

Let Us Talk Face to Face

An interview with Simcha Dinitz conducted by Mark Bruzonsky, Worldview associate editor, on the eve of Israel's recent election.

I want to begin by asking you to give an assessment of what President Carter has so far said on the Middle East. To my understanding he has talked about a three-part Middle East settlement, and although he hasn't specified exactly what he means, he has outlined what he means. I understand he has talked about minor adjustments from the 1967 borders, a Palestinian homeland probably in some of the occupied territories that Israel would withdraw from, and a real, meaningful, lasting peace. How do you assess the president's views?

President Carter spoke of three components that are essential for peace in the Middle East. The first one is peace and the essence of peace. The second one is the question of borders. And the third one the Palestinian question. The underlying thought behind all these statements was that he is not making judgments for the parties. The parties themselves must arrive at an agreed definition of all these components as a result of the negotiations between them. The final determinations are up to the parties, and I think this is an important point.

Why do I say this? Because, after all, if it is to be enduring, if it is to be just, if it is to be lasting, peace must be between us and the Arabs and not between us and the Americans—with all the respect that we hold for our American friends. When all is said and done we will have to live in the Middle East with Sadat, Assad, and Hussein and not with President Carter and not with Brzezinski and Secretary Vance. Secondly, any solution that is not the result of the innermost dialogue between Israel and the Arabs is bound to be not only artificial but fragile, because it will not come out of the consensus of the parties but, rather, out of an imposition of an outside factor. If it is to be preserved in spite of the will of the parties, it will have to be preserved by force—which will immediately be a question of an American involvement in the preservation and the execution of the arrangement, not only in giving its good offices for peace implementation. I don't think this is something that either Israel or the United States wants to see—a direct American involvement in the dispute in the Middle East in terms of physical involvement. I think the important thing is that

the president has emphasized that what we all must strive for—and this is in a sense the precondition for any meaningful solution—is that we know what we are talking about. What is peace? Because “peace” can be the vaguest word in the English language, or for that matter in any language.

If we are talking about peace, does the other condition, withdrawal with only minor modifications....

You don't think that I will not get to it. Peace, a settlement, in order to be conceivable at all, has to be based on the understanding, I repeat, of what we are trying to get, what is the aim. Peace as defined by President Carter is peace that is not only a declaration—definitely not merely a cessation of a state of war, an end to the state of war—but rather peace with components of realism in it; of open borders, of exchange of trade, of cultural exchange, of exchange of people, of exchange of tourists, of diplomatic exchange, etc., etc.

Why? And this is something I want to emphasize if I may. It is not because, with all due respect to our neighbors, Israel cannot survive without trading with Egypt or without cultural relations with Syria or without tourism from Saudi Arabia. The point is, if we are trying to understand the core of the issues, that we are living in a very transitory Arab world; an Arab world that can have a policy of accommodation today and a policy of confrontation tomorrow. And we have ample historical experience to go by. Therefore, if we are to assure that the State of Israel's permanence, not its fact but its permanence, is acquiesced to by the Arab people, by the Arab world, then something realistic has to happen, something that the man in the street in Cairo and Damascus and Amman will feel has happened to the Middle East—not merely a sign of purpose, or not merely a proclamation of good intentions. Only then will it be, not impossible, but difficult, for any subsequent Arab leader to change this reality by reneging on a commitment he took. Because the facts of the situation will speak for themselves. This is why for us, as I am happy to see for the President of the United States, it is such an important thing.

Now with regard to the other areas. We have always said and will continue to say that the question, the basic question between Israel and the Arab states, is not the territorial question. One has to ask himself why we are in

the two together. They sit opposite each other. They'll talk to each other. They'll make peace with each other. And that is the purpose of going to Geneva.

You disagree, then, with two American policies, as I understand it. You disagree with Secretary of State Vance, who has stated that before the PLO can come to Geneva it must change its charter. And you also disagree with U.S. policy of upholding Resolution 242. Apparently you agree with Crown Prince Fahd that 242 must be changed.

You are getting me into trouble, I see, with a lot of people. No. Let me say this: You can do it in Geneva or you can do it before Geneva. Let's have the Israelis do exactly the same thing we ask from the Palestinians. Before they go to Geneva let the Israelis say, "Yes, I recognize the existence of a Palestinian national state that has the right for a state in Palestine equaling the West Bank and Gaza."

But what Israel says is what? "These people do not exist. There is no room for the Palestinian state in between my borders and Iraq. There is only room for one state, which is Jordan, and they can disappear within Jordan." Israel says two diametrically opposed things. She says peace should not be imposed from outside, and yet before the Palestinians sit at the table she has imposed her conditions on the Palestinians. There has to be give and take. If she doesn't want anybody to impose conditions on her, she should not impose conditions on others. And I think the issue, frankly, Mark, is less complicated than what the Israelis say. And I think in the final analysis they'll come to it.

They'll be forced to it, or they'll come to it?

They will come to it. Because in the final analysis we, too, have been set upon by a lot of people to recognize the fact of Israel, to make peace with Israel. And we have been saying that now. They, too, must make peace with themselves. And they must make the decision that the only way that a Jewish state can live in the area is to live with the area and not against the area or on top of the area. How to co-live with us, the Syrians, the Lebanese, the Jordanians, and above all the Palestinians, who will share with them formerly mandated Palestine and who must live in peace and harmony together.

Let's go back to Africa. What is it about what's happening in Africa that has caused such a change in Egyptian policy? What is it you are afraid of?

Well, we need security. We want to feel sure that we are not being surrounded by enemies.

By whom, the Soviet Union? Who else could threaten you?

Look at what's happening with Qaddafi attacking us, sending people to destruct and kill. Apparently Qaddafi has found an ally in the Soviet Union, which has been giving him assistance. We don't want this. We want the best of relations with the Soviet Union. We want the best of relations with our Arab brothers. We have no reason to quarrel. But we don't want to continuously rise up every morning to find a bomb exploding in the heart of Cairo. You do not want it in your country, we do not want it in ours.

And the Israelis do not want it in theirs.

Exactly. This is why I say that we should go to peace with Israel and that Israel should not keep the situation aflame. In Africa, too, we want Africa to be for the Africans. We don't want meddling from outside into the affairs of the area. I speak of everywhere. European colonialists have gone and left us. And we want to see Africa remain free, independent, sovereign, where it can cooperate with everyone. I think it is essential that the Soviets have economic ties, but they should not help countries or regimes that can be destructive to other countries. That does not sit right with the policy of co-living and peace.

One final question. President Sadat has described the psychological dimensions to the conflict with Israel—a total lack of trust, a total lack of understanding. If you had the possibility of addressing the Israeli people, in view of the psychological problems and realizing the possibility that your two countries might sometime soon be engaged in a war that could mutually destroy each other, what is it that you would say to them to convince them of your sincerity? You'll remember that at Sadat's Washington press conference the Israeli correspondent asked, "What has changed the situation?" What would you tell the Israelis that might convince them to begin the road to peace rather than the road to war?

Well, I think it is going to be to their own benefit and to our own benefit, to the benefit of their own future generation and ours too. I would like to see my own son having peace, tranquility, and harmony with sons of Israeli counterparts of mine such as Simcha Dinitz. I was the colleague of Yosef Tekoah [formerly Israel's U.N. representative] at Harvard, and we sat in the same class of William Langer, who taught Modern European History. Look where the situation has developed since 1947. I would like to see peace replace war, where, if we could not talk to each other—Yosef Tekoah and I, who were schoolmates—because of the unhappiness of what happened between our two states, I would like to see that disappear so the new generation can then find it easier to co-live, to talk to each other.

Not just the new generation. Does normalization mean that you and Yosef Tekoah, the next time I come to talk to you, can talk to me together?

No, I don't mean that peace is for the next generation. You tell me how to convince them. I am telling them the fruits of peace for both of us in this generation.

And the three of us together talking?

Why not? Why not? Down the road I could see that taking place. If Israel withdraws from our territory totally and does not say this bit I like and this bit I don't like. And if the Israelis would recognize that they must live in harmony with the Palestinians and in peace. And then we can, yes, down the road, we can see normalization taking place between all the countries in the area, where normal conditions require normal behavior.

Thank you.

Good luck.

the Sinai, why we are in the Golan Heights, why we are in the West Bank. Because one bright Sunday morning we decided to take a stroll? We are there because we were attacked in these places; once, twice, three times, or we wouldn't be there. Mr. Assad would not have a problem explaining to the world today that he is prepared to have demilitarized zones had he kept the demilitarization of these same zones before 1967. Mr. Sadat would not have a question of trying to get us out of Sinai had he not attacked us from Sinai. And the same thing with King Hussein. He knows very well that in '67 he got a message from us that if he does not touch us, nothing will happen to him. But instead he shelled us, and instead he attacked us. As a result he lost the West Bank. Now what are we going to do on the question of the territories involved? Are we going to return to the situation exactly as it was, the same fragility and the same vulnerability that existed until 1967; the same vulnerability that produced all these wars? Or are we going to say, let us have what Security Council Resolution 242 calls for, secure borders?

But that does not seem to be President Carter's interpretation.

I will get to President Carter. You are interviewing me now, not President Carter.

No, I'm not asking you for your interpretation. I'm asking you how you feel about what the policies of this administration are.

But to tell you how I feel about the policies of this administration I have to tell you what my understanding of them is. And I don't see any contradiction so far between what I was telling you and what President Carter's statements are.

Some of my readers may.

Well, that is why, if you will allow me to finish, they might not. That is why we are talking about secure borders—and this is what Resolution 242 is talking about, and this is what President Carter talks about. We are not trying to reconstruct the '67 situation, neither does President Carter. What the changes should be—as President Carter defined them at one point, minor adjustments, or, as we say, changes that must be decided by the parties in the course of negotiations, or no changes at all, as some of our Arab neighbors demand—that is something that has to be negotiated.

I do not think that President Carter, by calling what he believed to be minor adjustments, has specified what sort of adjustments they should be. Because minor adjustments to one person might mean one thing and to another person another thing. For us it is not a question of trying to grab territory or trying to stay in territory. For us it's a question of making those territorial changes that are needed to assure our security. And I believe that on this we do not have disagreement with the president.

On the question of the Palestinians. As with President Carter, and before President Carter, we have indicated that that must be an ingredient of the final settlement of the dispute between Israel and the Arabs. We do not believe that there could be an overall lasting peace unless a settlement is made of the Palestinian question. The

question is how. And on this we believe there are certain things that, if done, will be detrimental to Israel and, I also believe, to the interests of other Arab countries in the area. There are other realistic approaches in solving the situation.

Before you stop me I'll say to you with regard to Carter's phrase of "homeland": He specifically said the following day that he preferred this to be in conjunction with Jordan.

No, I think that's inaccurate. His phrase is that he conceives of such a homeland in the context "of Jordan or by some other means." So he clearly has something else in mind as a possibility.

Why, because he said "or"?

"Or by some other means." Besides, you and I both know that a Palestinian state is an option being considered by the American Government.

What you and I know, this is a matter for us to discuss in a minute. The president said a Palestinian homeland in the framework of Jordan or in other means. By this you draw the conclusion that he definitely had other means in mind. I think you have to take back the statement because he did not rule out the possibility, but he did not definitely say by other means.

I think he does have other options, and that's why he said "by other means."

Yes, he doesn't foreclose the other options. But you can't say that if he says preferably by Jordan or by other means that he doesn't consider the option of Jordan. You know, we are talking about what the president said. You might have different opinions, which I respect, or do not respect, but it is your opinion, and you should not take such a distinguished partner as the president of the United States and make him a partner to your opinion just because you happen to favor them over the other options.

Mr. Ambassador, with all due respect, after talking with officials of the United States administration I do not think you have accurately summarized the options the United States is considering.

First of all, I haven't summarized the options of the U.S. Second, you will believe me that I also talk to American officials. If you want to discuss what some officials told you, I will discuss what some officials told me. One important official said it publicly, that a homeland doesn't have political connotations. He said it, a statement. Maybe you are deciding that this is not an important official, or you do not like this declaration, but he said it. That was Dr. Brzezinski. He said it to the press. I hope you will not succeed in convincing him to change his mind. But that's what he said.

In fact, Dr. Brzezinski in late 1975, as you might remember, specifically came out for a Palestinian state, which would be ruled by the PLO.

In 1975 Dr. Brzezinski was not the head of the National Security Council. And the president of the

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United States also said other things when he was not the president of the United States. So, I mean either we are talking about official statements or we are talking about the opinions people had at various times of their lives.

You've focused on the quality of peace and the nature of peace. I want to jump right into that question because that seems to me the central issue between Israel and the Arabs at this point. I want to quote what President Sadat said to a group of journalists on April 6 and I want to ask you what your differences are with this conception of what you could discuss at Geneva: "You must have misunderstood my saying that peace will be postponed for the next generation. I didn't say at all it will be postponed for the next generation. I am for full peace, permanent peace, and then everything will be normalized. For instance, the issue of the boycott automatically will be finished because whenever we sign the peace agreement everything is going to be normalized. For instance, now Israeli cargo passes the Suez Canal. But after the peace agreement, sure, the Israeli ships can pass the Suez Canal because we have solved the whole problem." He also went on to say that "when we sign this agreement, then it is O.K." for there to be an exchange of journalists between Egypt and Israel.

With this statement I believe President Sadat has opened up the kind of dimensions—maybe not enough, but at least the kind of dimensions—that you've been asking for. What specific differences do you have with this conception of how you can begin to define a peaceful relationship?

I have two difficulties with this answer. First of all, unfortunately, later during his visit here in Washington, when specifically asked what does he mean by normali-

zation, he said no more than cessation of the state of belligerency. And therefore I simply do not think he has in his mind what normalization—or at least he did not disclose—not to us and, on the basis of my conversations with high American officials, not to them—what the ingredients of normalization are. It could be that he has shown some opening and some preparedness to discuss them—that we would welcome very much. But obviously we would not be able to satisfy ourselves with general statements that all these things or some of these things can be discussed. We have to find out what they are.

At the present stage the only—based on my conversations with the American officials who spoke to him—the only opening they saw in Sadat's approaches to the question are two: That he did not say any more that it must be accomplished within a generation and that he understands his narrow definition of a mere cessation of belligerency is not sufficient. So, obviously, if Sadat will accept the definition of President Carter on what peace ought to be—even in your quotation those ingredients are not included—then we would have a meaningful change of the position of Egypt on this point.

You don't think that offering three specifics—an end to the boycott, Israeli ships being able to pass freely through the Suez Canal, and Israeli journalists being able to go to Egypt—are a beginning of the kinds of concessions you are looking for?

I say that if this is what he really means—I don't know....

It is what he said.

But he said other things following this quotation. I do not know whether this is what he really thinks, because, unfortunately, he has said subsequently the opposite things, and these things, of course, are not the full



Simcha Dinitz, left, with Mark Bruzonsky

picture. If he would begin to think in these terms and augment them, then it would be an important thing.

I told you I had a question from Ambassador Ghorbal that was volunteered, I did not request it. I want to quote him specifically: "We go now for the full peace, the total peace, which, when it gets to be established, then like any peace between countries that have had a state of war for a long time it brings them into an atmosphere of normalization. Normalization leads to what could be expected between two states that have normal conditions between them. What is impossible today may not be impossible tomorrow. I certainly would want to ask the question to my counterpart, Simcha Dinitz; here it is: The Egyptians are committing themselves not only to full peace, but beyond full peace to what the full peace will lead to in terms of normalization. I would like to hear from the Israelis, from Simcha Dinitz, that they commit themselves equally vis-à-vis their own obligations about withdrawal, and about the existence of a Palestinian-Arab state side by side, living in peace and harmony with the Israeli state. I would like an equal commitment in the same kind of language."

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

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

No, because for him "full peace" and "total peace" is cessation of hostilities—because he tells you here that he is prepared to go beyond full peace. So that means that for him full peace is merely an end of state of war. But he's prepared, if you read it very carefully, beyond the full peace to think in terms of normalization. When we sit and negotiate and he outlines for us what are the ingredients of normalization that he's prepared to go, we will outline for him what are the territorial adjustments that we are prepared to make. At the present time he shows intentions. We also show—I show very good intentions: Israel is prepared to withdraw substantially from the territories that we hold at the present time as a result of negotiations for a full and meaningful peace, with all the ingredients thereof.

I gave Ambassador Ghorbal this analogy, that not too long ago in history there was a confrontation between Germany and France, where the two countries were constantly at war and had no normal relations. I asked him if he could conceive that relations between the Arab world and Israel, and specifically between Egypt and Israel, could follow the patterns that have been achieved between France and Germany. He

responded, Yes, that that was a good example, in fact, of what normalization is. Now I may be wrong—other people may interpret it differently—but it does seem to me that we are getting the kind of definitions of normalization that are worth discussing. And somehow I hear from you that they are not really offering anything more than an end to the state of belligerency.

At the present time, yes. But that they are worth discussing, definitely yes. So I don't understand what we are really arguing about. So that you will understand that I am not inventing, let me offer an exchange between President Sadat and Barbara Walters from the sixth of April on ABC News. *President Sadat*: "I am for full peace, but not the interpretation of Israel for full peace. My definition of peace is this. Let us end the state of belligerency. Let Israel have whatever guarantees she asks for from whatever body she agrees to. We shall not oppose even to the extent of a defense pact with the U.S. We shall not oppose it."

Barbara Walters: "This is very important, Mr. President, because President Carter, when talking about full peace, seemed to be speaking of the same kind of peace Israel did. What about diplomatic relations, exchange of students, exchange of tourists, exchange of journalists? Will that be part of peace?"

President Sadat: "This is not at all. I mean, an argument about full peace, as I told you, it is imposing conditions—they are old Israeli conditions that they could not even impose after '56, or after their very glorious victory in '67 they couldn't impose these conditions on us."

Barbara Walters: "Mr. President, in a press conference you talked about normalization of relations. It may very well be interpreted that by normalization of relations you mean full diplomatic relations, exchange of students, etc."

President Sadat: "For me myself, on my part, I have no objections at all. But let's be practical. The climate is not ready."

Barbara Walters: "But you said that after Geneva it would be. And then came the question, Mr. President, are you talking about full normalization, and you said you were."

President Sadat: "Yes for sure, when I say full normalization it means that the state of belligerency that has prevailed since the creation of Israel, for twenty-nine years until this moment, will end."

I don't know whether I have to read Sadat of that quote or Ghorbal of yesterday or what Sadat said here in Washington. When we sit and talk we will find out from him exactly what he's prepared to do. And therefore I don't understand what is the purpose of our discussing here what is discussable or not. Everything is discussable. We will sit, in answer to my colleague the ambassador, we will find out what they mean in terms of peace, and they will find out from us what we mean in terms of boundaries and in terms of a Palestinian solution.

There's one other element in discussing peace. The question of Zionism. Are, in fact, the Arabs prepared to live with the Zionist Jewish State of Israel? I asked

Ambassador Ghorbal about this and he said: "As I said, we are ready for a full, complete peace with Israel. And Israel is a Jewish state. We are not quarreling with that. But not a growing, expansionist Jewish state. Yes, we will live in peace and in harmony with a Jewish state, but not with an expansionist state." What are your comments?

Zionism never was a policy of expansionism, and Israel never was an expansionist state. Israel has fought wars of survival that were launched on it since 1948 by the Arabs. We have committed a great sin. We won these wars. And we have transferred the war to the enemy territory. For this we don't need to apologize. If the Arabs are prepared to make peace, we will make peace on agreed borders. But there is not a question that Israel ever expanded in the past, and Israel has no ambitions to expand in the future.

Do you not have parties in Israel, in fact a number of major parties, that advocate the retention of the entire West Bank? And could not this be considered an expansionist tendency in Zionism?

It could be considered a party platform of certain political parties. There are some parties—unfortunately not parties, because there isn't a democracy in the Arab world—who would say to you that they don't want the very vestige of a Jewish state anywhere in the Middle East. Just yesterday I read a statement from a prominent Saudi representative, who said that it is ridiculous to believe that we can have peace with any segment of Israel.

Who was that Saudi?

I can find that quote for you.* Today I saw a statement from a Libyan representative that our struggle would continue until the last inch of Israel's existence in any part of Palestine will remain. You have the PLO talking about the elimination of Israel by stages. So, I mean, you're telling me that there are some parties in Israel that want to retain the West Bank. First of all, this is not a sign of expansionism because they have not expanded in the West Bank because they wanted to take it. It was Menachem Begin in the cabinet of Levi Eshkol who joined in a statement to Hussein, on the first day of the '67 war, that if you don't move, nothing will happen to you. So that doesn't exactly show signs of expansionism. But, on the other hand, you have in the Arab world still today, within the Arab countries bordering Israel and other Arab countries, those who demand the complete annihilation and elimination of every vestige of Jewish independence.

What major Arab leader supports the policy you just stated? What important Arab leaders support that policy?

I don't know if you think Qaddafi is important or not important. He just endowed a chair at Georgetown University.

In addition to Qaddafi?

I said Qaddafi is one example, and I think that Assad still does not talk about acquiescence to an independent

Jewish state in Israel. He has said that Syria is not obliged to recognize Israel or to have peace with it even if Israel goes back to the '67 lines. The leaders of Iraq are another example. In fact, Sadat talks about recognizing Israel as a fact but does not talk, so far, about a full, meaningful peace with Israel.

Sadat's ambassador is now on record as having talked about that. If in fact that is their policy, then do you consider that a major change?

As I said, if this is their policy and it will be expressed in the various ingredients during the course of negotiations, I will consider it a very important change. I've said it three times, but I'm prepared to say it four times.

I want to talk about U.S.-Israel relations. You've been the ambassador for Israel since the Yom Kippur War and through the period we call the "reassessment" of American Middle East policy. Many people would say that Jimmy Carter, in fact, represents the continuance of this reassessment. Many people would also say there are strains in the U.S.-Israel relationship. Last year, as an example of these strains, a broad cross section of political people issued what was called "the Brookings Report." In this report two major differences with Israeli policy were outlined. The Brookings Report called for, as President Carter has called for, first, minor changes in the 1967 boundaries. And, second, it called for Palestinian self-determination.**

A second example of the strains is George Ball's lead article in our most important journal of foreign affairs, which appeared in April. In this article George Ball says that the strain is so great that only an imposed settlement can be a proper policy for the U.S., and that he further believes that unless the U.S. takes the initiative to impose a settlement, the parties themselves will never reach one. In view of these

*Ambassador Dinitz later indicated that he was referring to Crown Prince Fahd, who has stated that his country will not agree to any policy not approved by the PLO. And the PLO, Dinitz further indicated, calls for the elimination of Israel.—MAB

**The Brookings Report referred to is entitled *Toward Peace in the Middle East*. It was published in 1975 by the Brookings Institution. The members of the study group that prepared the report—each acting in his or her personal capacity—included Morroe Berger of Princeton University, Robert R. Bowie of Harvard University, Zbigniew Brzezinski of Columbia University, John C. Campbell of the Council on Foreign Relations, Najeeb Halaby, a New York attorney, Rita Hauser, attorney, Roger W. Heyns of the American Council on Education, Alan Horton of the American Universities Field Staff, Malcolm Kerr of UCLA, Fred Khouri of Villanova University, Philip Klutznick of Klutznick Investments, William Quandt of the University of Pennsylvania, Nadav Safran of Harvard University, Stephen Spiegel of UCLA, A.L. Udovitch of Princeton University, and Charles W. Yost of the Brookings Institution. The affiliations are those of the participants at the time the report was published. (For discussion of the report see Mark Bruzonsky, "U.S.-Israel Policies: Reading the Signs for '77," *Worldview*, September, 1966.)—Ed.

developments what is your assessment of the condition of U.S.-Israel relations?

Sometimes I am more fascinated by your introduction to the question than the question itself. Because you are making certain sweeping suppositions. You are not questioning me but are asserting *them*. I doubt whether President Carter would agree to define his present policies as a continuation of the reassessment.

My second response is to the presentation of your question, saying there is a strain in America-Israel relations. My answer to this is that there is no strain in America-Israel relations. We work very closely and very intimately with the United States. We do not have agreement on every subject under the sun. But we do have basic agreement on both strategy and tactics, and therefore I cannot accept the assertions you made regarding the strain of relationship.

Third, to illustrate the strain you have brought in Mr. George Ball, who is known to be a protagonist of the Arab cause. I disagree with his thesis as expressed in the article he wrote in *Foreign Affairs* magazine, and in many articles he wrote before, on two or three basic grounds. First of all, I do not believe that for peace to be durable it can be imposed. I don't think either we or the Arabs are children, that peace must be conceived and imposed upon them by others. I'm happy to see this is also not the position of the U.S., and George Ball does not represent the position of the United States Government, to the best of my knowledge. Therefore I don't see why I should take this model as an example of strain in the relationship. On the Brookings Institution Report, this is also a private report, which I'm quite willing to comment on. The Brookings Report does not say—with all due respect to you—what you said. It does not talk about a separate Palestinian state.*

I'm sorry, I did not say that. Palestinian self-determination.

I don't have the Brookings Report in front of me. But the Brookings Report talked of two different options about how to solve the Palestinian problem. One in conjunction with Jordan and one as a separate entity. We favor the first one and reject the second one. Were there other elements, I'm quite prepared to answer them.

Yes, the Brookings Report favors a return to about the '67 borders.

