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CARTER AND THE MIDDLE EAST

MARK A. BRUZONSKY

> . . . barring a shift by Israel—regardless of who wins the November election in the U.S., a wracking American-Israeli showdown is near.

Washington

That was Washington political columnist Stephen Rosenfeld's prophecy during the summer (writing in *Present Tense*, the American Jewish Committee's quarterly on world Jewish affairs) as he looked beyond the superficiality of the election campaign to the realities of Middle East diplomacy.

Now, with Carter preparing for the transfer of power and Kissinger soliciting bids for his memoirs, the "showdown" still remains on the horizon. Something of a consensus on how to proceed in the Middle East has emerged in the United States, and it requires of Israel an acquiescence to concessions that far surpass those the current government of the Jewish state seems willing, or may be able, to contemplate. As Matti Golan, the well-known Israeli journalist (author of *The Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger*), remarked somewhat prematurely last April:

> Rabin has just about used up the time he has been able to gain. . . . For while he was busy counting the months and weeks . . . the Arabs were assiduously using

the same time to acquire broad political support, even from formerly unsympathetic places. And so Israel has arrived unprepared at the time of decision.

The Middle East war clock is again ticking and a "year of decision" is ahead for President-elect Carter. As in the mid-1950s and again after both the 1967 and 1973 wars, the United States faces basic political choices sure to have immense ramifications. Henry Kissinger's legacy in the Middle East, as he himself has put it, is the current "moment of unprecedented opportunity." If the incoming administration is able to exploit this moment that will be one of the first indications of its ability to grasp the reins of international diplomacy.

In the Middle East, the "demanding task for the United States," writes Carter's adviser, Henry Owen, in the new Brookings Institution study, *Setting National Priorities: The Next Ten Years*, is to walk "the narrow line between an overly intrusive role and passivity." It is a path made the more difficult because "the issue will also figure heavily in American domestic politics," as it so damagingly did during the campaign. Yet Owen is correct to conclude that "There is no alternative. . . . Encouraging and supporting Arab-Israeli negotiations for a general settlement will thus be the most urgent foreign policy task facing the next administration."

The urgency has, in fact, been heightened by the manner in which both candidates alienated the Arabs while courting the Jewish vote in the closing weeks of the campaign. The foreign policy price of domestic politics will now have to be met by unambiguous Carter assurances that he will follow basically the course set by Kissinger since the Yom Kippur war; i.e., to maneuver for an overall settlement which would include:

¶ Phased Israeli withdrawal to approximately the 1967 borders.

¶ Creation of a Palestinian "entity" or state.

¶ A novel arrangement for a united but dually administered Jerusalem.

¶ Various forms of security arrangements and "guarantees" for Israel.

¶ Arab recognition of the Jewish state.

If Carter fails to provide such assurances within a few months, serious apprehensions about his intentions will seem to be confirmed. His apparent shift in the final weeks of the campaign from "even-handedness" to pre-Yom Kippur war pro-Israeli attitudes would then threaten an unpredictable deterioration of Arab ties with the United States, renewed Arab-Soviet intrigue, further oil supply and price problems, and preparations for war in the manner of the 1970-73 period.

Already, the game of international diplomacy has been resumed with contact between Egypt and the USSR at the Foreign Minister level. This has been accompanied by a resumption of some Soviet spare parts for Sadat's anxious army, a flow which could increase. Egyptian diplomats in the United States are seriously worried and a post-election meeting with Carter's adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski has not quelled their uneasiness. Setting the tone for the coming months, the editor of *Al Akhbar*, a major Egyptian daily, wrote immediately after Carter's victory that "Arabs everywhere don't welcome the success of Carter." And *Al Ahram*, Cairo's most prestigious newspaper, called upon the entire Arab world to form a united front and find new ways to use oil as a political weapon in response to Carter's Israeli orientation. The impending OPEC meeting may well see a greater price rise than would have been the situation had President Ford retained office—something of an add-on for political effect.

The Arabs will be demanding of Carter persuasive signs of policy carryover—Saudi Arabia as well as Egypt is especially concerned since it too has gambled the future on Washington. Yet the Israelis and organized American Jewry think Carter is pledged to undo the Ford-Kissinger "reassessment" (which Carter condemned during the second debate) and to return the United States to the Israeli side of the bargaining table (rather than maintain, as under Kissinger, the role of active intermediary).

