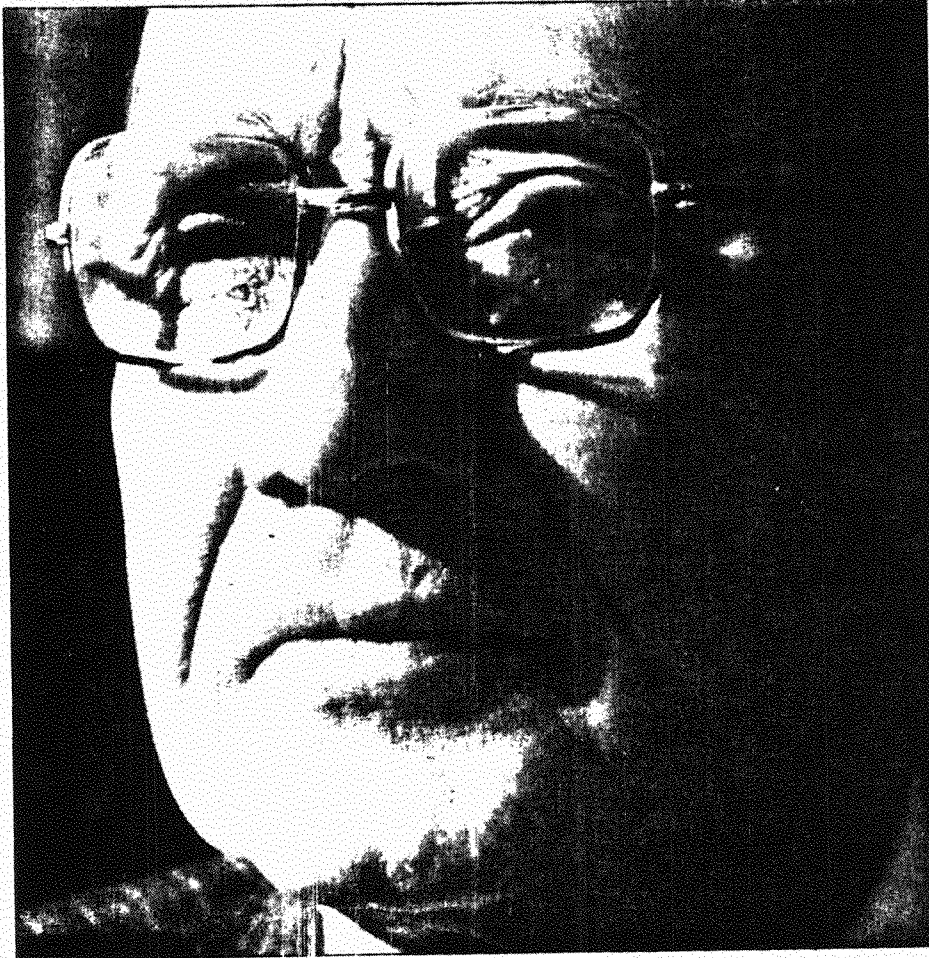


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# FORUM



## KLUTZNICK: NO ROOM FOR PRESSURE

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Muslims and Jews will again experience enriching ties with each other when normalisation leads to renewed cultural and social contact, according to World Jewish Congress (WJC) President, Philip M. Klutznick.

Klutznick, signer of the Brookings Report and a man well-known for his independent views, spoke with *The Middle East Forum* Editor, *Mark Bruzonsky*, in his office at Chicago's famous John Hancock Center. He discussed the WJC, the stalemated Middle East peace negotiations, the Palestinian issue and his hopes for better relations between Jews and Arabs.

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You recently had a controversial meeting with President Sadat. What did you and he talk about?

○ I didn't consider it a controversial meeting. Others considered it a meeting that should not have been held. That's their business, not mine.

Do the others include the majority of the organised American Jewish community?

○ I'm not sure how you identify that. I've lived in the organised Jewish community for more than 50 years. One must look beyond what is called a vote, even in the Presidents' Conference, formally known as the Presidents' Conference of Major American Jewish Organisations. This umbrella body usually represents the American Jewish community in dealings with the White House. They said they wouldn't accept an invitation to meet Sadat. Well, that's their right. I question their judgement, but I don't question their right.

I was invited by the Embassy of Egypt to visit Sadat, who was a guest of the US President. There was an atmosphere at that time a little more strained than in November of 1977, but it was, in my judgement (and still is) a hopeful atmosphere for the establishment of peaceful relations in part or in whole in the Middle East.

I had seen Sadat in Jerusalem in November. I was fully conversant with the political difficulties. I saw no purpose in saying that I wouldn't sit and talk with so distinguished a visitor to our country. And I did.

The Israeli Government and the Israeli press were also critical of your decision, weren't they?

○ The Israeli Government was not critical of that, but of a statement I was rumoured to have made, after Sadat left, in the presence of the US President. It was rumoured that I had told the President he should bear down on Israel.

Apart from the fact that it was not true and that the courageous people who uttered this thought have never identified themselves, it was something the Israeli press would obviously find a rich item of gossip. If it were true, I would not fault the Israeli Government if it took umbrage.

I consider myself a responsible official of an organisation that is committed to do what it can constructively to help bring about peace. I'm not one of those who think that a major power — whether the US or the USSR — can effectively bring about peace by compelling a couple of small countries to live together. It hasn't worked and it won't work.

You seem to be in conflict with your predecessor, Nahum Goldmann, who has been widely quoted as having told the Car-



*"I'm not one of those who thinks that a major power — whether the US or the USSR — can effectively bring peace by compelling a couple of small countries to live together. It hasn't worked and it won't work."*

ter Administration last November that significant pressure would be necessary to reach Middle East peace, and also that the Jewish lobby in this country would have to be defeated for this to come about?

