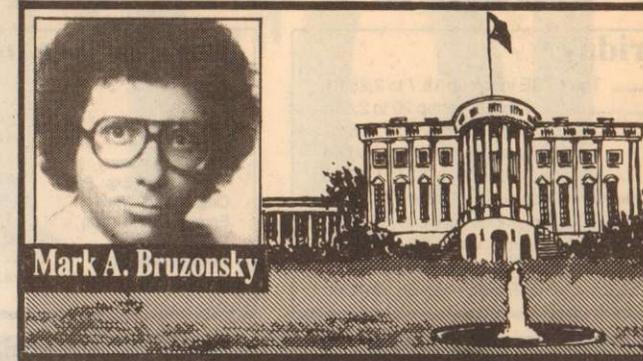


Ultimately there's a very tough question that has to be faced. The tough question is water. It's all very well to talk about a two state settlement. But Israel can't survive a two state settlement. It's relying on the occupied West Bank because the fact is it doesn't have water.

From



Washington

Palestine-Israel federation The final solution for Mid-east

• In fairness to them they do have some spokesmen who can actually articulate these things...

■ See if you can find this statement. It's a crucial statement. Look, there were three points that were at issue in this famous dialogue. One was acceptance of UN resolution 242, which the PLO had accepted without qualification. You see, the trick, the US position is you have to accept 242 "without qualification." Now what's the qualification. Well Arafat's qualification is we accept 242 along with other UN declarations that call for a Palestinian State. Why not make it clear that we've never changed our position, nor did the US change its position, we're as far apart as we ever were, the US is still alone against international opinion insisting that the UN declarations on the right to self-determination have no meaning. That's point one.

Point two is that Arafat was supposed to accept Israel's right to exist. Well, he's never accepted Israel's "right to exist" nor if he's sensible will he ever accept it. States don't have rights to exist. Nobody accepts anybody's right to exist. I mean Mexico doesn't accept the US right to exist in its present borders which include a third of Mexico. States recognise one another. They recognise one and another's right to be free from violence, so they recognise one another's right to live in peace and security. But they do not recognise their absolute "right to exist."

• But we know what's at stake here. What's at stake here is a psychological as well as ideological dimension that the Israelis want the Arabs to say "you guys are legitimate, you Jews are legitimate as a State."

■ But nobody is "legitimate," no State is "legitimate" nor should anyone accept that.
• But the Palestinians pretty much have accepted that.

planes. That doesn't hurt the US, in fact the US loves it. The US would love for them to go back to terrorism, just as Israel would love them to go back to terrorism. That doesn't hurt, in fact that helps. That way you mobilise the American people with hatred against them and everything is great. You know retail terrorism is no threat to a big power.

• So what is?

■ What is a threat to a big power is the public, its own public. I mean the biggest enemy that any state has is its own domestic population, that's what it's got to control. ...

• But they are so outgunned. The Jews and the Israeli establishment have such potent institutions in comparison. ...

■ I do not agree. On the contrary....

• They've got truth and justice on their side. ...

■ They are not as much outgunned as the Vietnamese were. They are not as much outgunned as the Nicaraguans or the Salvadorans or any other Third World liberation movement, because they've got a much easier case to make. ... On the Vietnam War, take that one ... where finally public opinion had an effect. The media were one hundred percent in support of the war. ...

• But our own kids were dying, so it was very different. ...

■ That's not what changed it. In fact part of the reason why our kids were dying is because there were constraints on what the US government could do. If the US government had been able to go all out and use nuclear weapons there wouldn't have had to be American troops there. But you know there were constraints on American involvement coming out of the public's opposition, and that opposition grew to the point where policy had to be modified. Now it was never done with the media. The media were way behind. They changed their view after Wall Street changed its view. You know by early '68 major American corpora-

PROFESSOR Noam Chomsky is one of the intellectual giants of the American left — "arguably the most important intellectual alive" according to an article in *The New York Times*. Without much argument he is America's leading dissident intellectual.

World famous as a linguist he is a prolific writer and lecturer about American foreign policy throughout the world. A talk with Noam Chomsky is like a refreshing intellectual bath washing away the daily clog of self-serving commentary and mediocre analysis with a style that constantly cuts to the core of the basic issues. Reviled by much of the establishment, adored by many independent intellectuals, Chomsky constantly fills student lecture halls around the country even while his writings are rarely accepted in any of the mass circulation papers and magazines.

Chomsky is Institute Professor in the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T).

IN Part 1, published on February 18, Chomsky focused on the general political situation since

why. The PLO, it's a Right-wing nationalist movement. And the network of popular organisations developing in the territories is different.

