

as it might, it has provided U.S. foreign policy with a new moral and strategic rationale that we have lacked since the Vietnam debacle. That rationale focuses on the advancement of democracy and human rights and was most thoroughly spelled out in Carter's speeches to the Indian and French parliaments this past January ("Common Challenges of Democracies," New Delhi, January 2; "New Agenda for Democracy," Paris, January 4).

The American public is not clear about the key ideas and phrases of this new rationale—as we were, for examples, about "containment," "massive retaliation," and "détente"—but that will come with time, especially if, as now seems likely, Carter is given a second term. While skepticism toward all slogans is warranted, "Agenda for Democracy" is less belligerent and more capable of enlisting the best instincts of the American people than are most other ways of summarizing America's purpose in the world.

But the Carter achievement goes beyond rationale and rhetoric. Not that rationale and rhetoric should be belittled. They provide moral legitimacy and a broad sense of direction to specific policy decisions. Decisions, however, are made in the context of power relationships among nations. At several crucial points those relationships seem to be moving in a direction more amenable to American interests and influence. As was demonstrated at this year's meeting of the nonaligned nations, the image of an imperialist America besieged by Third World revolution is largely outdated. The meeting evidenced at least as much anxiety about Soviet expansionism as about U.S. designs, and some formerly hostile nations are actively bidding for American support, if not outright alliance.

Complex tensions such as those between Vietnam, China, and the Soviet Union reflect a situation in which the primary security concern of Communist nations is in relation to other Communists. China seems to be taking a more relaxed approach toward Taiwan, no longer demanding that anyone who deals with Peking must treat Taipei as an international pariah. New relations between China and Japan pose to Russia the age-old threat of two-front vulnerability in Asia and must increase Soviet interest in reaching accommodations on SALT and other agreements on the Western front. In Africa, despite last-minute snags, peaceful transition to an independent Namibia seems likely, and the Angola-Zaire eruption of last year appears to be under control. Closer to home, separatist passions in Quebec have definitely subsided, and the supposedly imminent takeovers by Eurocommunism in Italy and France have receded at least for the moment to the status of troubling possibilities.

Admittedly there are ominous exceptions to the picture of general improvement. The administration has been puzzlingly wrongheaded in responding to Rhodesia's movement toward a democratic and multiracial Zimbabwe. By refusing to take advantage of positive aspects of the "internal settlement," in-

deed by deliberately undercutting that proposal, the administration has virtually invited the Russian-Cuban dominance that it laments. With respect to the tragedy of Cambodia, the U.S. has offered a few words of condemnation but no initiative in forming an international response appropriate to that unmitigated barbarity. Similarly, aside from expressions of concern, it is not at all clear that Carter has anything in mind to prevent the threatened annihilation of the Christian population of Lebanon.

Beyond such localized crises, most of which have global repercussions, the administration has still to come up with a comprehensive and credible response to demands for a new international economic order. There is not, for example, the hint of a policy with respect to the burgeoning role of multinational corporations in the international order. Nor, except for piecemeal proposals on Mexican immigration and undocumented aliens, is there a clear sense of direction on the future of U.S. immigration policy, and on that problem the already enormous pressures can only increase. Finally, the first two years—including America's nonperformance at the U.N. special session on disarmament—give little reason for expecting a breakthrough on the overriding threat of our time: a nuclear exchange sparked by accident, madness, or design (madness and design being in this case synonymous).

So the Carter achievement is sharply qualified. Where things are improved, it is sometimes because of, sometimes despite, the efforts of the Nixon-Kissinger years. Just as often there is probably little causal connection between formal policies and what happens around the world, both for better and for worse. In foreign affairs, as elsewhere, policy is frequently an after-the-fact rationalization of happenings out of control. Then too it may be that some of the unfinished business mentioned above must, almost by definition, always remain unfinished short of the advent of the Messiah, who Jimmy Carter definitely is not. Nevertheless, and allowing for all that, the Camp David summit is the right time to reevaluate this administration's record in foreign affairs. The fair-minded conclusion is that, after a little less than two years in office, there is reason for solid appreciation of, if not wild acclaim for, the Carter achievement.

EXCURSUS II

*Mark A. Bruzonsky on
Assessing Camp David*

If, as planned at Camp David, a separate peace between Egypt and Israel is consummated by the end of this year, the achievement should be viewed only as a foundation for settling the gut issues that

have alienated Jew and Arab through this century.