The Brookings Report does not favor the return to the '67 borders.** The Brookings Report says there should be some changes or minor changes—I don't have it in front of me—but it does not talk about the '67 borders as the formula. Again, as I said to you earlier in the answer, we believe there are certain changes in the '67 lines that have to take place for the borders to be secure and for the peace to be permanent. We are quite willing and prepared to discuss these changes when we negotiate peace with our neighbors.

I wonder what your response is to this quote from the pro-Israeli *New Republic*: "The conflict between Israel and the United States could well come over just how much change is to be demanded of the PLO

before it is accepted as a party to the negotiations." Do you think that such a conflict is foreseeable, is possible?

First of all let me take exception to your adjectivization of a journal as pro-Israel or anti-Israel. There are many articles in the *New Republic* written by different people whom I disagree with. There are some I agree with. And therefore I don't think it is fair to that magazine. I think as one journalist, you, especially, should be very careful in labeling generalizations about magazines, whether they are for or against.

On the substance of the question on the PLO. There's an American position on the issue articulated every Monday and Thursday, and this is that the U.S. will not recognize, will not deal with, the PLO until the PLO accepts Resolutions 242 and 338, recognizes the existence of Israel, and changes its covenant to eliminate from it all those references to the destruction of the State of Israel. I have no indication that there is any change contemplated with this American position.

A number of Israelis—in fact, a former Secretary-General of your Labor party and a highly respected Reserve General—feel there are such indications. In fact, they've been meeting in Paris with representatives of the PLO. This group of Israelis is advocating establishment of a Palestinian state and negotiations by Israel and the PLO. How do you feel about these efforts, and how do you feel about those individuals negotiating with members of the PLO?

I feel they have a perfect right as citizens, as free citizens in a free country, to do whatever they think is right. I think what they are doing is wrong.

Do you find Mr. Eliav and Mr. Peled respectable members of the Israeli political establishment?

They are definitely not in the Israeli political establishment if you call establishment the government.

I don't mean the government. Respected Zionist Israelis?

I wouldn't try to label them with any definitions. It's up to them. I think what they are doing is probably well-intentioned, but I think they are wrong. And their right to do it is, of course, guaranteed by law. But to the best of my knowledge they have not said that they think the changes that occurred in the PLO are sufficient. But

*In its opening statement the Brookings Report includes among the elements of a fair and enduring settlement this reference to Palestine: "There should be provision for Palestinian self-determination, subject to Palestinian acceptance of the sovereignty and integrity of Israel within agreed boundaries. This might take the form either of an independent Palestine state accepting the obligations and commitments of the peace agreements or of a Palestine entity voluntarily federated with Jordan but exercising extensive political autonomy."—Ed.

**On boundaries the Brookings Report states: "Israel undertakes to withdraw by agreed stages to the June 5, 1967, lines with only such modifications as are mutually accepted. Boundaries will probably need to be safeguarded by demilitarized zones supervised by UN forces."—Ed.

why should I argue that point. I think that the whole group is mistaken. I think their whole approach is wrong. Trying to find, to attempt to reform a coalition of murderers and make them the worthwhile representatives of people—rather than doing this we should find alternate ways of dealing with the Palestinian question through the vehicle of Palestinians who have in mind how to settle women and children and not how to kill them. I think this is basically our approach to the Palestinian question and therefore to the PLO.

If before the end of the year the U.S. Government were to grant a visa for a PLO official to work in an information office in Washington, would you consider that a major development, one that called into question previous agreements between Israel and the U.S.?

I would consider it a wrong move on the part of the U.S. because it would be subject to that sort of interpretation that you are giving. I hope they will not do this.

Ambassador Ghorbal questioned the Israeli economy yesterday, and I have one question for you on it. He solved his own?

He also has major problems. It's a question concerning which country has the greatest number of problems at the moment. My understanding is that the Israeli budget at present is about 35 per cent for military purposes, and that if you add the interest of the spiraling Israeli debt the total approaches somewhere about half the budget. I believe that since the debt is mainly due to war-incurred costs, it's fair to add these two together.

Your country is receiving \$2 billion in American aid, plus aid from the Jewish communities in the U.S. and elsewhere around the world. This aid is what's required to keep your economy afloat. A number of distinguished economists in your country have stated in fact that the country is potentially bankrupt, that there's even the possibility of defaulting on the Israeli debt. Meanwhile, inflation is rampant, devaluations come monthly, the standard of living is declining, emigration seems to be going up. How long can Israel carry a burden of using 50 per cent of its national budget for purposes of war?

I think you are exaggerating a little bit, but there is no need for you to exaggerate the heavy burden of defense, because it's there. There is no pleasure in devoting 33 to 35 per cent of your Gross National Product to defense. Even the heroic people of Israel are not enjoying paying taxes. But I think they realize that as long as we are threatened by a hundred million Arabs surrounding a population of 3.5 million people, that this burden will have to be carried. How long it will be carried, as far as I am concerned, the shorter the better. But let there be no misunderstanding: If the burden will have to be carried for a long time, we will do this. Because we have no choice. We are not imposing this burden on ourselves because it's pleasant. We are imposing it because this is the only way we can insure our continued survival as long as there is no peace.

How long do you anticipate the U.S. Government will continue to supply—if my figures on this are correct—approximately 50 per cent of our grant military aid and approximately 25 per cent of our grant economic aid to one country of 3.5 million people?

Without actually entering into the question whether your figures are right or not, it is substantial economic and military aid that we get from the U.S. I think the U.S., too, will continue to support us as long as they realize that we find ourselves in this situation. Without this inducement Israel and the U.S. are doing their best to bring about the situation of peace. Among other things, so this heavy load can be dispensed with. But not only because of this. Human lives are involved. And they are even more dear than the cash grants. So I believe that with all the effort we are putting in in order to find a settlement to the dispute the U.S. will aid us, so I hope, as long as we find ourselves in the predicament in which our existence and our survival are threatened.

One further question on the PLO. The director-general of the foreign ministry, Shlomo Avineri, last year on Israeli radio indicated that "there is no reason to rule out in advance coming to an arrangement that might include a West Bank-Gaza Palestinian state." "There is no reason," he continued, "to rule out in advance, in any event, negotiations with the PLO." This may have been before he became director-general, but apparently you disagree quite vehemently that there is no reason to rule these two things out?

That is correct. And not only I, but I'm happy to see that Professor Avineri too disagrees with it, if you see some of his recent statements. A recent speech was devoted to indicating why there cannot be and ought not to be a separate Palestinian state and why the PLO cannot be the conduit by which to do it.

What has changed Dr. Avineri's views in two short years?

I think that, like every scholar, he develops and matures as he studies the situation more deeply.

You recently stated, when talking about territories, that Israel must have defensible borders and that major portions of the territories occupied in the '67 conflict would contribute to these defensible borders.

I never said "major portions" of them could contribute to these borders.

So you believe that major portions....

I said to you earlier that I believe that for true peace major portions of the territories now held by Israel could be returned. I never said that major portions of the territories would have to be incorporated. Vice versa. I said that major portions of the territories now held by Israel could be returned in peace agreement negotiations between us and the Arabs.

Then defensible borders in fact might well mean minor adjustments?

This all depends how you define minor adjustments.

The State Department defines it as limited to a small number of kilometers and not including Jerusalem.

It never defined it to us in any way. Not in minor, not in major, not in tens of kilometers and not in a few kilometers and definitely never defined it as including Jerusalem. Never did. Maybe to you, but not to us.

Where do you find political support among constituencies in the U.S. and among member nations of the U.N. for the position that Israel must have defensible borders and should not return to some approximation of the 1967 borders?

In the U.S. I find great support for it in the general public, in the labor movement, in the Congress, in some parts of the media, and even among some members of the administration. Outside the U.S. I would admit that the majority of the member nations of the U.N. do not think so. And I can also analyze at length why, but this was not the question.

Could you tell me your own views, after being here for so many years, about the reasons the U.S. and Israel have a relationship of such a special character. What is it? Is it Israel's strategic importance, Israel's democratic nature, the Holocaust? What is it that makes for such a special relationship?

I think it's a combination of several factors. First of all it is a question of kinship, which is based on similarity of moral, ethical values. I think there is a kinship between democracies. Unfortunately, the U.S. has not been blessed in recent years with too many allies that are free societies, especially not in our part of the world. Second, I think there are strategic and geopolitical interests on the part of the U.S. in a strong, safe, secure Israel. Because it is not only providing a bastion of democracy and stability in that region, I think it increases America's position and leverage in the Arab world as well. A weak Israel can very easily be a liability for the U.S., but a strong Israel is an asset for the U.S. and for its position in the Middle East. If you just view, in recent years, how the U.S. has progressed in its position in the Arab world

because of its strong ties with Israel, while other countries that have severed ties with Israel or weakened their friendship with Israel have lost their position and influence in the Arab world, I think that this by itself would be a very telling lesson.

Secretary Vance and President Carter have indicated that the U.S. is preparing what is termed "suggestions" about the kind of settlement the Arabs and Israelis might try to reach. Do you welcome these "suggestions"? Are you looking forward to these suggestions?

We always welcome suggestions between friends. What we object to is imposition. We have had suggestions in the past, and we will probably have suggestions in the future, and we will consider it in the spirit of exchange of ideas between friends. But if somebody is trying to impose—and I don't suggest the administration has this in mind—this is something we would not welcome.

In the past, when there were suggestions from the U.S. as to what a settlement would look like, it was called the Rogers Plan. There seems to be a presumption that once the U.S. goes on record with suggestions, that by the very nature of going on record, we have something more than suggestions. Don't you feel this is true?

Yes, I feel it is true, if your interpretation is true. The reason the Rogers Plan was not suggestions, but a plan, is because it was a publicly articulated plan, which is exactly the sort of thing that we would not welcome and we think will not contribute to the efforts of peace. On the other hand, suggestions have been going on throughout the course of negotiations for the last four years, since the Yom Kippur War, between Israel and the U.S. Many of them were constructive, and I am sure that this dialogue will continue between Israel and the U.S. in the future.

Thank you very much.

CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES DEBATED
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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS
THE AMBASSADOR OF EGYPT
THE AMBASSADOR OF ISRAEL

WORLDVIEW

JULY/AUGUST 1977

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THE MIDDLE EAST NOW

WE WANT
THE ISRAELIS TO
UNDERSTAND US

LET US
TALK FACE
TO FACE

THE KOREAN-AMERICAN CRUNCH
NUCLEAR WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST
IN DEFENSE OF DEMOCRATIC CAPITALISM

We Want the Israelis to Understand Us

An interview with Ashraf Ghorbal conducted by Mark Bruzonsky, Worldview associate editor, on the eve of Israel's recent election.

It's quite clear that during the last few years Egypt has decided that its major foreign policy initiatives would be made with the United States and that you are attempting to solidify your relationship with the U.S. and expecting certain things from us. I would appreciate it if you could be specific about these expectations: economic aid, military aid, and most especially the political initiatives you are expecting from the U.S. in the next year or two.

To start with I think we have reason to rejoice that at least the state of polarization has ended and that the U.S. and Egypt have become much closer. An ambassador is always lucky when he has a visit from his head of state once during his tenure. I have been lucky in having, so far, two. And you notice I say "so far." I still hope to continue here in Washington for more years and to help President Sadat also continue his visits to the U.S. We definitely look forward to a visit by President Carter, who has received an invitation from the president.

We also face and know the realities. As has been said by President Sadat, the U.S. has 99 per cent of the cards in its hands. The relationship that the U.S. has with Israel is a unique relationship, a special one. You provide Israel with all kinds of support—political, military, economic, moral. And thus it is very essential that we have close relations with you if we are to convince you of the soundness of our thesis, of our point of view. We expect that you will claim equally a major role in convincing the Israelis of that soundness.

We are not naive in the sense that we do not believe that you are going to side with us against Israel. That is not in the cards, nor is it our intention. But we understand, and we expect, that the weight of our arguments, convincing as they should be, should be carried forward by the U.S. toward Israel. Then your weight will be felt. The Israelis understand the equation well. Fine, that's exactly what we want if we are going to make peace with each other, which is our intention. We want the Israelis to understand us, as we are trying our best to understand them and to co-live. Unfortunately, we still find in the Israelis the philosophies of gain; territory speaks louder than anything else to their mind. We do not believe it is

the case. I think that the U.S. believes it is not the case. And thus we expect that you, the U.S., will deploy your own efforts with Israel, your weight with Israel. Go make her understand.

Economically, again, as we come closer together, we have been grateful for the level of assistance that the U.S. has been giving us. We would like it maintained for a number of years, until we are out of the jungle of economic difficulties that we are in. Our Arab colleagues, brothers, have been helping us tidy our short-term debt situation. You have given us some assistance there. We expect that you will keep the level of assistance of \$1 billion, as it is now, for at least three or four more years.

Militarily, again we are realistic. We're realistic in the sense that we do not expect that you go overboard vis-à-vis the past. But we would expect that you would start to build up a relationship based on the trust and confidence that is developing. We can't have trust and confidence on one side and lack of confidence on another side—trust and confidence in that the peace is really our intention.

We are ready to do it. We have made a lot of compromises in order to achieve it. And lack of trust—saying that if we give you x, y, and z, you'll turn around and use it on Israel—it just doesn't fit with the equation. But we understand that there we have a psychological problem. We bear with that psychological problem. We try to convince you. And I believe that the time has come for all of us, we who are in the area, you who are outside the area but deeply involved in the area, to get rid of these psychological barriers, these complexes, and get into a more sound relationship.

We have not been receiving any assistance from the Soviet Union. Yes, we have been trying to get it from other sources. But you are a primary source. If you are going to play, as you tend and as you must play, a very effective role, politically and economically, you must also help militarily.

There's the question of expectations. When King Hussein was here a couple of weeks ago, he stated quite clearly that those Arab leaders who were leading public opinion to think that there would be major progress this year were playing with fire. Many of us think he was addressing President Sadat, who has

publicly indicated a great deal of optimism, saying that much can be expected from the U.S. Do you share the worry that your expectations of what is possible from the U.S. could backfire in the sense that public opinion in Egypt could turn against Sadat if he can't deliver?

Well, each one of us has his own constituency, and you must deliver to your own constituency the promises you make, the expectations you have and they have. It is an obligation that each leader has to his country, wherever he is. I think King Hussein appeared kind of gloomy because of what he saw as Israeli intransigence. I talked with King Hussein and he said, "Look at what comes out from Israel. It just doesn't give an indication that these people understand the lesson, understand the realities, are willing to really go to peace and make the gamble to peace as we are all willing—with excellent odds for both of us."

The Israelis, unfortunately, are trying to bank on the unknown—that maybe somehow, somewhere, something will change that would render the situation different, and thus they can hold onto the territory forever. That is what we call gambling, gambling on the unknown, on the negative, while you have the ingredients here to make the peace in a positive, effective manner and with chances that have never been as good as today. King Hussein, I think, toward the end of his visit here was more optimistic than when he came. I think the result of his talks with President Carter and with the secretary of state and congressional leaders gave him better hopes.

Let me ask the same question in a somewhat different way. An Egyptian journalist recently told me that President Sadat's optimism, almost an excessive amount of optimism, was mainly designed for American ears, a subtle form of pressure on the Americans. But he stressed that the Egyptian Government is not fully counting on the U.S. to deliver and is, in fact, preparing other options for itself. What might these other options be?

Leave it to the press people, they always know the secrets, more of them and faster than the officials. Sadat may be giving, as we his representatives, an added degree of optimism. But it is what we call the logical reading of the situation. Any man in his senses, whether he is on the Israeli side or on the Arab side, should not fail to see what are the beautiful chances today that we should not throw away for the unknown. Let's do it. We can do it.

Didn't we have the same beautiful chance in 1971 and 1972, and didn't you rely then on the Americans to deliver?

No, the Americans then were totally polarized toward Israel to the degree that, when the whole world in June, 1973, voted in the Security Council to order a total withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Arab-occupied territories, the only negative vote was that of the United States.

When President Nixon took office we had the Scran-

ton mission, we had the Rogers Plan. Today what President Carter is saying is being compared to the Rogers Plan. What makes you so optimistic that things have changed? What makes you so optimistic that the Israeli policies and the Israeli forces within the U.S. are going to be defeated this time?

Several things. Nixon and Rogers did not continue on the same line as they started. The Rogers Plan was introduced, but then it disappeared. Second, the polarization then was much deeper and further than now. I was told by people in the State Department that the U.S. is the lawyer for Israel and the Soviet Union is the lawyer for Egypt.

Today the situation is different. Why? Because you have become more enlightened. Why? Because we saw to it that you got to be more enlightened in the October, 1973, war. You were sold a bag of winds (forgive the expression) by the Israelis, that "never mind, just freeze the situation, the Arabs will yell, scream, and sign on the dotted line." We did not yell or scream or sign on the dotted line. We kicked the Israelis off the Canal and off the Bar-Lev line, and they ought to have learned from that a lesson that there is no such thing as defensible lines in occupation, that there is a real powderkeg of an explosion in occupation.

I think you have learned the lesson, and I think Henry Kissinger was immediate in grasping the proper reading and the chances. And we have moved since the October war to teach the lesson, but also to sue for peace immediately from the 16th of October. I was there in Parliament when the president spoke, President Sadat, and opened up the road to Geneva—way, way in the beginning, when the war was at its peak and when the Egyptian forces were advancing in Sinai and we had opened up our communications to you. I think you have learned the lesson. And I think some of the Israelis have. I hope the rest will.

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

Let's talk about that peace. This is what President Sadat said when he was here a short time ago: "I didn't say at all [that peace] will be postponed for the next generation. I am for full peace, permanent peace, and then everything will be normalized. For instance, the issue of the boycott automatically will be finished because whenever we sign the peace agreement everything is going to be normalized. For instance, now Israeli cargo passes the Suez Canal. But after the peace agreement, sure, the Israeli ships can pass the Suez Canal because we have solved the whole problem."

I think with this paragraph President Sadat opened a new dimension to the possibility of a full peace. And I'd like you to elaborate on it if you can. The president

indicated that within five years of an agreement that might be signed at Geneva a full, complete peace is what Egypt is working for. Does this peace include the concepts of open borders, trade relations, tourists visiting each other's country, and possibly at some point even an exchange of diplomatic representatives? Is that the kind of peace President Sadat is talking about? You know the Israelis are very, very concerned that this hasn't been spelled out.

I'm glad that you recorded what Sadat said, because I think what he said is very important, very significant in giving the true temperature of what our intentions are. In building the two disengagement agreements Henry Kissinger helped us build with the Israelis we were determined to make of these a beginning of the establishment of real peace—is it working, is it do-able, and is it possible to continue this way? And I think it proved that it is.

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

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

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

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

Including these elements?

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

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

Why not? If we talk about peace, we are not double-talking. We know what peace entails. And we know what peace leads to. It is only normal to expect what normal



(Credit: Embassy of Egypt)

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

Your foreign minister, Mr. Fahmi, has repeatedly stated that Israel must alter some of its Zionist principles, such as the Law of Return, in order for there to be a full peace. What is your opinion of Zionism? Do you agree with the foreign minister on that point?

Well, let me go back one step and repeat what I said. We are seriously prepared to achieve full peace, and we expect the Israelis are too. The Israelis go into every minute detail like the Code Napoleon about the obligations on the Arab side. We would like to be assured that they will not sign a peace agreement today that, because of *force majeure*, they will have to renege on.

What will the *force majeure* be? *Lebensraum*. How? Because of the influx, continuous influx, into little Israel. They will say, "We have no more room to hold all these people and thus we need to go into a larger space in the area to hold more people." When you contract the peace, then you must do whatever you need to do in terms of action and policy commensurate with that contract.

It sounds like you are saying that Zionist ideology must change.

I am saying that the Israelis must have another look at lots of their policies. One of the Zionist ideologies was for a state from the Euphrates to the Nile. Now are the Zionists going to keep that kind of policy, or are they

going to adopt another policy in order to live in peace, which they would sign freely, as we would sign? What do they want? Do they want peace or annexation? If they want peace, and for them to respect it and for us to respect it, they will have to do certain things, as we will have to do certain things.

Let me ask it somewhat differently. I had breakfast this morning with the deputy finance minister of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Mansour al-Turki, and he said, on the question of Zionism, that, No, he did not oppose and his country did not oppose the concept of a Jewish state, which he understands is now widely supported. But he did oppose the expansionist nature of what he thought to be Zionism. If that definition is wrong, if in fact Zionism is the concept of a Jewish state willing to live within set boundaries, then it is possible for the Arab world to make peace with a Jewish state of Israel. Is that also your view?

That's exactly the same view. As I said, we are ready for a full, complete peace with Israel, and Israel is a Jewish state. We're not quarreling with that. But not a growing, expansionist Jewish state. Let us not forget that we want to get the Israeli army receding from the Arab territories it presently occupies and into the June 5 [1967] lines, and that these lines be respected. We do not want to subscribe to a policy that will see these armies again leaving these lines. And as a consequence, yes, we will live in peace and in harmony with the Jewish state, but not with an expanding Israel.

So we are talking about a clarification of Zionism at the Geneva conference, not a total giving up of what Zionism is to many Jews?

If we have the positive elements that would fit in with the making of peace, there is no quarrel.

Let me return to the problems of Sadat and your expectations. A well-known American journalist visited your country a couple of months ago, and he returned to write this about the situation: "Nearly everything seems to be going sour. His economic open door policy has brought in no massive productive investment—only play things for the rich that mock the poor. The army is strangled for weapons. Sadat is welching on his promise of democracy. If his greatest gamble of all falls through—his reliance on the U.S. to wrest Sinai from Israel and get him peace—Sadat will have failed utterly and will not even be in a good position to recoup by starting a war. This year there is real doubt in Cairo whether Sadat will stay in office into next year. One admirer said he may find himself hanging from a lamp post." This is a rather bleak forecast for the future. I wonder what your comment is.

He just looked at things very gloomily and with great nervousness and emotion. Sure, we had problems on January 18 and 19 of this year, as a result of our trying to take some stringent economic measures that have been recommended to us by international organizations and even by our friends in the Western countries and some Arab countries as well. But it has been abused by some segments that wanted to topple the regime.

Well, the regime did not get toppled. The regime is strong, sound, and Sadat proved that, the government proved that. Sadat came here as the first Arab leader to come to America, to be invited. And, I think, we in Egypt are still in the forefront to take the necessary steps to bring about peace. We have remedied the financial situation. Our Arab friends have given us \$2 billion to tidy our short-term debt. You have helped us. Other European countries and Japan have extended help too. I think, as far as the economic problem, we are getting out of the woods, as I say, into a clearer situation.

Before you go on let me give you another summary. This one from C.L. Sulzberger of the *New York Times*. He writes: "Today Egypt is flat broke. If Mr. Sadat succeeds in all he forecasts he can retire early with a clear conscience. But the program outlined is Herculean. Is Sadat Hercules?"

Well, I don't think it is Herculean. That is an exaggeration of the situation. The problems are immense. But the solutions are there. They have already started. People forget that we have a tremendous built-in capability—the Canal, the oil wells, the great huge industrial capabilities that only needed a few things to produce and to export. And I think most important, if peace is achieved, then much of the money that is being invested in defense could be directed and channeled to economic developments and economic programs.

Let us not forget that Israel has an even more Herculean problem, where inflation is over 30 per cent and where devaluation (that has not taken place in Egypt) has been taking place continually in Israel, regardless of the fact that the U.S. has been giving Israel a budgetary \$2 billion and nonbudgetary monies through all the millions, the hundreds of millions of dollars that are sent by the United Jewish Appeal and other agencies.

You think Israel's economic problems are even worse than yours?

Worse. And I can assure you they are in a much more difficult situation than we are. The only thing they have is that they are banking on continuous support from the U.S. And there they ought to be warned, because they detect, I think, as we detect, that people are saying, "Why should we invest all that money in arms, which will be wasted. Let's bring them to peace and invest it all in economic and regional development." I think that is the case.

So, in short, it's a gloomy description of the situation. It is seeing one incident and putting it in huge, big dimensions. It is seeing it from one side and not from both sides. And I think we have passed that stage. The most important thing now is to get to Geneva, to get to achieve in Geneva what we want, and the economic problems will disappear as well as the security problems.

During Sadat's visit here, for the first time he emphasized the Egyptian role in Africa. In fact by some estimates, 30 to 40 per cent of the time spent in conversation did not deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict. What is it that Egypt sees happening in Africa that requires a shifting of Egypt's attitudes and maybe even of Egypt's military capabilities? Re-

cently you began sending pilots to Zaire, and tremendous anxiety has been expressed about what is happening in Ethiopia.

Mark, let me backtrack for a second. I want to answer, in addition, one point about the last question. I said what we need to do in order to achieve what we want. But if we don't, then the economic situation in both Israel and Egypt and everywhere will deteriorate. And the security situation not only between them, but in the whole region, will really explode. And the energy crisis there is going to be an even bigger inflammable crisis.

That sounds like a threat.

No, no. This is not a threat. But if you have no progress in the Middle East, you're going to have an explosion. And if you have an explosion, everything explodes. There isn't an assurance that one thing is out of the equation, the rest is in the equation. We are all in it together. That's why I say that it is very important that we get on with the job of making the peace. It has never been so achievable, and the chances are immense. Why would we, because of stubbornness on one side, throw the whole thing into flames—the economy, security, and what not?