But there is a revolutionary, there is a populist element there. There was a populist element in Zionism too, a major one in fact, you know the whole network of co-operatives was a significant popular movement, I mean it didn't survive the state system, but such things rarely do. So, you know there's all kinds of struggles and conflict apart from national conflicts. There's class conflicts, ethnic conflicts, religious conflicts, I mean the area is riven with conflicts. There is after all a sense in which the Ottoman Empire was well adapted to the Mid-east.

But the point is that for the Israel-Palestine conflict there must be some solution which involves political autonomy and economic confederation. Now I think it's probably feasible, but it has to be worked on. ...

• Theoretically feasible, but in practice you're basically saying that there isn't a solution.

■ I think that's a possible solution. In fact I've always thought. ... If you look at the first things I've written about this topic, I have always said that's the only solution, and I still say that there is no other possible solution.

• Yes, but I'm saying in theory of course there is. ...

■ Not in theory, I think in practice. ... You see Israelis have very definite needs. They have the need for self-determination, their own institutions — political and cultural and so on. They also have a need for security. And they also have a need for resources. Now the Palestinians have the same set of needs. ...

• How are the Palestinians, if they are truly independent, going to take 23 percent of Palestinian, going to be terribly upset by the compromise they have made, and then going to give most of the water and the resources to the Jews?

with Japan being in the economic situation that it's in, don't you think this is going to be changing somewhat?

■ Now you're talking about the real world. The Russians were never an issue. Europe and Japan are an issue. I mean we're moving towards a tri-polar world system. ...

• May be a quad-polar also with the Russians.

■ Yeh, but the Russians aren't really a player, they never have been. The Russians are basically a developing Third World country. There's going to be a conflict in my view between Japan, Europe, and the US for who is going to exploit Russia.

• I was in Yossi Beilin's office a few months ago — you know the Israeli Deputy Finance Minister, an old friend of mine — and the only book he had on his desk that looked like it was being used was a book about 1992 Europe.

■ If Europe can get its act together it's a powerful economic and political force — even bigger than the US. They are going to make their own deals you know with the Mid-east, with North Africa, and so on. This has always been a nightmare for the US. Japan is carving out its own new order in East Asia, and the US is doing it here.

So far Europe has subordinated itself to American power. So has Japan. And that's going to be less and less true in the future.

There's an evolution taking place in world affairs. It was obvious at the time of the Vietnam War. At the time of the Vietnam War there was a major shift in world power, you could even see it in the trade figures. In 1965 the trade balance between Japan and the US shifted in favour of Japan. The balance in terms of Europe had actually shifted a few years earlier.

• We were draining ourselves. ...

■ We were draining ourselves. I mean the US could no longer be the world dominant power. Reagan, I think, administered a very serious

Well, if they have, they shouldn't have. What they should say, and what I understand they said, is that "yes, you have the right as any state in the international system. Period." No more, no less. A "right to exist" says that what they have done in the past is "legitimate." Now every state that exists.

• **But now you're really ... the hairs you are driving philosophically....**

■ I'm not driving. That's what the US is demanding. For years. ... Why did they say that Arafat has changed his position. What he did is repeat the statement that that Israel has a right to exist in peace and security. That's UN 242. Now why wasn't that enough in the past? It wasn't enough in the past because it didn't say that everything that had happened to Palestinians in the past was justified. That's why Israel and the US insist on this position. They insist that the Arab States agree that what Israel has done in the past is "right," and that what the US has done in the past is "right," and therefore the Palestinians are not only going to get back their homes but they have no "right" to them.

• **All right. You've referred to Geneva a couple of times. But if my information is right you've missed a big factor. Arafat had to play a card he had never played before in order to get what he got ... the dialogue mainly. At PNC meetings in the past there were times when he had hinted he might resign, but he had never at the international level made that threat. But I understand that he made it known at the time of the last Geneva conference that he might resign....**

■ But that's a different issue. I'm talking about the three points. ...

• **Yes I know, but. ...**

■ On the three points ... Look, there is something that the PLO ought to be saying. They ought to be saying that on the first point 242 without qualifications, we don't change our position, we are right, the US is isolated in the world. The qualification is our right to self-determination and we do not renounce that. On the second point the issue is not Israel's right to exist in peace and security — we accepted that as far back as January 1976 when we endorsed 242 at the UN — but what we don't accept is the "legitimacy" of what they have done, nor will we ever accept it, or should we. ... The third point is the terrorism point, renouncing it. They should say look we continue to renounce terrorism exactly as we and the entire world believe it should be renounced with the exception of South Africa, Israel, and the US. South Africa, Israel and the US happen to be off the spectrum of opinion and we will not join them there.

• **But I don't think, you or I, that this leadership of the PLO is capable of handling itself with this degree of sophistication.**

■ Well, you know, I don't think they are because I don't think they want to be. They see themselves. ... You see, they wouldn't do it for another reason. They wouldn't do it because they don't want to irritate the US. They still think that if they can only work out the right combination they will be able to sell a deal to Washington. ...