○ First of all, let me make one thing abundantly clear. I'm an old friend of Dr Goldmann and I think he's an old friend of mine. And just as I don't believe that an argument between the US and Israel or between Egypt and Israel should be the cause for a breakdown in discussions or negotiations, I also believe that people can only be good friends if each occasionally differs with the other.

So the answer is yes?

○ No, my answer is first of all a correction of the statement that you made. It is true, and I think Dr Goldmann has confirmed the accuracy of the statement, that he felt that at some point the US might have to use rather harsh talk and even go to the point of threatening a break in relationships in order to bring about a peace in the Middle East. He denies that he said that they have to break the lobby. Besides which, I don't know how you break a lobby.

You can defeat it on an arms package like the one now before the Congress.

○ All right, but the lobby will grow again in strength. In a free country it is utter non-

sense to expect people — no matter how wrong they are — to refrain from supporting their views, and that is called a lobby. I think the worst lobbies are those that become known as such. The best lobbies are the ones that do their work and don't become identified.

The kind of pressure that comes to mind with respect to what Goldmann has been advocating is the kind President Eisenhower used in 1956 and 1957 by simply telling Israel it must withdraw from certain territories.

○ Eisenhower said that in October 1956. For months nothing happened and it wasn't until the US made a public commitment that certain waters would be accepted as international waters that Israel agreed to move.

Now I am not saying that Eisenhower was wrong or Israel was right, but the State of Israel felt at that time that its lifeline was at stake — the Straits of Tiran. In spite of its love and affection for the US Israel could not give up its lifeline without some assurance that it would be kept open. For months I was in the middle of that, and until the US made that pledge, in the presence of the UN, Israel did not withdraw.

There's another element that causes me to be uncertain about the position my dear friend takes. I don't know at which point or on whom you put the pressure. Do you put it on Egypt or Israel, Hussain or Asad? It's a pretty tough decision for a government with the power that the US has, but which is staffed by people who are essentially just. The tendency is, and should be, to show enough patience to find a solution that all can be blamed or praised for.

I think the kind of pressure Dr Goldmann — and George Ball — talked about is not practical.

Don't you think that pressure will not be put because of domestic politics in the US or because the decision will be made not to use significant pressure?

○ Domestic politics in the US is always a legitimate problem. I think, however, that our Government is manned by people at the high levels who want to be fair and cautious on questions of life and death. They don't like the role of God. Therefore, there is normally a tendency to encourage a negotiating process.

But the general feeling in many Washington circles is that domestic politics prevents this and the previous administration from going forward. The last administration had the "reassessment". It was blocked.

○ I don't think it's the primary reason. The "reassessment" wasn't blocked...

Henry Kissinger says it was blocked, by the "prevailing domestic political climate."

○ There was no conclusion. But you forget

that almost simultaneously the Brookings panel was established and it made a reassessment which was published.

As for Carter's position, I'm generally sympathetic to his policies. I think he is moving in the right direction, generally speaking. On the other hand, Carter is human. He has changed his positions because maybe he spoke too early on some occasions.

**For instance, on the Palestinian problem?**

○ I think he has made that issue more, not less, confusing.

**Joseph Sisco told *The Middle East* last month that he supports the Carter Administration's current, not his earlier, Palestinian policy.**

○ Sisco was saying, more diplomatically, that the policy of the Administration has not always been clear. Maybe you should give the President credit — instead of saying he was blocked, maybe he saw the wisdom of change.

**You're being more diplomatic than Sisco, who implied very strongly that Carter's "Palestinian homeland" idea was bad and that his current idea of some kind of Palestinian participation in their future is acceptable. I'm sure Sisco would have been very happy had the President said earlier that Menahem Begin's ideas for the West Bank**

**should be the substantial basis for a settlement of the Palestinian issue.**

○ You're making my point better than I've made it. After all, the parties directly interested who have to live with this decision are Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Israel and other abutting countries.

These countries are not manned by ignorant people these days. They've all lived through difficult times. They know the implications of continuing war. They are better able to assess the totality of these problems than those of us who live 7,000 miles away. Until it is evident that it is impossible for them to ever come to any kind of understanding, it would be wrong to think otherwise.

**George Ball would say that if Israel is not interested in \$2 billion of aid and political support then Israel's policies are only Israel's business. But if the US is giving this aid and support year after year then the US has a right to participate in Israel's policies as they affect American interests.**

○ That's purely dollar diplomacy. I would reverse the statement. I have often said to Israel: "You do not have the same freedom of action if you are economically and militarily independent in the world that you have when you live in a period of dependency."

And, incidentally, that is true of the US. The period of American hegemony is long gone. In my judgement, Daniel Yergin is right — we are living in an era of interdependence. This should make us more careful of substituting our judgement for that of others.

I agree completely that the US has a right to say to Israel, "You do this or we don't help you any more." But I suggest that it would have exactly the opposite effect. I think it is lousy diplomacy.

The art of diplomacy is not the act of forcing people together, but of bringing them together when they disagree, but not using a sledgehammer. I don't see why we need to use an axe when we can use a little patience.

**Did you ever think a year and a half ago that an Arab leader would recognise Israel, as Sadat has done, or that Menahem Begin would become Prime Minister of Israel?**

○ I envisaged neither of those. It proves how uncertain life is and how little we know about the realities of what's going on.

