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The U. S. and Israel: Proposals to Avert Another Middle East War

By MARK A. BRUZONSKY*

Recent months have significantly heightened the concern that another Middle East war is approaching with unforeseeable consequences not only to the direct participants. The ups and downs in the press-reported level of concern are not nearly as telling as the bulging stocks of weapons and the ever escalating tensions. Jon Kimche, writing in *Midstream* — a well-respected monthly in American Zionist circles — states bluntly that the Rabat Conference and Arafat's U.N. appearance have "ruled out the prospect of any kind of peace settlement between Israel and the Arab world as a whole... for a decade or possibly a generation."

The likely costs of another war will be huge for the United States — in relations with the Arabs, in energy supplies, in strains and even cracks within the Western alliance, and in a potential U.S.-U.S.S.R. collision crushing détente. Except for this latter possibility, a Machiavellian might well conclude that the Soviet Union could only gain from a fifth round between Jews and Arabs. Such a world view would only seem to make eruption more likely.

It has further been said that the Pentagon is increasingly concerned with the Middle East and "almost totally preoccupied," in the words of *New Republic* Associate Editor Stanley Karnow, with the fate of the entire region. Though there are some signs of hope — repeated assurances by Anwar Sadat that Israel's right to exist is accepted, for instance — on the whole, the situation looks ominous. What seems to be desperately needed is some preventive diplomacy beyond what Kissinger has so far been able to prescribe.

Even though Brezhnev's January visit to Egypt was put off, for whatever reasons, the signs are clear that 1975 could bring renewed Soviet arming of Egypt à la Soviet gorging of Syria. While Kissinger now has more time, the pressure for progress, either in fact or appearance, is even more intense. With the Israelis unwilling to trade major political and strategic concessions for the ambiguous and all-too-reversible return concessions offered so far, relations between the U.S. and Israel are potentially seriously strained. While Kissinger weights the lever separating

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Egypt and the Soviet Union, the same Machiavellian has to wonder if the same strategy isn't being pursued by the other side. A shrewd and coy Kremlin might well have decided that there is a greater likelihood of Soviet success at some future date, after Henry Kissinger has played nearly all of his cards and after Israel appears even more as the party holding back when there is supposedly a real chance of peace. Beginning a few months ago in a New Year's day editorial, even **The Washington Post** indicated that "The United States should press Israel hard" in view of recent events to force major concessions at least to Egypt.

More threatening than this jockeying for advantage by the super-antagonists, recent U.S. events make it probable that there has been high-level speculation about standing up to any further Arab use of the oil "weapon." Talk of strangulation and military force is actually a move to defuse the embargo weapon if not to bring some relief from the unbearable prices. The U.S. just might declare such use of oil to be an act of strangulation and hence an act of war which could legitimately provoke a military response — for instance the occupation of one or more of the Gulf sheikhdoms as outlined by Professor Robert Tucker in the much discussed **Commentary Magazine** article. **U.S. News and World Report** back in November 1974 carried a major story about such a possibility with a picture of U.S. Marines training in California's Mojave Desert. Much that was once thought unthinkable has at least become plausible. Further, the references to nuclear weapons by both sides in the Middle East, however much everyone tries to diminish their meaning, loom perilously in any future scenario of major fighting.

It is not surprising that recently three major attempts to offer a way out for both the U.S. and Israel have appeared in the American press. Others since then have generally fallen within the parameters of these three.

In the first, the director of studies at the Council on Foreign Relations and professor of international affairs at Princeton's acclaimed Woodrow Wilson School, Richard H. Ullman, promotes a treaty relationship between the U.S. and Israel including the stationing of American troops there to ensure the credibility of the American commitment. "If there ever were a political situation which cried out for measures to reduce ambiguity, it is the present stage of conflict in the Middle East," writes Ullman in his article which appears in the January issue of **Foreign Affairs**.

In the second, George W. Ball, former Under Secretary of State, writes in the January issue **The Atlantic Monthly** that "time is not running on the side of peace" and "the danger that the Middle East may become a Balkan-like situation involving the superpowers in a nuclear confrontation cannot be lightly dismissed." Ball insists that the U.S.

should try to enlist the aid of the Soviet Union in imposing a Middle East settlement, rather than shutting out the Russians as Henry Kissinger has done with his shuttle-diplomacy. He envisions a settlement largely based on U.N. Resolution 242 with borders guaranteed jointly by the U.S. and the Soviet Union and with joint "Soviet-American patrols of buffer areas," together with an embargo on arms to the area.

