

## Two Views of 'Normalization'

by  
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*In the April issue of Middle East International Fred Khouri argued that it was premature to talk about 'normalization' of relations between Israel and the Arab states, that normal contacts could only be built with time after the conclusion of a peace settlement.*

*Mark Bruzonsky, Associate Editor of the US magazine Worldview, in the course of recent interviews with Ashraf Ghorbal, Egyptian ambassador to Washington, and his Israeli counterpart Simcha Dinitz\*, put the question to both men.*

**Q:** When President Nixon took office we had the Scranton mission, we had the Rogers Plan. Today, what President Carter is saying is being compared to the Rogers Plan. What makes you so optimistic that things have changed? What makes you so optimistic that the Israelis' policies and the Israeli forces within the US are going to be defeated this time?

**Ghorbal:** Several things. Nixon and Rogers did not continue on the same line as they started. The Rogers Plan was introduced but then it disappeared. Two, the polarization then was much deeper and further than now. I myself was told by people in the State Department that the US is the lawyer for Israel and

\* The complete interviews — each lasting for more than an hour — are published in the July-August issue of *Worldview* magazine, (available for \$2.00 including postage from 170 E. 64th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021).

the Soviet Union is the lawyer for Egypt. Today the situation is different. Why? Because you have become more enlightened. Why? Because we saw to it that you got to be more enlightened in the October 1973 war. You were sold a bag of wind, forgive the expression, by the Israelis, that "nevermind, just freeze the situation, the Arabs will yell, scream and sign on the dotted line". We did not yell or scream or sign on the dotted line. We kicked the Israelis off the Canal and off the Bar-Lev line and they ought to have learned from that a lesson that there is no such thing as defensible lines in occupation, that there is a real powderkeg of an explosion in occupation. I think you have learned the lesson and I think some of the Israelis have. I hope the rest will.

This is what has happened and what has changed. And mind, today we say the Arab world is not weak, is not meek, is not poor and is not unsophisticated. It knows how to handle war, it knows how to handle oil, it has enough money to buy the most sophisticated weapons and it knows how to handle them. With all of that we say we don't want war. We want to go to peace because war is sick, it's not going to achieve anything for the Israelis or us except destruction.

**Q:** Let's talk about that peace. This is what President Sadat said when he was here a short time ago. "I didn't say at all that peace will be postponed for the next generation. I am for full peace, permanent peace, and then everything will be

normalized. For instance, the issue of the boycott automatically will be finished because whenever we sign the peace agreement everything is going to be normalized. For instance, now Israeli cargo passes the Suez Canal. But after the peace agreement, sure, the Israeli ships can pass the Suez Canal because we have solved the whole problem."

I think with this paragraph President Sadat opened a new dimension to the possibility of a full peace. And I'd like you to elaborate on it if you can. The President indicated that within 5 years of an agreement that might be signed at Geneva a full, complete peace is what Egypt is working for. Does this peace include the concepts of open borders, trade relations, tourists visiting each other's country, and possibly, at some point, even an exchange of diplomatic representatives? Is that the kind of peace that President Sadat is talking about? You know the Israelis are very very concerned that this hasn't been spelled out.

**Ghorbal:** I'm glad that you recorded what Sadat said. Because I think what he said is very important, very significant, in giving the true temperature of what our intentions are. In building the two disengagement agreements that Henry Kissinger helped us to build with the Israelis, we were determined to make of



Israel's Ambassador to Washington, Simcha Dinitz, with U.S. Undersecretary of State Joseph Sisco.

these a beginning of the establishment of real peace — is it working, is it do-able, and is it possible to continue this way? And I think it proved that it is. So we go forward now for the whole works, which is the total peace, which is the full peace, which when it gets to be established, then like any peace between countries that have had a state of war for a long time it starts to bring them into an atmosphere of normalization. And normalization leads to what could be expected between states who have normal conditions between them. What is impossible today will not be impossible tomorrow, but will become possible. And I think President Sadat gave you the temperature, examples of what could be done, examples of what could be expected.

Now I certainly would like the question to be asked to my counterpart, Simcha Dinitz: 'Here it is, the Egyptians are committing themselves not only to full peace but beyond it to what a full peace will lead to in terms of normalization...'

**Q:** What can I tell Ambassador Dinitz? Can I tell him that your concept of full peace includes the things I outlined: trade, open boundaries, tourists, journalists?

**Ghorbal:** I just told you that what is impossible today, because of the existence of the state of war with them, as a result of full peace would then become possible, and then would become achievable.

**Q:** Including these elements?

**Ghorbal:** But I would like to hear from the Israelis, from Simcha Dinitz himself, and from Peres or whoever will be the leader of the Israeli people, that they commit themselves equally vis-a-vis their own obligations about withdrawal and about the existence of a Palestinian-Arab state side-by-side, living in peace and harmony with the Israeli state. I would like to find an equal commitment in the same kind of language that I am saying. I hope they do. If they do, then I can say, already, three-quarters of the job to be done at Geneva has been done.



Egypt's Ambassador to Washington, Ashraf Ghorbal, meets the press.

**Q:** Might you say that the analogy between France and Germany might apply to the Middle East? There was a time when France and Germany were total antagonists without any relations.

**Ghorbal:** Why not? If we talk about peace we are not doubletalking. We know what peace entails. And we know what peace leads to. And it is only normal to expect what normal conditions will lead to. But don't expect me to say I love and hug and do everything when I am being pushed by the other side continuously through the determination to talk about the annexation of certain parts of the Arab world, the negotiating of the territories, the giving up of some but definitely not of all. There is no such thing as fulfillment of all obligations on one side with no equal fulfillment of obligations on the other side. The *quid* requires a *pro quo* and we are ready with the *quid* fully. Are the Israelis ready with the *pro quo* fully? I hope so.

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**Q:** I told you I had a question from Ambassador Ghorbal that was volunteered, I did not request it. I want to quote him: "We go now for the full peace, the total peace, which when it gets to be established, then like any peace between countries that have had a state of war for a long time it brings them

into an atmosphere of normalization. I would like to hear from the Israelis, from Simcha Dinitz, that they commit themselves equally vis-a-vis their own obligations about withdrawal, and about the existence of a Palestinian-Arab state side-by-side, living in peace and harmony with the Israeli state. I would like an equal commitment in the same kind of language."

**Dinitz:** The same kind of language; it wouldn't be difficult for me to give because it's absolutely vague. But in terms of a concrete answer, with all due respect to my colleague Ambassador Ghorbal, I think that this dialogue would be more effective if he allowed it to be direct. If Mr. Ghorbal can ask these questions of me, either publicly or privately, I think we would go somewhere. I think it would be as important as any of the ingredients of normalization. But...

**Q:** When the Ambassador says he's for full peace, total peace, normal peace, the kind of normal conditions that exist between states, I think we have something more than just a vague statement.

**Dinitz:** No, because for him full peace and total peace is cessation of hostilities because he tells you here that he is prepared to go beyond full peace. So that means that for him full peace is merely an