**And now that you've met Sadat are you convinced that Egypt wants a full normalisation of relations with Israel and that the Egyptian attitude towards peace is a reasonable one?**

○ The first question I can answer without

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reservation. Yes, Sadat wants full normalisation. It's not gratuitous; I think he's being a statesman. I think he's recognising that what's gone on has been a serious mistake.

I think he came to accept normalisation after his trip to Jerusalem. Previously he talked about it taking 25 years, and then five years. He saw in the eyes of the people of Israel and his own people when he returned, that they were ready for it. They wouldn't have been ready for it 10 years ago.

**What about the Egyptian attitude toward a settlement which was outlined first by President Sadat in the Knesset and has been repeated many times since?**

○ Well, I have one criticism of President Sadat; I made it to him and will make it publicly. Whatever provocation took place in January, I think he made a mistake in breaking off the discussions. I have a conviction, from what I saw in Jerusalem and from what I heard from him and from others, that if they were negotiating directly they would come to a solution much sooner.

**But are you being fair to Egyptian diplomacy? The Prime Minister of Israel was even invited to Egypt, and yet, from the Egyptian point of view, there have been almost no concessions by Israel. In fact, there has been back-tracking on 242 and**

**increased settlements by Israel. Aren't you anxious that Sadat may have to give up entirely the peace initiative because of internal Egyptian political developments?**

○ Well, the last problem that you mentioned has been a danger from the start. Secondly, I have said nothing about the adequacy of the response or position of Egypt or Israel.

Menahem Begin says — rightly or wrongly — that he has made many concessions from the positions his Government had taken before. And some agree that his proposal for the West Bank is a move forward, although most will also agree that it won't work.

Begin's original proposal on Sinai — which he made offhand — was beyond anything anybody expected him to do.

They should adopt the Brookings approach and move little by little instead of moving so fast. The problem is not who's right and who's wrong, but how the people who must make this peace can be kept in contact with each other until they agree on something that they want to do, not what we want them to do.

When President Ceausescu was here a few weeks ago I told him that, with all my respect for President Sadat, I thought he'd made a serious mistake in cutting off the negotiations. He said — very wisely — "Let's not try to fix blame; let's try to get

them back together again." That's my philosophy.

**But you're known in Washington and political circles to be very critical of the policies of the Israeli Government. Why are you so reluctant to publicly criticise Begin? Anyway, why were you not among those 37 prominent American Jews who signed a letter supporting the Peace Now movement in Israel?**

○ I'm not a carping critic. If I have something important to say I convey it to the people who have the ability to correct it.

I'm the responsible head of an international organisation of Jewish people who have different views on many subjects. As their President I have to inhibit some of my public mutterings, no matter how I may feel privately.

I have certain responsibilities. I'm not the head of a state but of a group of people who expect me to behave in keeping with the positions we've taken.

With respect to the letter of the 37, I wasn't asked to sign it. Many of these people are my friends; many of the things they say I'd be the first to endorse.

**Would you have signed it if you had been asked?**

○ If I were not President of the WJC I would have considered signing it. The WJC can issue its own resolutions.

**Do you support the Peace Now move-**

**ment? Do you support the plea for more flexibility from Israel?**

○ There's a lot of room for shifts in the position of both parties to the negotiations, and they need time to do it because I'm convinced that they can come to an agreement. I'm more optimistic . . .

**□ Egypt and Israel?**

○ Yes.

**□ A separate agreement?**

○ The big debate that always went on, and I thought was settled after the second withdrawal in Sinai, was over whether to move piecemeal or comprehensively. If I had a choice I would prefer a comprehensive settlement.

It is clear that, for whatever reason, from the beginning of the Carter Administration's energetic intervention in this problem and its attempt to secure the basis for a comprehensive settlement, something went wrong which compelled Sadat to select his course and go to Jerusalem.

**□ What went wrong?**

○ A couple of things. It appeared to many people that the Soviet Union was no longer a factor in the Middle East. And therefore, the joint Soviet-US statement in October caused a lot of people and some of the parties to act as if this were a new intervention. Both Israel and Egypt had little desire for increased Soviet involvement.

The other thing was the total inability to deal with the PLO issue. It had reached such a point that however it was tackled someone was unhappy.

One of the casualties was Geneva. As long as Sadat and Begin were engaged directly or indirectly in serious negotiations and the US was encouraging them, to go back to Geneva would have been a serious mistake. Therefore I favour going forward from where we are instead of going back and starting all over again.

Moving forward from where we are could mean Hussain's joining the negotiations and maybe stimulating Asad to come in; or it could mean, as a first step, a bilateral arrangement.

**□ From your talks with President Sadat and Egyptian Ambassador Ghorbal have you concluded that a separate step between Egypt and Israel is a real possibility?**

○ I'm not in any position to say that those talks caused me to believe that. I'm not even saying that I am certain it could happen. What I am saying is that if it did happen it would be better than nothing.

**□ You acknowledged that the Palestinians are one of the key issues. In the Brookings Report you and everyone else supported the idea of self-determination for the Palestinians. Do you continue to support that idea?**

○ I have as a matter of principle throughout my life supported the self-determination of peoples.



*"Domestic politics in the US is always a legitimate problem. I think, however, that our Government is manned by people at high levels who want to be fair and cautious on questions of life and death."*

**□ Do you believe that the PLO, as President Carter said about half a year ago, represents a substantial part of the Palestinian people?**

○ I have always believed that self-determination is not the act of 17 states designating an agent for the people who live in an area. I have never considered that the act of Rabat was a proper discharge of the act of self-determination. The only people in my judgement who have a right to participate in that determination are those who live, or are entitled to live, in the territories that are involved.