• **The logic of what you are saying is that PLO "diplomats" should reverse their entire position and basically realise they have to threaten and hurt the US rather than co-operate with the US. ... That's the logic of what you've outlined.**

■ Yes, I think they have to. ... But to hurt the US does not mean to blow up American

know by early '68 major American corporations had decided that the game wasn't worth a candle. They didn't want to pay the costs, they didn't want the domestic disruption ... it just wasn't worth it anymore. About a year and a half later the liberal media started making timid noises about maybe we ought to get out. The fact that the institutions were supportive of power that's no different in this case than it was in the other case. ...

• **You've come back to this theme at least four or five times. You really think that it's American public opinion which is going to make the difference.**

■ It's the weak spot. It's the weak spot. It's the only weak spot there is, I mean, other than the people struggling on the ground. The other thing that will make the difference is the struggle of the Intifada itself. That's the main thing that will make the difference.

But the point is that alone no Third World movement can survive. They are just too weak. ...

I don't think the needed tactics are very obscure. You know what they are. It's a combination of education and local organising and setting up bigger groups, and so on. It just takes work. It takes work, and it takes resources. On this particular issue I think it's one of the easiest ones I've ever had anything to do with. The case is simple and straight-forward. There's international support for it, which is extremely rare. I mean this no other Third World case has international support like. There's even American corporate support for it, which is unheard of. Look, there's a fair amount of US corporate opinion that thinks this is crazy; that thinks we'll be a lot better off by accepting a diplomatic settlement. There's a real elite split on this issue. There's never been a real elite split on a Third World struggle before, unless it just got too costly to handle. ...

• **And yet the chances of the Israelis being willing to accommodate such a settlement are almost nil, aren't they?**

■ Well, if we really get serious about the issue, ultimately there's a very tough question that has to be faced, and it's being kind of finessed at the moment. The tough question is water.

It's all very well to talk about a two-state settlement. But the fact is Israel can't survive a two-state settlement. It can't survive it because the fact is it doesn't have water. It's relying on the occupied West Bank for about a third of its water, and it has no internal resources. ...

• **You think that even if there were political will that water itself would make a settlement impossible?**

■ Impossible. Impossible as a two. ... Except within the context of ... Look, every sensible approach to this problem whatever it's been has pointed out that there is an integrated region, and so there has to be a regional solution. There has to be some kind of confederation. I mean call them two states if you like, but they've got to be an economic confederation. Something like that is absolutely necessary for survival. For one thing, you've travelled there, the borders are so crazy.

• **You're not talking about a secular state then.**

■ Let's go back to a secular state. You know the PLO talked secular state for years, but they never believed one word of it. Take a look at the PLO's statements on a secular state and you read them carefully and you'll always notice that they talked about a secular state

the US decision to begin a 'dialogue' with the P.O. He outlined how, in his view, the PLO had fallen right into the US-Israeli trap by taking the Tunis Dialogue seriously and neglecting political realities.

In Part 2, also previously published on February 24, Chomsky discussed the critical significance of the battle for public opinion in the US, Israel's 'Achilles heel', and how the PLO has done such a miserable job promoting its own case.

In Part 3, today, Chomsky outlines that the only possible solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be a complete regional solution that equitably allocates water resources and that includes political confederation between Israel and a Palestinian State.

"within the Arab nation" in which Jews will have religious rights within a transitional period. Now to come across that we are going for a secular state when anybody who is literate can see what you are saying, now may be that's the way you play games with your friends but it's not the way you appeal to public opinion.

Now there is no group in the region. ... Now I'm in favour of a secular state. But there is no group in the region that is in favour of such a state.

• **You're talking then about some kind of a Switzerland-type formula. ...**

■ Well, I think there has got to be some kind of confederation. I mean there has got to be some kind of a basically Jewish entity and a basically Palestinian entity ... the people just hate each other too much at this point and there is too much of a background of violence and terror. ...

• **But the idea of combining a ... Palestinian movement that's born in revolution, with a Zionist movement that's moving to the theocratic right strikes me. ...**

■ Well, first of all, to say that the Palestinian movement was born in revolution, you've got to be a little careful. The PLO is not a revolutionary movement. ...

• **No, no, I mean the Intifada.**

■ The Intifada is a revolutionary movement, and it's now come in conflict with the PLO precisely for that reason, and you also know



Arafat

most of the water and the resources to the Jews: ■ Because you don't give things in a confederation, you trade things. I mean there will have to be a *quid pro quo* whereby there is a regional water settlement which is as equitable as can be but also a regional settlement on other issues.

