

The long shadow of Henry Kissinger is beginning to cloud the entire Mid-east political horizon. Israeli newspapers report that the Bush administration is about to hand Kissinger the Arab-Israeli portfolio. This is no time to be diplomatic. This is the...

Time to say... 'no thank you!'

From



Mark A. Bruzonsky

Washington

Who is NOT complying with the US position on the Mid-east?

Confused about who stands where on Mid-east issue? Does Israel or the Palestine Liberation Organisation come closer to the stated position of the US government? Things are really clearer than they may seem from all that is said and written about the Mid-east each day. Compare the positions from the table below:

The issue	US position	Israeli position	PLO position
"Land for peace"	Yes	No	Yes
UN Security Council Resolutions 242/338	Yes	No ¹	Yes
Security of states	Yes	No ¹	Yes
International conference	Yes	No	Yes
PLO participation	Yes ²	No	Yes
Confederation with Jordan	Yes	No	Yes
Independent state for Palestine	No ³	No	Yes
Terrorism	No	No	No
Right of Israel to exist	Yes	Yes	Yes
More Israeli settlements	No	Yes	No
More West Bank/Gaza repression	No	Yes	No
Israeli violation of Geneva Convention	Yes	No	Yes

1. No withdrawal from West Bank and Gaza Strip.
2. It the PLO meets conditions.
3. Okay as a negotiating position or if the parties agree, but accept confederation.

Altogether we have compared the position on 12 important issues. Israel agrees with the US on three. The PLO agrees with the US on 11. The difference on the 12th (an independent Palestine state) is a matter of timing. Now ask yourself, who is not complying with the US position on the Mid-east?

National Association of Arab-Americans, Washington

THERE is a cancer growing on even the slim possibilities that a new and serious international political effort could result in the kind of breakthrough that could lead to real Israeli withdrawal from occupied Palestine.

There are legitimate differences in perspective, of course, whether the Intifada, the PLO peace offensive, or even both in coordination can achieve this goal. For many, the possibilities have always been remote that primary reliance on political and diplomatic efforts on the world stage could in the end be successful. Others are awaiting in the wings for their own chance to step in, if the efforts currently underway become discredited.

But then the Palestinian issue has taken on many unique characteristics and is already an exception to many general historical realities. Furthermore, whatever the odds, this is the course chosen by the historic Algiers PNC, the course currently favoured by most Palestinians in and out of the homeland, and the least bloody, most "rational" option available for everyone including the Israelis if they would only think it through calmly. For all these reasons the current efforts centred around the personality of Yasser Arafat and the PLO deserve to be forcefully supported even by those, including this writer, who remain somewhat sceptical.

Thanks primarily to those who daily suffer and struggle in the occupied territories, we are all living through a truly historic time that requires serious leadership from persons of political courage and bold vision. Most of all what is lacking in the US and thus what is needed most of all, are honest, committed leaders who understand the historic setting, who can be believed when they speak both in public and private, and who can and will follow-through on their commitments.

The cancer on this historic moment—though no doubt he continues to view himself more as a potential saviour—is a man who has become the antithesis of some of these requirements, whatever his brilliance at self-promotion. This is a man whose influence on American Mid-east policies is dangerously on the rise in George Bush's Washington. That man is Henry A. Kissinger.

First reported in this newspaper and by this commentator some weeks ago was Kissinger's "incessant manoeuvring to be appointed as special negotiator in the Mid-

east." But few were then taking notice; until the past few days, that is, when more rumours have begun circulating in Washington, rumours of the trial-balloon variety so well-known here.

Since Bush's inaugural, Kissinger's efforts have become even more intense and in recent days fears or eagerness, depending on your political persuasion, has become much more widespread that the arch-nemesis of the Palestinians might be about to get handed the new Mid-east shuttle assignment.