And finally, representing what seems to be a growing body of sentiment, T. McAdams Deford, now with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, suggests a three state solution with the U.S. coming out for the creation of a Palestinian state while at the same time letting it be known that Israel's existence would be guaranteed within its shrunken borders. Claiming that the Arab states now want a solution with Israel and that a Palestinian state would gradually bring about the real moderation of the P.L.O., Deford writes that "just as the Palestinians must now be told they will have to destroy us to destroy Israel, so we must help the Israelis to begin adjusting to the fact that there can be no solution that does not involve a free Palestine." Deford's article appeared in *The Washington Post* on December 15.

All three of these proposals have common denominators: the October Rabat Conference changed the very framework for making progress toward a settlement; Kissinger's step-by-step approach has been derailed and cannot succeed as conceived; only new policies can prevent the outbreak of another war with all of the uncertainties and the dreadful risks.

It is hard to imagine the gravity of the predicament the U.S. faces in the Middle East. Sadat insisted a year ago, when his armies were nearly devastated, that the war was required whatever the cost, to force the world community to accept the urgency of doing something to break the Middle East stalemate. But still, it seems, a situation must boil over again into actual combat before the battle reports actually stir the adrenalin which, after all, politicians need as much as military men. This time, with rockets aimed at opponent cities, and talk, however ambiguous, of even nuclear weapons, the U.S. finds itself having not only to safeguard Israeli survival, but having the responsibility as well to defuse and prevent a potentially catastrophic confrontation at the regional and possibly at the world level. Such a confrontation, everyone seems to agree, could have absolutely devastating political and economic consequences for the entire Western world. The drift toward war in the Middle East, Deford warns, "is still the greatest international threat to U.S. interests." Israelis and many American Jews are not always fully cognizant of the burdens that fall upon a country which has taken upon itself the responsibility for world peace, in addition to the economic and political welfare of other countries.

The Middle East is thus not only a testing ground for superpower

weapons, it is a testing ground as well for U.S. leadership of the Western alliance. Beyond this, it has become the central geopolitical focus for validating the legitimacy of East-West détente itself — especially after the collapse of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Trade Agreement. If détente has any real meaning and if the Declaration of Basic Principles signed in 1972 and the Agreement for the Prevention of Nuclear War of 1973 are living documents, rather than gestures for public show, then there must be room for creative diplomacy. Evidently that is what all three of these strategists have in mind with their proposals, even though they reach differing conclusions and begin with varying presumptions.

Richard Ullman, a well-respected and influential political observer and past Washington participant with the National Security Council, has offered the most controversial proposal. In the true sense of the word's meaning, it might even be termed "radical." He suggests unilateral action by the U.S. at a time when the post-Vietnam syndrome pervades the entire society and when a neo-isolationism has infused the 94th Congress considerably more than the one which just concluded. Americans seem hardly receptive to foreign adventurism of any kind. And, in addition, a unilateral commitment of American troops, after all, would be the reverse of what Secretary Kissinger told the nation caused the U.S. to go on an unprecedented nuclear alert little more than a year ago. Yet Ullman's reasoning may be more well-conceived and his presumptions more based in reality than those of the other two theorists. His conclusion that, if we were going to make the most "logical choice", it would be an "overt and explicit commitment to Israel's defense — including even the stationing of U.S. military contingents in Israel," seems sound if you accept his logic and analysis.

Unlike Ball, Ullman agrees with Secretary Kissinger that the Soviet Union, while not seeking a confrontation with the U.S., has fundamentally differing interests in the Middle East and they do not include political or military stability. The only danger for it is the situation getting out of control. Ullman does not doubt that the superpowers could impose a settlement upon both parties, he just doesn't think they will cooperate to the extent necessary to do so — at least not short of finding themselves reacting to another Cuban missile-style confrontation where they are backing off from being eyeball to eyeball. "The regional interests of the two superpowers diverge in so many respects," Ullman insists, that we cannot expect the Soviet Union, however desirable, to act with us, promoting regional stability and reduced tensions between Israel, the Arab States, and the P.L.O. With "Soviet influence within the Arab world almost certainly [dependent] upon the continuation of high levels of Arab-Israeli hostility," no Realpolitik assessment of the situation can be premissed upon lasting U.S.-Soviet cooperation.