**□ You don't think that the Arab states have a right to determine that the PLO is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people?**

○ The UN had the votes to decide that Zionism is racism. Does that make it so? The Arab states decide one thing politically and, like other states, act another way in practice. Which states decided about the PLO? Wasn't Syria one, and Jordan? But do they recognise the PLO in their own countries? They did more to destroy the people of the PLO than Israel has ever done.

I believe that the people who live in the area, or are entitled to live in the area, should have something to say about how they should live.

**□ Are you speaking of all 3 million Palestinians or only the Palestinians living in the West Bank?**

○ I don't know the number. I remember back in the early days they talked about

500,000 refugees. And then a million. And then a million and a half. I don't know whether you count the Palestinians living in Kuwait in that 3 million.

I say that the Palestinian Arabs, not the PLO — I don't know the PLO, I'm talking now about the people — are entitled to participate in their own self-determination.

**□ What was your response to the recent New York Times interview with PLO leader Yasser Arafat and the discussion of the aspirations of the Palestinian people?**

○ You keep using Palestinians and PLO interchangeably. I don't; they're different concepts. I don't even know what the PLO is. Who are they? I know that there's a Palestinian Arab people — now called Palestinians — who formerly were refugees or the descendants of refugees.

But I will not be placed in the position of saying I know what I don't know. I read about Arafat regularly. I know that the PLO and Arafat have gone through some difficult times. I don't accept the idea that anybody but the people themselves are entitled to participate in their self-determination. The PLO, selected by Arab states, in my judgement is not entitled to.

**□ Would you favour a UN-sponsored free vote in the West Bank to determine who represents the Palestinians?**

○ I'm not at the moment prepared to say unless I know how the vote is put together.

**□ A UN-sponsored and supervised vote.**

○ Well, I'd be one of the few who have enough confidence in the UN to say that I'd want to consider it.

**□ If a free vote could be held, would you be in favour of its determining who represents the Palestinians?**

○ I have never disagreed with the plebiscite idea. Beyond that I haven't studied the matter enough. In this respect, of course, there's a difference between the US and B. gin.

**□ Professor Nafez Nazzari in Ramallah strongly insists that when it comes to basic political representation it is a great fallacy in the US to think that anybody other than the PLO can be considered a representative of the Palestinians.**

○ I don't support that analysis — you can't prove it or disprove it. For example, some who watched the elections in the West Bank said they proved the PLO really was in charge. Others said if it came to a question of taking over the West Bank you'd get a different kind of vote.

**□ We were closer last year when the Carter Administration and the PLO were holding clandestine discussions.**

○ That didn't bring us any closer. Because you still have to produce parties to the agreement. Assuming that peace is possible — and I think it is — whatever kind of entity ultimately exists on the West Bank, and maybe in the Gaza Strip, has to be

## FORUM

acceptable to at least Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Saudi Arabia.

**I think you're avoiding what I thought we agreed was a central question. Even Menahem Begin says that if the Israelis withdraw from the West Bank there would be a West Bank state and the PLO would run it within 24 hours.**

You suggested that I don't agree with everything Begin stands for. Well, I don't happen to agree that it necessarily has to be a PLO state. I think his assumption is one of the weakest parts of his case. If he feels that way, then I think the idea of a council running the place for five years would be wrong too, because that council could also be a PLO council.

Now you're trying to get me to do what I don't think the US should do as a mediator — accept your formula for what should happen to the West Bank.

**Or offer an alternative.**

No, I'm not engaged in these negotiations. I will live with any alternative that is acceptable to the states directly involved.

**But that begs the question. At present Israel and the Arab states are at an impasse over this matter.**

But impasses fade away.

**Do you find the views Yasser Arafat recently expressed in the *New York Times* interview potentially able to break the impasse?**

A willingness to live with Israel . . . Are you talking about Yasser Arafat living there himself? If he wants to, that's his business. I don't see anything wrong with that. But I do not accept the notion that the PLO as something enshrined in heaven, or that Arafat alone controls the behaviour of the PLO.

**When I say PLO I simply mean the Palestinian national movement.**

There can be no meaningful and lasting settlement in the Middle East unless the desire of the Palestinians — the Arabs who live there or are entitled to live there — have been adjusted. I don't think peace is possible without satisfying their needs.

**In the context of some kind of self-determination?**

Their participation in that determination, of course. But we start from different premises.

**I think the premise that I've expressed is generally accepted throughout most of the Middle East and Europe.**

But you insist on the PLO, which is not saleable in its present form.

**Not in America.**

Not in Israel.

**But those are the only two places.**

All right. But that's very important.

**And the US almost entered a relationship with the PLO less than a year ago. Carter made Arafat an offer.**



*"I don't accept the idea that anybody but the people themselves are entitled to participate in this self-determination. The PLO, selected by Arab states, in my judgement is not entitled to."*

The offer wasn't accepted, was it, which is one of the reasons why the PLO is difficult. Arafat says one thing and a group of people with him say something else.

**In 1974 the then Israeli Minister of Information, Aharon Yariv, suggested that if there are Palestinians willing to coexist with Israel then the Israelis should be willing to negotiate and contemplate coexistence.**

I accept that. I went beyond that. I never understood my dear friend Golda Meir's saying there were no Palestinians.

**By accepting this position aren't you taking a position completely at odds with the Begin Government, which refuses to have anything to do with Palestinian nationalism and the PLO?**

I don't care what they're called if they're identifiable and they have a commitment to coexistence and real normalisation.

**So the real issue is not the PLO but whether there are Palestinians willing to discuss peace.**

As far as I'm concerned I do not discuss the PLO at all. I consider it a Palestinian problem. Considering it that way you've got a chance of solving it, otherwise, your chances of solving it are next to nothing.