If Carter deviates from the direction taken by American policy since the Yom Kippur war, the Middle East could quickly become unstable and unpredictable. If he does not deviate, and thus ignores the positions he so loudly proclaimed during the campaign, organized American Jewry may be shocked into trying to foment a political brawl. Such a major threat to domestic tranquillity would endanger the new President's relationship with the Democratic but pro-Israel Congress. Indeed, the reaction of American Jewry to continuing attempts to force concessions from Israel may be far more vociferous toward Carter than it would have been had the combined Ford-Kissinger team stayed around to do much the same thing.

Carter did poorly among Jewish voters in the primaries. Consequently in the Presidential campaign he set out to appeal to Jewish sensibilities. Yet even so, 30 to 35 per cent of the Jewish vote went to Ford. Simply put, this "born again" Southern Baptist would have done very badly among Jews had he not made a striking shift in his public statements about the Middle East.

Back in November of last year, Carter was thoughtfully saying such things as:

> I think the community of nations has got to recognize some basic principles of a settlement on a permanent basis in the Middle East, and I think one of the integral parts of an ultimate settlement has got to be the recognition of the Palestinians as a people, as a nation, with a place to live and a right to choose their own leaders.

In the early months of this year he said, "I favor early movements to discussion of the outlines of an overall settlement" in the Middle East.

Such views flashed red lights before Jewish officialdom. A number of key Jewish individuals and organizations, and indirectly the Israeli Embassy, quickly "persuaded"

Mark Bruzonsky is a Washington-based writer and consultant on international affairs now concentrating on the Middle East situation. He is author of a monograph published in April by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, A United States Guarantee for Israel? *During this year he has written numerous articles on U.S.-Israeli relations for American and Israeli publications including* Worldview, Commonweal, New Outlook, National Jewish Monthly, Moment, *and* The Christian Science Monitor.

Governor Carter to adopt different views. Whether he did so simply by ignoring for a time his awareness of Middle East realities or whether he was captured by opposing domestic political realities will be known only after he assumes the Presidency.

To some extent, Carter's campaign was colored by advisers who exploited Jewish leverage in an attempt to create a dike against further pressures on Israel. Early in the campaign, for instance, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC, which in Washington is "the Jewish lobby") in effect threw its support to Carter. Edward Sanders, a Los Angeles attorney who was president of AIPAC, had his name inked out on the committee's letterheads (though he was not replaced) and took himself to Atlanta to join the campaign organization. The president of the United Jewish Appeal, Paul Zuckerman, also joined Carter's Atlanta staff. The involvement of the Jewish establishment with Carter became so extensive that in the thick of the campaign in October one Jewish leader well connected at the Ford White House jokingly suggested, "If Ford should win, Morry Amitay [executive director of AIPAC for the past two years] will have twenty-four hours to get out of town."

Even I.L. Kenen, the founder and former executive director of AIPAC, appeared to be questioning the wisdom of the open association with Carter when, in the October 13th issue of the lobby's weekly newsletter he wrote, "This observer has never endorsed or rated candidates for offices. . . ." In private, Kenen has been expressing considerable anxiety, rising at times to harsh criticism, over the partisan tactics adopted by AIPAC. Though some consider Carter's victory justification for what otherwise would have been seen as excesses, AIPAC's out-front role in the campaign, together with its increasingly belligerent tone on Capitol Hill, has led to an intense discussion of the way the lobby promotes Jewish and Israeli interests. One knowledgeable Washington academic, who is often consulted on political matters by the Israeli Embassy, says: "I've heard more anti-lobby criticism in the past two years than in all the years before."

As for the less direct Israeli involvement, journalist Robert Scheer, who traveled with Carter to prepare the *Playboy* interview, reported in *New Times* on the involvement of members of the Israeli Embassy with persons at the Brookings Institution who advise Carter on the Middle East—especially its foreign policy studies director Henry Owen. After seeing a confidential memo from Owen to Carter about what approach to take on Middle East questions, Scheer concluded: "Carter was doing what all other Presidential candidates before him had done—he was garnering pro-Israel votes rather than discussing foreign policy." This catering to Jewish emotions reached its climax in the foreign policy debate with Ford.

What the campaign within a campaign was all about was analyzed by *Washington Post* writer Stephen Isaacs in the final weeks before Election Day. The arithmetic of Electoral College votes makes the Jews in the large states a potential swing factor of great importance in a close election. David Lissy, who was handling Jewish affairs for the Ford White House, saw the Jewish vote as potentially pivotal in New York, California, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Florida and Illinois.