Rabat did change the nature of the game — on this all three writers agree. It symbolized the P.L.O.'s assertion of leadership regardless of how representative the P.L.O. is and thus makes any compromise over the West Bank immensely more difficult. And it showed how Secretary Kissinger's carefully conceived step-by-step plan for gradual progress could be sabotaged by those less moderate than those the Secretary had chosen to rely upon — namely Sadat and Hussein and, on oil matters, King Faisal. As a theorist, Ullman is correct in his awareness that the very dynamic of the "struggle for leadership within the Palestinian movement and within the Arab world at large" makes the road to political success susceptible to the exploration of the pervasive disdain for Israel. "Otherwise moderate leaders, are thus driven to embrace militant positions on some issues in order to protect their power to deal with others", especially since "revolutionary politics favors the extremist and the fundamentalist over the moderate and the compromiser." There can be no doubt that both Sadat and Hussein are walking tight-ropes, unsure where their interests and their very survival lie. In international affairs, actions do not simply affect the specific issue at stake. When the British encouraged Hussein to enter the 1973 war, even in the limited way he eventually did, the realities of holding power and influence were clearly demonstrated.

In another sense, Rabat symbolized the climaxing of the long-held Arab assumption that history is on their side. Writing from Cairo in June following the 12th Palestine National Council meeting, David Hirst noted that "there was hardly a delegate there — guerrilla leader, 'independent', notable, intellectual or West Bank deportee — who does not believe that Israel is now ultimately doomed, that the October War marked the beginning of the end of Zionism..."

Even for the moderate Arab leaders, surely the vision of eventually returning all of the Middle East and North Africa to Arab sovereignty must hold powerful emotional and psychological sway. Hence the Israeli uneasiness about a Sadat who one day talks of Israel's legitimacy and the next day says that the next generation of Arabs will finish what this generation has begun while sending his foreign minister out to insist that Israel halt all immigration for the next 50 years!

If the situation is looked at as an inevitable conflict between peoples and cultures, even a temporary settlement that does not give Israel absolute guarantees and bring about a deescalation in the Middle East arms race will be one containing omens of danger for Israel and making Israeli concessions at the best tortuous — politically as well as strategically. With such a perspective, Ullman's proposals carry greater attractiveness notwithstanding the risks. Long-term Arab strategy, if it is to squeeze Israel out over the decades, may for now be to soften her

up for the kill by Arab acceptance (but only for now) of the weakening which would inevitably be brought about by Israeli territorial and political concessions. Such an Arab strategy would have to be completely recontemplated should the American commitment to Israel become absolute. After all, one of the primary Arab assumptions, one grossly inflated by the oil weapon, has been that the link between the U.S. and Israel — the life-line if you will — can at first be loosened and then eventually severed. A credible U.S. guarantee of Israel's future would make such Arab visions untenable and themselves incredible.

With the probable failure of Secretary Kissinger's step-by-step approach — another point all three writers agree upon but which remains uncertain, of course — and the unlikelihood that the Soviet Union will join the U.S. to impose stability in the region, Ullman asks the basic question which the U.S. must face — what can the U.S. do unilaterally in its own interests as well as the interests of Israel? Even the word "unilateral" carries with it the realization that America is not in such a mood. Still, Ullman proceeds analytically on the assumption that logic can convert skeptics to allies. After all, if J. W. Fulbright can propose a treaty commitment between the U.S. and Israel it shouldn't be impossible to convince two-thirds of the pro-Israeli U.S. Senate to rally around the idea — especially if the powerful Jewish lobby (which means the Israeli government inevitably) can be convinced that this is the best of many bad alternatives.

