

# PROSPECTS FOR THE MID-EAST

**MARK BRUZONSKY, the Saudi Gazette's correspondent in Washington, interviews JOSEPH SISCO, former U.S. Assistant Secretary for the Near East and then Under-Secretary for Political Affairs at the State Department.**

Did you ever envisage that, within a few years, we would have a peace process in the Middle East? It seems to me that we are now in a position to do so. I don't believe that there is any known, viable alternative to Sadat's leadership. No one can predict for certain what might happen in circumstances where his vulnerability would be increased. But I was struck that his initiative in November really reflected very, very strong and deep yearnings for peace on the part of the peoples on both sides — in Israel as well as in Egypt.

Does that include the Syrians, the PLO and the Palestinians? President Assad obviously has serious doubts, and has expressed them publicly about Sadat's initiative. But, if that initiative should lead to an agreement between Egypt and Israel, it should bring Hussein in the negotiations. I think Assad will show that he has kept all of his options open. The last thing that Assad wants, in my judgment, is to be left out of the peace process. It makes progress.

As for the PLO, I think, within the whole Palestinian movement, there are some real divisions. Some Palestinians are prepared to proceed and negotiate to recognize Israel, and to adopt a live-and-let-live attitude.

What do you mean within the PLO, within the Palestinian national movement? Within the Palestinian movement itself. But there are a number of other elements, whose objectives are still the destruction of Israel, and who are deeply committed to the Covenant, and therefore are not willing to negotiate or to accommodate themselves to the continuing existence of Israel.

**'Common interest in avoiding radical solution'**

The critical question today is: Are there Palestinian elements resulting primarily in the West Bank with whom, in the first instance, Jordan and Israel could work cooperatively? I believe that Jordan and Israel have a common interest that they should

avoid a peace process in the Middle East. Do you think there was so much of a part of it in the last decade. At present there is an impasse. Did the peace process is not at an end. Both Sadat and Begin have understood the importance of maintaining contact, and I think there are some very good reasons for this. Sadat started his initiative

ment, is contrary not only to the position of the Carter Administration but contrary to the position adopted by the Labour Party over the years. The impurity opinion in the West Bank seems to be that they cannot separate their interests from the broader concept of the entire



JOSEPH SISCO, ex-political affairs official at the State Department.

# Peace—the Progress and the Problems...

not or other parts of the world. Why does Sadat continue, then, after time, to emphasize that there must be Palestinian self-determination — he offers even says "Palestinian state"? And what is it that you are proposing for the half-million Palestinian

# ..BY THE MAN WHO GUIDED U.S.

problems the Lebanese central government will never have the authority to control the country. I'm more inclined to the first for this reason. Whatever force the Palestinians have within Lebanon is affected by the fact that there has been no significant practical progress toward peace. That's the issue that the PLO seeks to exploit. The situation in Lebanon is intimately related to the question of practical progress towards peace — progress that moderate Arab governments are willing to commit themselves to. This can, in time, have an impact on the situation.

## 'Arab states pursuing their own interest'

But there's no doubt in my mind, it will be an extremely difficult period because the situation in Lebanon is such that it's fractionalized today as a result of the civil war; the centralized authority is insufficient. Therefore I don't assume that, even if agreements are achieved, the situation in Lebanon will not offer serious difficulties in the future.

Why does Sadat keep focusing on the need for Palestinian self-determination?

Well, I think that here one has to distinguish between the rhetoric and the reality. All of the Arab states, in public pronouncements, essentially take the same line on the Palestinians. But what strikes me is, if you take an event like the Lebanese civil war, it proves that each one of the Arab states is, in the first instance, pursuing its own national interest.

And I happen to believe that each of the Arab states will pursue their 'own' perceived national interest in negotiations. For this reason, given the present political environments, there will be continuing statements made in the public domain, but I don't take these public statements as the final position in the actual negotiations.

## 'Alternative is continual turmoil...'

Now, I'm not saying there can

Jordan. A negotiated settlement that gives Palestinians an opportunity to participate in the governing of such a territory, it seems to me, goes a long way towards meeting the legitimate interests of the Palestinians.

Are you saying that a Jordan-Palestine entity and a Middle-East framework where stability is more likely is a better risk than some sort of Palestinian self-determination on the West Bank? Are you saying this because you don't believe Palestinians self-determination is the West Bank would be a stabilizing influence, although you recognize the movement's existence?

I would put it a little differently. The alternative that we're talking about is continual turmoil, which in time would not only carry the risk of a radicalization. There are no easy alternatives as you well know.