Emerging victorious, Carter is now surrounded by two groups that want desperately to influence his Middle East policies. First, there are the academics such as Owen and Brzezinski who are indeed aware of Middle East realities and Arab apprehensions. Carter's written statements throughout the campaign did reflect at least some sensitivity to political realities beyond election opportunism. Indeed, Brzezinski in early 1975 advised a firm American determination to bring about an overall settlement that would include "what would probably be the PLO-dominated state of Palestine." "Israeli inflexibility," Brzezinski and others noted in a *Foreign Policy* article, "places maximum stress on . . . vital [U.S.] support."

The Dark at the Beginning of the Tunnel

In the closing days of the campaign one political analyst wrote that Daniel Patrick Moynihan could lose the New York Senatorial race only if he were to do something like come out for an independent Palestinian state—exactly what Carter's foreign policy adviser had been advocating before he hushed up lest he make himself unacceptable for a foreign affairs post in the new administration.

The other group seeking to dominate Carter's Middle East policies includes the issues coordinator for the campaign, Stuart Eizenstat, along with Edward Sanders,

Zuckerman and others who take a far more pro-Israel position. Which of these competing circles will wield the greater influence in a Carter Presidency is unknowable, though it is only reasonable to expect less deference to Jewish demands. The basic issue will probably reduce itself to this: though the Middle East is sure to start smoking again if nothing happens diplomatically after the inaugural, President Carter may not dare risk his credibility, based on positions taken during the campaign, in a major series of political battles with the Jewish-Israeli lobby. Just as Ford and Kissinger had to drop plans to push for an overall settlement, and reluctantly resume step-by-step diplomacy, Carter may make only some token gestures toward the Arabs to buy time rather than provoke the Israelis with quick demands for major concessions. With the Israeli elections approaching in October 1977, and should there be a resurgence of Arab turmoil, this way out may seem rather inviting to a President just settling in on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Indeed, what took place in early 1975 after the breakdown of shuttle diplomacy could well be repeated in Carter's first months. At that time, faced with the decision to delay or take bold action, Kissinger chose to defer to American political pressures. Questioned by Edward R. F. Sheehan (author of the recent *The Arabs, Israelis and Kissinger*) on why he didn't push for a comprehensive settlement in 1975, Kissinger remarked: "What were the alternatives? The conflict in the Middle East has a history of decades. Only during the last two years have we produced progress. It's easy to say that what we've done is not enough, but the steps we've taken are the biggest steps so far. They were the attainable—given the prevailing domestic situation."

Ford, of course, also realized the urgent need to reach for the Jewish vote. He remembered Nixon's success, was informed of Jewish uneasiness with a Southern Baptist, and understood the Electoral College's magnification of Jewish influence. But he was well aware throughout that Kissinger's Middle East policies had frightened Israeli leaders and he knew how Jerusalem and the American Jewish lobby pass on cues to American Jewry. It is remarkable that he did as well as he did.

By September, the Israelis had begun coolly to play both sides, preferring Carter but cautious now that the election was becoming a tossup. It was those associated with AIPAC in coalition with those running the umbrella organization known as the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations (chaired by Rabbi Alexander Schindler and administered by Executive Director Yehuda Hellman) that stuck firmly to the Carter bandwagon. In fact, this American Jewish establishment alignment with Carter had "some Israeli Government people shaking in their boots," according to one Jewish leader, apprehensive that Ford might remember his enemies if he survived.

In essence, Carter outbid Ford with the Jews. One of Ford's Jewish followers bitterly reflected in the closing days of the campaign, "It's remarkable that the Jewish community would fall for Carter who has only given cheap promises, while Ford has tried to take a positive, balanced approach." To sum it up, the most important political agents of the American Jewish community chose Carter, and did so early. The Israelis, while anxious about Ford, wisely remained less committed to the Governor. They tactfully refrained from blundering into public support for either candidate as happened in 1972 when then Ambassador Rabin gave Nixon a de facto endorsement.

There was toward the end considerable Israeli concern that the lobby had stuck its neck too far out this time—which may partially explain the Israeli Foreign Minister's meeting with Ford at the White House on October 11 (when the announcement of more sophisticated arms for Israel was made). But in general, most Israelis hoped, and still hope, that things would go better for them with the new man, pledged to a backward-looking platform plank (which remarkably even promotes moving the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem at such a sensitive time in Middle East history). Few Israelis could forget that Ford was the man who allowed the "reassessment" to take place, fought hard to cut "transitional quarter" aid to Israel, approved major arms and economic deals with various Arab countries, and opposed confrontational anti-boycott legislation.

