

The Arabs, Israelis, and Kissinger

*A Secret History of American Diplomacy
in the Middle East*

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America's Arab policy surely shall. The consensus that prevails amongst most levels of the United States government—in the State Department, in the C.I.A. in the Pentagon, and elsewhere—favoring a settlement based upon the 1967 boundaries, a state for the Palestinians, strong guarantees for Israel, must be translated into the imperatives of high policy.*

The United States and Israel have no other choice. The October war and the oil embargo cost the United States (so the National Petroleum Council estimated) between \$30 and \$60 billion in lost Gross National Product. The next war in the Middle East, should it be waged, will cost the United States and Western Europe considerably more. Well into the 1980s, America will remain dependent upon Arab oil—Israel cannot kill time for another decade. Nor can Israel, even assuming she wins the next war, pay for the war from her own pocket.

Even today, Israel teeters at the abyss of bankruptcy. She has devalued her currency ten times in 18 months. Her deficit for

*Mr. Mark Bruzonsky, analyzing my article in *Foreign Policy*, asserts that the "first option" I have described in Chapter 12 is already being implemented. In *Interchange* (April 1976), a publication of Breira (Alternative), a most enlightened Jewish group, Mr. Bruzonsky wrote that "the 1975 'reassessment' was, in fact, the starting point for expression of this [chronic crisis between Israel and the United States described by Mr. Sheehan]. It began with President Ford's blunt letter to... Rabin in... March [1975] insisting that Israel show more flexibility. It continued with Saunders' statement on the Palestinians in November [1975]. In March [1976] there was Ford's rebuff of Jewish leaders over the sale of C-130s for Egypt, the reduction in military aid for Israel for fiscal 1977, and most recently, William Scranton's calculated attack on Israeli settlements in the occupied territories as violations of the Geneva Convention...."

"The letter from the seventy-six Senators [in May 1975]... stopped the verbal articulation of America's conception of a Middle East peace [but] it did not stop its implementation. In fact, the letter may have made it easier for Kissinger since it prevents Israeli supporters from challenging the fundamentals of American policy, forcing them to focus on the slow and subtle manifestations of pressure which have been growing since March 1975. In effect, Israel is getting all the pressure implicit in option No. 1, without the benefit of an articulated overall policy to challenge."

I find Mr. Bruzonsky's analysis a trifle too neat. I do not agree that Israel is already "getting all the pressure implicit in option No. 1." As for the trend of policy Mr. Bruzonsky describes, I very much agree.