Are you saying that you don't think the PLO can be tamed by offering it half a loaf — a small state in the West Bank and Gaza? Are you saying that what the Carter Administration got involved in last year was a bad idea and it's good that the U.S. didn't enter a formal relationship with the PLO?

I'm more comfortable with the present Carter Administration position — the President has said explicitly that a PLO state in the West Bank and a part of Gaza would be destabilizing and a threat to the security of Israel. I would add that it would also be a potential threat to the state of Jordan.

## 'PLO state a potential threat to Jordan'

One final question about the Palestinian problem. I interviewed Muhammad Sid Ahmad. He felt the Palestinian issue could only be dealt with properly in the hope of the genuine, justifiable aspirations of the various parties at the original of the conflict. How do you respond to this?

My response is that in the last analysis the Palestinian problem is primarily an Arab problem. Obviously it's an Israeli problem in the sense that the very heart and the security of Israel are involved. But we're dealing with a political force

# guys in arms 'no blessing'

ONE of Zbigniew Brzezinski's key technical advisers recently pronounced this principle: Better that the U.S. not enjoy a clear arms superiority over the Soviet Union for fear that America would sometimes misuse it.

Dr Victor Ugiuff, Director of Policy Analysis on Brzezinski's National Security Council (NSC) staff, thereby set off spirited debate within the small, contentious community of strategic experts. The Ugiuff principle explains much about national security policy in the Carter Administration.

His remarks reflect self-distrust among middle level officials. Fearing that the U.S. will make more principled use of military power than the Soviet Union, they are concerned not only with deterrence in Moscow but self-deterrence in Washington. That mindset among technical advisers may explain why even non-technician Brzezinski, traditionally a hard-liner, has not escaped charges of Carter Administration softness towards the Kremlin.

Ugiuff's push-bidding for Deputy NSC Director David Aaron, assessed 840 weapons experts in Monterey, California on February 1 at a conference sponsored by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. In no sense did Ugiuff advocate unilateral disarmament. Describing the Carter Administration's commitment to strategic arms control as an "article of faith," he called for "strategic equality, through adequately verifiable, arms control agreements." "It that's impossible," he advocated "whatever programmes are necessary for our national security," adding: "We'll pay whatever price it takes."

## Fading

What followed, however, began to raise eyebrows. "We cannot afford to allow ourselves to drift into significant strategic inferiority," Ugiuff said. "But what is significant?" inferiority? And he soon argued that superiority is no blessing.

Using superiority would "not be the end of the world," he said. "Some of our advantages are fading, and in some cases, it might be to our advantage to allow U.S. superiority to fade away." Ugiuff said. Why? NSC staffers told us. Ugiuff feels losing U.S. superiority



# IN THE CONQUANT'G part in the interwar years JOSEPH SISCO, the Saudi Gazette's Washing- ton correspondent MARK BRUZONSKI ques- tions the former American official on U.S.-Arab and U.S.-Israel relations.

last year, when this administra-  
tion came into power, it not only  
supported a "Palestinian home-  
land," but the President said that  
the PLO represents a substan-  
tial part of the Palestinians." And  
behind the scenes it was trying to  
get the PLO to accept Resolution  
242, in return for direct dealings.  
The implication was that the PLO  
would be recognized by the U.S. as  
the political representative of the  
Palestinians and possibly invited to  
Geneva. Was that the major dif-  
ference compared with previous  
policy?

"Well, there's no doubt there was  
a tremendous evolution in the pos-  
ition of the administration on the  
Palestinian question. The  
Soviet-American memorandum  
talked in terms of the "rights of  
the Palestinians," whereas the pre-  
vious administration limited its  
public expressions to "legitimate  
interests." And these are words  
that you would know. At no  
time had the previous administra-  
tion supported either the concept  
of a "homeland" or "entity" or a  
"Palestinian state." All of these  
pronouncements obviously go  
well beyond the position of the  
previous administration.

But the previous administration  
was approaching this problem in  
small steps, interim steps,  
procedural steps, and therefore  
there was absolutely no need to  
define positions on the substance  
of an overall settlement.

**'Administration  
oppressed to  
a PLO state'**

The peace process has been car-  
ried forward. After all, the Israelis  
have made a very far-reaching  
proposal on Sinai — they have  
indicated a willingness to return  
Sinai to Egyptian sovereignty.  
Granted, the settlements have  
proved to be an obstacle in this  
regard. There has been further  
evolution by all the parties con-  
cerned — Egypt, Israel and the  
U.S. — simply because diplomacy  
has been directed toward an overall set-  
tlement.