We're not all in the same boat yet. In fact, the Israelis do have a legitimate worry that a peace with Sadat's Egypt today may not be a peace with whoever runs Egypt if Sadat does not continue. How do you reassure them?

How are we to be assured about the ones who will sue for peace, contract for the peace in Israel? How are we sure that Menachem Begin would not come in and then say, I disagree with everything that Peres has done and I am going back to the old theory of the Euphrates to the Nile?

Is the only choice to rely on U.S. guarantees?

Well, this is why we say guarantees for both sides.

A treaty with Israel and assurances to you that Israel would not be allowed to expand?

That could be one way. And we are serious about peace. The peace is not being signed by Sadat and Peres alone. The peace is the commitment of the country. Is the country ready? Yes, the country is ready on our side. There isn't such a thing as a Sadat policy that is different from the country's policy. What Sadat is saying is what the country is saying.

If you are serious, it appears to many observers that you were rather unsuccessful in attempting to convince the Palestinians that it was time they alter their ideological opposition to living with the Jewish State of Israel. You did not succeed in that policy, and yet your president insists that the Americans open a dialogue with the PLO, the same PLO that refuses to follow the positions that you've outlined. How is this consistent?

You are not reading the Palestinians right. You have not read—and if you've read, then you've not read carefully—the decisions of the National Palestinian Council. There you have seen what they have said, that they are ready to go to all the conferences and the

meetings at the international level that deal with the Palestinians' future.

But we've both read the Palestine National Covenant. We know what the covenant says.

Sure, I've also been reading about the Zionist Covenant. Now, how do you want me to read it?

What Zionist Covenant?

Well, the Euphrates to the Nile. The Zionist Declaration.

That's not on paper.

Well, sure it is on paper.

When I was in Egypt I was told that there was a map in the Knesset that shows Israel wants to expand from the Euphrates to the Nile. I went to the Knesset and asked for it. It's not there.

Tell them to take it out from the Library.

But the PLO Covenant is there.

Has there been a repudiation of what the Israelis have been saying about the annexation of territories until this minute? No, there hasn't.

The Israelis have not formally annexed any territories except for eastern Jerusalem.

But what are they doing with the settlements in the different Arab territories?

According to the Labor Party platform, the Israelis are now prepared to discuss withdrawal from all of the occupied areas.

How about the rest of the parties? How will I know that the rest of the parties would not come in after the elections and be the governing and ruling party later? We can go into an endless discussion. What I say is this: I think the Palestinians have moved immensely. They're talking about agreeing with a resolution of the U.N., of the General Assembly, which spells out their rights in the proper form. They are not going to be treated simply as refugees—refugees could be settled anywhere according to some other resolutions of the United Nations. But this is a nation. And for the first time, thank God, an American president speaks about the right of that nation to establish a homeland.

Well, he called them refugees.

Yes, but still he talked about homeland. He's made progress, and America's made progress. I'm not going to deny that. But that doesn't mean the end of the road. The U.S. must still continue the road in giving them their full rights, in recognizing them, in entering into a dialogue with them, in bringing them to Geneva to give them their rights, but equally to convince them of their own obligations.

What is their obligation? It is to live side by side with an Israeli Jewish state in Palestine within the June 5, 1967, boundaries. That's what we have been saying. And that's what we hear from many Palestinians that they are ready to do. But they ask, what is the *quo* if they give the *quid*? *Quid pro quo*. There isn't one without the other. Israel asks for recognition from the Palestinians and the Palestinians ask this same question of the Israelis. I think it could all be settled very easily. Bring

Israel's No. 1 Dove

Lova Eliav Speaks With Mark Bruzonsky After the Sadat Visit

Arie (Lova) Eliav is Israel's number one dove. It is widely agreed he is the most respected figure in Israel calling for a Palestinian state.

From 1970-72 Eliav was secretary-general, the number two position after prime minister, of Israel's then ruling Labor party.

Then he broke with Golda Meir and publicly endorsed creation of a Palestin-



ian state in the West Bank and Gaza if a comprehensive peace settlement could be reached.

Beginning in 1976 Eliav and other dovish Israelis began holding meetings with PLO representatives.

In the May, 1977, Israeli election Eliav headed a new party—Sheli—which now holds two seats in Israel's Knesset.—MB

Bruzonsky: Can you define what you are? What does Sheli mean today?

Eliav: I'm supposed to be the number one Israeli dove. I am the chairman of Sheli. I am one of the leaders of the Israeli realists, moderates who are preaching for the last ten years that Israel should go a different way, an entirely different way on its road to peace.

I am saying in essence two things. Israel should have declared—and this was said ten years ago—that in return for full-fledged peace Israel should return *the* territories, but for minor adjustments agreed on both sides, to all parties concerned. And, two, that Israel should recognize the rights of the Palestinians for self-determination. These are the two basic things we were saying for the last ten years.

And I collided head-on with Golda Meir and the Establishment. I was one of them; in the political hierarchy I was number two to Golda. When she was prime minister she was number one. And secretary-general is number two in the party hierarchy—not in the governmental hierarchy, although I was a minister. I collided with her on these issues the last ten years.

What's changed because Sadat came here?

Israeli society is a drug-addicted society. It's addicted to political drugs, unfortunately. Especially from the Six-Day War on. Even before.

Look, you take three million Jews from a hundred-odd countries with their traumas, with their suspicions, with their two thousand-year-exile mentality, ghetto mentality, you take them and bring them in. You put a hundred million enemies, Arabs, around them. Then you have a society that doesn't behave normally. What Zionism wanted was that they be normal. We are far from it. The founders of Zionism—my teachers, Ben-Gurion's generation—they didn't bring us up on drugs. They brought us up on reality, about things we can do, we cannot do, and not on hatred, and not on illusions. It was a very good upbringing. I brought my generation up to be

good soldiers, good pioneers...not empire builders.

From the Six-Day War on—there were some traces before—but the Six-Day War was a military and then a political LSD trip. Really it was. Both the people and their leaders—headed by Golda and Dayan and company—went on a high trip. The people, after the Six-Day War, were in a euphoria. So were the drunken leaders, drunken with glory. And they thought they got not only a country, a homeland, but an empire. And as Arik Sharon [now minister of agriculture in charge of settlements in the occupied territories for the Begin government] put it in a flamboyant way: "We can take Casablanca, only we'll have to refuel the tanks in Algiers." And Dayan was not far from him.

In *The Land of the Hart* [1972] I tried to call out that the status quo is not good, that time is not working for Israel. Then we had the Yom Kippur War. And from a dose of uppers we went into a dose of downers. Everybody was shocked, again in an exaggerated way, because there was a military victory. Then the body politic—the psychology of the people—needed a shot in the arm. So Entebbe was a dose of heroin.

I wrote to Brzezinski on the first of November, after I visited him in the White House, that the Israelis are so trauma-ridden and their suspicions so deep that only a direct hit in their hard core would maybe shatter their rigidity, which is based on the hard-core suspicion that there is nobody to talk to on the other side. In writing to Brzezinski, by the way, I suggested that Sadat will meet top Israeli people in the open. I quoted the letter I wrote to Brzezinski in the Knesset, saying I urge you that Sadat meet top Israeli spokesmen in the open because I tried to meet PLO and other moderate Arabs in secret and it was no good, people didn't believe us.

Sadat came. He gave the Israelis another trip. His trip was a high. People had again a euphoria. Six-Day War high. Yom Kippur low. Entebbe high. Now people are on a high again. He scored a bull's-eye in hitting the myth that there is nobody to talk to. And patterns of

thinking, clichés, demagoguery that the Likud built on—Golda cemented them and the Likud built on them a second and third story and got the votes—are being shattered now; they are falling apart.

But I'm afraid that...that...I'm afraid to say it.

Please say it.

Even this ultra, ultra dramatic visit was not yet strong enough and long lasting enough to shatter the clichés, the rigidity completely so that people will start rethinking.

Which is, of course, my real question. What do you expect Mr. Begin and the people who run this country to do in response?

I don't know. Now I don't know. I know one thing is sure: Begin didn't give, to my mind, didn't give Sadat enough leeway and didn't meet him halfway.

He didn't meet him at all, did he, in his Knesset speech?

Well, he could have said "Don't come." So he did go some distance.

It looks to me like something is happening in the Labor party regarding the Palestinian problem.

Shimon Peres [leader of the Labor party, who lost to Menachem Begin in the May, 1977, election] came to me after his Knesset talk [the same day Sadat spoke] and said, "Lova"—I was his secretary-general—"you see I even veered from the Labor platform about 'your' problem." [The Palestinians are supposedly *my* problem! Golda said I invented the Palestinians. Eight years ago she said, "Lova invented the Palestinians."]

So the sentences in Peres's speech about the Palestinians were very serious sentences? [Peres had stated: "Let us not hide from it, let us not disregard it, we are aware of the existence of the Palestinian identity. Every people has the right to decide its own identity, and this does not depend on the authorization of another nation."]

They were serious sentences. I think Peres sees that he has to do something, he has to say something. They're not good enough, but they are already something.

Is there a possibility that Labor could return to the Yariv formula of agreeing to recognize and talk with the PLO if the PLO will agree to recognize and talk with Israel?

Actually, this was my formula.

Is there a possibility that somebody in this country—Sheli already does, but Sheli is only two votes—that somebody in this country is going to accept the idea of Palestinian nationalism?

Some in the Labor party do. First of all Mapam does in a weird sort of way, in a weird sort of way....

There are ideological doves, a minority, Sheli. There are ideological hawks, a small minority, not even all of Gush Emunim—zealots who say we are ready for Mas-sada to kill ourselves and our children and our wives on

the rocks of Nablus or Shehem or whatever. There are other zealots who sit in the coffee shops of Tel Aviv and are ready to march once in a while into the West Bank as long as my son is guarding them as a captain of a tank brigade. What kind of hawks are these? They are coffee shop hawks. I don't count them.

In between you've got what I call "hawks by default," hawks out of desperation, pessimism, trauma; "There's nobody to talk to"; "There will never be peace"; "All the Arabs are killers"—all the brainwashing and the clichés and the horrible demagoguery that was poured on them for ten years. All these are hawks by default. Sadat did something to them—not to the ideological hawks, who will never change.

Where does Begin fit in?

I don't know. I don't know. He didn't give Sadat leeway, he didn't give him rope, he didn't meet him halfway, not even a quarter way. He could have made ten different gestures, but he never made one.

If Labor were still in power, what concessions would they have made?

They would still be sitting in their councils and fighting. Peres would fight Rabin, Rabin would fight Peres. And I don't think they would give Sadat any answer of any kind because of their internal rivalries and the big shadow of Golda, which is still dominating.

Nothing happens in Labor without Golda?

Not yet.

Has she changed her views at all on the Palestinians?

No, she insists I invented them. People don't change at my age, and definitely not at her age.

What is it in this country that makes it so difficult for intelligent people to accept in principle the obvious existence of a Palestinian national movement?

I told you. We are a paranoid, schizophrenic society. We've got all the right to be—all the right to be paranoid and schizophrenic. We have to be treated—because of the 2,000 years, because of the traumas, and not less because of the horrible attitude of the PLO. Instead of trying to help people like me....

I think I overcame the traumas. And I don't want people to throw at me the Holocaust. When Abba Eban speaks about the Holocaust, I abhor it. I don't want the Holocaust thrown at me, not at my generation. Maybe you were not born then. But my wife and I, we don't want the Holocaust thrown at us. She was in the death camps and I saved her from the death camps as a soldier. So I saw the Holocaust. And I think I overcame. But many didn't. And I don't blame them. Now the PLO, instead of enhancing my hand, the hand of people in Sheli and the Council [for Israeli-Palestinian Peace]—the Israeli doves—they did us a horrible turn when we started meeting with them. Instead of giving us some rope, they did to us what Begin is doing to Sadat. They didn't give us an inch.

What did they do?

They denied the talks! Whenever I said I met [Issam]

Sartawi—and he's a good man and he's ready to meet me halfway on two states, two peoples, two nations, two national movements—Kaddouni came and said I don't know who Sartawi is and we'll never meet with Zionists; the talks didn't take place. They discredited us before the election horribly.

But their job wasn't to further your movement.

Their job.... Why did Sartawi start meeting us? He was sent by Arafat to meet us halfway. And then because of internal rivalries, and because they don't have in their midst a consensus, and because they don't have leaders or statesmen—they've got petty politicians—they made our work a Sisyphus kind of work. You push a stone up and it falls back on your head.

You sound quite bitter.

With them? I'm ready to go to Paris and start it all over again. The road to peace will be very long, very tortuous. Out of every ten wells that we'll drill toward peace, like in the desert, nine will be salty and dry. It was a salty hole we found. So we'll start again.

From my point of view I look at the ideological statements and the positions of the PLO and I see tremendous change.

No doubt. No doubt. But you are not working here. You are not traumatized. You are not schizophrenic. You're an onlooker. People here have to have tangible proof. I should have brought a piece of paper, signed, saying O.K. let's call it quits—'67 borders, two peoples, full peace. They never gave me that. They couldn't.

You don't seem very sensitive to their own ideological and political problems.

I'm very sensitive. So what? Out of my sensitivity I got two members of Knesset. So what? The PLO, for their own good, could have changed the political arena in Israel. They didn't, because they are governed by (a) internal rivalries and (b) by extremists. As we are.

So there's symmetry. Every day that Begin puts a settlement on the West Bank it's a field day for Habash and other extremists. Every day there is a Ma'alot or Kiryat Shemona it's a field day for Israeli extremists.

If the PLO had acted in the way you wanted it to, how many votes would your party have gotten?

I don't know. Many.

Would you have gotten ten seats in the Knesset?

Ah, ten people and we would have changed the whole face of Israeli politics!

And you think you would have had that?

Yes!

Sartawi predicted to a friend of mine you would get that many Knesset seats.

But he didn't give me the tools!

And what did he say to you when you told him that?

He wept.

Literally?

Literally.

And said what?

And he said he couldn't, he couldn't deliver. I don't have anything against him personally. On the contrary. He was nearly stoned to death in Cairo [in March at the Palestine National Council meeting] because they said he's a traitor and he's giving Israelis a good name and he's running around with Zionists. But he couldn't deliver.

How do you view the U.S. role in these PLO efforts? Did we encourage them properly?

No you didn't.

What should we have done?

People in the State Department.... It took them—dumb as they were—it took them a long, long period, through the Johnson, Nixon, and part of the Ford administrations—it took them a long time, like a dinosaur, to recognize the importance, the crucialness, the centrality of the Palestinian problem.

But the Palestinians came to the U.S. in November, 1976, shortly after you started meeting with them, and they started opening indirect talks with the United States government. Did we mishandle that opportunity?

Sure you did.

What did we do wrong?

First of all, they mishandled it. They went to the wrong people. You mishandled it because you didn't put it on a very high level. You put it on a very low level. I'm talking about the Ford administration. When Sartawi first came to America, Carter was "Jimmy who?" Then Carter had other things on his mind. Sartawi was mistreated in America by everybody. He came to Cairo with his pants down. Nobody took him seriously in America—neither the Jewish doves....

I think he made many mistakes himself because he was new.

Should we have given them the office they wanted in Washington?

It's not a question of the office. To my mind you should have told—via Saudi or any other way to Arafat, not to Sartawi—should have told them you have to behave differently, you have to spell it out, you have to talk differently. Then maybe, just maybe, via pressure on them, they would have talked differently and then the political arena would have been different. But you didn't do it. You didn't press them, you didn't press us. You used silken gloves.

I think the administration would say they strongly urged the PLO to make the kind of positive gestures that would allow the U.S. to open a dialogue with them.

Not strong enough. Not strong enough.

What should the U.S. do now vis-à-vis the PLO?

Meeting Sadat

Whether or not Mohamed Anwar El Sadat will eventually be judged a great man, he has accepted the responsibility for doing great things.

Sadat is a relaxed, amiable man, full of Middle Eastern conviviality. My fortune in meeting him resulted from having spent three weeks in Egypt in October. Thus I had the right contacts to return as emissary of the *New Outlook* International Peace Symposium, which brought hundreds of Middle East experts to Tel Aviv for five days—days that overlapped with Sadat's Jerusalem visit.

I came across the Allenby bridge from Jordan into Israel on November 9, the very day Sadat spoke to his parliament proclaiming his willingness to go to Israel's Knesset. That evening Sadat's speech was seen in Israel through Jordanian TV. As Sadat's image (with untranslated Arabic) infrequently caught our attention, Dr. Uzi Arad and I exchanged political perspectives until the early morning—a habit we had picked up together at Princeton a few years ago—unaware of the diplomatic revolution then being born.

The excitement at the *New Outlook* magazine office the next morning made me quickly aware I had missed something spectacular. Within hours I was on my way back to Cairo, letter for Sadat in hand. After a quiet evening in Larnaca, Cyprus, I arrived in Cairo in the early hours of November 12.

"I am writing to you a few hours after your recent speech on peace in the Middle East was reported on Israeli radio and in the Israeli press," Simha Flapan, chairman of the upcoming symposium and long-time editor of the Left-intellectual English-language monthly, wrote Sadat. "Your remark...has already created an enormous stir among the Israeli public," Flapan added. He then detailed the nature of the symposium, the impressive list of participants from Israel, the West Bank, and abroad, and extended Sadat an invitation to designate a representative or send some message.

It was, of course, a wild gamble, but it turned out to present Sadat with an opportunity he desired. With the help of Dr. Morsi Saad Eldin, chairman of the State Information Service, who has since served as Egyptian spokesman for the Cairo conference, Dr. Butros Ghali, then Minister of State, who was soon to become acting foreign minister, and Mrs. Jihan Sadat, I had by midnight an appointment to see the president at his country home outside Cairo on the afternoon of the 14th.

Sadat and I met a few hours before Walter Cronkite brought the Egyptian president and the Israeli prime minister together, hastening Sadat's Jerusalem travel plans. Of course I was elated during our half-hour discussion that Sadat accepted the invitation and would be sending the first commercial telegram from an Arab country to Israel to



the symposium. I was so excited, in fact, that I didn't take the opportunity to query Sadat whether he considered himself a modern Saladin, the Egyptian hero who, in 1192, after defeating the Crusaders and capturing Jerusalem, journeyed to what was then southern Palestine to conclude peace with Richard the Lion-Hearted.

The following day, via Athens, I returned to Israel. That morning the picture of Sadat and me meeting appeared on the front page of most Egyptian newspapers—a tipoff for the coming message. The telegram itself arrived, via Cyprus, at the regular Israeli telegram service the morning the symposium opened. The need for using American embassy or third-party facilities was quickly ending.

Sadat's message was the top news in Israel that day, and the telegram was prominently pictured in all Israeli newspapers the next morning. Later that day (the 17th) the only news was of Sadat's impending arrival just two days in the future.

—Mark Bruzonsky

The tragedy is that the PLO are making their own mistake. They are caught in their own Catch 22, as we are, as our government is. All through the Palestinian national movement's history they missed their boats, they missed their planes. The Mufti said all or nothing, and he got nothing. Husseini said all or nothing and got killed. Shukairi said all or nothing, and he was demoted. They cannot come out of it as yet.

But the PLO has offered, behind the scenes, to accept 242 with reservations on the national question, if the U.S. will support a Palestinian state.

But they're not doing what Sadat did. They didn't have a daring man, and they don't—like Sadat—who will spell it out.

What do you want them to say clearly?

I want them to say that for full-fledged peace we are ready and willing to recognize Israel—not its right to exist. Who wants it from them? Recognize Israel, conclude full-fledged peace, and make our state in the West

Bank and Gaza somehow federated with Jordan, and then this is the end of it, the end of the conflict; no more, this is it.

When you say federated with Jordan, if they want to have their own state, passports, flags....

It's their own business.

Ideologically, what you are asking is like Israel being asked to give up the Law of Return. You're asking a movement that has practically been slaughtered and battered around for years to give up everything that it stands for at a time when nobody is offering any return for it. The U.S. offer: only that we'll talk to you. Israel insists they will never, under any circumstances, deal with the PLO. There are a few people like you who talk sense....

But they would give me the influence to be ten and then fifteen and then twenty. They're committing harakiri, that's all. From a military point of view they are null. They are being dragged and pushed by all the Arab

governments like a football. And they cause with their stand another tragedy first of all to themselves.

Will Sadat make a separate peace with Israel?

No, I don't think he will; he can't. Let's say he won't and there'll be another war. If there will be, what will the Palestinians gain? They'll be the first lambs to be slaughtered. You're making speeches to me about their ideology—but they're risking the lives of a million and a half people, the remnants of their own people.

What do I want from them? A Yariv formula, that's all. If Israel will recognize us, we'll recognize Israel. That's all I want from them. What is it? Is it a very big sacrifice? They've got a million people under military rule. If there will be another war, they'll have tens of thousands of killed and hundreds of thousands of refugees.

Did you read the Barbara Walters interview with Arafat? Didn't Arafat speak of a final settlement here?

He never said anything. He's a small, petty man. He should have used the Yariv formula and recognized Israel in return for a state in the West Bank and Gaza. He never said it. Not to Barbara Walters and not to anybody else. If anybody knows it, I know it. They are juggling with words. They are being kicked by all Arab governments and they know it. They are being cheated by all Arab governments, they know it. They are playing with the lives of a million and a half people. The whole thing is a tragedy, a Greek tragedy. It's a double vicious circle. We are to blame...they are to blame.

So I'm small. Because I'm small in number the U.S. government and the PLO don't give enough weight to my political view and then I get smaller. And this is the tragedy. And if I had gotten not 27,000 votes but 270,000 votes—it could have been done by this act that Sadat has now done—then I would change the face of Israeli politics.

Can't you still do it?

Sure, if your government will be daring enough.

To do what?

To help me.

How?

To spell my name. To say this kind of stand of Eliav and his colleagues is good. They should enhance my hand. American Jews like yourself should enhance our hand, the PLO should enhance our hand, then I could change things, especially now after Sadat.

Sadat gave me already credibility here—more than all your government and American Jews combined. Because the people who meet me now in the street, the people who are filling my car tank—people who all voted for Begin—are shaking my hand. They say we looked at television and Sadat was nearly kissing you—which he did. He said two sentences: I am following you with great sympathy, and I admire what you do.

When you come to Washington you have access to the top people, don't you?

I do. But these top people are afraid of the Jewish lobby, who is with the Israeli government, who has got the majority because of the traumas, etc. It's a vicious circle. Nobody comes out of it.

And then one day they will say, oh, the whole thing is a tragedy and the story of human folly. Why didn't we do something?

What's your view of the Carter administration? Does Carter know what he's doing in the Middle East?

I think that the Carter administration—I told this to Hamilton Jordan when I saw him—that what you're doing I'm preaching ten years. He laughed. They've adopted the Sheli platform, which is good. They do it because they think it's good for the U.S. I think it's good for Israel.

I said it ten years ago when Carter was growing peanuts. But they've adopted it.

If for the next few months little progress is made, is it up to the U.S. to gently but firmly tell the parties, especially Israel, that the time has come and there's going to be a settlement?

Yes. They're doing it anyway, but they should do it in a positive way, not in a negative way. They should enhance the hand of the Israeli ideological doves.

How? They already meet with you, they talk to you, they have a position very similar to yours. What more can they do? They can't make a speech and say Sheli is the party they'd like to have ruling Israel.

I can be helped by the American administration, part of the American Jews—not all of them—the Palestinians themselves. Maybe Sadat has given me—not me personally—some leverage for the first time.

Sure, whenever I'm in Washington I can come to the White House. But that's all. With that it's finished.

Don't be that naive. An American administration that thinks that the Middle East is the most explosive area, that the terrible fuse of all the world is the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians, could do more to enhance the hand of these people whom they know think like them—even if for different reasons.

Does the administration really know what it wants in the Middle East?

Generally, I think they think in the right direction. They are doing many, many tactical mistakes, to my mind. But when people do things, they make tactical mistakes. Their general direction is my direction. What can I say more? I did many tactical mistakes, they do many tactical mistakes.

I said when I first read the Brookings Report,* "This is my platform." This was two years ago. They are generally going along with the Brookings Report.

What do you think about the American Jewish community?

*The Brookings Report (1975), drawn up by a list of influential people, outlined the elements they regarded as leading to a fair and enduring settlement in the Mideast.

There are many closet doves, many realists. When I came, I talked my head off from Boston to Los Angeles.

But you're doing yourself a terrible harm, and the Israeli hawkish stand is doing you a terrible thing. A by-product of the Israeli hawkish stand is that it's the first time in a hundred years that American Jews are facing the very grave risk of going out of the American national consensus. And it's a very grave risk that the Israeli government is taking and American Jews. For no good reason.

You're suggesting anti-Semitism?

No, no. American Jews were within the limit of the national consensus most of the time of the Zionist enterprise—the last eighty years—until maybe a few years ago. Now we are pushing you to the edge of an abyss for no good reason.

We are playing on the guilt feelings of American Jews, filling them with horrible equations that PLO are Nazis, Arafat is Hitler, the Covenant is *Mein Kampf*, the whole thing is annihilation. So if PLO are Nazis and all Palestinians, or most, say they are PLO, then the whole syndrome in American Jews creates terrible guilt feelings.

We in Israel are playing on the annihilation syndrome.