**Do you think there was any justification for placing new settlements on the West Bank during and after the Sadat initiative?**

No, I don't. I think it was bad judgement.

**Do you think that Prime Minister Begin's statement that he will never give up any part of the West Bank is justifiable as a negotiating position?**

Well, my position on 242 has been clear for a long time. I think it calls for withdrawal from part of the West Bank and therefore I disagree with Begin on this.

**Does the idea of the US's having some military relationship with Saudi Arabia and Egypt as well as Israel make sense to you?**

In today's world it does. You can't have a friend without acting like a friend. And apparently one of the requirements today of a big power is that it should become a supplier of military hardware to friends who aren't able to produce their own.

Any friendly country in the Middle East or elsewhere has a legitimate right to request help, but I think each request ought to be treated on its merits.

The suggestion that it would be easier to pass them as a package may be politically right or wrong today. When it was considered by the Administration it was probably right, but today it could be wrong. It's immoral to combine two nations that are technically at war with the third in the same arms package.

**And is the President then entitled to reject the Congressional decision?**

Absolutely. That's why I don't understand why it went as a package.

**If the atmosphere of reconciliation and improved relations between Jews and Arabs continues, is the WJC ready to enter into some kind of relations with organisations in the Arab world?**

There's no reason why not. Today we're dealing with the Jewish community of Morocco. As far as I'm concerned, I see no reason why tomorrow we should not respond to the Jewish community of Tunisia if it invited us.

**Can you envisage being invited to Saudi Arabia?**

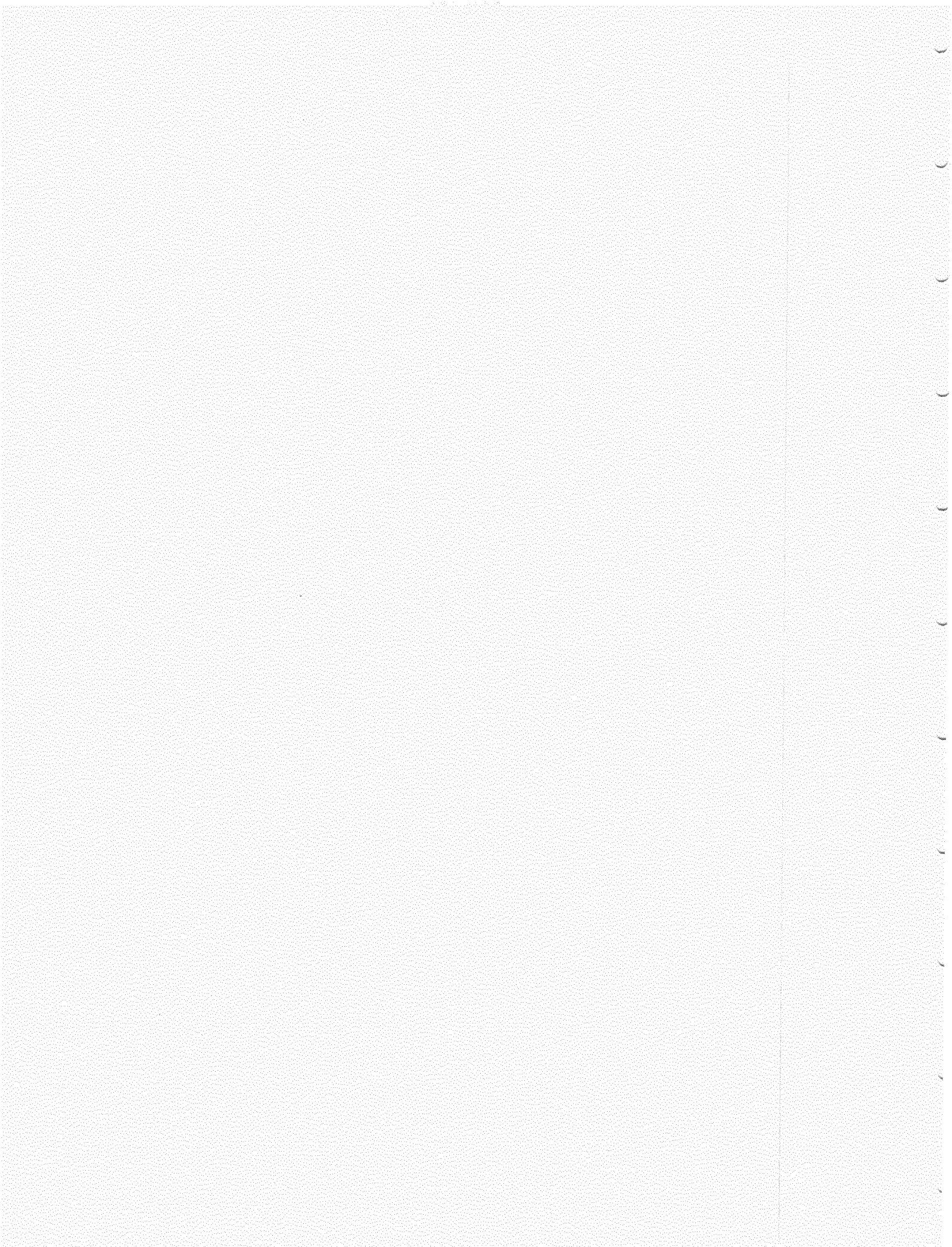
I don't think there are any Jews there.