**Do you think Carter and  
Breznevski have rethought their  
Palestinian policy and have  
returned to the policy you were  
involved in?**

"There's been an obvious change.  
In the first months of the adminis-  
tration the President talked in  
terms of a "homeland" and indi-  
cated that if the Palestinians were  
willing to accept Resolution 242  
the administration would take  
another look at its position.

**'Seriousness  
must not be  
discounted'**

On the other hand, Soviet diplo-  
macy in the Middle East is diplo-  
macy with one hand behind its  
back. It has relations with only one  
side. And even then the U.S. has  
more influence than the Soviet  
Union. Moreover, it has at  
least as much influence as the  
USSR in Damascus, in spite of the  
military assistance relationship  
between Syria and the Soviet  
Union.

President Assad is a strong  
Syrian nationalist. He is not going  
to be a lackey of either the Soviet  
Union or the U.S. While the  
Soviet Union can help Syria with  
arms, there is a broad perception  
in the Arab world, including Syria,  
that it's only the U.S. that can help  
achieve peace.

**There were more threats at that  
time. I don't know of any official  
threats, but the environment was  
one of threats.**

**Has Begin, as a man represent-  
ing Revisionist Zionism, exacer-  
bated the tensions or would they  
have existed anyway?**

"I think it's enough to say there's  
a clear Israeli-U.S. difference on  
two critical issues: the settlements  
and withdrawal in the West Bank.  
The Begin proposal of self-rule  
precludes withdrawal and pre-  
cludes the return of any territories  
to Jordanian sovereignty. Since  
these two positions are viewed as  
the Carter Administration as a  
retrogression from positions held  
by previous Israeli governments,  
one obviously has to assess who  
has contributed what to the  
strained relations.

After being in the State  
Department for 25 years and  
knowing how difficult it is to take  
these decisions under the gun, one  
is not prone to level critical broad-  
sides at its position.

**But in 1957 the U.S. relationship  
with Israel was still evolving and  
had not reached the intimacy of  
recent years.**

"Well, these things are very hard  
to compare, but the commitment  
to Israel's security and survival is  
firm. The strain is in an environ-  
ment where neither side believes  
that war is imminent. The strain is  
in the context of differences within  
a negotiating framework. Not that  
anybody can be totally relaxed in

# — Carter's retreat from his stand on homeland



SISCO — 25 years in U.S. State Department.

**But the Israelis are increased that  
should the Congress take a differ-  
ent view on arms to Saudi Arabia  
or Egypt the administration will  
not supply Israel either.**

"You've got to remember that  
our relations with the Arab world  
in the past few years have evolved.  
Moreover, in terms of the defini-  
tion of our own interest in this  
situation, one has to be fairly blunt  
about it. In the overall national  
interest the question of continuing  
friendly relations with Saudi  
Arabia, particularly in the after-  
math of the '73 embargo, has  
taken on an added importance.

**What I'm suggesting is, if this  
relationship is to be maintained, in  
our mutual interests — while the  
package might be conservatively  
delegated by the Congress (and I  
can also conceive of the Congress  
deciding to increase the numbers  
on the Israeli side and decrease  
them on the Saudi side) — I just  
don't believe it is possible for any  
American administration today,  
given our overall interests, to  
give our military assistance to Saudi  
Arabia.**

**But if we're going to be candid as  
you said don't we have to admit  
that the Administration's primary  
interest in putting everything into  
a package is to get around the fact  
that the Jewish lobby might block  
the Saudi sale if they were to put up  
simultaneously but independently.**

"Well, I suppose this is not factual  
for a strict pre-ace

**'Arms question  
cannot  
be avoided'**

In my judgment, it is in the  
interest of the U.S. to provide  
the arms.  
Moreover, I think it's important  
to bear in mind that Saudi Arabia  
does have legitimate self-defense  
and security needs, and these  
planes are intended to help meet  
these needs. If we don't it will be  
met by others. And I think that it is  
prudent for us to try to meet them,  
as the administration is trying to  
do, with minimum impact on the  
balance of forces in the area.

**'Honest  
differences  
with Israel'**

The differences of the U.S. has  
with Israel are honest differences.  
I have no hesitation in saying that  
I'd like to see the Israeli govern-  
ment alter its positions on the set-  
tlements issue and on Resolution  
242, because I think it's right  
in order to get on with the face-  
to-face negotiations.

