

And yet, when it comes to playing the new game of world order manipulation—whenever possible avoiding the use of brute military force—the great United States sometimes seems so helpless, so empty-headed, so unsure of itself.

Wondering about America

NON-Americans certainly have a right to wonder.

Here is this big and rich America with so much news and information at the finger-tips of its leaders and most of its citizens as well. Here is a modern empire whose influence extends globally through sophisticated methods of international finance, resource manipulation, covert intelligence methods, and military muscle. Here is this gargantuan world power that over the past few decades has even brought the competing Soviet empire to begin to emulate some of its once denounced ways.

And yet, when it comes to playing the new game of world order manipulation — whenever possible avoiding the use of brute military force — the great United States sometimes seems so helpless, so empty-headed, so unsure of itself.

From the debacle of Vietnam, to the running while wounded escape from Lebanon, the US has proved itself in recent years capable of stupendous blunders. American hostages, ever-increasing airport security, and all the anti-terrorist barricades that have sprung-up throughout Washington over the past decade, remain the daily symbols of the insecurity and confusion rampant under the surface of American life about what is happening in much of the world.

How fortunate for we Americans (for I am certainly one of the species no matter how much my own personal views on so many issues might differ from those of officialdom here in Washington) that the Bolsheviks

made such a mess of Communism and that the Soviet Union was in such shambles at the end of the last great war.

For, in a very real sense the American have had it pretty easy for a long time. The other super-power — the only real global competitor — wasn't really in the same league except may be when it came to armaments. Indeed if America wouldn't have been so heavy-handed in so many parts of the world, so insensitive to the aspirations of so many, so selfish in its own desires to control, it seems likely to me the Soviets wouldn't even have had the few points of access, the few successes, that they have had on the global chess-board.

But the future is beginning to look a bit different. The Europe of 1992 looms large — a financial and political empire in the making. And in an era when shrewdness in dealing with world affairs coupled with international economic leverage may play more of a role than weaponry. Europe's future seems boundless; while America's is certainly in decline.

Japan, of course, is already the world's financial empire with no real end in sight to its economic fortunes. My goodness, the Japance (Sony) are even rumoured to be about to purchase Columbia Picture in Hollywood! Now we Americans will be driving in our Japanese cars, or sitting back with our Japanese VCRs, and watching movies whose profits will be counted in yen!

And though the task ahead of him may yet prove too overpowering, its much too early to



...whatever one thinks of Yasser Arafat's style, or of the class of interests his Fatah of today represents, or of the magnanimous compromise he has come to represent for so many around the world, there can be no denying that the Palestinians led by Arafat have taken truly giant steps towards avoiding another war through attempting reconciliation.

rule out a new Soviet empire crafted by Gorbachev and his new generation of Soviet technocrats as they undo much that the heavy-handed Bolsheviks

shed so much blood attempting. The unstable areas of the rest of the world are of course where the competition for wealth, for influence, and for resources —

all inter-linked it must be understood — will remain fiercest. That's why the struggles of Latin America, Africa, and the Middle-east seem so pervasive even to Americans, even though they are so far removed from US shores and mentality that most Americans can hardly comprehend where these places are, not to mention what is actually going on in them.

And of course the single place where the Americans are so out of step with nearly everyone else on the planet is in regard to the cancerous Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On no other issue have the Americans tried to stand up against quite literally the entire world. Whether by Security Council veto, the petulance (and arrogance) of refusing Arafat a visa to talk at the UN, or the still-escalating political footsie that the Israelis play with the Americans alone, the US-Israel relationship may eventually prove more of a burden than the Americans realise at this point.

For when the political fog begins to clear it will become more evident what has taken place, on the historical scale, during the past few years in the Holy Land. And though the Americans keep attempting to pass-off their almost totally one-sided pro-Israeli machinations as a "peace process", there is a day of reckoning down the road, a day of untold consequences.

For whatever one thinks of Yasser Arafat's style, or of the class of interests his Fatah of today represents, or of the magnanimous compromise he has come to represent for so many around the world, there can be

From



Mark A. Bruzonsky

Washington

no denying that the Palestinians led by Arafat have taken truly giant steps towards avoiding another war through attempting reconciliation.

Nurtured by supporting Arab states, themselves most concerned with a new regional balance and with finding some cure the problem of the region the Palestinian offer to recognise (and hence to legitimise) Israel is one of momentous but different consequences depending upon whether it succeeds or fails. This is all the more the case as the giant Palestinian steps have come on top of the ongoing Intifada — indeed it is probably the case that it is the Intifada itself which has made all of this possible (and necessary).

But when the political fog of the daily headlines clears it will become more evident that the Arafat gamble has not paid off, that the Americans have not really been moved, that the Washington-Israeli connection is even more conniving (though some shifts in public opinion have made the Americans a bit more crafty in their style of presentation).

Whatever their motives, the leaders of the Arab world have made an offer — with Yasser Arafat now playing the leading role, in some ways at least, that cannot remain forever credible. It has been an offer addressed to Israel on its face, but in actuality in its diplomatic dimensions it has really been addressed to Washington all along.

The great and growing danger ahead is that soon this historic gambit may be viewed more widely as an offer rebuked, spurned, turned aside. Then

what?

Policies of moderation and compromise must bear fruit if they are to be sustained. Even here in America the failures of Jimmy Carter-style liberalism and his confused attempts at world understanding brought on an era off Reagan chauvinism which has had a lasting grasp on this country, no matter how much sophisticated a manner of presentation we now have in George Bush.

Unless a major breakthrough can be achieved — and that does not appear likely viewing the balance of political and military forces — a crisis of credibility lies ahead for the Arab moderates who have reached out to both the US and Israel by attempting a true historic compromise over Palestine. What is being said these days by the most sophisticated analysis behind closed doors is becoming more and more out-of-step with what is said in public and in print.

And so a crisis of consequences looms ahead for both America and Israel if indeed the historic window of opportunity is allowed to close tightly.

It is not too late as yet. There is still some time for more diplomacy. But it will have to be a far more potent and urgent type of diplomacy than what we have seen until now; and its not likely the Egyptians are up to the challenge even though they have managed to get a lot of press coverage. For the window of moderate, credibility is surely closing and any day now could bring with it news that new policies, new alternatives, and maybe even new leaders, have come to the fore.