Ullman has one other basic premiss — the most frightening of all — that Israel may not to be able to survive any longer (or would have to suffer too much of a battering) without actual U.S. intervention at some future date. Until now, supply of weapons has been deemed sufficient. But supply of weapons alone is no longer an adequate guarantor for Israel, especially if the Arabs decide they are willing to pay a very high price to defeat Zionism. This is indeed the primary motivation behind recent high-level Israeli speculation about nuclear weapons. The stakes have been raised. It is a quantum jump.

The situation now created is one where "the vast transformation in the relative abilities of the two sides to command resources, together with other gradual but steady improvement in the fighting ability of Arab forces, have (sic) worked and will continue to work to undermine the credibility of the American commitment to Israeli independence." It is the credibility of the U.S. *de facto* commitment which Ullman worries may be the only thing capable of preventing what Ball and so many others see coming in 1975. "If the stalemate continues," writes Ball, "there will almost certainly be another Arab-Israeli war within the next nine months." And Ball is correct to include the possibility that such a war could be brought about by Israeli preemption — even with

the current world political line-up — as isolation and fear push Israel more and more toward desperation. Maybe strengthening the American commitment to *de jure* stature raises the credibility of American resolve sufficiently to prevent either an Arab attack or an Israeli preemption.

An unambiguously demonstrated American commitment would not only force the Arabs to completely reevaluate the potential costs of making war again on Israel; it would at the same time place the Soviet Union in the position of having to risk all the gains of détente and even world war in the event of another confrontation. Further, "only in the presence of a concrete American commitment" could Israel, "in the absence of credible Arab assurances — afford to accept the increased military vulnerability that would come from surrendering occupied territories". Dayan is probably right that nearly all territory, including Golan, would have to be given back in order to really try the Arabs in any peace settlement. How could this come about without some American assurances in unprecedented form? Indeed, Ullman's thesis is that only such strong action by the only country in a position to act — treaty plus troops with the analogies of South Korea and especially of Berlin in mind — could bring the American commitment to full credibility for both the Arabs and the Israelis.

Under such a scenario of a fully credible guarantee, massive territorial concessions might be a worthwhile risk for Israel. Especially when all other alternatives seem even less inviting. But even if a guarantee were to be extended (and some feel there is a sufficient one now) what would suffice to actually make it "fully credible?"

The result of the debasement of both American strength and American will — itself the result of American foreign policy in the 1960s — has made U.S. commitments only credible when accompanied by explicit acts. As for Israeli withdrawal from all the territories gained in the Six-Day War (which would have to include some sort of at least symbolic internationalization of the Old City of Jerusalem), the Israelis will always wonder if they can rely on anyone other than themselves. U Thant's U.N. fiasco in 1967 surely will be remembered. But the Israelis now know as well that their security is inextricably tied to American strength and resolve. And one young Israeli strategist who has been studying and working in the U.S. and is closely in touch with Ullman has for years been talking about the absolute need for concrete American guarantees as the best way to stabilize the area and allow Israel to make concessions to the Arabs.

While Ullman does not specifically denote what concessions are to be expected (demanded is the proper word for both Ball and Deford) or tell us for sure whether he favors a Palestinian state, the clear implication is that Israel would have to trade most, if not all, post-1967

territories and maybe even agree to a third state in the area in order to validate the American guarantees. In this way, the Arabs would be able to point to a **quid pro quo** which might — if they really do want peace — give them the excuse necessary to enter into some state of hesitant peace with Israel.

And finally, after philosophizing about the role the U.S. should play in the world and that "the value of the Israeli experiment itself" may be enough, regardless of strategic or moral considerations, to mandate a U.S. willingness to guarantee Israel, Ullman warns that the potential costs of inaction for America may well surpass the likely costs of taking the actions he recommends. Ullman is a realist. It is only because he and his colleagues see such a desperate situation that he is advocating such drastic steps.