Nevertheless, even the most vehement American backers of the tough Israeli approach are becoming aware that it would be naive to assume that either the party platform planks or the public campaign statements adequately reflect expectations for U.S. Middle East policy in the coming year. Even the editor of AIPAC's weekly newsletter, Wolf Blitzer, wrote some months ago (choosing the *Jerusalem Post* over his own publication *Near East Report*) that "The real crunch for Israel will probably come during 1977 if Ford is elected—it will be delayed by only a few months if a Democratic candidate wins." And in July the editor of the *Jerusalem Post*, reporting on a recent American visit, concluded that "Washington and Jerusalem are . . . headed toward an inevitable collision. . . . The year 1977 will also be a year of a real American push toward a solution of the Middle East conflict. The United States will lean heavily on Israel, even to the extent of imposing a settlement." Just a few months earlier, in May, a former Director-General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, Walter Eytan, put things even more succinctly: "It is taken for granted," he warned, "that whoever is elected President this November . . . will not let matters drift as they have for so many years in the past."

Taken together, these perceptively candid views reflect Israeli awareness of the emerging American consensus on an approach to Middle East diplomacy in 1977. It is to be hoped that Carter will be influenced at least as much by this consensus as by the Jewish-Israeli lobby.

Ending the policy drift mentioned by Walter Eytan was what the April-May 1975 "reassessment" was all about. And though such counter-efforts as the lobby-inspired May 1975 letter from seventy-six Senators who unequivocally supported Israeli policies caused a sol-

pedaling of the reassessment's conclusions, the basic framework of American policy remains what was first charted during that period of shuttling. It has been best publicly outlined in the Brookings Institution report, "Toward Peace in the Middle East," released last December.

The conclusions of the report have steadily gained visibility and respectability. During the summer they were strongly endorsed by a parade of Middle East experts, including a number of prominent American Jews who testified before the McGovern Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee) on "Prospects for Peace in the Middle East." According to Senator McGovern, these hearings were designed to provide "sound advice to the Senate as a whole and to the executive branch on future initiatives in U.S. policy."

This Brookings report, which one Israeli newspaper termed "officially sanctioned," provided the most comprehensive public outline of what amounts to the new post-Yom Kippur war consensus on what should be U.S. policy. In brief: Israel's gradual withdrawal to the 1967 borders; recognition of the "principle of Palestinian self-determination" (i.e., creation of some kind of Palestinian state); resolution, probably at Geneva, of all outstanding issues including Jerusalem; implementation of the agreement over a period of several years; multilateral and bilateral guarantees for Israel's security, including a unique commitment from the United States; specific acts establishing Arab recognition of Israel.

That the Brookings report has not been attacked (as such things usually are) by the Israeli Government or by American Jewish organizations acting as surrogates, should not be taken as indicating support or even of acceptance. Outwardly there has been an attempt to ignore it in the United States, even though the Israeli press has reported it widely. Behind the scenes the Israeli Embassy, including Ambassador Dinitz himself, has worked hard to prevent a number of the Jewish members of the panel from endorsing the report's conclusions—especially on 1967 borders and Palestinian rights. Bertram Gold, executive director of the American Jewish Committee and the only "Jewish professional" involved (most of the others hold academic appointments) did hold back. But Phillip Klutznick (one of American Jewry's most respected elder statesmen) approved, and in doing so largely immunized the report from public attack.

Among the sixteen signers are Zbigniew Brzezinski (Columbia University), John C. Campbell (Council on Foreign Relations), Malcolm Kerr (University of California, Los Angeles) and former U.N. Ambassador Charles Yost. Henry Owen of Brookings played a major role in setting up the project.

Before the 94th Congress adjourned, Congressional endorsement for the Brookings report accelerated. Besides the McGovern hearings, a bipartisan organization known as Members of Congress for Peace Through Law (MCPL) is seeking support. The same is true within the Jewish community, where an organization known as *Breira* (which is Hebrew for "alternative") has been promoting the report. And the new Jewish monthly *Moment* carried an article in its September issue by Harvard Prof. Nadav Safran, another member of the study group, proclaiming the report a blueprint for peace.