Of course, the Bush administration is already top-heavy with Kissinger proteges. Lawrence Eagleburger—always known as an Israeli man when he served in the early years of the Reagan presidency as No. 3 and helped design the disastrous Lebanon policy—is now under secretary, the key No. 2 player at Foggy Bottom, having left his position as president of Kissinger Associates. Brent Scowcroft, one of the other senior personalities at Kissinger Associates, is in charge of the National Security Council and has recently given additional authority by President Bush. Dennis Ross is head of the potentially very important policy planning council at the State Department, and another key Kissinger operative, Peter Rodman, is a counsellor at the NSC.

So, the Kissinger spirit and influence are very widespread indeed throughout George Bush's administration making, a serious switch in US policy toward the Palestinians very difficult to contemplate.

Worse yet these are all very crafty, street-smart Washington players sure to work closely with the Israelis behind-the-scenes to cut the Palestinian issue, and the PLO, down to size whenever and however they can. Remember this rule about these kinds of people: Don't play so much attention to what they say, watch very carefully what they actually do.

And now, the long shadow of Kissinger himself is beginning to cloud the entire Mid-east political horizon. One of Israel's leading daily newspapers, *Maariv*, reported just a few days ago, on February 6—appropriately quoting Jewish sources in the new administration—that Kissinger is key to Bush administration Mid-east thinking about to be handed the Arab-Israeli portfolio for which he hungers.

And so this is no time to be diplomatic. For those who have struggled and suffered in the Intifada the appoint-

ment of Kissinger to deal with the Arab-Israeli situation would be an insult. A slap in the face. For many in Washington, including this analyst, Henry Kissinger is a duplicitous, deceitful, unprincipled, brilliant and exceedingly dangerous personality.

There can be no doubt that he perceives a chance to further his reputation in the current situation especially among the conservative Right, the Jewish community, and the Israelis. Kissinger knows that the status quo in the territories has become untenable for everyone. Indeed, this is Kissinger's style—to step in when all the parties want and need some kind of movement and haggle with everyone until he finds some formula that can, at least temporarily, be peddled as success. But he specialises in diplomatic sleights of hand, not real solutions.

It should not be forgotten that Kissinger was the man who in a personal lust for power undermined the Rogers Plan, along with Secretary of State William Rogers himself, in December 1969, thus opening the way for the October War a few years later.

As Leslie Gelb recently wrote in *The New York Times*: "Not many rivalries have been as destructive of US interests abroad as those between Kissinger and William Rogers in the Nixon administration."

Kissinger is also the man who manoeuvred for years at the Paris Peace Conference about the shape of the table, seemingly oblivious as the killing escalated, eventually leading the US to the ultimate humiliation as helicopters had to scoop up remaining US supporters from the roof of the Saigon embassy.

And he is also the Henry Kissinger of the October 1973 "nuclear alert", the man who gave Israeli ambassador Rabin a direct phone line to his office, the Henry Kissinger who, working hand in glove with the Israelis, railroaded two of the PLO's best, Isam Sartawi and Jabri Jiryis, out of Washington when they came in 1975 on a previous PLO peace offensive; after that protecting the Israelis and blindfolded the US with his stupid commitment that the US would not even speak to anyone in the PLO.

The stories of Kissingerian back-channeling (he might have even invented the word), back-stabbing, playing both side of the fence, are legend here in Washington. But of course at the same time Kissinger has very skillfully built up the myth of

Say no good



Hear no good



his omnipotence, the sense of fearful anxiety that a man of such uncanny unprincipledness is sometimes needed to get things done, the image of a kind of successful Darth Vader who should be engaged rather than ignored for fear he will otherwise undermine the efforts of others.

To get the job he wants, Kissinger has no doubt been telling everyone what they want to hear—that's what he's done for decades, most successfully when he first got started by convincing president-elect Richard Nixon to appoint him to head his NSC in 1968.

Earlier that year, Kissinger was not only helping the Nixon team to position himself next to the likely new president-elect; he was at the same time, in a separate deal, offering the Humphrey campaign to help gather information to discredit Nixon!