**I do not believe that there is any  
realistic way for the U.S. to avoid  
provision of some F-15s to Saudi  
Arabia. In the overall interests of  
the U.S. there is not only a  
commitment to Israel but also the  
question of the need for continu-  
ing friendly relations with the  
moderate Arab states in the area.**

perhaps a broader and a more  
fundamental sense, it is also a  
reflection of the state of matters in  
the area. We are having to look at  
the situation on an overall basis  
and are trying to pursue a policy of  
arms assistance which does not  
weaken either the commitment or  
the security of Israel but at the  
same time deepens the friendly  
relations that exist between our-  
selves and friendly Arab states.

**Does this mean that the special  
relationship might evolve into a  
security treaty — something that  
was discussed by Carter and Begin  
in March?**

"I think it's altogether possible.  
And the interesting thing is that if  
one talked in terms of a security  
relationship between Israel and  
the U.S. 10 years ago the reaction  
in the Arab world would have  
been strongly, firmly, categori-  
cally negative. But there is a new  
realistic perception and under-  
standing in the Arab world — and  
when I say the Arab world I  
remember I'm focusing on Egypt,  
the "moderates" — that such a  
treaty relationship (and this has  
been said to me directly by a  
number of these leaders) would  
really be a reflection of what the  
real U.S.-Israel relationship has  
been and is.

**'Bipartisan  
to  
commitment  
to Israel'**

And I don't think that there  
would be any significant adverse  
reaction in the Arab world if we  
signed an overall agreement and  
as part of the assurances that  
would have to be given — the U.S.  
and Israel entered a precise, more  
formal security arrangement.

After all, consider the kinds of  
commitments that the U.S. made  
in connection with the interim  
agreements. They weren't formal  
treaties, but they were submitted  
to the Congress; they were  
reviewed by the Senate Foreign  
Relations Committee. And the  
commitment to Israel and Israel's  
security is bipartisan in character.

I think you would find that it  
would not be a major problem in  
Congress, because of the biparti-  
san commitment to Israel's securi-  
ty, even in this post-Vietnam envi-  
ronment.

**Would you say there would have  
to be some sort of American pres-  
ence to make such a security treaty  
readily meaningful?**

Not necessarily. I don't preclude  
this as a possibility, but I think  
both Israel and the U.S. would  
want to weigh very carefully any  
concrete element in such a sec-  
urity arrangement which would  
call in time of peace for an actual  
American presence. One of the  
things that would have to be  
weighed is whether this would  
bring pressure on the other side  
for a similar presence.

**CARVED** on the pristine  
marble front of the U.S. Sup-  
reme Court building are these  
proud words: "Equal Justice  
Under Law."

Unfortunately, this idealistic  
inscription is often ignored by the  
black-robed men and women who  
march out justice in the U.S. They  
seem more enthusiastic about  
enforcing the laws against  
individuals than malfeasance  
for they apply different standards  
to the police who commit crimes  
in the streets and the affluent  
businessmen who commit crimes  
in securities suits.

The high school dropout who  
holds up a filling station is sent off  
for a lengthy prison stretch. But  
the business leader who is caught  
embezzling funds from his stock-  
holders often gets off with a sus-  
pended sentence and a fine.

This rich man, poor man dis-  
crimination is breeding cynicism  
in the land and making a mockery  
of the legal system. I have obtained a  
Congressional report, not yet  
released to the public, which  
describes the double standard of  
justice. It should put the consci-  
ences of those who condemn white-  
collar crime but condone white-  
collar crime, honoring law and  
order more in the punishment  
than the process.

The report, "The Federal  
Cover-up of White Collar Crime,"  
was prepared for a House sub-  
committee headed by Representative  
John Conyers, D-Mich. It  
highlights Congressional mis-  
management of the white collar  
crime, which is cleverly hidden  
into the design of the federal  
enforcement model and the  
policies and practices of the Justice  
Department and Federal regula-  
tory agencies.

Conyers starkly states the report  
declares bluntly: "If you are black  
and poor and unemployed and get  
convicted of robbery, you have a  
90 per cent likelihood of being  
imprisoned. And the average length  
of imprisonment is 74 to 124  
months."

In contrast, "white collar  
embezzlers who live in the suburbs  
and steal millions instead of hun-  
dreds of thousands have only a 20  
per cent likelihood of being  
imprisoned and the average sen-  
tence is only 30 months." Street  
crime in America, of course, is  
horrible. Yet, still more often  
desperate lawbreakers steal only a  
pittance compared to the loot that  
flows from business and corpo-  
rate executives, plunder, looting, and  
fraud.

It is estimated that bankruptcy com-  
missioner Floyd, who has not seen  
inner directors and other profitable  
white collar criminals cost the public  
\$1.5 billion annually. If non-  
felonies took 40 days from prison, a  
white-collar felon could be a

white-collar felon could be a

