research centers, private organizations and government officials which together comprise Washington's unofficial Middle East community. Only Capitol Hill requires wheels — and now the subway has converted even that journey into less than a ten-minute ride.

Increasingly, conversation in Washington underscores a multiplying panoply of attitudes and approaches to the Arab-Israeli conflict — some would say that “even-handedness” has begun to penetrate the entire city, not just Foggy Bottom (location of the State Department). Nevertheless, reading materials, especially in book form, seem to transcend political and ideological leanings. Going from office to office one cannot help but notice the overlap of bookshelf collections.

During the past year, a new 3-volume reference work has become one of the most frequently visible books. With partially bright red jacket covers and comprising 3,459 pages, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* is rather symbolic of the magnitude of the confrontation between Arabs and Jews during this century.

The project which resulted in these large and heavy volumes was sponsored by the American Society of International Law, one of those private organizations conveniently located in what Washingtonians call Embassy Row. Professor John Norton Moore of the University of Virginia law school was chosen to select and edit the readings and documents. Though not a Middle East scholar himself, Professor Moore, with the assistance of numerous experts, has produced an exciting collection of historical materials; a unique and valuable collection.

In fact, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* is one of the most useful book collections published since the Yom Kippur War for students, writers and scholars interested in probing the depths of this tragic confrontation between cultures and ideologies. Though published in late 1974, the book was largely completed in 1973 before the Yom Kippur War. The introduction makes no reference

to this most recent battle of arms. None of the readings in Volumes I and II and only a few of the documents in Volume III make reference to post-Yom Kippur War developments.

The general purpose of this undertaking "is to promote greater understanding of one of the most persistent and explosive challenges to world order of our time." "Every effort," writes Moore, "has been made to achieve balance on the issues and presentation of the principal viewpoints."

A more specific purpose, one which explains the sponsorship, "is to facilitate access to a range of scholarly readings in the international legal literature and to demonstrate the utility of an international legal perspective in the analysis and settlement of major world-wide disputes." Moore continues his introduction noting that "Although each world-order dispute is unique, each is subject to appraisal against a common backdrop of international norms and institutions for the management of conflict... The international legal literature which builds on this tradition is a rich source of normative analysis and suggestions for alternative policies."

Talk of "world-order" and the relevance of "international legal literature" may be rather strange to Israeli ears. But for American scholars (and increasingly, politicians as well) the larger dimensions of all problems have become of central importance over the past few decades. Indeed, this tendency on the part of American intellectuals, including most Jewish intellectuals, to attempt to view all conflicts objectively and with sensitivity to the viewpoints of all parties is largely responsible for the growing divergence between Israeli attitudes to the current Middle East stalemate and those of a growing number of Americans.

Moore has arranged the readings and documents in two simultaneous ways — first by theme and second chronologically.

Volumes I and II — the readings — are organized around five principal sets of legal and political issues which define the conflict. Volume I begins with a section on the

relevance of international law with nearly the entire volume dealing with three underlying issues; 1) Arab and Jewish Nationalism and the Rights of Refugees; 2) Freedom of Navigation Through the Strait of Tiran; the Gulf of Aqaba, and the Suez Canal; 3) The Status of Jerusalem and the Holy Places.

Volume II covers three further basic themes: 1) The Six-Day War and Continued Hostilities; 2) The Role of the United Nations; 3) Thoughts on Settlement.

Especially unfortunate is that (except for three pre-Yom Kippur War speeches — one by King Hussein, another by Secretary of State Rogers, and the third by Assistant Secretary Sisco) this last section is primarily a presentation of readings from the 1960s.

Volume III is a straightforward presentation of 189 documents beginning with the Basle Program (1897) and ending with the Israeli-Syrian disengagement agreement of May 31, 1974. As a reference work, the collection of these documents is wonderfully useful. In addition to nearly all of the important United Nations documents (all but 36 of the 189 documents are post-1947) a substantial amount of diplomatic documentation is provided. The chronological breakdown is into 6 parts; 1) Origins of the Conflict; 1897-1947; 2) Establishment of the State of Israel and the 1948 War: 1947-1949. 3) From Armistice to War: 1949-1956; 4) The Suez Crisis, The 1956 War, and the Decade of UNEF: 1956-1967; 5) The Six-Day War and the Search for Peace: 1967-1973; 6) The October War and the Continuing Search for Peace: 1973—.

In addition, the 23-page selected bibliography prepared by Mrs. Helen Philos, the librarian of the American Society of International Law, is a useful summation of the major materials relevant to all of the issues covered in this project.

At \$95 few individuals will be adding this collection to their private book shelves, but there is an abridged paperback volume available and it may prove a satisfactory substitute.