But in this area of comparative costs, his analysis seems incomplete — an incompleteness which gives rise to expectations of a follow-up analysis after debate on his proposal mounts. For Ullman doesn't take on the logical reasoning that, if the Soviet Union's principal interest is instability in the region (his own presumption), then how will it react to U.S. attempts to shut it out through some 20th century extension of the Monroe Doctrine to the shores of the Mediterranean much in tune with William Buckley's call for Israel to become the 51st state? Neither does he tell us how the Arab extremists might be expected to respond. Lacking other help, we are forced to rely upon Alfred Coppel's **Thirty-four East**, a fascinating novel but frightening in its portrayal of risks. Without some further hypothesizing as to conditions that will develop in the region in the coming decade or two, under Ullman's scenario we are still left to add up for ourselves the eventual costs of inaction, or alternative actions. It is not enough to prevent the "coming war", no matter how vital it is to do so. The goal must be U.S. involvement in the Middle East that will actually work to defuse the conflict permanently. If it is our chess move it needs to be check-mate. In a nuclear world you cannot make final commitments without being sure.

And possibly even more crucially, Ullman refuses to come to any terms with domestic American political-psychological realities. Some attempt to lead us through the political labyrinths from where we are to where we should go seems essential. For if we cannot get there, the merits of the logical analysis lose much of their value and some other policies will have to be conceived — policies that can be implemented. Telling us that there is a post-Vietnam syndrome which must be overcome is not enough.

Ullman relies completely upon the traditional actor model for policy formulation, but he has little to say about policy implementation where the bureaucratic thicket model and the realities of domestic public

opinion may supervene. Even a man as brilliant as Henry Kissinger may not be able to achieve the remarkable domestic coalition-building that would be necessary to make Ullman's proposal U.S. policy while at the same time juggling the international actors and weaving together a composite framework for Middle East stability. And even if he could, William Fulbright warned in October 1973 at the Pacem in Terris III Conference how dangerous it was to even attempt to build a world-order which only a virtuoso statesman could possibly orchestrate. "The cleverness of statesmen", Fulbright told the assembled thousands who all knew he had the new Secretary of State specifically in mind, is "a commodity hardly to be relied upon".

"And that indeed is the root weakness of the game of nations; it is a despotism without laws, as stable or shaky, just or unjust, as the man momentarily at the top of the heap. In international relations, as within our own country, stability requires institutions; it requires a system that ordinary men can run and incompetent men cannot ruin. Guarantee if you can that the game will be played by a Bismarck or Talleyrand, by a Kissinger or Le Duc Tho, perhaps I will withdraw my objections. But as long as luminaries give way to lesser lights — and they always do — the objections stand. As Henry Kissinger once wrote of Prince Bismarck, 'In the hands of others lacking his subtle touch, his methods led to the collapse of the nineteenth century state system. The nemesis of power is that, except in the hands of a master, reliance on it is more likely to produce a contest of arms than of selfrestraint.'"

One of the long-held assumptions about a nuclear world has been the vital necessity to keep U.S. and Soviet troops as many steps as possible from collision. In considering the desirability of Ullman's proposal it is absolutely essential to go beyond considerations of what might bring stability to the Middle East region. We need to know how much potential instability might be brought to the entire world in any conceivable circumstances. Do we want to risk lessening the number of steps to world catastrophe in one of the world's most unstable and unpredictable areas? And might not this be the very result if the Soviet response to U.S. unilateral introduction of troops is the placing of Soviet troops in the area as well? The decade of arms building following the humiliation of the Cuban Missile Crisis wasn't undertaken so that the Kremlin would have to back down at the next major challenge.

Ullman takes us only part of the way in his **Foreign Affairs** outline. But at least his is a trip worth taking. And hopefully it is only an **entrée**. His approach to many of the questions just asked might be that instability plus uncertainty (the present) is the worst of all worlds, and

simply not preferable to instability with certainty. And with the new situation he advocates, the certainty itself should over time interact to help bring about less instability. Anyway, the alternatives offered by George Ball and T. McAdams Deford are considerably more questionable when their premisses and prescriptions are fully examined.

As for George Ball, he no more favors unilateral U.S. initiatives regarding Israel than he does in relation to the energy crisis. He is instinctively a compromiser and might just possibly be misled by an unwarranted optimism about the very nature of international conflict. The Israelis have constantly warned that imposition of a settlement cannot possibly work in the long run. And the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC — the focus of all Jewish lobbying activities in Washington) has severely criticized Ball's imposition approach, calling it very dangerous since it misleads the Arabs to think that the U.S. and Israel can be pried apart with the U.S. beginning to dictate terms to Israel — terms which Israel would otherwise be right in rejecting. Unfortunately, Kissinger's apparent use of "unrelenting pressure", the phrase of the Insight Team of the **London Sunday Times** in the new comprehensive book **The Yom Kippur War**, to force Israeli concessions at the end of the October War, gives some credence to Ball's approach and to Arab hopes.