Those who want to know more of the glitzy details should consult Seymour Hersh's *Kissinger: The Price of Power*, a truly devastating indictment.

In all likelihood, Kissinger is telling the Russians that only he can get the US to act strongly; the Israelis that only he can protect them from a possible US backlash and get the Intifada under control; the Arabs that only he can deliver the Israelis; and George Bush that only a shrewd old tough-guy like himself can get the job done and get the Israelis to go along.

What the long moribund Mid-east "peace process" really needs, in addition to a thorough American policy overhaul, is political conviction and honest, straight-forward follow-through. The basic parameters of an honourable settlement are clear; but the configuration of political, military and economic forces needed to bring it about remain illusive. Most

of all absent is the willingness of the US to join the overwhelming majority of the world community and cease cuddling Israel, cease making excuses for Israel, cease allowing the Israelis to continue on their potentially suicidal course.

The problems are not only what Kissinger has done in the past. His recent involvements should in themselves be more than enough to prevent him from being acceptable to the Arab parties. As one rather astute Palestinian-American observer here put it to me, "in the past he (Kissinger) hid his bias behind a thick wall of professionalism. Now he's come out into the open as an unashamed advocate siding with the worst elements in Israel."

This analyst went on to quite vocally express the hope that the Arab League, or at least some of the Arab governments, will this time put their foot down.

When the Intifada was in its first weeks, it was none other than Kissinger who repeatedly strongly advised the Israelis to begin restricting the press, urged them to do whatever they had to do to get the Intifada off American TV screens, encouraged them to brutally suppress the Palestinians in every way. The news eventually leaked; but Kissinger knew it would also pass.

More recently, in the final hours of that day in mid-December when Secretary of State Shultz was still arguing with President Reagan not to change policies toward the PLO, none other than Henry Kissinger was there doing Israel's dirty work once again. More details of that story have begun to surface and Kissinger's messy footprints have been found. As the story goes Reagan called Shultz late in the afternoon that day to tell him that a change there had to be and

that if he, Shultz, wasn't going to do it then National Security Adviser Collin Powell would have to.

No sooner was Reagan off the phone than Shultz was pleading with Kissinger to intervene fast! Within minutes Kissinger was at the White House arguing with Reagan not to take this step, the very step that Kissinger had successfully held back for over a decade. But this time he failed, for this time Yasser Arafat had finally, after considerable effort, outmanoeuvred everyone in Washington. Nevertheless, even at this late moment, Henry Kissinger was trying to pull every string behind the scenes in his unrelentingly anti-Palestinian campaign.

The only good news this writer can find in all this is that we all now know that even Henry Kissinger senses that something *must* be done about the Intifada and Israel's slipping image and status; that all the parties may be ready to be manoeuvred and may secretly welcome someone finding a formula that they themselves cannot. But in the tradition of true opportunists and political hucksters Kissinger is far more concerned with his own place in history than the kind of revolutionary political settlement that real peace and justice require.

Simply put, Henry Kissinger is not a man to be trusted. Letting Henry Kissinger be the point-man for US Mid-east diplomacy would be the classic case of asking the fox to guard the hen house. Those serious about seizing the moment for a dramatic political breakthrough that could result in fulfilment of the two-state solution and an honourable peace for both the Israelis and the Palestinians must now realise their voices in loud protest against Kissinger before it is too late.

The way to deal with this cancer is to cut it out, once and for all. The Arab World has that capability, if it will only assert itself. The reason for saying a flat "no" to Henry K are numerous, but if nothing else this is the time to stand up in support of the Intifada. The youths of Palestine have not been struggling and suffering and dying so that Henry Kissinger could come to feed on their misery and courage!



Henry Kissinger in the White House with former president Ronald Reagan. Edwin Meese and George Shultz are on the left, with George Bush and James Baker, now Bush's secretary of state.