**No, that's a different situation, but could you envisage going to Saudi Arabia?**

We go to countries where we don't have affiliates; why not? We deal in interracial affairs. We'd love to deal with Muslims and Islam. We deal with Christians, and every faith you can think of. We pioneered that kind of work. I think that until those days come you really won't have normalisation, and we'd like to be part of this.

**Maybe a leader of it?**

We have been in the past and there's no reason why we shouldn't be now. I can say to you without hesitation that if tomorrow there was peace and we were invited to Saudi Arabia to discuss matters of a religious or cultural kind we'd be eager to do it.



## KLUTZNIK INTERVIEW

The World Jewish Congress is an international organization with offices in most major cities. Founded in 1945 it is a frankly Zionist motivated organization and supports the idea of a Jewish national homeland. That its leaders should differ widely with Menachem Begin's ideas of how to bring about peace in the Middle East demonstrates that there are other Jewish views besides that of the Knesset's policy of arrogant expansion. Yesterday former president of the WJC, Nahum Goldmann, was quoted as backing the Palestinians' cause and saying that if they chose the PLO as their representative Israel should accept it. Today the *Los Angeles Times* publishes part one of an interview with the current president of the W.S.J., Philip Klutznik. Still having the restrictions of office, Klutznik chooses his words carefully but the message is plain that he believes Begin must come to terms with the Arab world and the Palestinians.

**Brunzonsky:** You recently had a controversial meeting with President Sadat. What did you and he talk about?

**Klutznik:** I didn't consider it a controversial meeting. Others considered it a meeting that should not have been held. That's their business, not mine.

I was invited by the Embassy in Egypt to visit with the President who was coming here as a guest of the President of the United States. There was an atmosphere at that time a little more strained than in November of 1977, but it was, in my judgment, then (and still is) a very favorable atmosphere for the establishment of peaceful relations in the East.

And I didn't hesitate a moment. I had seen President Sadat in Jerusalem in November. I was in conversation with the political attaché. I saw no purpose in saying that I wouldn't sit and talk with so distinguished a visitor to our country. And I did.

### Rich item of gossip

The Israeli government and the Israeli press were also rather critical of your decision, weren't they?

The Israeli government was critical of that. They were critical of a statement that I had told the President that he should hear down on Israel.

Aside from the fact that it was not true it was something the Israeli press would obviously find to be a rich item of gossip, not of news.

I am not one of those who thinks that a major power — whether the U.S. or the USSR — can effect peace by about peace by compelling a couple of small countries

good an example as you could possibly select to illustrate how effective Eisenhower is.

Eisenhower said that in October of 1956. For months nothing happened. And it wasn't until the U.S. undertook to make a public commitment that certain

### Primary reasons

waters would be accepted as international waters that Israel agreed to move. For months I was in the middle of that. And until the U.S. made that pledge in the presence of the UN they did not with-

For instance, on the Palestinian problem?

I think that on that issue he has made it more confusing rather than less.

But you know what your colleague George Ball would say. He'd say that if Israel is not interested in \$2-billion of aid and great political support then, Israel's policies are only Israel's business. But if the U.S. is giving this aid and support year after year then the U.S. has a right to participate in Israel's policies as they affect American interests.

Well, of course, that's purely dollar diplomacy. I would reverse the statement. I have often said to

had been privately discussed for many years — are you convinced that Egypt wants a full normalization of relations with Israel and that the Egyptian attitude towards a peace settlement is a reasonable one?

The first question I can answer without reservation. Yes, Sadat wants full normalization.

I have one criticism of President Sadat and I made it to him and will make it publicly. In spite of whatever provocation that took place in January, I think he made a mistake in breaking off the discus-

sion. But from the Egyptian point of

## PART ONE

concessions by Israel. In fact, the opposite. There has been a retraction on 242 and increased settlements by Israel. Aren't you also anxious that because of internal Egyptian political developments Sadat may have to give up entirely the peace initiative?

### Setbacks from Israel

Well, the last thing that you said has been a danger from the moment this thing started. That danger is present whenever you go into a negotiation.

Secondly, I have said nothing about the adequacy of the response or positions of Egypt, or of Israel. You have said in your question that Egypt, in spite of everything it did has received no concessions but instead setbacks from Israel.

The only thing I said about the negotiations was that I thought Sadat made a mistake in cutting them off — no matter how they were going at that time. That's my judgement. I could be wrong.

I would point out to you, now, that you've brought up the issue, that you've got to analyze each of these men against their background and their time.

Menachem Begin says — rightly or wrongly — that he has made many concessions from the position his government had taken before. And there are some who will even agree that his proposal for the West Bank is certainly a move from where he started, although most will also agree that they won't carry water.

Begin's original proposal on Sinai — which he made off hand, right from the beginning — was

### Public mutterings

and beyond anything that I think anybody expected him to do. But you're known in Washington circles and to political circles in Israeli government. Why are you so reluctant to publicly criticize Begin?

I'm the responsible head of an international organization of Jewish people who have different views on many subjects. As their president, I have to, in my judgement, inhibit some of my public

mutterings, no matter how I may feel privately, in order to lead that group more effectively. There's nothing worse than the pangs of an undelivered criticism when you feel it, even if it's not going to do any good if you deliver it.

Do you support in Israel the "Peace Now" movement? Do you support in general the plea that there be more flexibility from Israel?

I say that there's a lot of room for shifts in positions of both parties to the negotiations, and perhaps even our own government. And they need to take time to do it because I'm convinced that they can come to an agreement. I'm more optimistic...

● Yes.  
● A separate agreement?  
● The big debate that always went on and I thought was settled after the second withdrawal in Sinai was over whether to move piecemeal or comprehensively. It's clear that in the Brookings

### Energetic Intervention

Report I opted for a comprehensive settlement. If I had a choice I would prefer a comprehensive settlement.