And so American Jews are saying, What the hell, we are sitting in the nice villas, the suburbs of New York or Connecticut and these people are going to be annihilated.

But this is not true! We are not going to be annihilated. We are the strongest military power in the whole Middle East and getting stronger, military-wise.

Isn't there a fear that should there be a peace settlement, should Israel have to recast its claim on Jewish sympathies in a different way, that American support and American money would be called into question?

It's another horror what you are saying now. Because if Israel is basing all its sympathy on pictures of wounded soldiers....

Only Israel living in peace, or on the road to peace, will gain a new magnetism for young Jews like yourself—not only to sympathize and love it, but even some of them to come and live there.

You don't expect too many to come and live in Israel?

Not in this kind of Israel, but in my kind of Israel that I wrote about in *Land of the Hart*—sure, I do, and many.

When Israel will be the kind of Israel I want it to be—the most modern, service society in the neighborhood, serving and helping and integrating on the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe—it may be much more interesting to many.

I don't know how many. If our magnetism is determined by the helmets we wear or the tanks we use or the guns we have, it's not magnetism.

Where did your 27,000 votes come from?

They are intellectuals, elite. Among the 27,000 we have maybe 3,000 university professors and lecturers. People in kibbutzim, some very good soldiers. Our dovish stand is nothing comparable to the Vietnam analogy, because in every tank you'll find doves, hawks; it's not draft dodgers. Elite!

What's the practical program of your party for gaining greater support?

If we'll have Sadat and the PLO helping us and the American administration helping us and reality helping us, we'll make a breakthrough.

Then we can join hands with Labor. I don't want to remain as a small party of two. We can close hands, eventually, with others who will come to say more or less the things I do.

But that will take another Sadat, and maybe Arafat, and then the American administration, and a change of the arena. It can be done. I don't know if I'll see it, or my young colleagues will see it, but some will.

Why won't you, like Nahum Goldmann [former president of the World Jewish Congress] and George Ball say clearly that the U.S. should impose a settlement in the Middle East?

I don't want it! I want to come myself as a proud man.

But you're not coming yourself. Your country, some think, is moving in the wrong direction with Begin.

So what do you want me to do? Plead with Carter that he'll come and press us? No!

If you were not Israeli. If you....

But I'm Israeli!

But if you were not Israeli, were just an intellectual, a politician....

But I'm not an intellectual! You're not listening. I fought more years for this country than the years in all your life—forty years! What are you talking about? No! I will not come to Carter to plead that he press us! I want to do it from my own free will!

But this country is not doing it.

So you do it! You go and have people talking like you. And Goldmann's people. They'll help us. But not me. I want to be a proud man and a proud Zionist. And I think me, and people like me, are the proudest Zionists. To come and plead to Carter, "Please press us. Please don't send us money. Please don't send us arms...."

But the reality of your arguments seems that, emotionally, you can't say that but, objectively, you're arguing for that.

But who stops you from saying it! Go ahead and say it!

But I want to understand what you are thinking.

I'm telling you that the whole essence of Zionism was not to crawl before the courts. By the way, the hawks do it. They crawl on all fours. And they'll start retreating to the '67 borders on all fours.

This is the most horrible thing that can happen to us as a national liberation movement, a renaissance movement. I don't want it! I want to say this is good for Jews and for Zionism, and when we come and share our land with them—that it's also their land—and from then on we'll start a new era that will be the most glorious era of Zionism.

That's the way I want to speak! Not to crawl before the goyim and say, "Please press us," or "Please make us go there." No, I won't say it!

FORUM



WEST BANKERS SUPPORT PLO

The Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza feel that President Sadat has offered too much and has received nothing in return, Dr Nafez Youssef Nazzal told Mark Bruzonsky in a wide-ranging interview. Dr Nazzal (left in photo), who is Director of the Middle East Studies Centre at Birzeit University in the West Bank, insisted that the population of the occupied territories recognise only the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as their legitimate representative and would accept no alternative.

□ **What do people here in the West Bank think of what Sadat has done and about the possibility of a peace settlement?**

○ Most Palestinians here in the West Bank are confused about Sadat's visit . . . Most people would like to end the Israeli occupation. I think this is a priority. But as far as other issues are concerned — the establishment of a West Bank state, the establishment of a mini-Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza — there are many viewpoints . . .

What the mayors say sometimes reflects what the people think. The mayors were elected by the people because of their position with respect to the PLO. However, they are individuals and each has his own political views.

If you ask Elias Freij, the Mayor of Bethlehem, about Sadat's visit he would speak very highly of it because he's thinking in terms of a peaceful settlement which will end the occupation and which will bring about the establishment of a Pales-

tinian state. And then if you come to the north and visit Karim Khalaf, the Mayor of Ramallah, he feels that Sadat's initiative is a sell-out as far as the Palestinians are concerned. He thinks this way because he is convinced that the Israelis are not planning to withdraw from the occupied territories. Therefore, he feels that Sadat gave too much and did not get anything.

Now, if you talk to people in the West Bank about Sadat's visit, the spontaneous answer would be: "If God wills it, his initiative will bring peace." And this, I think, shows that the West Bankers want an end to the occupation and want autonomy.

But what kind of autonomy is an issue that needs to be discussed. Unfortunately, no one has done a survey of the political attitudes on the West Bank. I'm planning to do that, but I'm really scared, more or less, to do it.

□ Why?

○ Because I might not be permitted to do it by the Israeli authorities.

□ What would you find, do you think?

○ I think I'd find that it varies. I hate to predict, but I think a majority of people would want a definite end to the military occupation. I think I would find that most of the people would say that the PLO is the sole representative of the Palestinians. This, of course, would be a threat to Israeli military rule in Palestine.

I think it's understood that most Palestinians look at the PLO as the institutional framework within which things must be done. However, it will be difficult to find out to what extent the people here are willing to accept a state. What kind of state would they be willing to accept?

They have suffered a great deal. After 1948, although we were leaderless, we suddenly came under Jordanian rule. There is no doubt that 19 years of Jordanian rule have demoralised the people. We were not allowed to have our political leadership or our parties.

□ The Jordanians attempted to integrate the West Bank into the Hashemite Kingdom?

○ Yes, they integrated it, but they failed to consider it as part of Jordan. So if you look at the West Bank you will see that it suffered severely industrially, agriculturally and economically.

Politically, we were deprived of leadership. All parties were dismantled. And this process made it easy for the Israelis to take over and continue the process — to control the people on the West Bank.

Of course, people look upon Jordan differently from Israel. No matter how badly they were treated by Jordan they would tend to forget the past, look at their present and say they are badly treated by the Israelis because, after all, Israel is their enemy.

As far as Sadat's visit is concerned, most

Palestinians believe that Sadat's initiative is not right. They feel that he misunderstood the issue.

The people in the West Bank do not believe that the issue is to end the psychological barriers that exist between the Arabs and the Israelis. They feel that the issue is the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. True, there are psychological barriers, but they are a result of historical events.

Most Palestinians in the West Bank feel that the issue is one of dispossession. One group, the Israelis, have dispossessed the other, the Palestinians. They became enemies. As long as they are enemies, as long as one is dispossessing the other, the dispossessed, of course, are unwilling to recognise and speak to those who caused this.

The West Bankers feel that Sadat's visit to Israel gave more legitimate recognition to the Israelis, to the occupation. Of course, they felt that the visit would bring peace. It reminds me of the way we treat each other. Usually, if two individuals are in conflict the one who initiates the peace is paid double. For example, if we are in conflict and haven't been talking to each other for a long time and I initiate the conversation it is expected, according to our culture, that you double that initiative. If I move one step forward you have to respond by taking two steps forward.

So, Sadat's visit was expected to produce a miracle. We expected Israel to go all the way, sign a peace settlement and withdraw from the occupied territories. I know for a fact that many people expected the Israelis to release political prisoners — at least a few of them. When this didn't happen and Sadat went back with practically nothing they felt that Sadat had given too much.

Personally I don't feel that Sadat's intention was to take something back with him. Sadat is a politician and his initiative was aimed at ending the Israeli myth — I should have not said myth — allegation, that for the last 30 years there have been no Arabs to talk to. It is true. For the last 30 years the Arabs were unwilling to talk to the Israelis. And this is understandable. As long as Israel is occupying the land of the Palestinians, as long as we have a Palestinian issue, it is . . . was very difficult for the Arabs to talk to the Israelis.

Now the Israelis can no longer allege that there are no Arabs to talk to. Eighty per cent of the Israelis are convinced Sadat means well, that Sadat wants peace. Unfortunately, I feel, the Israelis continue to distrust the Palestinians and some of the Arab countries. This makes the situation more difficult because as far as we are concerned in the West Bank it is important for the Israelis to trust us, to recognise us. As long as they continue to mistrust us and fail to recognise us there will be no peace.

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Citroën in the Middle East

Bahrain

Manama - Mohamed Jalal Trading Cy - Po box 747
Tel.: 52-606

Cyprus

Nicosia - Paris Motors Agency - Po box 4507
Tel.: 41-333

Egypt

Cairo - Anglo Egyptian Motors Cy - Po box 943
Tel.: 59-824

Jordan

Amman - F. and I. Jweihan
Po box 1933 - Tel.: 51-241

Kuwait

Kuwait Developments and Trading Cy
Po box 707 - Tel.: 815-517

Lebanon

Beirut - Sté Cogimpex
Po box 8964 - Tel.: 29-76-69

Oman

Muscat - Technique LLC
Po box 3089 Seeb Airport
Tel.: 610-244

Qatar

Doha - Almana Trading Cy
Po box 491 - Tel.: 26-296

Saudi Arabia

Jeddah - Arabian Automobile Agency - Po box 2223
Tel.: 20-380

Syria

Damascus - Tevas
Po box 5043 - Tel.: 228-479

Türkey

Istanbul - Merkam Otomotiv
Ticaret UE - Sanayi AS
Büyükdere Cadesi 75/A
Tel.: 66-71-75

U.A.E

Abu Dhabi - Arabian Trading & Contracting Cy
Po box 294 - Tel.: 43-344

□ **Why don't you West Bankers form a political leadership to go to the Israelis and say you want to negotiate the creation of a Palestinian state?**

○ Because most Palestinians in the West Bank don't feel that the issue is just the West Bank and Gaza. The issue is Palestine and the Palestinians. We are inseparable from the Palestinians outside. We are inseparable from the PLO which is the representative of the Palestinian people.

If we go back 14 years, to 1964 (before the creation of the PLO and the Israeli occupation), then it would have been much easier for all of us to talk about solving the problem by creating a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. But now it is many years too late because there are more nations who recognise the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinians than countries that recognise the state of Israel.

To separate the PLO from the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza is essentially an attempt to solve only part of the problem which in the long run would not succeed.

□ **But that's exactly what's happening. Brzezinski has said "bye-bye PLO". The Israelis and the Egyptians are trying to find an alternative leadership. There were West Bank Palestinians in Cairo when I was there at the end of December — arranged by Israel and invited by Egypt. So, it looks very much as if the PLO is going to be pushed out, doesn't it?**

○ I don't believe it. I don't believe that the people in the West Bank would accept this. We are just taking the position of "wait and see". Nothing is very clear about what is happening between Sadat and Israel. They are talking of an overall settlement. Sadat did say that his position is for Israel to withdraw from all the occupied territories and for a Palestinian state to be set up in the West Bank and Gaza. As far as we are concerned, this is acceptable.

But the other issue is can the problem be solved without the PLO? The people in the West Bank and Gaza are against this. We don't want peace with Israel only to be confronted with the Palestinians outside.

I think most Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza would be against the creation of a West Bank-Gaza Palestinian state if the Palestinians outside the occupied territories are not for it. We are aware that although we are 1.1 million Palestinians and we are in a Palestinian land, nevertheless, you must remember we are not armed. We are sympathetic to the PLO. The PLO is our representative.

□ **Do you just say that, or do you mean it?**

○ We mean it. We say it, and we mean it! We are under occupation, so many people will be afraid to tell you that they are for the PLO. They'll tell you that the PLO is the sole representative of the Palestinians, but if you ask them: "Are you a member of the PLO?" they will tell you "No" because

it is an offence to be a member of the PLO in the occupied territories.

□ **But the Israelis tell me that the West Bankers are afraid to say they don't support the PLO because they're afraid of what will happen if they try to assert an independent political position.**

○ We support the PLO, but our support is different from the support of the Palestinians outside the occupied territories. We support them emotionally. We support them by saying that they represent us. Beyond that we cannot do anything, while the Palestinians outside the occupied territories — those who support the PLO — can go beyond this and become members of the PLO and carry on with the struggle of liberation.

To suggest that we should form a leadership in the West Bank and Gaza to deal



"... most Palestinians in the West Bank don't feel that the issue is just the West Bank and Gaza. The issue is Palestine and the Palestinians. We are inseparable from the Palestinians outside and the PLO."

with the Israelis... Of course, if the issue was just the West Bank and Gaza this could very easily be done. But this is not the issue. To solve the problem of the West Bank and Gaza is to solve only part of the problem.

□ **Let me clarify this. The issue is not the creation of a secular state anymore, is it? The issue is the creation of a Palestinian state which will also solve the problem of the Palestinians not living in the West Bank and Gaza.**

○ Yes, this issue is the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza for all the Palestinians. What the Israelis are trying to do is to isolate the PLO and to solve the problem within the context of the population of the West Bank and Gaza.

□ **Not just the Israelis — the Americans, the Jordanians, maybe the Egyptians, and maybe the Saudis.**

○ Well, I don't know about the Saudis because the Saudis would have more to lose if they tried to isolate the PLO from the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. We are not a threat to the Israelis because we are not armed. And we are not a threat to the Saudis — we can't go there. But the Palestinians outside, who are armed, could be a threat to the Saudis and to the Egyptians.

This is why we don't want to be victims of a plan to separate us from those outside. The Palestinians who are outside are the ones who have been struggling, who have been carrying arms, who have sacrificed a great deal. What did the people in the West Bank lose, honestly? Look at the situation.

The Palestinians in the West Bank were adopted by Jordan. They were given passports. Many of them had opportunities, like myself, to carry a Jordanian passport to go and travel as a Jordanian, to get educated; while the Palestinians outside, the Palestinians in the other Arab countries, have been deprived of all these privileges. They have been sacrificing a great deal for the return to their homeland. We are in our homes, after all.

□ **But the people on the outside came from places like Haifa and Galilee. They didn't come from the West Bank.**

○ Exactly. So what does it mean to them — a state in the West Bank and Gaza? That's why we say it means nothing to them and it's very important they should be included as part of this solution in order to regain their identity, even if it is not in

their own homeland — Jaffa, Haifa, and what have you.

□ **So, this brings us to Menahem Begin's plan. Begin says that you can have "autonomy", you can have "self-rule", that after five years he will re-evaluate. And apparently the Egyptians and the Americans are willing to discuss this, thinking it could be the beginning of something that will solve the Palestinian problem. What do the West Bankers think?**

○ We rejected this. The Palestinians rejected this three years ago when this question was discussed. When the Israeli Government proposed this there was confusion as to what people felt, so the Israelis decided, with the assistance of the US, to have a poll. They permitted the West Bankers to have an election. The platform of most of the mayors at the time was "No home rule, yes to independence and sovereignty" and they won.

I think the Israelis are trying to keep the situation as it is. We already have "home rule". What is the "home rule" Begin is suggesting? He's suggesting that we run our own affairs. Well, to a certain extent this is what's happening. The municipalities are running their own affairs. Of course, they are checked by the military governor.

"Home Rule" does not mean anything to us because as long as there is an Israeli military presence it is not "home rule". What kind of "home rule" is it when the Israelis insist that the settlements continue to exist? You know that the settlements were not established to create goodwill

between the Arabs and Israelis. They were established for strategic purposes, and they are sited to surround the heavily populated Arab areas.

So now we are militarily, economically and politically at the mercy of the Israelis. Even if the Israelis give us "home rule", even after the Israeli army is withdrawn, we will continue to be at Israel's mercy because of the settlements. The Israelis are going mad and establishing settlements like it is going out of season. They are doing this purposely to insure their presence in the West Bank and Gaza.

I have visited most of the settlements and I don't believe that they were constructed to be deserted in the event of peace.

□ Isn't it possible that there could be peace with some settlements of Jews living in a Palestinian state?

○ Yes, I don't mind. I don't think this is the issue. There is no objection to having

○ Of course, no doubt about it. We haven't been permitted to have our own institutions. If the Israelis feel insecure about such a state then there is no reason to reject the idea of autonomy for us as Palestinians — not as Arabs of Israel — for a five-year trial period in which we can organise ourselves and establish our own institutions.

□ With the participation of Palestinians not living here?

○ Of course! This is the whole point — autonomy not as the West Bankers or the people from Gaza, which Begin refers to as Arabs of Israel, but autonomy for the Palestinians. And I don't believe that the PLO would reject this idea — a five-year trial would give us time to rethink and develop our institutions.

□ Some people would say that's what Begin is offering.

○ No. Specifically when he says "Arabs of Israel" it is not what he means.

□ Both Sadat and Carter have repeated in the last few months that they believe that the Palestinian entity must have a link with Jordan.

○ Yes, we agree to this. But we say that we would like to have our independence and then decide. Why should Begin, Sadat and Carter decide what is best for us? We are saying that we want to decide for ourselves.

We are asking the world to give us our right to self-determination. We are not against Arab unity. Our dream is to have a united Arab nation. So, no doubt the Palestinian nation would work for Arab unity. I don't think the Palestinians would be against federation with Jordan or with Lebanon or Syria or Iraq. But this has to be decided by the Palestinians and this decision must be based on self-interest. If it is in the interests of a Palestinian state to have a federation with Jordan then they will decide that.

Unfortunately the world is unwilling to realise that we are capable of deciding for ourselves and that we are people deprived of our human rights. We are asking for our human rights without attaching this to other things which might be achieved.

□ If Sadat makes an agreement with Israel which gives Egypt sovereignty over Sinai and talks vaguely about how the Palestinian problem will be solved and how the Syrian-Israeli problem will be solved, how will the West Bankers view Sadat? Will they consider him a traitor?

○ Sadat is already being viewed as a man who's bankrupt. So far he has nothing from the Israelis.

□ He has Sinai.

○ I don't think Sadat needed to come to Israel in order to get back Sinai. Sadat could have done this without any trouble. And I don't think Sadat's aim is to get back Sinai. He could have done this without risking his own life by coming here.

□ You think he's very serious, that he will hold out for a Palestinian state, that he won't compromise with Begin about self-rule.

○ This is what he said publicly. Of course, I don't know what is going on behind the scenes, but he has stated over and over again that he is not interested in a separate settlement. I think he's interested in solving the problem once and for all. However, the problem is that Israel is not responding to his initiative.

□ And he's being pushed into a corner from which he may have to make a separate accommodation — which is the feeling of many people in Cairo.

○ Why don't you look at it the other way around. Let's say that after a while Sadat may look at the situation and say: "Well, I have done enough, I came to Israel, I talked to the Israelis, and the Israelis are adamant about not letting go of the occupied territories."



"Unfortunately the world is unwilling to realise that we are capable of deciding for ourselves and that we are people deprived of our human rights. We are asking the world to give us our right for self-determination."

Jews living in a future Palestine. But this has to be decided later, because the settlements that are being constructed now are, as I said, strategic. Their function is not to enable the Jewish people here to integrate and communicate with the Palestinians. As far as the Palestinians are concerned, these settlements would have to be dismantled and afterwards, when peace is achieved, I don't think there would be any objection to Jews living anywhere in the Arab world, including Palestine.

□ There's something strange here. The whole world is talking about the Israeli plan for peace, about Begin's offer of "self-rule" for the Palestinian Arabs (the Arabs of Eretz Israel as he calls them). And you are telling me there's nothing new?

○ You see, if Begin was willing to recognise us as Palestinians, and not as Arabs of Israel, then the issue would be altogether different. I think the whole world is missing the point. We are not "the Arabs of Israel", we are Palestinians, and we want home rule as Palestinians, and as Palestinians we are inseparable from the PLO.

□ Which means inevitably an autonomous state, with UN membership . . .

○ Yes, with an army . . .

□ How big an army?

○ A symbolic army, of course.

□ There would have to be demilitarisation.

□ He says you are Arabs of Israel; you say you are Palestinians. If you have self-rule you can be Palestinians.

○ We insist that he should recognise us as Palestinians.

□ But that's just ideological.

○ No, no. It means a great deal to us because we don't want to be separated from the Palestinians outside the West Bank.

□ So what you are saying is that Begin is offering the West Bankers self-rule but he hasn't offered the Palestinian people a process by which they could develop their institutions and form a state.

○ Yes, and he's isolating us from the PLO. We believe there will be no peace without the PLO. While we would very much like to see an end to the military occupation, and would very much like to have autonomy, we don't want this to be at the price of the Palestinian cause. Whether Israel and the world like it or not, we constitute the majority in the West Bank and Gaza. So what are the Zionists trying to do? They are trying to deny the fact that we exist. Are we or aren't we the majority in the occupied territories?

□ That's why they are willing to give you self-rule.

○ But our self-rule must not be supervised by the Israelis. We should have the right to self-determination.

□ What about Jordan?

○ This is not our problem.

A Voice of the Egyptian Left

Mark Bruzonsky and Judith Kipper Speak With Mohamed Sid-Ahmed

Mohamed Sid-Ahmed is one of Egypt's most prominent and respected leftist critics. His *After the Guns Fall Silent*, published in 1976, was widely acclaimed as the single most important Arab statement on the Middle East crisis since the October, 1973, war. Sid-Ahmed argued that peace was at last possible, for the October war had changed the regional situation and détente altered the global environment.



Until a few years ago Sid-Ahmed was in charge of the editorial page of *Al-Ahram*, Egypt's most respected daily. A Marxist since 1946, he had long been a leading figure on the Egyptian left and was imprisoned by both Farouk and Nasser. Following his release in 1964 he helped establish the Marxist review *Al-Talia* and was one of the key members of *Al-Ahram's* Center for Political and Strategic Studies.

How has the Left in Egypt responded to the various steps Sadat has taken?

Its basic critical stand toward the trip has not changed. The Left now believes that the small degree of reciprocation by Begin is proof that the party was right.

The Left party believes that the euphoria that began with Sadat's trip is built on issues that are not solid. This state of mind is a bit similar to that during the January riots of 1977. In both cases it is an expression of deep dissatisfaction with the everyday life of the Egyptian people and the economic difficulties they're living with. The basic difference is that in January this state of revolt exploded *against* the president, and this time it was the president who used the state of revolt to get support for his trip by identifying peace with a promise of prosperity and an end to the everyday difficulties.

What one should be afraid of is that, if hopes do not materialize, we could have a third edition of the January events. The first edition is one that can be repeated, while the second edition is one that is difficult to repeat.

How long do you think Sadat will hold back from a separate peace while trying to bring the other Arabs into the process?

If Sadat gets something completely satisfactory on Sinai, then there will be a real dilemma. A step forward toward this might occur at this juncture. But there will be another moment in between. He would first make an attempt at an Arab summit. What he is keen on is to get enough on the Palestinian issue, not to satisfy the Palestinians or to satisfy the PLO, but to satisfy a certain number of Arab countries who will then take care of the Palestinians.

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Which Arab countries specifically?

Saudi Arabia first. Jordan, of course. Lebanon doesn't count and depends on decisions of others. And there will be a bit of wooing Assad as much as possible. For some time now the Palestinians have been viewed by many Arab parties—especially since the Lebanese war—as a threat to them, not just to the Israelis. What happened in Lebanon is being viewed by these new, powerful, conservative Arab regimes as a threat to their stability. They worry that the phenomena of Lebanon could be extended.

So it is most important for these regimes to be offered something for Palestine that they think could result in a compatible solution. The bargain is this: "You Israelis give us something on the Palestinian issue so they will not be an element of subversion for us. And we will guarantee fully that they will not be an element of subversion for you."

Is the PLO in decline? Is the PLO out of the ballgame now?

Even if Sadat looks for other leadership than the PLO, this is not yet acceptable to other relevant Arab parties. The attempt since the Riyadh and Cairo summits after the Lebanese war was to try to produce from within the PLO a leadership that would consider the interests of these countries before the basic, traditional Palestinian requirements.

That effort having failed....

It didn't fail. Something more important came up—Sadat's trip. It didn't fail; it wasn't tested. But at least this was the Arab stand.

What now?

Now a further step. Now you enter into the real difficulties concerning the PLO and Israel. PLO or no PLO, you must obtain a minimum on Palestine so that you can be sure there are relevant Arab parties who will stand with you against the

Palestinians' basic demands—and who are ready to crush.... Even the Syrians were ready to crush the PLO in a previous stage.

What is the minimum?

For sure what is being offered by Begin as "self-rule" is not the minimum.

Where do we reach the point that the Palestinian issue really becomes negotiable?

Probably it will be somewhere around this institutional link with Jordan.

So it's the old 1972 King Hussein plan, with two parliaments?

Yes, if you like. Let's put it this way: a formula by which Jordan will replace what Israel is now requiring as direct presence within the Palestinian entity.

Egypt is back in the leadership role in the Arab world, even though there is a rift and split. Can Egypt today correct its negotiating stance and exert the kind of pressure on Israel that will give it the bargaining power to produce results?