In short, academic, Jewish and Congressional support now lining up behind the conclusions outlined in this short document could provide the incoming administration with the "excuse" it may need to press hard with such policies. As one political columnist has said, the Brookings report represents a return to the basic equation for a Middle East settlement first outlined in the 1970 Rogers Plan, which remains the overall position of the U.S. Government.

Fear that pressures may be building to reassert this view is something the Israeli Government has not hidden very well. One result has been a largely unsuccessful though painful attempt to quash in the United States further Jewish community dissent from Israeli policies. This situation is largely unknown to Middle East analysts; but it may be one of the most significant new developments.

Into the web of political rethinking has come an unprecedented wave of American Jewish criticism of Israeli policies and attitudes. Both Stanley Karnow, a senior Washington political columnist who formerly was foreign affairs editor for *The New Republic,* and again Stephen Rosenfeld have recently commented on the meaning of the deepening fissures within the American Jewish community.

"One of the most significant developments in years is the growing willingness on the part of American Jews to criticize publicly Israeli policies," Karnow wrote in his syndicated column in July. "This development is important," he continued, "because it means U.S. politicians need not endorse Israel's behavior automatically, as many have in the past, out of concern that they will be confronted by an antagonistic American Jewish community whose political influence is considerable. . . . The U.S. may be able to exercise more flexibility with Israel as it seeks a settlement to the constantly worsening situation in the Middle East."

In the previously mentioned *Present Tense* article, Stephen Rosenfeld also drew attention to the changing nature of American Jewish attitudes and influence. The "stirrings in the American political outlook and specifically in American Jewish opinion" are "extremely important." They constitute, Rosenfeld indicated, "a major political fact sure to affect the Middle East policy of the administration that will take office in January 1977. In brief, Rosenfeld continued, "a new administration would be under more pressure from the general public, and under less restraint by American Jews, to push more vigorously for a comprehensive Middle East settlement—despite the certainty that such a push would severely tax the complex relationship between Israel and the United States."

Irving Howe, author of the best-selling new book *World of Our Fathers,* has wisely put forth the logical question that Jewish intellectuals may soon have to face.

"Suppose America is pushing toward a proper kind of settlement?" he asked recently in a *Jerusalem Post* interview. "What I would do then I honestly don't know. Would I say: Israel has the right to self-determination even if it is mistaken? Or would I say, if Israel continues along this course, it's going to back itself into a position where there might be a disastrous war which it might even lose because America wouldn't support it?"

Though this is a live question, and Howe is right to point out that even most dissenting Jews have yet to deal with it, it is also essential to realize that American Jewish criticism of Israeli policies comes from identification with, not separation from, the Jewish state. Rosenfeld is correct to warn bluntly that there is "no falling away of support for the security and survival of Israel, despite the tendency of some anxious partisans to read just that result, if not that purpose, into the Capital's increasingly frank political dialogue."

Still, the attacks upon public Jewish questioning of Israeli positions remain fierce. Three major Jewish organizations held meetings over the summer on this very issue. The most important, the Presidents' Conference, met in New York in June and the consensus, as summarized by chairman Schindler, was that when Jewish dissent "goes public . . . the result is to give aid and comfort to the enemy."

In response, Irving Howe charged that the relentless campaign to prohibit thought and expression now "verges on . . . witch hunting." "Such a course, if allowed to continue," he wrote in the June issue of the monthly *Breira* newsletter *interChange*, "would make the life of the American Jewish community lifeless; a mere ritual of parades, resolutions, and generous checks."

Breira is as yet a small organization and a pariah in most "proper" circles. It acts as the cutting edge, absorbing the most vicious criticism and breaking a path for those reluctant to be too far out front. But potentially, *Breira* is the most interesting development in American Jewish life in recent memory. It is opening up a pro-Israeli but, at least in part, non-Zionist, alternative which is more representative of the bulk of America's Jewish intellectuals than are the positions of any of the established Jewish organizations. Yet *Breira* faces major political, ideological and organizational challenges in the coming months and there are widespread doubts whether the fledgling organization can really become a force in either American Jewish communal life or American politics.

It is even more questionable what effect *Breira*-type ideas can have upon the political scene in Israel. A Washington *Breira* spokesman, Rabbi David Saperstein, reported last February:

> I can tell you from off-the-record discussions that we have had with leading figures in the Israeli Government that they welcome our efforts. The Israeli Government is under enormous pressure from the conservative elements to take a hard line. . . . They don't have a political base in the American Jewish community that might support a more liberal approach. . . . They welcome with open arms the development of *Breira*, and hope for the growth of *Breira* in order to give them some strength outside of Israel.