• **It has to include Syria and Lebanon then too, doesn't it?**

■ Optimally, but that's not in the cards at the moment. I mean, look, any political settlement is going to have to involve Syria because it's got to involve the Golan Heights. Nobody ever talks about that, but it somehow got to include the Golan Heights. A sensible regional settlement would involve a regional water programme for the whole area.

Incidentally, you know there's very little in American foreign policy that I ever approve of, but one of the things that I did approve of. ...

• **The Johnson Plan. ...**

■ I mean the basic idea that there's got to be a regional settlement of the water problem — that is absolutely correct. Notice that it's complex. Israel relies on the West Bank, but the Gaza Strip relies on Israel. And if Israel were to turn off the taps you'd have a million people die in the Gaza Strip. What water they have is being overwhelmingly used for these couple of thousand Jewish settlers, but even if that were to stop they just don't have enough. So, if there was a West Bank-Gaza step just for that alone there would have to be a federal arrangement of some kind.

• **The parties themselves can't possibly. ...**

■ I think they would have to be led to it.

• **Well, we haven't talked at all about the Soviet Union.**

■ Look, there was an illusion in some parts of the Arab world, including the PLO, that don't worry, the Russians will come to our aid. ... That was always nonsense. The Russians have always recognised, way back to Stalin, that the Mid-east is American turf. ... Look what happened to Egypt. As long as the US thought Egypt was a basket case they were quite willing to have the Russians who were pouring money and arms down the drain. In 1973 they realised that that racist assumption was wrong, that the Egyptians actually knew which end of a gun to hold, to their amazement, and they weren't a basket case and you had to pay attention to them, that they were a political force, and a cultural force and an economic force, and they even have arms, they know how to fight.

So therefore the US instantaneously changed its position. You know Sadat had offered to kick the Russians out a year earlier, and Kissinger just laughed. After October 1973 he said, OK, you can be a client state of the US as you've been asking for the last couple of years, now we'll accept you, and the Russians were out.

I mean the US is not stupid, the leadership, they understand this. And the Russians understand it too. They know they are in the Mid-east at the sufferance of the US. Even Japan can't get into the Mid-east. England and France can't assert an interest in the Mid-east. What was the 1956 war all about? From the American point of view that Israel conquered the Sinai they don't care one way or another. But England and France were re-asserting an interest in the Mid-east, a position is the Mid-east from which the US had just expelled them. ...

• **Yes, but with Europe coming together, and**

Reagan, I think, administered a very serious blow to the American economy. I mean it looks OK for the moment, but the long term effects are very very bad. They've sold out. ... They're living on indebtedness to foreign lenders. And foreign aid capitalists were willing to throw a party for the rich people in the US. That's basically the story of the Reagan years.

• **Well, won't we try to manipulate the Europeans and Arabs and the Japanese to start picking up our bills?**

■ We'll try. And we have plenty of power. But it's going to be complicated.

The US has plenty of power. The US is still the major industrial power in the world. But it has two other legs. One is of course military. And other is ideological.

The US is the dominant cultural force ... just dominant. I mean Europe is dominated by US culture — news, information, interpretation. If Europeans want to have an opinion on say Nicaragua, well they just read what is said here [in the US].

• **But isn't this changing?**

■ I think it's going the wrong way in my view. My view is that Europe is becoming more culturally subordinated to the US as it becomes more economically independent. Maybe it will change somewhere down the line, but now it's not.

• **Just the recent squabble over TV. ...**

■ You see that's an indication just how much they are being colonised. The point is they are being flooded by American TV and they don't know how to stop it because they don't know how to compete. As a matter of fact they don't even know how much they are being colonised. European intellectuals think of themselves as very independent and so on. But actually they are just parroting a lot of the nonsense they hear over here, and they are not even aware of it half the time.

These changes have been very striking in the last few years. In the European media they more and more look like a kind of pale copy of the US.

• **So American dominance, even with the changes towards 1992, you still see as supreme?**

■ Well, nothing is supreme. It's not as firm as it was in the 1950s. Then the US really was a world dominant power in a sense that had never existed in history. That's changed. Now we're moving to a tri-polar world. There are going to be conflicts about who exploits the Soviet Union. There are going to be conflicts about entry into the Third World; the Europeans are trying to re-assert themselves in Latin America from which they were kicked out. The same is happening in the Mid-east. Japan will sooner or later have its own diplomacy in the Mid-east — not just waiting to see what the Americans are willing to let them do. But these things are all down the road. And there are a lot of complicated factors that are going to be involved.

But the people who are sitting and having their houses broken into and their arms broken on the West Bank, they can't want for that. As far as they're concerned the major external actors are here in the US and they have to hope, as every Third World actor does, that there will be enough of a change in public opinion in the US to put pressures on American power of the same kind that they are putting. That's what makes policies change. Popular struggles in the Third World can make the costs of empire rise.