It looked, at one moment, as if Egypt was cornering everybody. But it is a very risky situation, one in which Egypt can be completely cornered. The sort of things I think help correct the situation are the following:

Let's begin with one I have already spoken about. "I overcame a taboo in the Arab world. Now you overcome a taboo, that is, deal directly with the PLO." This would be reciprocation, real reciprocation. If Sadat were to accomplish this, then nobody could defend the Palestinians if they insisted on not coming. And Sadat's position would be extremely strong after that.

Another thing. Sadat made an enormous psychological breakthrough. So now let's be consistent. Sadat could say, "U.S., stop the pipeline to Israel. Completely. Make a sign, a gesture. Everybody knows that the only party who's able to fight is the Israelis, that the disbalance is already enormous. No need to increase it further. Give a sign of hope to the other parties that a negotiating process is possible and that there's not the threat of war, which has become worse than ever since Egypt is out." Such a gesture would not appear to be addressed to Sadat but to the others, to the whole region. That's point two.

Point three. A thing for Israel. "Stop changing anything outside the '67 borders. Stop the settlements, stop the changes in Jerusalem, stop the building in Golan, in Sinai, in the West Bank, and in Gaza. Give us a sign, at least, that this is really negotiable and that you're not just winning time by negotiations."

But I don't see anything of this sort being brought up.

What, basically, does the Left want for Egypt?

The basic attitude of the party is for peace. But we believe that the peace now being achieved will not bring stability to the region. It is a peace that is not creating favorable conditions in which all the peoples in the region can achieve their national aspirations and improve their backward conditions. It's doing the opposite.

What is happening now is power politics, arm twisting. The very idea that when I come to an agreement with Israel, all Arab parties have to follow—that's power politics. It's not a logic of national aspirations. Power politics is a right-wing policy by definition. Left-wing policy is based on fighting for given rights—your power is alignment of forces to achieve certain aims. The game now played will not achieve stable

peace and settlement. But the Left party does accept the principle of peace. This is something that distinguishes the Egyptian, who is more aware of the issues than others in the Arab world. In the Arab world, yes, there are still slogans of war—though they know very well that achieving war is not easy and perhaps not even possible.

Let's put it this way. War is certainly not the best way yet to achieve national aspirations. On the contrary, it could create cataclysm and catastrophe in the region. Peace, on the other hand, also doesn't achieve the aspirations of all the parties.

Let's go farther. To be specific, I don't think that the Palestinian-Israeli issue, which is at the heart, can be solved today. It will not be solved when the only experience between Palestinians and Israelis has been one of total antagonism. There must be another moment to definitely solve this issue—a moment of peace, of intercourse between these two peoples so they will know what are their ultimate motives. The ultimate philosophy and motive of either side are not developed enough for a solution at this juncture.

This is the logic that I've been defending all the time: That you should not touch the ultimate motives at this juncture because they are not mature enough to be solved at this time.

So what should you do now?

All you do at this juncture is replace modes of conflict that are mutually antagonistic and detrimental. We need détente, institutional change, mutually accepted in advance. The peace agreement is precisely to devise these rules of the game. And then there will be another historical process for a period to come. And finally, then it will be possible to see what is relevant and what is not relevant in all that the parties are bringing up as slogans today.

I believe that the slogans of all the parties will not be the realities of tomorrow. But I can't talk about that, I have no right to talk about that; today—nobody knows. The main reason there is blockage today is because they are taking irrelevant issues and making them relevant. And the relevant ones they're making irrelevant.

When you talk about a secular state, which is a dream of the future, or the Zionism of Israel as it is looked upon today—these are not *the* issues. The real issue is that we pass from an antagonistic mode of conflict to a nonantagonistic mode of conflict; fight your way in social terms with dealings between the two peoples.

Sounds like what Sadat is doing.

No, he is not doing it in a balanced way. I think that the way Sadat is acting now is creating a form of normalization that, sooner or later, and necessarily, will allow Egyptian sovereignty to be violated because the deal is not balanced. More has been given by Egypt than has been received. So that is why it will impinge—even this economic build-up will impinge—on Egyptian sovereignty. It won't be mutually beneficial in an equal way. That's what I reproach. Also what's being done is done in isolation from the other Arab parties. I don't reproach the principle of normalization. You're giving Israel its basic desire. Get, in counterpart, your basic desire!

You know, in power politics the Palestinian issue is the weakest link. What is the Palestinian issue—just a small piece of territory? In the dialectics of the conflict, the mechanisms of the conflict, the Palestinian issue is the heart; it looks enormous. It can only be dealt with properly in the logic of the genuine, justifiable aspirations of the various parties who are at the origins of the conflict.

The question is not what you formulate but what you achieve. I don't think the peace that is being achieved now is a peace.

**WASHINGTON
REPORT**

**Mark A.
Bruzonsky**

White House aide quits Plane sales plan brings split out into the open

TENSIONS are finally surfacing within the Carter Administration over Mid-east policy. Last Wednesday, Mark Siegel, Deputy Assistant to the President, refused to continue his duties as chief administration contact with the U.S. Jewish community. Next day he resigned from the White House staff.

Although Siegel at first refused to discuss his resignation, both Washington newspap-

ers immediately interpreted his action as an expression of serious dissent from the basic direction of Carter Administration policy.

It has since been learned that Siegel was specially upset by the recently announced plane package sale to Saudi Arabia and Egypt as well as Israel.

The *Washington Post* reported that Siegel "harboured a deep distrust of Zbigniew Brzezinski" for his Mid-east views.

The *Washington Star* headlined the Siegel resignation story: "Disturbed by Mid-east policy." The *New York Times* singled out the Jewish community's intense opposition to the plane sales proposal as the main reason for Siegel's abrupt departure.

At first it was thought Siegel would remain on the White House staff with other duties.

This was apparently Siegel's hope. But after initial confusion, White House officials decided Siegel must go.

As one indicated: "There was simply no way that Mark could continue at the White House when his opposition to the President's Middle East policy was so well known."

Disagreed

Some Washington political analysts believe Siegel was simply unable to continue acting as point man for the administration with Jewish groups. More and more Siegel has had to defend policies and attitudes with which he disagreed.

Only two weeks ago Siegel was booed, hissed and laughed at when he spoke on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal.

Vainly shaken, Siegel rose at the end of a panel discussion and told the gathering: "Let me take off one hat and put on another.... I not only travel into the Jewish community, I am part of the Jewish community.... I appear before you right now not only as a member of this administration who works for the President of the U.S. I'm here before you as an American Jew and a very, very fervent Zionist."

It is also said in Washington that the possibility the White House is planning to come out with its own Mid-east peace formula — one

that will be closer to the Egyptian view than to the Israeli — convinced Siegel to take his leave.

Both Senator Richard Stone, Democrat, Florida, chairman of the Near East sub-committee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Rabbi Alexander Schindler, chairman of the most important caucus of U.S. Jewish organisations, have publicly warned that Carter might attempt to capitalise on Israel's declining public support and come forward with a major U.S. peace initiative.

Whichever of these speculations prove correct, Siegel's bailing out must be taken as one indication of the intensity of the debate within the administration over just how far to go in pressuring Israel.

After the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan this week and the conclusion of the Senate's Panama Canal debate soon, the administration may face a showdown with "the Jewish lobby" on the jet fighter deal.

That may be the time when Carter will finally have to decide whether or not to publicly challenge the Begin government's increasingly unacceptable position with a U.S. proposal to break the new Mid-east stalemate.

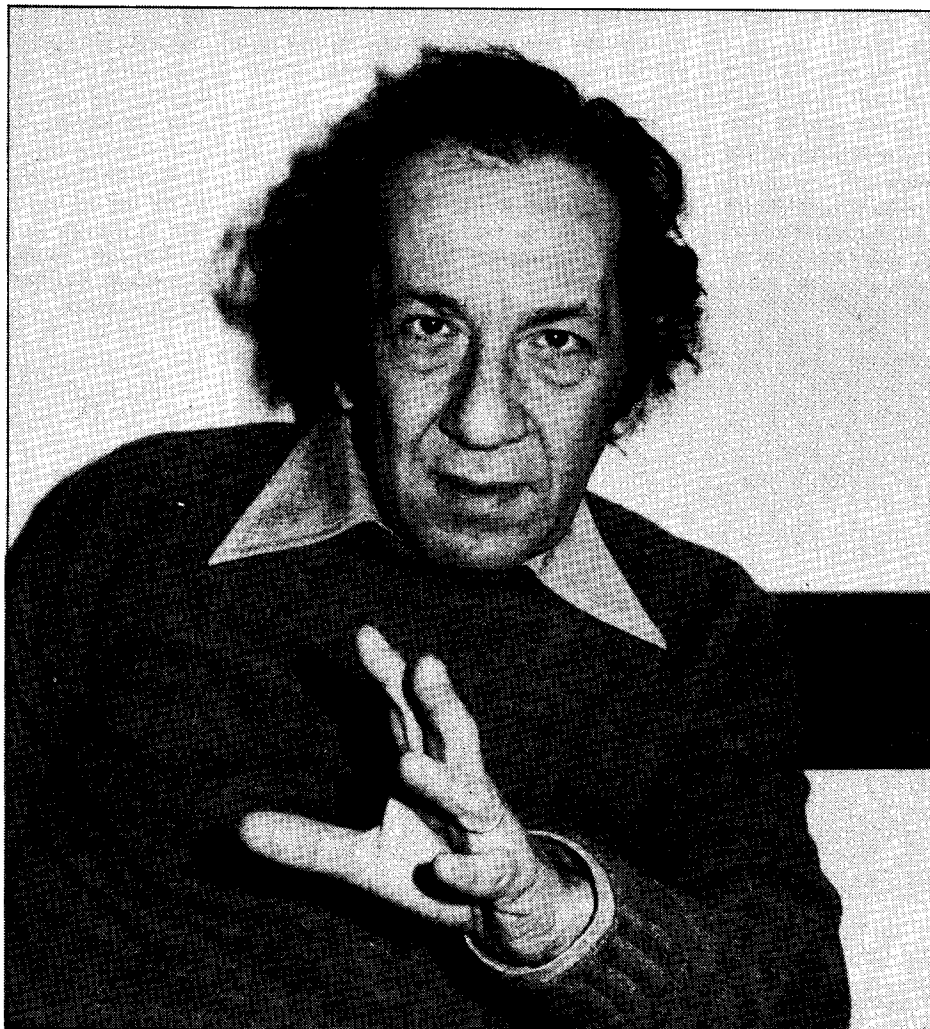
Unsuccessful

Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton, who has returned to Washington from his unsuccessful Mid-east shuttling, is said to have told Egyptian officials that if Begin's visit fails to lead to a declaration of principles both sides can accept, the U.S. will offer its own language.

But to do so, it is widely felt, could spark a knockdown fight with Israel as occurred in October over the joint Soviet-American statement. At that time the administration panicked at the unexpected protests and reversed itself.

But this time could be different. Even the influential, Israel-oriented *New Republic* magazine headlined last week's article: "The long-awaited crisis in American-Israeli relations may be at hand."

FORUM



BREAKING TABOOS

Neither Egypt nor Israel is seeking a separate peace agreement, but it may come to that in the end, Muhammad Sid-Ahmad (above), one of Egypt's most prominent leftists, told *Mark Bruzonsky* and *Judith Kipper* during a discussion in Cairo. Sid-Ahmad, author of *After the Guns Fall Silent*, analyses the role of the superpowers and Saudi Arabia, the position of the Palestinians and the aims of the left in Egypt (photos by *Mark Bruzonsky*)

□ What's changed now that Sadat has gone to Israel and Israelis have come to Egypt?

○ Before Sadat's trip, all parties to the negotiation process were subjects to the negotiations with the exception of the Palestinians, who were the object of the negotiations. Since Sadat's trip, the subjects to the negotiations have become Egypt and Israel. Whatever Egypt and Israel decide the others have just to follow — that's making them objects.

But Egypt is a subject only to the extent it becomes an Israeli object. Egypt will have bargaining power to the extent that this bargaining power is bargaining power for Israel.

Egypt wants its occupied territory returned. Israel would have an interest in restoring this territory in so far as restoring it or not is a way to manipulate other recal-

what could finish up by being objectively a separate agreement, and what, in the intention of the parties, is not. I think the intention of both parties is still not a separate agreement.

□ The Israelis are not pushing for a separate agreement?

○ Of course if they can get a separate agreement, that's useful, but it would also be useful to use Sadat to go beyond the separate agreement. If what has occurred with Egypt now could be used in order to obtain something more than an agreement only with Egypt, all the better.

□ What would be the something more?

○ An arrangement with Syria, too. An acceptance throughout the Arab world of some arrangement of the Palestinian problem.

□ You contemplate this on the basis of what the Israelis are offering?

actual negotiating process, and that Begin has a stand on this and Sadat has a different one.

Carter's position has been interpreted by both parties as being on one side.

□ What do you suspect the American motivation to be in finally taking such a stand?

○ One possible interpretation is that the Americans believe the only issue which can be solved in the foreseeable future is between Egypt and Israel. Another possibility is to think beyond Egypt and Israel; the US is very keen on other parties coming into the process. But both Carter and Brzezinski have, in one way or another, said farewell to the PLO. Now this extends beyond the PLO into the Palestinian problem in general.

□ But the "homeland" concept was "the American Balfour Declaration" according to Brzezinski.

○ It could have been, but not necessarily. If a "homeland" is interpreted in terms of Begin's proposals it is not, and it carried that possible interpretation from the very beginning. He never said "Palestinian state". He never said "self-determination". He did make some progress by saying "Palestinian rights" in the US-USSR joint statement.

□ Carter also said that the "PLO represents a substantial part of the Palestinians", and he privately said, through his National Security Adviser, that the US had made a Balfour Declaration for the Palestinians. So, doesn't it seem to you that there's been an abrupt shift?

○ It is obvious that if he was once moving in one direction towards the Palestinians he's now moving away from what are considered by the Arab parties to be the relevant Palestinian representatives.

□ Wouldn't a good interpretation of why he acted in this way be that he was formerly seriously pursuing a comprehensive settlement, but that, in light of what Sadat has done and what Begin has told him, he's no longer doing so?

○ I wouldn't want to be that categorical. I do not think the US would so easily reduce the issue of a Middle East settlement to an Egyptian-Israeli affair. It's too costly. I have another reading of the situation.

Two years ago when I wrote *After The Guns Fall Silent* I predicted a breakthrough towards a completely different pattern in terms of the impact of international détente and its new rules on the Middle East. Since then an issue has come up which is very important.

There are social and economic problems which have changed the whole mechanism of the Middle East issue. Specifically, there is a new, vested interest in stabilising structures that has acquired a central importance. This is linked to the oil and to the

"There is something new about Carter's recent declarations. For the first time . . . he is taking a stand on substance."

citrant parties. This is the formula by which Egypt's bargaining power becomes Israel's bargaining power.

To use Carter's expression, there are three basic ingredients for a breakthrough towards peace. In order of importance for the Arab side they are recovery of the occupied territories, the Palestinian problem and normalisation of relations.

For Egypt, before the Jerusalem trip, the issue of normalisation was to come five years after a settlement. Since the trip, the issue has come before a settlement in a certain way. A process has been initiated that gives the promise and the assurance of future normalisation without the other things.

□ Everything you have said implies that the new agenda is on how to reach an accommodation between two countries and not how to reach an overall settlement.

○ No, not necessarily. It might boil down to that. One should distinguish between

○ No, what has been offered up till now does not promise that at all. I doubt whether it even promises an agreement with Egypt.

□ How do you interpret the recent policies of the American Government? Is the US still pushing for a comprehensive settlement or has it resigned itself to a bilateral Israel-Egypt agreement?

○ There is something new about Carter's recent declarations. For the first time it is very obvious that he is taking a stand on substance. Up till now he has tried, as far as possible, not to be precise concerning issues of substance. He has been saying only that what the parties agree upon we agree upon, and that the US can help specifically on procedure.

Now for the first time, on the issue of the Palestinian state, he is taking a stand on substance. It is not that he hasn't said similar things before, but that it is said at this moment, when the issue is basic to the

new petrodollar wealth which has created parties who seek stabilisation and for whom there are two forms of destabilisation that they would like to avoid — continuation of “no peace”, and peace on Israel’s terms. But these two things, though feared, are not issues of immediate urgency for them. They are a danger in the long run.

For Egypt the issue is different for two reasons — the staggering economic situation, which cannot continue indefinitely, and the fact that Egypt can decide on peace or war. Egypt is in a position to go further than the others would dare to. In a certain way, what Sadat has done is taking the new situation to some logical conclusion.

Of course, I would say it is a “right-wing” peace, a conservative peace. It is a peace for stabilisation of oil privileges. It is peace that is motivated by conservative interests. It is peace that is provoked more by class and social issues than by national requirements.

□ **If this is the kind of peace, why are the Saudis so reluctantly supporting Sadat?**

○ The Saudis are not ready to go as far as Sadat. For them, the issue is not that simple. The new economic situation could propel them in this direction, but there are also ideological considerations. You cannot change the ideological outlook that Zionists are our worst enemies and suddenly, because you want stabilisation of your profits from oil, forget that.

To the extent that this new factor has come in — this new social and class incentive — it has deranged the previous set-up, not only in Egypt.

Egypt is not the key oil country, it’s not the key rich country, it’s not the country the US is most interested in. Oil is a global strategic issue. It goes beyond the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The West is interested in stabilisation of oil flow. The rich Arab oil countries are interested in stabilisation of oil profits. Both are for a certain form of stabilisation.

□ **What do the Saudis want now that Sadat’s initiative has fundamentally changed the status quo?**

○ The Saudis are for stabilisation, and Sadat’s going too far with Israel could be a destabilising factor. Moreover, if they stand too much with Sadat it could provoke other forms of destabilisation that could threaten them with the rejectionists of the Arab world.

So, they are between two fires. They want unanimity of the Arab world. They want to get the parties together. They do not like a rift in the Arab camp. But the basic issue in both cases, the motivating factor, is not Arab rights, but stabilisation of oil profits.

□ **What role do you see for the superpowers?**

○ The superpowers already had a position before this began. The Soviet-American joint statement (in October) was a sign of superpower policy. Kissinger might, in a certain way, be closer to the logic of things now — it’s a different category of “step-by-step”. The Soviets are ousted, but Carter had to come to understand — not only for global reasons but also for regional reasons — that it was better to have the Soviets in on the negotiating process than to run the risk of having them liberated from all commitments.

The whole logic of Geneva was to build a system of mutual commitments between the various parties. This was the logic of the unified Arab delegation including the Palestinians. The aim was to try and solve the maximum procedural problems beforehand. That was the American stand, not only because of a certain increase in

Geneva has receded almost beyond view, what role do you see for the Soviet Union?

○ I don’t think the Soviet Union has given up on (UN Security Council Resolution) 242. The Soviet Union is not in the position of the most radical rejectionists. It is not in the position of Iraq. One of Asad’s arguments in Tripoli — when he was pressured to follow Iraq — was: “You see, if I have not openly accepted 242, I have openly accepted 338. And because of 338 I got my disengagement on the Golan and help from the Soviet Union. I can’t afford not to get help from the Soviet Union unless you, Iraq, are ready to replace it.”

But, at the same time, the Soviet Union will stand very staunchly on the side of the Arabs and denounce Sadat on the grounds that he has broken Arab solidarity which is a basic card in negotiations with Israel.

□ **You are one of the most prominent**

“The Saudis are for stabilisation, and Sadat’s going too far with Israel could be a destabilising factor.”

dealings with the Soviet Union but also for regional considerations. To the extent that Geneva seemed to be a receding reality, the Americans sought to bind everybody more by commitments.

What Sadat did was just the opposite. He made an arrangement, he came to a certain mode of mutual dealing with Israel going beyond anything expected, but at the same time he freed all other parties of their previous commitments.

□ **But now there is a clear split in the Arab world between Soviet clients and American clients . . .**

○ Yes. Detente has produced two formulas — one that was desired and one where things got out of hand. The one that was desired is what happened in Europe. The one that got out of hand is what happened in Africa, and the Middle East has adopted the African model.

□ **Now that the Soviets have been freed from the binding process you spoke of, and**

members of the leftist party here. What was the initial reaction of the left to Sadat’s initiative and what has been the reaction as negotiations have gone forward?

○ Initially the reaction was hostile — not because the left is opposed to a peaceful settlement; there is no argument about the need for a peaceful settlement — but to produce a peaceful settlement a balance of power is needed between the two parties.

□ **How has the left responded to the various steps Sadat has taken?**

○ Its critical stand towards the trip has not changed. The left now believes that the small extent of reciprocation by Begin is proof that the party was right.

○ **What is the strength, the influence, of your party today?**

○ There are two problems: the problem of the Egyptian people and its state of mind today, and the Arab world and its state of mind. The left believes that the euphoria that existed after the Jerusalem visit was

built on issues which are not solid. This state of mind is similar to what happened during the January 1977 riots. In both cases it is an expression of deep dissatisfaction with everyday life and the economic difficulties.

The basic difference is that in January this state of revolt exploded against the President but that this time it was the President who used the state of revolt to get support for his trip by identifying peace with a promise of prosperity and an end to the everyday difficulties. If hopes do not materialise we could have a repetition of the January events.

What does Israel want from Egypt and what does Egypt want from Israel? Israel wants a promise of normal relations, an acknowledgement of its right to exist in the region. Sadat has given these two things. Now Egypt has to get something in return, for the situation is unbalanced. Egypt's bargaining power now depends on Israel.

□ You objected to the trip because Sadat didn't ask for a good price in advance. What would have been your minimum requirements to make this an acceptable initiative?

○ That it should be agreed upon by all the concerned Arab parties.

□ That's impossible. You are effectively saying that Sadat's trip should never have happened.

○ Not necessarily.

□ There was no way to get unanimity.

○ I want to show you how the issue is one of substance and not just procedure. This conflict is something special, not like other conflicts. The fact of dealing directly with Israel is an issue of substance not of procedure. And this is acknowledged by the international community and Resolutions 242 and 338. Point 3 of 242, for instance, is to bring in a representative of the UN as a go-between. Why was there a question of a go-between?

□ It was 11 years ago that 242 was passed.

○ Never mind. It's part of the dynamics of the situation. The point of departure was that you have an implanted body that you do not recognise and that the day you go and deal with it you have already played your trump card. What does Israel basically want? What's the trump card that the Arabs have with Israel? It's recognition. What else do they have?

They have no other card. In the power-balance Israel is militarily superior. By war the Arabs have never been able to achieve anything. The trump card is normalisation. This is the maximum they can give, and at least a promise of this was given away by Sadat.

□ Why not say it clearly? You on the left are unequivocally against the strategy being followed by Sadat and after achieving Arab unanimity would you have

"The PLO is the only Arab party for which dealing with Israel is an asset and not a liability."

approved of it.

○ This is not correct logic; it is formalistic and simplistic. I said there are serious changes in the region, and there is a certain logic in Sadat's initiative. I didn't say that his trip was an abnormality, an accident.

In my book *After The Guns Fall Silent* I talked of detente, which is very important. Detente is arms. You cannot arm beyond a certain level because of detente. The Russians would not give arms which would threaten detente and even the Americans take detente into consideration in giving arms to Israel.

What do you mean by unanimity? There has never been unanimity. What is needed is at least a consensus between the relevant parties, whether you want this or not.

□ Including the PLO and Syria?

○ Including the PLO and Syria. The PLO is the only Arab party interested in direct

contacts with Israel, but Israel is not interested in contact with the PLO. The PLO is the only Arab party for which dealing with Israel is an asset and not a liability.

□ The PLO were never really offered anything by anybody until they were invited to attend the Cairo conference. They turned it down. Where do we go from here?

○ I don't give much significance to their absence from Cairo. If anything was offered to them I am sure they would not lose the opportunity, but Elissar even required that the name should be removed from the table and the flag removed outside.

Egypt could say to Israel: "For me to meet with you is taboo, but I have done it, and now you sit with an Arab party. It's taboo for you to sit with the PLO, so that should be the reciprocity. You should sit with the PLO."

If this could be done, I believe the PLO would agree. The PLO's failure to come to Cairo should not be seen as an irrevocable decision.

□ So far the initiative has not produced the reciprocity you spoke of. What results can now be obtained?

○ There is a chance that he will get something from Israel. But this doesn't mean he has solved the problem, only that he has put it into a different context. It depends on Begin. Sadat wants withdrawal from Sinai. And Israel wants security. It may be possible to replace one mode of security with another.

Egypt has staggering economic problems. Egypt's market is one of the biggest and most interesting in the Middle East, but it is also the most shattered. It has no immunity to foreign invasion, for an open-door policy means readiness to import whatever capital and investments want to come.

Israel could say: "The open-door policy hasn't worked. Now we are ready to help. We don't have money but we could be intermediaries, brokers. And we can be guarantors. But if we are guarantors we must also be sure that the money is put in the right place. This will achieve two things — a boost to the Egyptian economy and security for us. This will give us the opportunity to acquire leverage in Egypt."

One reason withdrawal will be slow is because of the need to negotiate other conditions of security, namely the takeover of key positions in the economy. If they are clever, and I believe they are, they will go so far as to make their presence in key positions of the Egyptian economy coup proof, and this is not impossible. There are many precedents for this sort of thing. The political regime can change, but certain key factors are permanent.