But well-meaning *Breira* leaders are probably deceiving themselves as to just how welcome their interventions are, except among a few scattered Israeli politicians. As for affecting Israeli politics, *Breira*'s only hope is so to weaken American support for current Israeli policies as to force policy changes, by U.S. imposition if necessary. Hence, *Breira* is participating in the creation of the "showdown," not liberalizing attitudes in Israel.

Israelis remain deeply suspicious of the Arabs and increasingly of the United States. Few of them are aware that belief in Kissinger's "moment of unprecedented opportunity" has become widespread and that the new American consensus is swiftly altering American willingness to defer to Israeli perceptions. Harvard sociologist Nathan Glazer, commenting on Israel's predicament in the November issue of *interChange*, outlines the necessity for Israel to adopt a position similar to the new American consensus. With an American-Israeli "showdown" becoming more, not less, likely the Israeli Government should carefully review such advice.

Yet the Labor Party coalition in Israel is still a victim of political paralysis and Zionist myopia. The doves flutter and propagate, but basic policies remain rigid. Worse yet, it appears that the October 1977 election will produce a continuation of the present coalition or the formation of a broad "national unity" government which would be even more frozen and able only to perpetuate the "decisions not to decide."

Faced with this situation, President Carter will have to be not only forceful to ease Arab anxieties; he will need as well to shock Israel into realizing that neither internal Israeli politics nor the American Jewish lobby will be allowed to block the pursuit of an overall settlement along the lines of the consensus outlined in the Brookings report.

American approval in early November of the Security Council's "consensus statement" condemning Israeli policies in Jerusalem and the occupied territories was a start, however unfortunate, in the right direction. A further useful step would be to continue the process of recognizing "Palestinian national rights"—something begun a year ago when State Department spokesman Harold Saunders told a subcommittee of the Congress that "In many ways, the Palestinian dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the heart of the conflict." A Presidential statement early in 1977 specifying the need for a Palestinian homeland in Palestine to coexist with Israel could set in motion a process of moderate assertiveness in both Israel and the PLO.

Even during the transition period between American administrations, the PLO has made overtures that could lead to resumption of the Geneva Conference and Palestinian acceptance of a two-state solution, as was originally envisioned by the U.N. in 1947.

With Yassir Arafat's blessing, two PLO spokesmen met recently in Europe with leading Israeli doves (rumored

to have had at least Rabin's acquiescence). In the United States the same two representatives, Sabri Jiryis and Issam Sartawi, met during October and November with American Jews, many of them well-placed in American Jewish organizations. More important, through two intermediaries they had discussions with officials at the highest levels of the State Department. There are clear indications that when the 153-member Palestine National Council—the embryonic Parliament of the Palestinians—meets in Cairo in January, a public willingness to accept a West Bank/Gaza Strip state and to coexist with Israel will be expressed. Farouk Kaddoumi, head of the PLO's political department, has already indicated that "We accept establishment of a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip" and that "this means that we stop armed struggle when we have the state."

A reasonable American response to this evolution in PLO attitudes—one which the United States has sought for nearly two years—might be to allow PLO representatives to staff the new PLO information office which is being established in Washington. Such a step would encourage a dialogue but still be far short of diplomatic relations or even an invitation to Geneva. Failure to respond to PLO initiatives at this point would only further delay what has become inevitable and could discredit the present moderate PLO leadership, thus reducing hope for a comprehensive settlement in the coming year.

To sum up, 1977 is likely to be the toughest year ever in Israeli-American relations. If Carter does not severely press Israel he will experience a collision with the Arabs. Whether the United States and Israel will actually reach a crisis point of "showdown" is now pretty much up to the Israelis. It is not likely that the United States will actually attempt to impose terms on Israel during the coming year, even though American leverage has become immense. But such a bold gambit might evolve within a few years if the new stalemate cannot be cut through soon—or after another war which some experts in Washington are predicting.

What can be said for sure is that, assuming the settlement in Lebanon holds and the Arabs, as a collective, resume their demands for a political agreement with Israel in exchange for the return of territory and a solution of the "Palestinian problem," the United States will press and cajole Israel finally to put its own cards on the table at Geneva or some other forum. □