Ball too sees Kissinger's initiatives ending in failure since the Secretary "never had a clear plan as to how he might bring an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict". He further believes that "Kissinger's conception of a step-by-step solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is now obsolete", made so by the Rabat circumvention. Philosophically, Ball is not so sure that U.S. and Soviet interests are so fundamentally divergent in the area, especially with détente still fragile. He hypothesizes that Kissinger's bypassing of the Russians has made them none too eager to help out. And anyway, he believes that "the critical substantive questions" can only be resolved "in the multilateral setting of the Geneva conference, with the participation of all the principal Arab states including the most radical, and with the Russians acting as co-chairman."

Ball's view of the future is a stable Middle East after a settlement dictated to all parties and guaranteed in reality by the superpowers and in form by the U.N. Security Council. Imposing a settlement is desirable to Ball since "the major nations of the world have an obligation not to stand passively by while a new war flames in one of the world's most sensitive strategic areas". He, too, is not specific about just what the settlement would include — which detracts considerably from his promise to tell us how to avert another round of war but he is for telling the parties that they **must** settle their disputes without war and once and for all.

Apparently, Ball is as much interested in imposing this settlement on the Arabs as he is of doing so upon Israel. "The mood of the Arab leaders at the Rabat conference," he says, "had ominous overtones. They seemed to be saying that with their vast new wealth, they no longer needed to make many concessions, either to Israel or to the U.S." But Ball fails to tell us why if this is true he also believes that secretly the Arab leaders might accept a U.S. imposed settlement that apparently guarantees Israel forever — Deford even believes that many Arab leaders wish to see an imposed settlement. Or is it that the Arabs really wish something to be imposed on Israel now which will weaken it for a future onslaught? Ball leaves the whole area of long-range Arab intentions too unclear for those who begin with the insistence that Israel must survive and that geostrategic and geopolitical positions must not be totally weakened. And for those more suspicious of the Soviet Union than Ball, it is inconceivable to ask Israel to accept the Russians as a co-guarantor. Only America has the respect and the trust for this role.

Since the key for Ball is Soviet cooperation he insists that "whether the Soviet Union would be willing to participate in such a common effort cannot be predicted with assurance" — thus starting where Ullman concludes. Ball sees the possibility that, in the crunch, the U.S. would not launch a military venture even to save Israel from defeat (a very very questionable hypothesis)* and he follows it with another thesis, in opposition to Ullman, that the Soviets really would "like to see a stable Middle East provided they could play a part in bringing it about." Anyway, he reaches the conclusion that the burden is on the U.S. to bring about joint — not unilateral — superpower intervention, since so far we have tried to go it alone.

What we need to know from Ball, though, is what the U.S. should do if Ullman's analysis of Soviet interests and intentions proves to be more perceptive than his own. Since many believe Ball is simply wrong about ultimate U.S. determination to prevail in the Middle East, would it be better to prove ourselves now before the fact or wait for a test as in Cuba a decade ago to make U.S. convictions absolutely clear?

* But Ball is right, there is doubt. And, of course, for Ullman this is the very problem. In December a Sindlinger Poll for instance determined that only 22.9% of those polled favored U.S. armed intervention even if it were needed to prevent an Israeli defeat. 47.4% opposed and 6.7% said "Perhaps". A year ago, 43.1% backed intervention. And, in Joe Alsop's report of his luncheon with President Ford in January, the columnist said that Ford thinks that because of Vietnam the American people would not stand for an active U.S. role in the Middle East unless the Soviets intervened first.

All nuclear game theory under such circumstances has to lead us to opt for Ullman's pre-conflict resolution of the basic issue of U.S. commitment. Even a role as co-guarantor ultimately means U.S. willingness to act on its own. There is no escaping a minimal divergence of interests and goals between the superantagonists. And Jewish-Arab hostility will not disappear quickly.