This means an organic link between the Israeli and Egyptian economies which

would be presented to the rest of the Arab world as a model involving Jewish genius and Arab abilities.

This will look like peace with prosperity. But there are loopholes. I mean, other problems may result. Israel will extend its geographical presence inside Egypt not only into Sinai but into a whole social stratum in Egypt which would become Israeli-oriented.

□ Do you think Sadat will hold back from a separate agreement trying to bring the other Arabs into the process?

○ If Sadat gets something really satisfactory on Sinai then there will be a dilemma. A step towards this might take place at any time, but there would first be an attempt to call an Arab summit. Sadat wants to get enough concessions on the Palestinian issue, not to satisfy the Palestinians or the PLO, but to satisfy a number of Arab countries who will then take care of the Palestinians.

□ Specifically which Arab countries?

○ Saudi Arabia first. Jordan, of course. Lebanon depends on the decisions of others. There will be an attempt to woo Assad. For a long time the Palestinians have been viewed by many Arab parties — especially since the Lebanese war — as a threat not just to the Israelis. What happened in Lebanon is seen by these new, powerful, conservative Arab regimes as a threat to their stability.

It is most important for these regimes to be offered something for Palestine which they think could result in an acceptable solution. The bargain is that Israel should give something on the Palestinian issue to prevent them from becoming a subversive force in the Arab countries, and the Arabs will guarantee that they will not be a threat to Israel.

□ Is the PLO in decline?

○ Even if Sadat looks for an alternative leadership to the PLO this would not yet be acceptable to many Arab parties. An attempt has been made since the Riyadh and Cairo summits after the Lebanese war to produce a leadership from within the PLO that would put the interests of these countries before basic Palestinian requirements.

□ That effort having failed . . .

○ It didn't fail. Something more important came up — Sadat's trip. It didn't fail, it wasn't tested. But this was the Arab stand.

□ What now?

○ Now the real difficulties begin concerning the PLO and Israel. PLO or no PLO, it is essential to obtain a minimum on Palestine to ensure the support of some relevant Arab parties to oppose the Palestinians' basic demands and be ready to crush them. Given the Syrians were ready to crush the PLO at a previous stage.

□ What is the minimum?

○ Certainly what is being offered by as "self-rule" is not the minimum.

□ At what point does the Palestinian issue become really negotiable?

○ Probably it will be somewhere around an institutional link with Jordan.

□ So, it's the old 1972 King Hussain plan, with two parliaments . . .

○ Yes, if you like. Let's put it this way: a formula where Jordan will be replacing what Israel is now requiring as direct presence in the Palestinian entity.

□ And is it conceivable that a Begin Government can ever offer this?

○ I don't think so.

□ So, if that's the minimum and its impossible that Begin will ever offer it where does this leave Sadat?

○

□ It's the first time I've seen you speechless . . . Are the wars over?

"I don't see that the US is exerting pressure in the right direction. In the past there was certain progress in the American stand."

○ Yes, I think the wars concerning Egypt are over and thus the wars are over in general. There may be an Israeli war, but that's another question.

□ Either Sadat is in a process where he can reach some agreement or he's going to end up in a position of possibly having to fight a war again, isn't he?

○ No, the logical alternative is something completely different. Why should the Israelis feel pressured to offer historical shifts in their positions when Egypt has ruled itself out of any future wars? That's one major argument of ours, you know. I think that wars are out as long as Sadat has things in hand.

□ If the present process produces no results, is the war option out?

○ I think there's a general awareness now that the military imbalance is such that no Arab party can contemplate war in the foreseeable future.

□ So, where is the pressure on Israel?

○ That's precisely why I said that the initiative of the Jerusalem trip is based on such an imbalance of power that it is counterproductive. It will not produce the minimum Arab requirements.

□ What can the US do to continue to merit Arab confidence?

○ But is the US ready to do anything? I think that there is already a discrepancy between the present negotiating process and what the Americans are interested in. The Americans are interested in a situation that will not be counterproductive for them in the Arab world in general. They are not interested only in an agreement between Egypt and Israel.

They're interested in stability all over the region. They know very well that separate agreement between Egypt and Israel would expose the Arab world to enormous upheavals. So this is an issue on which they would not like to give in.

□ In Cairo, anti-Palestinian sentiments . . .

○ Yes I have a whole interpretation of this.

Egypt is very frustrated with the Arab world due to the fact that Arabs are identified with the Arab rich who are humiliating Egypt. They are a source of vexation and frustration for Egyptians, not only in their own countries, where Egyptians are treated like second-class citizens, but even in Egypt today, where Egyptians are also treated as second-class citizens compared with Saudis and other rich Arabs.

So, from this point of view, there is a class issue. But what has happened with certain propaganda in our official press during recent years is the confusion of these frustrations with the rich with the frustration of all, including militant Arabs, with the general situation.

Certainly there are justifiable reasons for humiliation and vexation in the Arab world, but against whom should we turn

our gun first? Against the Palestinians or the Syrians or those who were with us during the October war? Or, should we turn it on those rich parties who, instead of giving us what we needed, kept us on a leash, not giving enough to radicalise us or enough for a take-off? The sums we have received from these countries may look enormous but they are very, very limited in terms of what they have and what is partly due to us.

The old conflict is still there, though it is not openly spelled out, between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It was expressed under Nasser as the Yemen war. Then Sadat said this was a mistake, but today when he goes to Israel and considers a deal on technology it's a way of saying to Saudi Arabia: "You had a chance to help us but you didn't help us enough".

It's not said explicitly, but the logic of events contains this.

□ Is this Sadat's way of reasserting political control in the Arab world, of taking control away from the Saudis?

○ At least it is perceived by the Saudis as such.

□ Isn't this the reason for their reluctant support of Sadat? Is it not their concern that the political power they wielded during the Lebanese war is now back in the hands of Egypt?

○ Yes, they feel this. The Saudis were the masters of the Arab world. That's why they were so furious that Sadat acted without consulting them. This had a greater significance than going to Jerusalem. It meant Sadat would dare to take options outside their orbit. Their main concern had been to keep Egypt in their orbit, on the leash.

I don't know to what extent this was intended, but even if it was not conscious and Sadat acted under other urgencies, the Saudis have taken it that way.

□ Egypt is back in the leadership of the Arab world even though there is a split. Can Egypt correct its negotiating stance and exert the kind of pressure on Israel that will give it the bargaining power to produce results?

○ It looked, at one moment, as if Egypt was cornering everybody. But it is a risky situation in which Egypt can be completely cornered. I don't think Egypt is now behaving in the right way to correct the situation.

The correct way would be to insist on Israel's dealing directly with the PLO. This would be a real reciprocation. If Sadat were to accomplish this, then nobody could defend the Palestinians if they refused to come, and Sadat's position would be extremely strong after that.

Sadat has made an enormous psychological breakthrough, so he could say to the US: "Stop the lifeline to Israel completely. Everybody knows that the only party really able to fight is Israel and that the imbal-

ance is already enormous. No need to increase it further. Give a sign of hope to the other parties that negotiation is possible.

Sadat should demand that Israel should stop changing anything outside the '67 borders. Stop the settlements, stop the changes in Jerusalem, stop the building in Golan, in Sinai, in the West Bank and Gaza. Give a sign, at least, that these things are really negotiable and that Israel is not just winning time by negotiations.

□ Are you hopeful that the US will step in and put pressure on?

○ So far, I don't see that the US is exerting pressure in the right direction. In the past there was certain progress in the American stand.

If you could achieve something acceptable to both the Palestinians (and I mean the PLO) and Israel — and I believe that is not impossible — the other issues are automatically solved. As long as the Palestinian issue is not solved, the Arabs will never accept full normalisation — I'm talking of the Arab world as a whole. Carter has only given half on this, but it is progress compared with the previous US stand. But I now see even this receding.

□ Do you think that the US-Soviet statement provided a basis for a proper super-power role? And do you think it is now possible to go back to the statement as a basis for negotiations?

○ I don't see that it would be easy to go back to the joint statement. It is a bad model of detente, the American style, not the European style.

□ Before we end, can you explain who is the left in Egypt and what basically does the left want?

○ The left comprises Marxists, Nasserites and liberal left elements. There are also religious elements — both Copts and Muslims — who are against fanaticism on either side.

The basic aim of the party is peace, but we believe that the peace which is now being achieved will not bring stability to the region. It is not creating favourable conditions for the peoples in the region to achieve their national aspirations and progress from their backward condition. It's doing the opposite.

What is happening now is power politics. The very idea that all Arab parties have to follow an agreement with Israel is power politics.

Power politics is right-wing by definition. Left-wing policy is based on fighting for given rights — and power is the alignment of forces to achieve certain aims.

The game now being played will not achieve stable peace, but the left party does accept the principle of peace. In the Arab world there are still slogans of war, though they know very well that war is not

easy and perhaps not even possible.

War is certainly not the best way to achieve national aspirations. On the contrary, it could create cataclysm and catastrophe in the region. Peace, on the other hand, also doesn't achieve the aspirations of all the parties.

To be specific, I don't think that the Palestinian-Israeli issue which is at the heart of the problem can be solved today. It will not be solved while the only relationship between Palestinians and Israelis is total antagonism. There must be another moment of peace, of intercourse between these two peoples so they will know their ultimate aims.

The ultimate aim of the Palestinians is in terms of a given historical experience of total antagonism. The Zionism of Israel is definitely antagonistic to the world around it. The philosophy and aims of either side are mature enough for a solution at this juncture.

□ What should be done now?

○ All that can be done at this juncture is to replace these models of conflict which are a loss for everybody to various degrees. New rules of the game along the lines of detente and institutional change are what is needed. The peace agreement is meant to devise these rules, and then there will be another historical process for a period.

I believe that the present slogans of all the parties concerned will not be the realities of tomorrow. But I can't talk about that today — nobody knows. The main reason for the blockage today is because the irrelevant issues are being made relevant, and the relevant ones are being made irrelevant.

The formation of a secular state, which is a dream of the future, or the Zionism of Israel as it is today are not the issues. The real issue is that we must pass from an antagonistic mode of conflict to a non-antagonistic mode of conflict.

□ That sounds like what Sadat is doing.

○ No, he is not doing it in a balanced way. The issue of normalisation is, of course, coming up. The only reservation I would have is that normalisation must ensure the security and sovereignty of Egypt. It must not impinge on the sovereignty of the parties.

I think that Sadat is now creating a form of normalisation which, sooner or later, will violate Egyptian sovereignty because it is not balanced. More has been given than has been received. Even an economic build-up will impinge on Egyptian sovereignty. It won't be mutually beneficial.

You know, in power politics the Palestinian issue is the weakest link. What is the Palestinian issue — just a small piece of territory? In the dialectics of the conflict the Palestinian issue is the heart. □

FORUM



MORE THAN RHETORIC

Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Israel all have a common interest in a moderate solution to the Middle East conflict, Joseph Sisco, former US Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs (*left in photo*), told Mark Bruzonsky in one of the rare interviews he has given since he left his post as Henry Kissinger's Middle East trouble-shooter. The discussion touches on the position of the Palestinians, the US attitude to Saudi Arabia and the "special relationship" with Israel. (*Photos by Mark Bruzonsky*)

□ When you were Assistant Secretary for the Near East and then Under-Secretary for Political Affairs at the State Department did you ever envisage that, within a few years, we would have either Menahem Begin as the Israeli Prime Minister or Anwar Sadat recognising Israel by a dramatic visit to Jerusalem?

○ I never assumed that the situation would develop in a way that the Likud Party would supplant the Labour Party in the leadership of Israel. But I think a more interesting response to your question is that Menahem Begin himself never expected to be Prime Minister. I spoke with him shortly afterwards and we focused, very briefly, on the matter. He had been in opposition 29 years and found himself in this very critical position at a very important time.

□ And Sadat, did you ever think he would take the steps he did?

○ I don't think any of us either predicted or thought that we would ever see the day when a major Arab leader would take the kind of initiative that Sadat took last November. However, knowing Sadat as well as I do, I think it's clear when you look at his pattern of leadership that he has normally taken the unexpected, the unusual step.

Moreover, you can see this kind of characteristic in his method of negotiation. His method is to take the broad, strategic decisions and leave the details to his Foreign Minister, in contrast, by the way, to the negotiating method of Asad.

Asad, in the 33-day talks which culminated in the Syrian-Israeli agreement, negotiated every inch of that withdrawal. And I'll tell you an interesting story. The Israelis, every time we came back with the latest Syrian position, raised questions about how Asad could behave in this way.

The implication of what was said at these lighter moments was that Asad really had no business negotiating the same way that the Israelis negotiate.

□ Amazing things have happened since you left office. Do you think that the peace process, which you were so much a part of in the last decade, is on track today? Are you generally hopeful?

○ At present there is an impasse. But the peace process is not at an end. Both Sadat and Begin have underscored the importance of maintaining contact, and I think there are some very good reasons for this. Sadat started his initiative in November, and for him to declare the death knell on that initiative would face Egypt with some very, very hard and difficult and critical decisions as to the alternative.

On the Israeli side, regardless of the fact that the negotiations on a face-to-face basis are really stalled, they have a very strong interest in assuring that the peace

process is not declared at an end. This would be saying that Sadat has been lost as a partner in the peace process. And that too has implications in the area, because as long as both sides — and I mean specifically now Egypt and Israel — maintain that, regardless of the difficulties, the process has not come to an end, the focus is still on discussion and this remains a deterrent against a possible resumption of hostilities in the area.

□ **I wonder if maybe we're not taking Sadat seriously enough now. The Egyptians are telling people, especially in private, that they feel they have very limited time, maybe only months, to make progress. And yet you're giving me the impression that the peace process is barely alive and not going anywhere at the moment.**

○ I do not believe that it is necessary at present to estimate the time limit that we have in regard to the peace process or to speculate about how much time Sadat has if there isn't much progress. I have seen these predictions time and time again. I don't want to take anything lightly, but these predictions have been historically overdrawn.

President Sadat has an obvious firm interest in his own survival. And I do not assume that, if the peace process were at an end, this would mean that Sadat's position of leadership in Egypt had come to an end.

I don't believe that there is any known, viable alternative to President Sadat's leadership. No one can predict for certain what might happen in circumstances where his vulnerability would be increased. But I was struck that his initiative in November really reflected very, very strong and deep yearnings for peace on the part of the peoples on both sides — in Israel as well as in Egypt.

I believe that people in the area are absolutely sick and tired of war and that, in this respect, the people have been ahead of the governments. I think that the kind of public reaction that we've seen to the events that surrounded the November initiative are basically a reflection of the psychological mood of the people. The broad masses of people on both sides want to find a way to achieve a just and durable peace, and I don't think this is just rhetoric.

□ **Does that include the Syrians, the PLO and the Palestinians?**

○ No. With respect to Syria, I would include the Syrian people. As for Asad himself, his posture is to wait and see on the sidelines. He, obviously, has serious doubts, and has expressed them publicly, about Sadat's initiative. But, if that initiative should lead to an agreement between Egypt and Israel, if it should bring Hussain into the negotiations, I think Asad will show that he has kept all of his options open. The last thing that President Asad

wants, in my judgement, is to be left out of the peace process if it makes progress.

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

□ **You mean within the PLO, within the Palestinian national movement?**

○ Within the Palestinian movement itself. But there are a number of other elements, whose objectives are still the destruction of Israel, and who are deeply committed to the Covenant, and therefore are not willing to negotiate or to accommodate themselves to the continuing existence of Israel.

The critical question today is: are there Palestinian elements residing primarily in the West Bank with whom, in the first instance, Jordan and Israel could work co-operatively? I believe that Jordan and Israel, and I would add Egypt and Saudi Arabia, have a common interest that it should not be a radical solution which would jeopardise Israel. Hussain knows that that kind of leadership would be a serious threat to his own security, that those guns could just as well point eastward as westward.

The parallel interests of Jordan and Israel, which are manifested on a day-to-day basis by de facto co-operation over the years in preventing violence and terrorist attacks in the West Bank, are bolstered by the parallel interests of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. This makes it possible for the principle of withdrawal to be applicable to the West Bank subject to specific negotiations on borders and specific negotiations provisions to meet the needs of security.

□ **So, you favour a West Bank, at least in the majority, returned to Jordan?**

○ First of all, the interpretation of (Security Council Resolution) 242 given by the Begin Government is unsustainable, and, in my judgement, is contrary not only to the position of the Carter administration but contrary to the position adopted by the Labour Party over the years — Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, Yigal Allon . . .

□ **But perfectly consistent with the platform Begin won on.**

○ Yes, and, moreover, in 1970 he actually resigned from the Cabinet on this particular issue. But what I'm trying to say is that the security concerns of Israel are entirely understandable. The Labour Government position was that some portion of the West Bank would be returned to Jordan and that it would be under Jordanian sovereignty.

There's no doubt in my mind that if there is to be achieved an accommodation between Jordan and Israel there is going to

have to be some Israeli withdrawal. Whatever is returned should return to Jordanian sovereignty, and Jordan and Israel should negotiate the specific agreement on the borders as well as the security arrangements.

□ **You mentioned only the West Bank — less than a third of the Palestinian people. You've read our interview in the March issue of *The Middle East* with Professor Nafez Nazzari at Birzeit University in Ramallah. The majority opinion in the West Bank seems to be that they cannot separate their identity from the broader concept of the entire Palestinian people: second, although there are some differences, the PLO remains their political representative, and third, return to Jordan is not satisfactory because it doesn't provide for any kind of self-determination.**

○ I don't take these as the final views. Take, for example, the recent elections in the West Bank. Most of the Palestinians that were elected, certainly in their public pronouncements, were at great pains not to draw any distinction between themselves and the PLO. That is the political environment one is operating in, but, I think, the issue remains unsettled.

Given the parallel interests of Jordan and Israel in assuring that the West Bank is not a threat to the security of either, Jordan, Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia are not without influence in this situation.

Let's assume for the purposes of discussion that we have negotiations between Israel and Jordan and they are able to work out an agreement including a contractual peace, withdrawal and return of some territory, and an agreement on borders. Let's assume that this comes along with a specific agreement between Egypt and Israel as well. Political views are not immutable. It would produce a different environment.

I can't believe that there are no Palestinian leaders who would be disposed to co-operate in an agreement which returned territory and provided an opportunity. But, again, I emphasise that Jordan, Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia are not without influence on the political evolution.

□ **You seem to differ with President Carter and his National Security Adviser, Brzezinski, about a "Palestinian homeland". That hasn't been mentioned by you at all as what's coming or what should come.**

○ My own feeling has been that the territories from which Israel withdraws in the West Bank would be linked to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. And this is a proposal that Jordan and Egypt have talked about. It is also a position which — prior to the present position enunciated by Prime Minister Begin — was spoken of by the Israeli Government. There was, before

Begin, an open-minded attitude on this in Israel itself.

□ Self-rule, you think — the “autonomy” that Begin has come forward with — is of no real significance?

○ The “self-rule” proposal does represent a step forward on Begin’s part, particularly when you compare it with his position during the political campaign. The question is, however — and I think the individual who has raised it in the most specific sense is the former Israeli Foreign Minister, Abba Eban — if self-rule were applied, what does this mean geographically and demographically for Israel?

If this means that thousands of Arabs would remain under Israeli rule, what does this mean in terms of the fundamental character of the Jewish state of Israel? How many Arabs — and I’m not sure I know the answer to this question — could Israel absorb and still retain its fundamental Jewish character?

□ It will become bi-national you mean?

○ Yes. But, even so, I don’t think the self-rule proposal will prove viable, even though, as I said at the outset, it does represent a step forward.

□ You seem to be saying you do not believe self-rule for the Palestinians under Israeli sovereignty is a concept that can go very far, for a number of reasons. But, self-rule — some kind of local autonomy — within the Hashemite Kingdom does raise for you the possibility of a solution.

○ A possibility. And certainly an important and significant step forward beyond the present position.

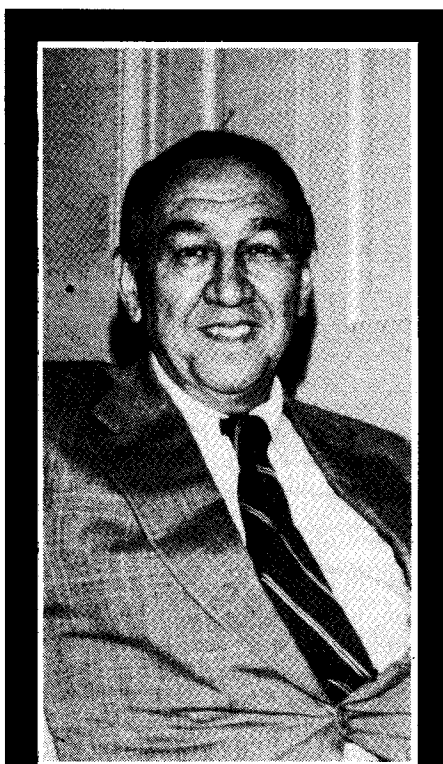
□ And when you speak of moderate elements in the Palestinian movement I gather you do not have in mind any major element within the PLO or Arafat’s Fateh?

○ No, I do not. I believe there are parts of the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank that have an interest in retaining leadership in the West Bank and have no interest in being supplanted by Palestinian interests from Lebanon or other parts of the world.

□ So the 2 million Palestinians outside the West Bank and Gaza — I assume you mean Gaza, too — would have to find some way of settling, on a permanent basis, in the countries they are now in?

○ I very much doubt that many Palestinians would move from their present locations. In Kuwait the Palestinians are doing well. In Syria it is a satisfactory situation from their point of view.

The Palestinian problem is critical in one place — Lebanon, where they were a state within a state. The Syrian intervention weakened the PLO both politically and militarily. The Syrians moved into Lebanon, in my opinion, for one principal reason — they were afraid that Palestinian guerrilla action might draw Syria into a one-front war with Israel. The same over-



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riding consideration, I think, explains Syrian restraint when Israel moved into southern Lebanon militarily.

As long as Sadat continues to say that the peace process is still alive, Syria only has the prospect of a one-front war against Israel. In other words, as long as there is some hope there is no united Arab front focusing on the possible resumption of hostilities. I do not believe that these are imminent, but I do believe that the Sadat initiative means the end of the no-war, no-peace situation in the area. Either there will be practical progress toward peace, or we will be seeing in today’s circumstances the early beginnings of the fifth blood-letting in the region.

□ Why does Sadat continue, time after time, to emphasise that there must be Palestinian self-determination — he often even says “Palestinian state”? And what is

it that you are proposing for the half-million Palestinian refugees scattered around Lebanon and Syria and elsewhere?

○ The problem is most difficult, as I indicated, in Lebanon itself. There is no alternative, so far as Lebanon is concerned, other than to continue to develop the capacity of the central government. Lebanon today does not have the ability to keep its own house in order. And as long as that is the case it will have a Palestinian problem.

□ You can say it the other way — as long as there is a Palestinian problem the Lebanese central government will never have the authority to control the country.

○ Yes, you can put it that way, but I’m more inclined to the first for this reason. Whatever force the Palestinians have within Lebanon is affected by the fact that there has been no significant practical progress toward peace. That’s the issue that the PLO seeks to exploit. The situation in Lebanon is intimately related to the question of practical progress towards peace — progress that moderate Arab governments are willing to commit themselves to. This can, in time, have an impact on the situation.

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

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

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

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

Now, I’m not saying there can be peace in the area by disregarding the legitimate interests of the Palestinians. There is a Palestinian movement in the area — that’s a reality. . . .

□ Whose legitimate interests are what?

○ That’s what the argument is all about.

□ But in your view?

○ In my opinion there ought to be an opportunity for choice — a negotiated set-



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

□ **Does this include the possibility of the Hashemite Kingdom's becoming a democracy, in which case the Palestinians would have their state? They would by far be the majority of such a state.**

○ That's something for the Jordanians to decide. I don't think they have that result by right. We're talking about a political process. Look at the number of Palestinians already in the East Bank. The question of the form of government within Jordan — whether limited to the East Bank or including some part of the West Bank or the Jordanian people themselves to determine, and that includes the Palestinians in the East and West Banks.

□ **If you squeeze the Palestinian movement into the Hashemite Kingdom aren't you setting up the conditions for a resumption of the 1970 civil war, especially if you assume the USSR will continue to play a destabilising role within that kind of semi-settlement? One day you could wake up with the PLO in control of much more than the West Bank.**

○ Sure. Moreover, there is no doubt in my mind that at some point the people who reside in Jordan — including the East Bank and whatever portion of the West Bank is returned — are the ones who really have to determine their way of life and their governmental structure. But that is a political process which would not only be influenced by developments in the West Bank and the East Bank, but would also be influenced by the nature of the peace relationship and what it had evolved into as a matter of day-to-day practice. It would be influenced by the political situation in other parts of the Arab world — Saudi Arabia and so on.

This is not a static political situation. And it's not a situation that carries with it no risk. There is no solution to the problem that can give absolute security and absolute assurances as to its ultimate outcome.

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

○ I would put it a little differently. The alternative to the kind of possible solution that we're talking about is continual turmoil, which in time would not only carry



...one leading Israeli has often said that the more friends the US has in the Arab world the better it is for Israel...

the risk of renewed hostilities, but also the risk of a radicalisation. This is the real threat, bringing with it danger not only to Jordan but to the kind of moderate regimes that we have today in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. There are no easy alternatives as you well know.