Whatever one's view of Camp David's outcome, it is hardly the comprehensive Arab-Israeli settlement Carter loudly preached from inauguration day until the Sadat Jerusalem extravaganza one year ago. At best the Carter-inspired formula is an uneasy, unstable beginning to what might eventually become a firmer Middle East accommodation. At worst it is a collapsible gamble at a separate peace—one accomplished in exhausted desperation and one that, if aborted, might create an even more intolerable situation than existed before.

If the Egyptian-Israeli understanding should break down, there is little likelihood of shifting back to the comprehensive settlement approach. The psychological turmoil sure to accompany such a collapse could render peace as a concept a victim and discredit the entire process of reconciliation.

By choosing the Camp David framework, the actual and conceptual progress made toward an across-the-board settlement—à la the Brookings Report, as has been discussed in these pages during the past two years—has been negated in favor of a return to a Kissingerian step-by-step approach. Camp David was even more a triumph for Kissinger than for Carter.

Everyone chose to gamble big in the seclusion of the Cacotin Mountains. Sadat, by taking on himself the making of a separate deal—one disguised by rather transparent ambiguities regarding the crucial issues of the West Bank, the Palestinians, and Jerusalem, and one sure to result in a replay of the frustrating debate over the meaning of Resolution 242—has cast his fate with Washington and Israel. Neither economically nor politically will the Egyptian leader have much to show very soon for his decisiveness. Meanwhile, both Begin and Carter have been appointed to the committee guiding Egypt's destiny.

Carter is gambling that he can contain inter-Arab rivalries and that the feared collapse of the Camp David formula can be avoided. By sanctioning years of haggling over the key issues (rather than insisting on a clearer process for Palestinian self-determination and eventual Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank) he has extended the U.S. "full partnership" into the indefinite future. Washington is now saddled with the unenviable responsibility of guiding a process that Camp David's confusing result renders highly dubious and problematical. American credibility is more on the line now than before.

Begin has risked least of all—in the short run. Israel is today militarily invincible, and even should the Egyptian-Israeli peace deteriorate, his political hand would remain strong. If the separate deal takes root, Begin is proclaimed hero. If it comes apart, he has defused the pressures that have mounted during the last two years for a settlement that would have tackled the intractable issues. Yet for Israel the gamble is also considerable. An amber light has been given to Palestinian self-expression in an atmosphere of confrontation. There is now a

precedent for territorial withdrawal and dismantling settlements. And continuing Arab hostility creates for the Jewish state a schizophrenic condition of peace and war at the same time.

Theoretically the Camp David formula should be judged by an assessment of alternatives as well as risks. The principal alternative was, as during 1976 and 1977, to plan a Geneva conference in which Soviet concerns would have been considered and in which the willingness of other Arab parties (including Syria and the moderate wing of Al Fatah) to endorse some initial form of Arab-Israeli coexistence could have been exploited.

Politically, in view of Carter's domestic predicament, Begin's aggressive political instincts, and Sadat's relative impotence, the risks of the Camp David approach were apparently viewed by Jimmy Carter to be less than those of continuing to strive for more now.

Objectively, combining theory and politics, what emerged from Camp David is far less spectacular than generally thought—and only marginally encouraging. The test is what now follows and whether a stable Middle East framework protecting American interests and assuring Israel's acceptance can be fastened onto the Camp David skeleton.

For Israel the post-Camp David period should be a time of reassessment. The political victory of 1978 can be consolidated, not by unyielding determination to block further territorial withdrawal and Palestinian self-determination, but by an openness toward settling the formerly unresolvable issues. Israel would be well advised to remember how the post-1967 euphoria led to the 1973 collapse. The U.S. must now justify step-by-step diplomacy by creating conditions for a full Middle East peace over the next two to four years. For basic issues remain to be resolved—even after Camp David.

EXCURSUS III

Jewish Leaders on Camp David

Q: *What was agreed to at Camp David?*

A: There were two agreements. One provides the framework for the conclusion of a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel by mid-December, 1978. The other sets out the basis for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, providing for bilateral peace treaties on the Egyptian-Israeli model with each of the neighboring Arab states, as well as special arrangements for the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) and Gaza with the participation of the Palestinian Arabs in the process. Each agreement stands on its own; the bilateral Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty does not depend on the comprehensive framework agreement.