Though possibly an initiative to convince the Soviet Union to dictate terms mutually and cease arming the parties is worth trying,** and, indeed, "would be a solid test of the sincerity and significance of detente," what should the U.S. do if the Soviets have other ideas? This is where Ball ends and Ullman begins. And it is why Ullman's proposal seems so much more relevant to the current situation. Ball's great failure is his unwillingness to see the U.S. act on its own when political and economic conditions have made our allies impotent and our adversaries expectant. Some might accuse him of fitting Rollo May's description of the combination of power and innocence.

Deford's proposal begins not with the U.S. or the U.S.S.R., but rather with the P.L.O. While he accepts the U.S. role as key, his priority is not with strategic initiatives or joint U.S.-U.S.S.R. guarantee forces. Guaranteeing the existence of Israel is something he is willing to make explicit, but he doesn't spell out what this means in actualization — this apparently is not the crucial problem. What he does place as his priority is the creation of a Palestinian state and the need for the U.S. publicly to take such a stance thereby defusing Arab intransigence about the "just rights of the Palestinian people". "The Arabs want a solution" is a certain premiss behind Deford's strategy and he outlines how, for the first time since Israel's creation, the Arabs have the resources and the psychological strength to accept a sovereign Jewish state in the region. "They are now mature enough politically and psychologically to live with Israel".

These themes dominate Deford's outlook and result in his conclusion that "the Palestinians have emerged as a real obstacle" to settlement. Once the U.S. breaks through this obstacle and declares itself in favor of a three state solution the Israelis "ultimately have little option but to go along". Though Deford tries not to color his proposal in clear terms of imposing a solution upon Israel, his overall approach is one of telling Israel what to do or else because this is what the Arabs really want and this is what will bring the peace that Israel wants. He concludes that the only ones in the Arab world who also need a

**And who knows what Kissinger has tried during his numerous visits to the Kremlin. In fact, it is hard to believe that he hasn't tried this and found Ullman's presumptions substantiated.

solution imposed upon them are the radical Palestinians, but once they are given something to negotiate really for "the Palestinians will show themselves as rational and moderate as the Israelis".

Actually, Deford's proposal seems remarkably similar to the much more elaborate creation of a "New Palestine" outlined in a pamphlet by Joseph D. Ben-Dak and George E. Assousa and published recently by the Stanley Foundation under the title "Peace in the Near East: The Palestinian Imperative." Deford is really speaking for a lot of people who, unaware of how the Palestinian issue has been manipulated ever since 1948, focus on the Palestinians as if they were the key element in the struggle.

In the sense that Israel's existence would be "guaranteed" (whatever he means by that phrase — he is the least clear of the three writers), Deford's strategy is not incompatible with either Ball's or Ullman's. The important thing is that neither Ball nor Ullman is willing to overlook that the struggle has always been between the Arabs and Israel with the Palestinians playing a very minor role. The American Jewish Congress has demonstrated this very clearly in a new pamphlet entitled "The Palestinians: What is Real and what is Politics." Deford has his priorities reversed. There may or may not be a third state in the area. Palestinian passions might also be cooled through some kind of Palestinian federation with Jordan. Or, as Arik Sharon surmised a few months back, maybe Israel should help the Palestinians overthrow King Hussein and rule in the state where they have always been a majority and which comprises over three-fourths of historic Palestine. Deford, and those insisting that the primary issue is a third Palestinian state, simply fail to understand the larger geopolitical issues involved between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. And, most crucially, they fail to perceive the real conflict that exists between the entire Arab world and Israel.

Deford is also the most optimistic of the three writers. He sees the P.L.O. moving toward "conservatism that grows with statehood," he thinks the Arabs are ready and even desirous of achieving a lasting peace with Israel, and that, since the Russians are "on record" as publicly accepting Israel's existence and the principle of a Palestinian state, the desires of the superpowers in the region would be in unison if the U.S. would only come out for a Palestinian state.

We can only wish all of this to be true. But experience teaches caution. What if the Russians seek instability and use a Palestinian state as a political and military base? What if the P.L.O. makes the new state into a third front for Israel? What if U.S. guarantees are still seen as not fully credible? What if radical leaders à la Quadaffy should take over in Egypt or Jordan? What if a U.S. Administration in the crunch decides it is unwilling or unable to honor American guarantees?