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

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

□ **One final question about the Palestinian problem. In the last issue of our magazine I interviewed Muhammad Sid Ahmad — I believe you know him — and he said that in power politics the Palestinian issue was the weakest link. The Palestinian issue is just a small piece of territory, but in the mechanism of the conflict it is the heart**

and looks enormous, he added. He felt that it could only be dealt with properly in the logic of the genuine, justifiable aspirations of the various parties at the origins of the conflict. How do you respond to this?

○ My response is that in the last analysis the Palestinian problem is primarily an Arab problem. Obviously it's an Israeli problem in the sense that the very heart and the security of Israel are involved. But we're dealing with a political force in the Arab world and we're seeing a tussle, essentially, between political forces in the Arab world that are ready to seek an accommodation with Israel on the basis of recognition and forces who are basically unwilling to make that accommodation.

It is also a tussle between elements of the Palestinian movement itself as to what would satisfy their legitimate interests and aspirations.

□ **Muhammad would probably say that the peace you are advocating is a conservative peace, linked to the oil interests and privileged class interests — a peace which in itself would not stabilise the Arab world but would do the opposite.**

○ No, I wouldn't agree. You imply that those who hold this view are in the majority as far as the Palestinian movement is concerned. The attitudes within the Arab world are not static. Not only are they influenced by what happens within the Arab world itself; they are also influenced by what happens in Israel and what happens in these negotiations.

There is a substantial force on both sides that wants a stable, peaceful relationship based on coexistence? And I would argue that this represents the preponderant thrust and force of a majority of the people in the area.

□ **Some three weeks ago Crown Prince Fahd made a statement, which was little reported in America. He spoke of Saudi recognition of Israel, opening this up as a possibility. Did you interpret this statement as potentially an ideological breakthrough for the Saudis?**

○ Saudi Arabia has been playing a quiet role in support of the peace process. Saudi Arabia has no interest in a radicalised Middle East because it would be a threat, and Saudi Arabia has been giving support — material and otherwise — to Egypt and Jordan. While it has never pursued an intrusive policy in the peace process, it has intervened at the critical moments, for example, in helping to bring an end to the Lebanese civil war and in giving support to the kind of initiative that Sadat has taken.

The Saudis will continue to exercise their quiet influence to this end. And a statement such as Fahd's does represent an evolution. It also reflects what I said a moment ago, that the preponderant majority in the Arab world are ready to try to

negotiate a settlement.

□ Does Fahd's statement, to the best of your knowledge, represent an opening to normalisation of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel as well as between Egypt and Israel?

○ That's very premature in my judgement.

□ But is it now conceivable?

○ I think it's now conceivable because I don't really think that normalisation is going to prove the major stumbling block in these negotiations, even though it is going to take a long while. And Saudi Arabia will tend to follow the Egyptian lead in this regard.

□ What would you say are the major differences between the Carter-Brzezinski approach to reaching a Middle East peace and the Ford-Kissinger-Sisco approach?

○ Well, first of all, the interim agreements that we achieved in the last three years of the Nixon-Ford Administration helped to create the minimum conditions in the area which kept open the option for diplomacy and made it possible for the Carter Administration to move from the piecemeal step-by-step approach to an overall settlement. This objective was broadly agreed on not only by the US, but by the Israelis and the Arab states. So conditions had changed and it was possible to begin to move diplomatically towards an overall settlement.

The major difference came with Sadat's November initiative, which has made possible for the first time face-to-face negotiations at the highest level. Therefore the Carter Administration can direct itself more than under the previous Administration — because of the changed environment — to facilitating these discussions.

This doesn't mean that the role of the US in seeking to reconcile differences has changed. I think that the new Administration had an opportunity — and took it — to try to get the parties together to the maximum in the aftermath of the November initiative. But it's obvious that there have been impasses and that the US is still the only party acceptable to both sides. Our mediation role is a reflection of continuity, not of differences.

□ Last year, when this Administration came into power, it not only supported a "Palestinian homeland", but the President said that "the PLO represents a substantial part of the Palestinians". And behind the scenes it was trying to get the PLO to accept 242, in return for direct dealings. The implication was that the PLO would be recognised by the US as the political representative of the Palestinians and possibly invited to Geneva. Was that the major difference compared with previous policy?

○ Well, there's no doubt there was a tremendous evolution in the position of the Administration on the Palestinian ques-



... the Sadat initiative means the end of the no war, no peace situation. Either there will be practical progress towards peace or we will be seeing the early beginnings of the fifth bloodletting...

tion. The Soviet-American memorandum talked in terms of the "rights of the Palestinians" whereas the previous Administration limited its public expressions to "legitimate interests". And these are code words as you well know. At no time had the previous Administration supported either the concept of a "homeland", an "entity" or a "Palestinian state". All of these pronouncements obviously go well beyond the position of the previous Administration.

But the previous Administration was approaching this problem in small steps, interim steps, piecemeal steps, and there-

fore there was absolutely no need to define positions on the substance of an overall settlement.

The peace process has been carried forward. After all, the Israelis have made a very far-reaching proposal on Sinai — they have indicated a willingness to return Sinai to Egyptian sovereignty. Granted, the settlements have proved to be an obstacle in this regard. There has been further evolution by all the parties concerned — Egypt, Israel and the US — simply because diplomacy has been directed at an overall settlement.

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

○ There's been an obvious change. In the first months of the Administration the President talked in terms of a "homeland" and indicated that if the Palestinians were willing to accept 242 the Administration would take another look at its position.

Now the Administration is opposed to a PLO state. There has been a drawing back of Carter's position with respect to the Palestinians — a drawing back from what he expressed in the early months.

□ Do you consider the Joint Statement in early October to have been a mistake on the part of the Administration?

○ I think its timing was unfortunate. Only the US is acceptable to both sides. Neither Israel nor Egypt wants the Soviet Union to play a role. The Soviet Union is still a power in the Middle East and no peace is possible without at least Soviet acquiescence, because their presence is a reality.

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

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

This was brought home to me in the clearest way during the 33 days in which Dr Kissinger and I negotiated with President Asad on the Syrian-Israeli disengagement agreement.

□ Has the US-Israel relationship ever been as strained as it is today?

○ Oh yes. I have seen more difficult periods — Suez, for example, in 1957 when Golda and Dulles negotiated the Israeli withdrawal. But the seriousness of

the present situation must not be discounted.

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

○ Well, these things are very hard to compare, but the commitment to Israel's security and survival is firm. The strain is in an environment where neither side believes that war is imminent. The strain is in the context of differences within a negotiating framework. Not that anybody can be totally relaxed in this situation, because ultimately the risk of a resumption of hostilities becomes great in the event of the failure of the peace process. But this strain in relations is based on very explicit differences about Israel's position in the negotiations. There's been no threat to cut off military assistance. Take, for example, the period of so-called "reassessment" in March 1975. There was very deep feeling at that particular juncture.

☐ **Were there threats then?**

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

☐ **Has Begin, as a man representing Revisionist Zionism, exacerbated the tensions or would they have existed anyway?**

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

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

The differences the US has with Israel are honest differences. I have no hesitation in saying that I'd like to see the Israeli Government alter its positions on the settlements issue and on 242, because I think it's required in order to get on with the face-to-face negotiations.

Those of us who have lived, breathed, worried and dreamed about this area know that it has been a history of lost opportunities. And I just don't want to see this best of opportunities lost at the present time.

☐ **If the joint statement was a mistake, what about the idea of linking Israel's supply of arms to the supply of arms to Egypt and Saudi Arabia? Doesn't this alter the "special relationship"?**

○ No, I do not think it does. These are individual commitments. It isn't possible

for the US to pick and choose which part of a relationship it wishes to pursue. The F-5s for Sadat are primarily psychological. They're obviously no match for either the Phantoms, the F-15s or the F-16s. The F-15s and F-16s for Israel are a continuation of the special relationship that exists and our continuing commitments to Israel's security and survival.

The arms commitment to Saudi Arabia is intended to meet what is a primary Saudi Arabian concern: its security in the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula.

I do not believe that there is any realistic way for the US to avoid provision of some F-15s to Saudi Arabia. It is a risk. But in the overall interests of the US there is not only the commitment to Israel but also the question of the need for continuing

friendly relations with the moderate Arab states in the area.

This is an example of where there are parallel interests in Israel and the US, but they are not totally identical. Israel understandably looks at this question of arms from the point of view of the region itself and its own immediate problem of 3 million people surrounded by Arab governments and states which are viewed as inimical. The US has to view this from a global position.

I don't find anything inconsistent in the special relationship and pursuing a policy of friendly relations with the Arab states. And I don't see how that policy can be pursued with Saudi Arabia without the US being at least modestly responsive to Saudi Arabian military needs.

There is no absolute guarantee that these planes cannot be used at some time in the future on the Israeli front. But, in my judgement, on balance, it is in the interest of the US to provide these planes. There are some appropriate safeguards against third-party transfer which can give some assurance — not absolute assurance.

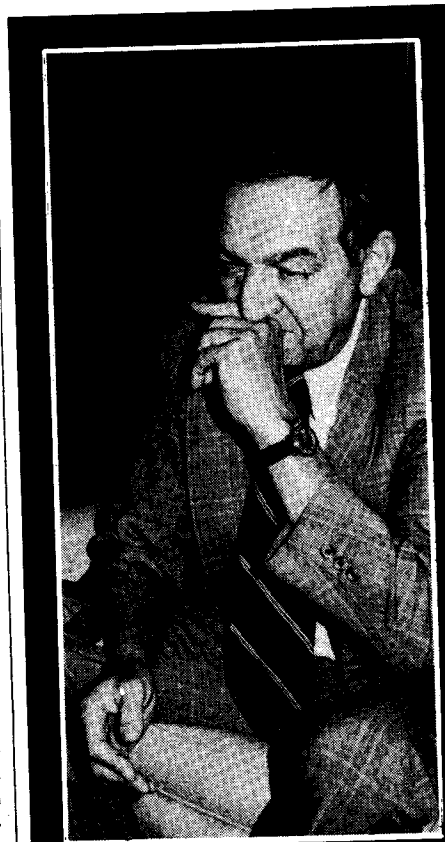
Moreover, I think it's important to bear in mind that Saudi Arabia does have legitimate self-defence and security needs, and these planes are intended to help meet these needs. If we don't it will be met by others. And I think that it is prudent for us to try to meet them, as the Administration is trying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

☐ **But the Israelis are incensed that should the Congress take a different view on arms to Saudi Arabia or Egypt the Administration will not supply Israel either.**

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

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

☐ **But if we're going to be candid as you said don't we have to admit that the Administration's primary interest in putting everything into a package is to get round the fact that the Jewish lobby might**



... those of us who have lived, breathed, worried and dreamed about this area know that it has been a history of lost opportunities. And I just don't want to see this best of opportunities lost...

block the Saudi sale if they were to put up simultaneously but independently.

○ Well, I suppose there is a tactical element in relation to the Congress. On the other hand, in perhaps a broader and a more fundamental sense, it is also a reflection of the state of matters in the area. We are having to look at the situation on an overall basis and are trying to pursue a policy of arms assistance which does not weaken either the commitment or the security of Israel but at the same time deepens the friendly relations that exist between ourselves and friendly Arab states.

Moreover, this has an impact on the peace process itself. Saudi Arabia has been helping to keep Egypt and Jordan on the peace process track and, though I don't want to put any Israeli leader on the spot, one leading Israeli had often said that the more friends the US has in the Arab world the better it is for Israel. I happen to believe that the special commitment to Israel and the policy of friendship with Egypt and Saudi Arabia and Jordan are complementary rather than conflicting.

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

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

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

After all, consider the kinds of commitments that the US made in connection with the interim agreements. They weren't formal treaties, but they were submitted to the Congress; they were reviewed by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. And the commitment to Israel and Israel's security is bipartisan in character. I think you would find that it would not be a major problem in our Congress, because of the bipartisan commitment to Israel's security, even in this post-Vietnam environment. These concerns are directed at other parts



...there has been a drawing back of Carter's position with respect to the Palestinians — a drawing back from what he expressed in the early months...

of the world — Angola, the Horn of Africa and so on.

□ Would you say there would have to be some sort of American presence to make such a security treaty really meaningful?

○ Not necessarily. I don't preclude this as a possibility, but I think both Israel and the US would want to weigh very carefully any concrete element in such a security arrangement which would call in time of peace for an actual American presence. One of the things that would have to be

weighed is whether this would bring pressure on the other side for a Soviet presence.

□ For years you've been the primary advocate of the thesis that only a strong Israel — one militarily confident in its own military credibility and confident of its relationship with the US — could be psychologically prepared to risk the kind of settlement that we've discussed.

○ Yes, I've long held this view.

□ Some think this view is not accurate. The US has its special relationship with Israel, it continues to arm Israel at a much higher rate than ever before, yet, the result has been the hardline Likud Government.

○ We've pursued this kind of a policy over the years, and we achieved two withdrawal agreements in the Sinai and one on the Syrian-Israeli front. I'm absolutely convinced that only an Israel that feels reasonably secure would risk peace negotiations for peace. And I don't conclude that this approach has failed. There is an inherent asymmetry in the situation. You've got 3 million people in one state surrounded by a number of states with a considerably greater population. The basic idea that one hears in Israel time and time again — that Israel can only afford to make one fundamental mistake — is more than just rhetoric.

Therefore I feel that the policy which made a reality of the commitment to the security of Israel is one that has produced concessions in the past, and I think that the interim agreements are examples of this. I'm not convinced that a policy which sought to cut off arms would be effective. I think that such a policy carries the risk that Israel and the Israeli people would feel isolated, and that might lead to less rationality.

□ Do things look different to you from the perspective of President of an American University?

○ No, things don't, because I'm still very close to it in every respect. I follow developments very carefully. I am fortunate enough to be located just a few miles from Foggy Bottom and therefore I get an opportunity to see all the principal leaders from the area as they make their frequent trips to Washington.

Therefore, although I'm no longer in office I have an incurable disease and I follow developments on the Arab-Israeli dispute as closely as I did when I was in the State Department.

The one critical difference is that I have no official responsibility. The decisions are being made by others. From time to time, I look back with a little nostalgia but it doesn't last very long. When you've been actively involved in decision-making, at periods of heightened tension, you miss the action. □

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Mideast Peace: The Best of Chances

Mark Bruzonsky Speaks With Joseph Sisco

A Worldview Interview

Worldview Associate Editor Mark Bruzonsky spoke with Joseph Sisco in Washington, D.C., in early April. Sisco served as Under Secretary for Political Affairs in the Department of State from February to July, 1976—the No. 3 post in the State Department and top career post in the Foreign Service. As Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs from 1969 to 1974, he was principal advisor and deputy negotiator on Middle Eastern issues to Secretary of State Kissinger. Sisco is now President of American University in Washington and, he says, follows “developments on the Arab-Israeli dispute as closely as...when I was in the State Department.”



When you served in the State Department, did you ever envision that within a few years we would have either Menachem Begin as the Israeli prime minister or an Anwar Sadat recognizing Israel in a dramatic visit to Jerusalem?

I never assumed that the situation would develop in such a way that the Likud party would supplant the Labor party in the leadership of Israel. But I think a more interesting response to your question is that Menachem Begin himself never expected to be prime minister. I spoke with him shortly after he became prime minister and we focused, very briefly, on the matter. He had been in opposition twenty-nine years and now found himself in this very critical position at a very important time.

And did you ever think Sadat would take the steps he did?

I don't think any of us thought we would see the day when a major Arab leader would take the kind of initiative that Sadat took last November. However, it's clear, if you look at his pattern of leadership and pattern of operations, that he has normally taken the unexpected, the unusual step.

Moreover, you can see this in his method of negotiations, which is to make the broad, strategic decisions and leave the details of the negotiation to his foreign minister. In contrast, by the way, to the method of Assad. Assad, in the thirty-three-day negotiations that culminated in the Syrian-Israeli agreement, negotiated every inch of that territory and every inch of that withdrawal. And I'll tell you an interesting story. The Israelis, every time we would come back with the latest Syrian position, would raise questions about how Assad could behave in this way. And in the lighter and more jocular moments the

implication was that Assad really had no business negotiating in the same way that the Israelis negotiate.

Amazing things have happened since you left office. Do you think in general that the peace process, which you were so much a part of in the last decade, is on track today? Are you generally hopeful?

At present there is an impasse. But the peace process is not at an end. I am struck by the fact that both Sadat and Begin have underscored the importance of maintaining contact. And I think there are some very good reasons for this. Sadat started his initiative in November. For him to declare the death knell on that initiative would face Egypt with some very, very hard and critical decisions as to what the alternative would be.

And the Israelis, regardless of the fact that the negotiations on a face-to-face basis are really stalled, nevertheless have a very strong interest in assuring that the peace process not be declared at an end. That would be saying that Sadat has been lost as a partner in the peace process. As long as Egypt and Israel maintain that, regardless of the difficulties, the process has not come to an end, the focus is still on discussion, and this remains a deterrent against a resumption of hostilities.

I wonder if maybe we're not taking Sadat seriously enough now. The Egyptians are telling people, especially in private, that they feel they have very limited time, maybe only months, to make progress. And yet you're giving me the impression that the peace process is only barely alive and not going anywhere at the moment.

I do not believe that it is necessary at this time to try to estimate the time limit we have in regard to the peace process or to speculate about how much time Sadat has in the event there isn't much progress. I have seen these predictions time and time again in the past. I don't want to take anything lightly in the present situation, but these predictions historically have been overdrawn. That's been my experience in the last decade.

President Sadat has an obvious firm interest in his own survival. And I do not make the assumption that a possible end to the peace process is synonymous with an end to Sadat's position of leadership in Egypt. I don't believe that there is any known, viable alternative to President Sadat's leadership in Egypt. I was struck that his initiative in November really reflected what I think are very, very strong and deep yearnings for peace on the part of the peoples on both sides of the issue—in Israel as well as in Egypt.

I happen to believe that people in the area are absolutely sick and tired of war and that in this respect the people have been ahead of the governments. And I think that the kind of public reaction we've seen to the events that surrounded the November initiative—and I don't want to overdraw this—are really basically a reflection of the psychological mood of the people. The broad masses of people on both sides want to find a way to achieve a just and durable peace. And I don't think this is just rhetoric. I think this is a deep feeling that exists in these countries.

Does that include the Syrians, the PLO, and the Palestinians?

With respect to Syria, yes, I would include the Syrian people. As for Assad himself, his posture is wait and see, on the sidelines. He obviously has had the most serious doubts, and has expressed them publicly, about Sadat's initiative. But if that initiative should achieve progress, if it should lead to an agreement between Egypt and Israel, if it should bring, within some broad framework of principles, Hussein into the negotiations, I think that you will find that Assad's watchful waiting posture has been intended to keep all of his options open. The last thing that President Assad wants, in my judgment, would be to be left out of the peace process if, in fact, that process were making progress.

Within the whole Palestinian movement you've got some real divisions. There are some Palestinians who are prepared to proceed and negotiate, who are prepared to recognize Israel, and who are prepared to adopt a live-and-let-live attitude.

You mean within the PLO, within the Palestinian national movement?

Within the Palestinian movement itself. But there are a number of other elements that remain unreconstructed, whose objectives continue to be the destruction of Israel, who are deeply committed by conviction to the Covenant, and therefore are not willing to proceed either to negotiations or to accommodate themselves to the continuing existence of Israel. And the difficulty is that some unreconstructed elements are likely to remain even if peace were achieved.

The critical question today is: Are there Palestinian elements residing primarily in the West Bank with whom, in the first instance, Jordan and Israel could work cooperatively? I happen to believe that Jordan and Israel, and I would add Egypt and Saudi Arabia, have a common interest—whatever is established in whatever portion of the West Bank Israel ultimately

would agree to withdraw from—that there not be a radical solution, that any solution not jeopardize the security of Israel and Jordan. Because Hussein knows that a radical leadership would be potentially a serious threat to his own security, that those guns could just as well point eastward toward Hussein as they could westward toward Israel.

So my own feeling has been that with this parallelism of interests, in the first instance of Jordan and Israel—which by the way manifests itself on a day-to-day basis by the de facto cooperation that has existed over the years in preventing violence and terrorist attacks in the West Bank—that that parallelism of interest, bulwarked by a parallelism of interest on the part of Egypt as well as Saudi Arabia, makes it possible for the principle of withdrawal to be applicable to the West Bank, subject to specific negotiations on what the borders are and specific negotiations with respect to provisions to meet the needs of security.

So you favor a West Bank, at least most of it, returned to Jordan?

First of all, the interpretation of Resolution 242 given by the Begin government is unsustainable and, in my judgment, is contrary not only to the position of the Carter administration but to the position adopted by the Labor party over the years—Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, Yigal Allon....

But perfectly consistent with the platform Begin won on.

Yes, what he won on. And, moreover, in 1970 he actually resigned from the Cabinet on this particular issue. But what I'm trying to say is that the security concerns of Israel are entirely understandable. But the Labor government position was that some portion of the West Bank would be returned to Jordan and that it would be under Jordanian sovereignty.

There's no doubt in my mind that if there is to be achieved an accommodation between Jordan and Israel, there is going to have to be some Israeli withdrawal; whatever is returned should return to Jordanian sovereignty; and that Jordan and Israel should negotiate the specific agreement on the borders as well as the security arrangements.

You mentioned only the West Bankers—less than a third of the Palestinian people. But the opinion on the West Bank among the great majority of the people seems to be: first, that they cannot separate their identity from the broader concept of the entire Palestinian people; second, that although they have some tactical and personality differences, the PLO remains their political representative; and third, that return to Jordan is not satisfactory because it doesn't provide for any kind of self-determination. How do you respond to these widely held views?

Well, I don't take these as the final views.

Take, for example, the recent elections in the West Bank. Most of the Palestinians who were elected were at great pains in their public pronouncements not to draw any distinction between themselves and the PLO. I think that that is the political environment one is operating in. But I think the issue remains unsettled. Given the parallel interests Jordan and Israel have in assuring that whatever remains in the West Bank not be a threat to the security of each side, Jordan and Israel and Egypt and Saudi Arabia are not without influence in this situation.

Let's assume for the purposes of discussion that we have a negotiation between Israel and Jordan and they are able to work out an accommodation that includes a contractual peace, includes withdrawal involving the return of some territory, includes an agreement on borders. And let's assume that this kind of agreement comes alongside a specific agreement between Egypt and Israel as well. Political views are not immutable. Now that's an environment different from what we see today and have seen in previous years, where, quite frankly, it's been an environment in which no such progress has been made.

I can't myself believe that there are not Palestinian leaders, presently there, who would not be disposed to cooperate in an arrangement that returned territory and provided an opportunity, economically and otherwise. But again, I underscore, Jordan and Israel and Egypt and Saudi Arabia are not without influence as to what the political evolution is or may be in the future among the Palestinians that reside today in the West Bank.

You seem to differ with President Carter and his National Security Advisor, Brzezinski, about a "Palestinian homeland." You haven't mentioned what's coming or what should come.

My own feeling has been that the territories from which Israel would withdraw in the West Bank would be linked to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. And this is a proposal that Jordan has talked about, Sadat has talked about, and it is also a proposal that—prior to the present position enunciated by Prime Minister Begin [the self-rule proposal]—was spoken of by the Israeli Government. There was, before Begin, an open-minded attitude on this in Israel itself.

Self-rule, you think—the "autonomy" that Begin has come forward with—is of no real significance?

The "self-rule" proposal does represent a step forward on the part of Begin, particularly when you compare it with the positions he expressed during the political campaign. The question is, however—and I think the individual who has raised it in the most specific sense is former Foreign Minister Abba Eban—if self-rule were applied, what does this mean geographically and demographically for Israel? If this means that thousands of Arabs would remain under Israeli rule, what does this mean in terms of the fundamental character of the Jewish state of Israel? How many Arabs—and I'm not sure I know the answer to this question—could Israel absorb and still retain its fundamental Jewish character?

It will become binational you mean?

Yes. But, regardless, I don't think the self-rule proposal will prove viable, even though, as I said at the outset, it does represent a step forward.

You seem to be saying that self-rule for the Palestinians under Israeli sovereignty is a concept that cannot go very far, for a number of reasons. But self-rule—some kind of local autonomy—within the Hashemite Kingdom does raise for you the possibility of a solution.

A possibility. And certainly an important and significant step forward and beyond what the present position is.

And when you speak of moderate elements in the Palestin-

ian movement, I gather you do not have in mind any major elements within the PLO or Arafat's Fatah.

No, I do not. I happen to believe there are parts of the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank that have an interest in retaining leadership in the West Bank and that they have no interest in having themselves supplanted by Palestinian interests coming from Lebanon or other parts of the world.

So the two million Palestinians outside the West Bank and Gaza—I assume you mean Gaza too—would have to find some way of settling, on a permanent basis, in the countries they are now in.