It is equally clear that, for whatever reason, from the beginning of the Carter Administration's energetic intervention in this problem and its attempt to secure the basis for a comprehensive settlement, that something along the way went wrong. And it compelled — if it didn't actually compel — Sadat to select his course and go to Jerusalem.

You acknowledge that the Palestinians is one of the key issues in the Brookings Report and everyone else supported the idea of self-determination for the Palestinians. Do you continue to support that idea?

I have as a matter of principle throughout my life supported the self-determination of peoples.

Are you speaking of all 3 million Palestinians or the West Bank? I don't know the number. I say that the Palestinian Arabs, not the PLO... I don't know the PLO... I'm talking now about the people, are entitled to the right to participate in their own self-determination.

**TOMORROW: I don't think peace is possible without settling the Palestinians**

## reasons

waters would be accepted as international waters that Israel agreed to move. For months I was in the middle of that. And until the U.S. made that pledge in the presence of the UN they did not withdraw.

The last Administration had "reassessment." It was blocked. This Administration came into office with policies and apparently has now backed off. Surely domestic politics must be one of the primary reasons.

I don't think its the primary reason. The "reassessment" wasn't blocked...

Henry Kissinger says it was blocked, by the "prevailing domestic political climate."

A conclusion didn't take place. But you forget that almost simultaneously there was a Brookings panel established and it made a reassessment and it was published.\*

As for the Carter position, I'm generally sympathetic to his policies. I think he is moving in the right direction, generally speaking.

\*Klutznick was one of the 16 speakers of the Brookings Report which appeared in December 1973 after holding periodic meetings for about 6 months.

business. But if the U.S. is giving this aid and support year after year then the U.S. has a right to participate in Israel's policies as they affect American interests.

Well, of course, that's purely dollar diplomacy. I would reverse the statement. I have often said to Israel, you do not have the same freedom of action if you are economically and militarily inde-

## Opposite effect

pendent in the world that you have when you live in a period of dependency.

And, incidentally, that is true of the U.S. The period of American hegemony is gone long ago. We are living in an era of interdependence.

Certainly, I agree completely, that if the U.S. says to Israel you do this or we don't help you anymore, the U.S. has a right to say it. But I suggest that it would have the exact opposite effect on world opinion and on Israel — or on Egypt, or Jordan or Syria. And I think it is lousy diplomacy.

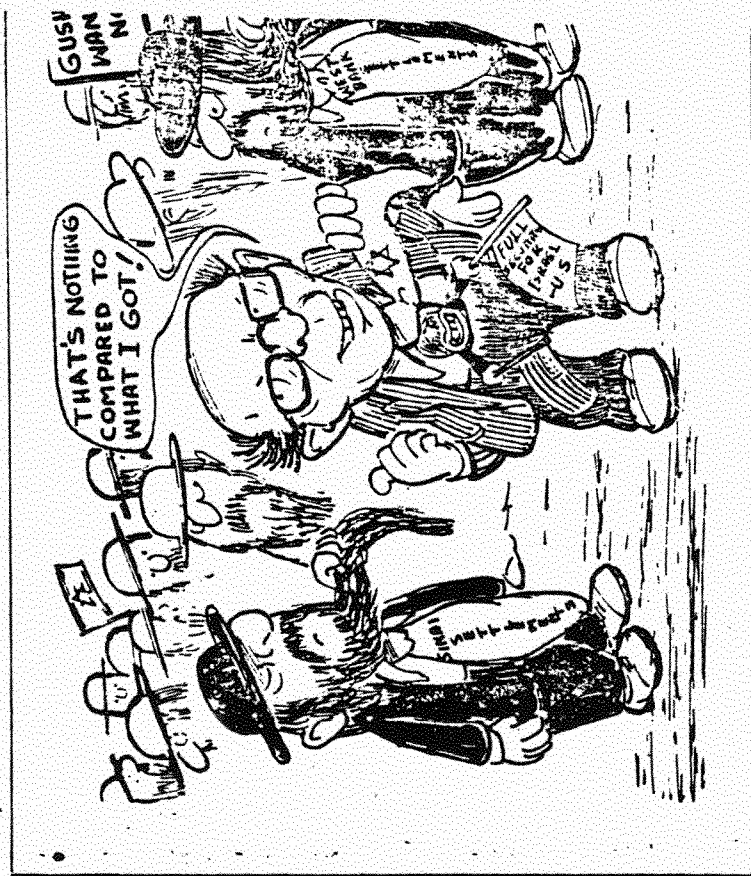
And now that you've met President Sadat — in a meeting that

Sadat and I made it to him and will make it publicly. In spite of whatever provocation that took place in January, I think he made a mistake in breaking off the discussions.

But from the Egyptian point of view, there have been almost no

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**TOMORROW I don't**  
possible without settling in  
needs and desires





of thing you've just said Yasser Arafat says one thing. And he has a group of people with him who say something else. He can't deliver them. Or if he can deliver them, they're the wrong people.

In 1974 then Israeli Minister of Information, Aharon Vardi, suggested that the proper Israeli policy vis-a-vis the Palestinians — and even the PLO — was that if there are Palestinians willing to say they will coexist with Israel and recognize Israel and negotiate with Israel then the Israelis should be willing to negotiate with and complete coexistence with those Palestinians. Do you agree with this?

I accept that I went beyond that. I never understood my dear friend Gidon Meir's saying there were no Palestinians.

By accepting this position aren't you taking a position at odds with that of the Regio government which refuse to have anything to do with Palestinian nationalism and the PLO as such?