And what if future Arab demands, again in the form of blackmail, insist on a return to the U.N. partition boundaries of 1947? What if, under rhetoric like Arafat's at the recent U.N. General Assembly, the U.N. were even to sanction (as many have already concluded this year's General Assembly resolution actually does) an end to the Jewish state?

Deford is simply too sure of himself. "If there is no Palestinian state, there will be another war," he pronounces. Possibly, as a former State Department Foreign Service Officer he has imbibed some of that Arabism so well-known to permeate the diplomatic corps.

Nevertheless, his willingness to guarantee Israel's shrunken existence is significant. It lends credence to a certain extent to Ullman's thesis that the support for U.S. unilateral initiatives to guarantee Israel can be found and nurtured. But overall, Deford seems closer to Ball's imposition approach through a joint Russian-American initiative. The carrot for the Russians is, of course, a new state in the area where they might finally have a real opening into the entire region. In fact, if Ball's optimism about the Soviet Union and Deford's optimism about the Arabs are joined together it is a wonder that the situation is so bleak and ominous in the first place.

So it is that a logical analysis of the proposals being made to prevent another catastrophic Middle East blow-up leads to the conclusion that possibly the most radical of them all is the one which merits further attention. It is likely that Ball's approach has already been tried, and that his assumptions have proved unwarranted. If it has not been fully tried it may well be because Kissinger has decided it to be too dangerous to let the Kremlin get too involved in the Middle East. To do so might mean serious political and economic losses of a magnitude too great to willingly accept. And it is unlikely that Deford has his priorities properly in place. If the Palestinian problem were really the key and if a West Bank state were really the central issue, then why, when there were no occupied territories, did the war in 1967 ever happen and why did the Arabs attempt to crush Israel in 1948? And why the tone and content of Arafat's U.N. drama? Has everything really changed practically overnight as Deford insists?

Joe Alsop, before ending his sensational writing career, came away from a luncheon with President Ford a week or so before Christmas 1974 writing that "President Ford considers there is a horribly high chance of renewed war in the Middle East within hardly more than half a year. He further foresees that another Arab-Israeli war will have every kind of shocking consequence, ranging from re-imposition of the Arab oil embargo all the way to the emergence of a measure of serious anti-Semitism in the U.S." Alsop called Ford's Middle East outlook a "horrifying centerpiece" to the President's list of problems.

Surely the Secretary of State and the American government will closely reevaluate current American policies and try something that seems to make logical sense. Maybe Ullman's proposal — risks included and without a completed analysis of likely costs and effects — is the best there is. And perhaps Secretary of State Kissinger has the domestic diplomatic brilliance to save his foreign policy achievements in the Middle East.*

* [Since this article was written, any hopes that Dr Kissinger might perform a miracle of adjustment between Egypt and Israel, at all events a preservation of vital momentum in the slow process of pacification of the Middle East, have unhappily been, if not shattered, shelved sine die. On the face of it, the distinguished 'matchmaker', in this last February marathon capital-hopping of his, found himself either the bearer of unpalatable bids from the groom or the broker of an unattractive dowry from the bride; Far too much, and too hastily, is being muttered now in the Press and in White Houses about which party was to blame for breaking down the fragile talks by inflexibility or intransigence or both. Let us wait and see whether Kissinger — who might himself conceivably be the inflexible or intransigent player in the game, with cards too self-interestedly stacked in his hands — may not yet visit the Middle East again before resumption of the Geneva Conference becomes unpostponable.

As for inflexibility, it is perhaps not altogether unwarranted to say, on Israel's side, that the organism of a sovereign State can be bent so far and no further, surely not to the point at which bending is tantamount to national rupture. After all, to echo a phrase by Abba Eban, there is no obligation upon Israel to commit self-politicide. The odds are that Geneva might be manoeuvred into a ganging-up on Israel to do just that, or nearly that. Sadat is still allergic to non-belligerency, still all 'grab' and no 'give'. There might be overmuch at Geneva of the Kremlin's histrionic partisanship, with words and gestures rivetted not on a Middle Eastern co-existence but on TV cameras.

The reader will agree, no doubt, that these animadversions are apt also as a foot-note to the article by Valentine Belfiglio in this issue. MN]

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