**Commitment to coexistence**

Well, I don't care what they're called if they're identifiable and they have a commitment to coexistence and real normalization — I don't mean just sitting there and looking up another plot.

So the real issue is not the PLO. The issue is whether there are really Palestinians willing to discuss coexistence?

As far as I'm concerned, the PLO I do not discuss at all. I consider at this point it's a Palestinian problem. In view of the recent history of the PLO, otherwise means your chances of solving it are next to nothing at this time.

Do you think there was any justification for coexisting, expanding and even placing new settlements on the West Bank after the Sadat initiative and during the negotiations?

I think it was bad judgement. Do you think that Prime Minister Begin's statements to Israeli people's statements to Israeli that under no circumstances will West Bank be justifiable as a negotiating position?

Well, my position on 242 has been clear for a long time. I think it calls for withdrawal from part of the West Bank and therefore I disagree with Begin on this.

But you insist on the PLO which is not actually in a position to do anything.

Not to Israel. And not to Israel. Only two places.

All right, but that's very important. And America should enter a relationship with the PLO less than a year ago.

Well, let's be a little bit shy about that.

The President made Yasser Arafat an offer. We all know about that.

We all know about it, but the offer wasn't accepted, was it? One of the reasons that the PLO is difficult for me is precisely the kind

that Yasser Arafat controls alone and lasting settlement in the Middle East unless the desire of the Palestinians — the Arabs who live or are entitled to live there — have been adjusted, then I accept that I

But that begs the question. At present Israel and the Arab states are at an impasse precisely over this matter.

But it passes fade away.

Earlier I asked you to respond to the views Yasser Arafat recently expressed in a New York Times interview. Do you find those views potentially able to break the impasse?

A willingness to live with Yasser Arafat living there himself? If he wants to, that's his business.

I don't see anything wrong with that. But I do not accept the notion that seems to be so popular with some people who see PLO as something authorized in heaven or

But that didn't bring us any direct. Because you still have to produce parties to the agreement. Assuming that a peace is possible — and I think it is — whatever kind of entity ultimately exists on the West Bank and maybe in the Gaza Strip has to be acceptable to at least Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Syria and in light of today's realities, Saudi Arabia.

Not necessarily a PLO state

Mr. Klutznick, members I think you're avoiding what I thought we agreed was a central question. Even Menachem Begin says that if the Israelis withdraw from the West Bank there would be a West Bank state and the PLO would run it within 24 hours. It's very clear that the great majority of the Palestinians want self-determination. Why don't you either say you're in favor of it or opposed to it?

First of all, let me correct you on one statement. You've before suggested I don't agree with



PHILIP KLUTZNIK, President of the World Jewish Congress.

I don't think peace is possible without settling their needs and their desires.

In the context of some kind of self-determination?

Their participation in that determination, of course. But we start from different premises.

I think the premise that I've expressed is the generally accepted premise throughout most of the Middle East and Europe.

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# Where Begin is going is going wrong



YESTERDAY the Gazette carried the first part of the interview our Washington correspondent, Mark Bruzonsky had with Philip Klutznick, president of the International Organization for World Jewish Cooperation. Klutznick, though not going so far as his predecessor as Congress president, Nahum Goldmann who recently publicly backed the Palestinian cause in an incoherent way, said that he supported self-determination for the Palestinians. Asked why he did not criticize Menachem Begin more publicly he explained he had to remember his position as head of an organization of people with many different views. Nevertheless, from what he tells Bruzonsky in his concluding article, it is plain that like many other Jews he believes that the only way to peace lies in recognizing the Palestinians' cause in a way Begin has stubbornly refused to do. Bruzonsky puts the questions...

By MARK BRUZONSKY

I'd like to know your response to the kind of views PLO leader Yasser Arafat presented.

You keep using Palestinianism and PLO interchangeably. I don't. They're different concepts.

I know that there's a Palestinian Arab people — now called Palestinians — who formerly were refugees or the descendants of refugees. The refugees were created by an unfortunate war in the Middle East that didn't get settled early enough.

But I will not be placed in the position of saying I know what I don't know. I read about Arafat regularly. I know that the PLO and Arafat have gone through some difficult times. I do know that I don't accept the idea that anybody but the people themselves — whether you take the definition to involve those living in the Gaza Strip or include those living elsewhere — are entitled to participate in their self-determination.

The PLO organization selected by Arab states, in my judgement, technically, is not entitled to.

Vote on West Bank

Would you be in favor of them of a free vote, if sponsored, on the West Bank to determine who represents the Palestinians?

I'm not at the moment prepared to say unless I would know how the vote was put together, what the conditions were...

A UN-sponsored and supervised vote.

Well, I'd be one of the few who have enough confidence in the UN to say that I'd want to consider it.

If, theoretically, a free vote favor of it to determine who represents the Palestinians?

I have never disagreed with the principle idea. Beyond that I haven't studied the matter enough in this respect, of course, there's a difference between the U.S. and Begin.

In January I interviewed Yasser Arafat in Ramallah on the West Bank. And he strongly and repeatedly insisted that when it comes to basic political representation, it is a great fallacy in the U.S. to think that anyone other

that necessarily it has to be a PLO state. I think his assumption is one of the weakest parts of his case. If he feels that way, then I think the idea of a council to run the place for 5 years is wrong too, because that council could be a PLO tool.

Or offer an alternative?

No, I'm not engaged in these negotiations. I will live with any alternative that is acceptable to the state that are directly involved.

Willingness to live with Israel

But that begs the question. At present Israel and the Arab states are at an impasse precisely over this matter.

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