I doubt very much that very many Palestinians would move from their present locations. In Kuwait the Palestinians are doing well. In Syria it is a satisfactory situation from their point of view. The Palestinian problem is critical in one place, namely, in Lebanon, where at one point they were essentially a state within a state. The Syrian intervention weakened the PLO both politically and militarily. The Syrians moved into Lebanon, in my judgment, for one principal reason: They were afraid that Palestinian guerrilla action might draw Syria into a one-front war with Israel. And the same overriding consideration, I think, constitutes the primary explanation for Syrian restraint in the more recent developments, when Israel moved into southern Lebanon militarily. As long as Sadat continues to say that the peace process is still alive, this confronts Syria with only the capability for a one-front war against Israel. In other words, as long as there is some hope to this process you do not have a united Arab front focusing on the alternative to the peace process, namely, the possible resumption of hostilities. I do not believe that these are imminent, but I do believe that the most significant aspect of the Sadat initiative is this: It means the end of the no-war, no-peace situation in the area. Either there will be practical progress toward peace, or we will be seeing in today's circumstances the early beginnings of the fifth bloodletting in the area.

Why does Sadat continue, time after time, to emphasize that there must be Palestinian self-determination—he often even says Palestinian state? And what is it that you are proposing for the at least half-million Palestinian refugees scattered around Lebanon and Syria and elsewhere?

The problem is most difficult, as I indicated, in Lebanon itself. There is no alternative, so far as Lebanon is concerned, to continuing to develop the capacity of the central government. Lebanon today does not have the capacity to maintain its own house in order. And as long as that is the case there will be a Palestinian problem within Lebanon.

Or you can say it the other way: As long as there is a Palestinian problem the Lebanese central government will never have the cohesive authority to control the country.

Yes, you can put it that way, but I'm more inclined to the first way, for this reason: Whatever force the Palestinians have within Lebanon is importantly affected by the fact that there has not been significant practical progress toward peace. That's the issue the PLO seeks to exploit. The situation in Lebanon is intimately related to the question of practical progress toward peace—progress that moderate Arab governments are willing to commit themselves to. This can, in time, have an impact on the situation in Lebanon.



"Those of us who have lived and breathed and worried and dreamed about this area know that it has been a history of lost opportunities. And I just don't want to see this best of opportunities lost at the present time."

Lebanon is fractionalized today as a result of the civil war; the centralized authority is insufficient. Therefore I don't assume that, even if agreements are achieved, the situation in Lebanon will not offer serious difficulties in the future.

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

Well, I think that here one has to distinguish between the rhetoric and the reality. All of the Arab states, in public pronouncements, essentially take the same line as it relates to the Palestinians. But what strikes me is, if you take an event such as the Lebanese civil war, what it proves is that each one of the Arab states is, in the first instance, pursuing its own national interest. And I happen to believe that each of the Arab states will, in the first instance, pursue its own perceived national interest in negotiations. For this reason, given the present political environment, there will be continuing statements made in the public domain. But I don't take these public statements as the final position in the actual negotiations.

Now I'm not saying there can be peace in the area and at the same time disregard legitimate interests of the Palestinians. There is a Palestinian movement in the area—that's a reality....

And the legitimate interests of the Palestinians are what?

That's what the argument is all about.

But what in your view?

In my judgment there ought to be an opportunity for choice—a negotiated settlement that returned part of the territory of the West Bank to Jordan. A negotiated settlement that gives Palestinians an opportunity to participate in the governing of such a territory, it seems to me, goes a long way to meeting the legitimate interests of the Palestinians.

Does that include the possibility that they might decide one day that the Hashemite Kingdom should become a democracy—in which case the Palestinians would have their state? They would be by far the majority of such a state.

Yes, but that's something for the Jordanians to decide. I don't think they have that result by right. We're talking about a political process here.

After all, look at the number of Palestinians you have already in the East Bank. The question of the form of government within a Jordan—whether we are talking of a Jordan limited to the East Bank or one that includes some piece of territory in the West Bank linked to it—that's for the Jordanian people themselves to determine, and that includes the Palestinians in the East Bank and the West Bank.

What I'm suggesting is that if you squeeze the Palestinian movement into the Hashemite Kingdom, aren't you setting

up the conditions for a resumption of the 1970 civil war there? Especially if you assume the Soviets will continue to play a destabilizing role within that kind of semi-settlement?

Of course that is the critical question....

One day you could wake up with the PLO in control of much more than the West Bank.

Sure. Moreover—and here we're in very iffy territory—let's assume there was an agreement basically along the lines you and I have discussed—a linkage with Jordan. There is no doubt in my mind that at some point the people who reside in Jordan—and here I am including East Bankers as well as that portion of the West Bank that might be returned—they are the ones who really have to determine their way of life and their governmental structure. But that is a political process that is not only influenced by what would be going on in the West Bank and in the East Bank, it would be influenced by what the defined nature of the peace relationship had been and by what it had evolved into as a matter of day-to-day practice. It would be influenced by what the political situation and the political attitudes were in other parts of the Arab world—Saudi Arabia and so on.

This is not a static political situation. And it's not a situation that carries with it no risk. There is no solution to the problem that can give absolute security and give absolute assurances as to what its ultimate outcome will be.

Are you saying that to create the Jordanian-Palestinian entity and hope for the best while also creating a Middle East framework where stability would be more likely is a better risk than to allow some sort of Palestinian self-determination on the West Bank? And are you saying this because you don't believe Palestinian self-determination in the West Bank would be a stabilizing influence in the area, though you do recognize the movement's existence?

I would put it a bit differently. The alternative to the kind of possible solution that we're talking about is an area in continual turmoil, an area of instability that in time carries the risk of another resumption of hostilities. But also under those circumstances there is the greater danger of a radicalization of the area—meaning particularly the Arab world—bringing with it a danger not only to Jordan but to the kind of moderate regimes that we have today in Egypt and Saudi Arabia and elsewhere. And so that's what concerns me. There are no easy alternatives, as you well know, in this situation.

You seem to be saying that you don't think there can be a taming of the PLO by offering them half a loaf, a small state in the West Bank and Gaza. You seem to be saying that what the Carter administration got itself involved in last year was a bad idea and that it's good that the U.S. didn't enter a formal relationship with the PLO.

I'm more comfortable with the present Carter administration position—where the president has said explicitly that a PLO state in the West Bank and a part of Gaza would be destabilizing and would be a threat to the security of Israel. And, I would add, a potential threat to the State of Jordan as well.

One final question about the Palestinian problem. In the April issue of *Worldview* I interviewed Mohamed Sid Ahmed—I believe you know him—and he said the following: "...in power politics the Palestinian issue is the weakest link. What is the Palestinian issue—just a small piece of territory? In the dialectics of the conflict, the mechanisms of the conflict, the Palestinian issue is the heart; it looks enormous. It can only be dealt with properly in the logic of the genuine, justifiable aspirations of the various parties who are at the origins of the conflict." How do you respond to someone like Mohamed who feels that what you're outlining just won't work, nor is it right?

My response is that in the last analysis the Palestinian problem is primarily an Arab problem. Obviously it's an Israeli problem in the sense that the very heart and the security of Israel are involved. But we're dealing with a political force in the Arab world and we're seeing a tussle—and, this is admittedly somewhat of an oversimplification—we're seeing a tussle, essentially, between political forces in the Arab world that are ready and prepared to try to find an accommodation with Israel on the basis of recognition and a live-and-let-live policy, and forces that basically have been unwilling and are unwilling to make that accommodation.

I see it in those terms. It is also a tussle within the elements of the Palestinian movement itself as to what would satisfy what they consider their legitimate interests and aspirations.

Mohamed would probably say that the peace you are advocating is a conservative peace, a peace linked to the oil interests and the privileged-class interests, a peace that in itself would not stabilize the Arab world but would, in fact, do the opposite. What do you think of this view?

I wouldn't agree that we're creating such a peace. Your statement would imply that those who hold this view are in the majority as far as the Palestinian movement is concerned. Again, I think that the political dynamics in the Middle East are not static. The attitudes within the Arab world are not static. Not only are they influenced by what happens within the Arab world itself, but they, obviously, are influenced by what happens in Israel, what happens in these negotiations. And the question is: Is there a substantial force on both sides of this issue that wants to try to find a stable, peaceful relationship based on coexistence? And I would argue that this represents the preponderant thrust and force of a majority of the people in the area.

In this context, in March Crown Prince Fahd made a statement. There were ifs and buts and whens, but he spoke of the concept of Saudi recognition of Israel, opening this up as a possibility. Did you interpret this statement as potentially an ideological breakthrough for the Saudis?

Saudi Arabia has been playing a quiet role in support of keeping the peace process on track. Saudi Arabia has no interest in a radicalized Middle East because it would be a threat to Saudi Arabia. And Saudi Arabia has been giving support—material and otherwise—to Egypt and Jordan. While they have never pursued an intrusive policy in the peace process, they have intervened at the critical moments, for

example, in helping to bring about an end to the Lebanese civil war and in giving support to the kind of initiative that Sadat has taken.

The Saudi Arabians will continue to exercise their quiet influence to this end. And a statement such as the one you've indicated by Fahd does represent an evolution. It also reflects, as I said a moment ago, the fact that the preponderant majority in the Arab world are ready to try to negotiate a settlement.

Does Fahd's statement, to the best of your knowledge, represent an opening to normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel as well as between Egypt and Israel?

That's very premature in my judgment.

Is it conceivable now though?

I think it's now conceivable because I don't really think that normalization is going to prove to be the major stumbling block in these negotiations, even though, as a practical matter, normalization is going to take a good long while. But as a matter of formal commitments in the first instance, I don't really think it's going to be a major stumbling block. And Saudi Arabia will tend to follow the Egyptian lead in this regard.

Let's go to U.S. policy. What would you say are the major differences between what I'll call the Carter-Brzezinski approach to reaching a Middle East peace and what I'll call the Ford-Kissinger-Sisco approach?

Well, first of all, the interim agreements that we achieved in the last three years of the Nixon-Ford administration helped create the minimum conditions in the area that kept open the option for diplomacy and made it possible for the Carter administration to move from the piecemeal step-by-step approach to the objective of an overall settlement.

This objective was broadly agreed on, not only by the U.S., but by both the Israelis and the Arab states. So conditions had changed, and it was possible to begin to move diplomatically toward an overall settlement.

The major difference comes with the November initiative of Sadat, which has made it possible for the first time for there to be face-to-face negotiations at the highest level. It's not that there weren't face-to-face negotiations between Egypt and Israel and even Syria. If you go back to the interim agreements, it was necessary for the Egyptians and the Israelis, and the Syrians and the Israelis to get together at Geneva, admittedly at a low, usually technical level. But the decisive difference is that this initiative has made it possible for there to be face-to-face negotiations at the highest level.

Because of the changed environment the Carter administration can direct itself more to facilitating these face-to-face discussions. Basically, we were in lieu of direct negotiations. Now that doesn't mean that the role of the U.S. in seeking to reconcile differences has been different. I think that the new administration has an opportunity, and has operated on this assumption, to try to get the parties together to the maximum in the aftermath of this November initiative. But it's obvious there have been critical junctures at which impasses have resulted, and it's obvious that the U.S., as in the previous administration, is the only party acceptable to both sides. And so our mediation role is a reflection of continuity more than difference.

You've hinted at what seems to me the major difference between the Kissinger-Sisco approach and the Carter-Brzezinski approach. Last year, when this administration came into power, it not only came out for a "Palestinian homeland," but the president went so far as to say that "the PLO represents a substantial part of the Palestinians." And behind the scenes they were even dealing with the PLO, trying to get the PLO to accept 242, and telling the PLO that when they did that we would start dealing with them. Our implication then was that they would be recognized by us as the political representative of the Palestinians and possibly invited to Geneva. Is that or was that the most major difference?

Well, there's no doubt there was a tremendous evolution in the position of the administration as it relates to the Palestinian question. And what you're describing is precisely accurate. In the Soviet-American memorandum they talked in terms of the "rights of the Palestinians," whereas the previous administration limited its public expressions to the "legitimate interests." And these are code words, as you well know. At no time had the previous administration come out for the concept of a "homeland" or an "entity" or a "Palestinian state." So that all these pronouncements obviously go well beyond the position of the previous administration.

But I think, by the same token, one has to say that the previous administration was approaching this problem from the point of view of small steps, interim steps, piecemeal steps, and therefore there was absolutely no need or attempt made to begin to define positions relating to the substance of an overall settlement.

The peace process has been carried forward, frankly, in the definition of respective positions on both sides. After all, the Israelis have made a very far-reaching proposal as it relates to the Sinai. They have indicated a willingness to return the Sinai to Egyptian sovereignty. Granted, the position on the settlements has proven to be an obstacle in this regard. But there have been definitions and further evolutions by all the parties concerned—namely, Egypt, Israel, and the U.S.—simply because the diplomacy has been directed at an overall settlement rather than the piecemeal step-by-step approach that we were involved in.

Do you think Carter and Brzezinski have now rethought their original Palestinian policy and have returned pretty much to the policy you were involved in?

Well, there's been an obvious change. Because, as you say, in the first several months of the administration the president talked in terms of "homeland" and in terms of "entity," and he did indicate that if the Palestinians were willing to accept 242, the administration would take another look at its position. Now, I think, they're very explicit in terms of their current position. Namely, the administration is opposed to a PLO state, which it would consider to be destabilizing. So I think there has been a drawing back of Carter's position with respect to the Palestinians—a drawing back from what they expressed in the early months.

Do you consider the Joint Statement in early October to have been a mistake on the part of the administration?

I think its timing was unfortunate. And on the substance I am struck with the fact that only the U.S. is acceptable to both

sides. Neither Israel nor Egypt wants the Soviet Union to play a determinant role. Still, the reality is that the Soviet Union is a power in the Middle East. No peace is possible in the Middle East without at least Soviet acquiescence, because their presence is a reality.

On the other hand, I'm equally struck by the fact that Soviet diplomacy in the Middle East is a diplomacy with one hand behind its back. It has relationships with only one side. And even with that side, my own view is that the U.S. obviously has more influence than the Soviet Union in Cairo, more influence in Amman, more influence in Jeddah, more influence in Lebanon, and I would even add, at least as much influence as the Soviet Union in Damascus, even though there exists an ongoing military assistance relationship between Syria and the Soviet Union.

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

Therefore we are influential in Damascus because Damascus is keenly aware that progress toward peace is dependent not only on the attitude of the parties but on the U.S. role. This perception was brought home to me in the clearest way in the thirty-three consecutive days in which Dr. Kissinger and I saw President Assad and negotiated with him on the Syrian-Israeli disengagement agreement.

The relationship with Israel—the U.S.-Israel relationship. Has it ever been as strained as it is today?

Oh my, yes. I have seen periods that have been even more difficult. Suez, for example—1957. The period in which Golda and Dulles negotiated the Israeli withdrawal. Much deeper feelings than at the present time. This is without discounting the seriousness of the present situation.

But except for '57. Our relationship with Israel was still evolving then and had never reached the levels of intimacy of recent years.

Well, these things are very hard to compare. But the commitment to Israel's security and survival is firm, in my judgment. The strain is in an environment where neither side believes war is imminent. The strain is in the context of differences of view in a negotiating framework. Not that anybody can be totally relaxed in this situation, because ultimately the risk of a resumption of hostilities becomes great in the event of the failure of the peace process.

But this is a strain in relations on the basis of very explicit differences on what the substantial positions of Israel ought to be in the negotiations. Note, there's been no threat of a cut-off of military assistance. Take, for example, the period of so-called "reassessment" in March of 1975. There was very deep feeling at that particular juncture.

Were there threats then?

There were more threats at that time. I don't know of any official threats, I should say quite clearly. But the environment was one of threats.

Has Begin as a personality and as an ideologue and as a man representing Revisionist Zionism—has he exacerbated the

tensions, or would they have existed anyway?

I think it's enough to say there's a clear difference on two critical issues, *first*, the settlements and *second*, withdrawal in the West Bank. The Begin proposal of self-rule precludes withdrawal, precludes the return of any territories to Jordanian sovereignty.

These two are very critical differences between the Begin government and the U.S. One has to say this. Since these two positions are viewed by the Carter administration as a retrogression from positions held by previous Israeli governments, obviously one has to assess *who* has contributed *what* to the strained relationships in light of these two very specific differences between the present leadership and the past leadership of Israel.

That's a diplomatic way of saying it, isn't it?

Well, I don't know how diplomatic that is, but I'm reminded of what someone said to me recently in a jocular vein. I had just written a 250-word article for a magazine and I thought it was very statesmanlike. And they liked it. But the message that came back was that Joe Sisco had left the State Department but the State Department had not left Joe Sisco. I took this as a compliment in this sense. After you've been in the State Department for twenty-five years and you know how difficult it is to make these decisions under the gun, you are not prone to level critical broadsides at policymakers.

The differences the U.S. has with Israel are honest differences. I have no hesitation in saying that I'd like to see the Israeli Government alter its positions on the settlements issue and on 242, because I think it's required in order to get on with the face-to-face negotiations. Those of us who have lived and breathed and worried and dreamed about this area know that it has been a history of lost opportunities. And I just don't want to see this best of opportunities lost at the present time.

If the Joint Statement was a mistake, what about the idea of an arms package—the idea of linking Israel's supply of arms to the supply of arms to Egypt and Saudi Arabia? Doesn't this in concept alter the "special relationship"?

No, I do not think it does. These are individual commitments. The fact of the matter is that it isn't possible for the U.S. to pick and choose which part of a relationship it wishes to pursue. The F-5s for Sadat are primarily in the psychological category. They're obviously no match for either the Phantoms or the F-15s or the F-16s. The F-15s and F-16s for Israel are a continuation of the special relationship that exists and our continued commitment to Israel's security and survival. The arms commitment to Saudi Arabia is intended to meet what is a primary Saudi Arabian concern, namely, its own security in the area of the Gulf and in the area of the Arabian peninsula.

I do not believe there is any realistic way on the part of the U.S. to avoid some provision of F-15s to Saudi Arabia. It is a risk. But in the overall interests of the U.S. there is not only the commitment and the special relationship to Israel but there is the question of the need for continuing friendly relations with the moderate Arab states in the area. This is an example of where there is a large measure of parallelism in the interests of Israel and the U.S., but they are not totally identical.

Israel understandably looks at this question of arms from the point of view of the region itself and its own immediate problem of three million people surrounded by Arab governments and states that are viewed as inimical. The U.S. has

to view this from the point of view of its global position. I myself don't find anything inconsistent between the special relationship and pursuing a policy of friendly relations with the Arab states. And I don't see how that policy can be pursued with Saudi Arabia without the U.S. being at least modestly responsive to Saudi Arabian military needs.

There are no absolute guarantees that these planes cannot be used at some time in the future on the Israeli front. But, in my judgment, on balance, difficult as it is, it is in the interest of the U.S. to provide these planes. There are some appropriate safeguards against third-party transfer that can be taken and that give some assurance—note I say "some" assurance, not "absolute" assurance. Moreover, I think it's important to bear in mind that Saudi Arabia does have legitimate self-defense and security needs and interests. And these planes are intended to meet these particular needs. If we don't meet them, they will be met by others. And I think it is prudent for us to try to meet this situation in a way such as the administration is trying to meet it, with a minimum impact on the balance of forces in the area.

But the Israelis are incensed that they've been told by the administration that should the Congress, for whatever reasons, take a different view on arms to Saudi Arabia or arms to Egypt, then the administration will not supply Israel either. And that's something very different from what you and Kissinger ever did.

You've got to remember that our relationships in the Arab world in the past few years have evolved. Moreover, in terms of the definition of our own interest in this situation one has to be fairly blunt about it. And that is that in the overall national interest the question of continuing friendly relations with Saudi Arabia, particularly in the aftermath of the '73 embargo, has taken on an added importance. I just don't happen to believe it is possible for any American administration today—given what our overall interests are—to avoid entirely the question of supplying military assistance to Saudi Arabia.

But if we're going to be candid, don't we have to admit that the administration's primary interest in putting everything into a package is to get around the fact that the Jewish lobby might block the Saudi sale if they were put up simultaneously but independently? The concept of linkage in this case has to do with getting around political pressures in this country, doesn't it?

Well, I suppose there is a tactical element in relation to the Congress. I think that's probably right.

On the other hand, we have to look at the situation on an overall basis and to try to pursue a policy of arms assistance that does not weaken either the commitment or the security of Israel, while at the same time deepening and nurturing the friendly relationships that exist between ourselves and friendly Arab states.

Moreover, this has an impact on the peace process itself. Saudi Arabia has been helping to keep Egypt and Jordan on the track. And, though I don't want to put any Israeli leader on the spot, one of the leading Israelis has often said that the more friends the U.S. has in the Arab world the better it is for Israel. I happen to believe that the special relationship and the special commitment to Israel and the policy of good friendship with Egypt and Saudi Arabia and Jordan are complementary rather than conflicting.

Does this mean that down the road the special relationship might evolve into a security treaty relationship, which is something that was discussed by President Carter and Prime Minister Begin in March?

I think it's altogether possible. And the interesting thing is that if one had talked in terms of a security relationship between Israel and the U.S., say, ten years ago, the reaction in the Arab world would have been strongly, firmly, categorically negative.

My judgment is that there has been a new realistic perception and understanding in the Arab world—and when I say the Arab world, remember I'm focusing on Egypt and Jordan and Saudi Arabia, the so-called "moderates"—that such a treaty relationship in the eyes of many (and I've had this said to me directly by a number of these leaders) would really be a reflection of what the reality of the U.S.-Israeli relationship has been and is. And I don't think there would be any significant adverse reaction in the Arab world if—as part of an overall settlement and as part of the assurances that would have to be given—the U.S. and Israel would enter a precise, more formal security arrangement.

The kinds of letters and the kinds of commitments that the U.S. made in connection with the interim agreements weren't formal treaties, but they were submitted to the Congress, they were reviewed by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. And the commitment to Israel and Israel's security is bipartisan in character. I think you would find that it would not be a major problem in our Congress because of the bipartisan commitment to Israel's security even in this post-Vietnam environment.

You're saying that the Congress and public opinion would basically be sympathetic to the idea of a security treaty in the form of a NATO-type treaty, for instance, where the U.S. would commit itself to come to Israel's aid and the U.S. would symbolize this by maybe basing the Sixth Fleet out of Ashdod or Haifa or maybe by some sort of military presence in Israel. It wouldn't be credible otherwise, would it?

I wouldn't go so far as to define at this particular juncture the precise nature of the commitment. When you talk in terms of the NATO commitment, the critical commitment is that an attack on one is an attack on all. Whether the U.S. would want to go that far in a security treaty I think is something that would have to take the most careful study. I think a more likely formulation—and this is quite speculative—would be much more along the lines of SEATO and others, where the principal operative element is the commitment to consult in certain circumstances. But no one need make any judgments on this. It's quite premature.

But would you go so far as to say there would have to be some sort of credibility factor, some sort of American presence in one way or another, to make such a security treaty really meaningful?

Not necessarily. I don't preclude this as a possibility. But I think both Israel and the U.S. would want to weigh very carefully any concrete element in such a security arrangement that would call in time of peace for an actual American presence. Because one of the things that would have to be weighed is whether this would bring pressure on the other side for a Soviet presence. Remember that while the Arab-Israeli dispute is a regional dispute, it's global in character in the

sense that the U.S. and the Soviet Union obviously have vital interests in the area, so that the kind of commitment that is made in any security arrangement not only has to be evaluated in terms of its impact regionally, both on Israel and the Arabs, but has to be examined very, very carefully for what the political impact would be in a global context and, more particularly, in relationship to the Soviet Union.

For years you've been said to be the primary advocate of the thesis that only a strong Israel—one militarily confident in its own military credibility and confident of its relationship with the U.S.—could be psychologically prepared to take the kinds of risks involved in the kind of settlement that we've discussed.

Yes, I've long held this view.

There is some thought that this view hasn't been accurate. The U.S. has its special relationship with Israel, it continues to arm Israel at a much higher rate than ever before, yet the result has been the Likud government and retrenchment from former positions.

Well, we've pursued this kind of policy over the years. We achieved for the first time two withdrawal agreements in the Sinai and one on the Syrian-Israeli front. I'm absolutely convinced that only an Israel that feels reasonably secure would risk peace and negotiations toward peace. And I don't conclude that this approach has failed. There is an inherent asymmetry in the situation. You've got three million people in one state surrounded by a number of states with a considerably greater population. The basic notion that one hears in Israel time and time again—that Israel can only afford to make one fundamental mistake—is more than just rhetoric.

Therefore I feel, for example, that the policy that makes a reality of the commitment to the security of Israel is one that has produced concessions in the past, and I think that the interim agreements are cogent examples of this. I'm not convinced that an opposite policy, which seeks to cut off arms, would be effective. I think that such a policy carries with it the risk that Israel and the Israeli people will feel isolated. That might lead to less rationality.

Do things look different from your perspective as president of American University than they did from Foggy Bottom?

No. Things don't because I'm still very close to them in every respect. I follow developments very carefully. I am fortunate enough to be located right here, just a few miles from Foggy Bottom, and therefore I get an opportunity to see all of the principal high-level leaders from the area rather regularly as they make their frequent trips to Washington. Therefore, while I'm no longer in office, I have an incurable disease, and that is that I have as much interest in and am following developments on the Arab-Israeli dispute as closely as I did when I was in the State Department.

The one difference is a very critical difference—I have no official responsibility; the decisions are being made by others. From time to time, I do admit, I look back with a little ambivalence, but it doesn't last very long. I think the word is nostalgic, really. When you've been so actively involved in decisionmaking, at periods of heightened tension you miss the action. But it doesn't last very long, I find.

Thank you very much.

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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW:
ABU-NIDAL



THE NEW BATTLEGROUND

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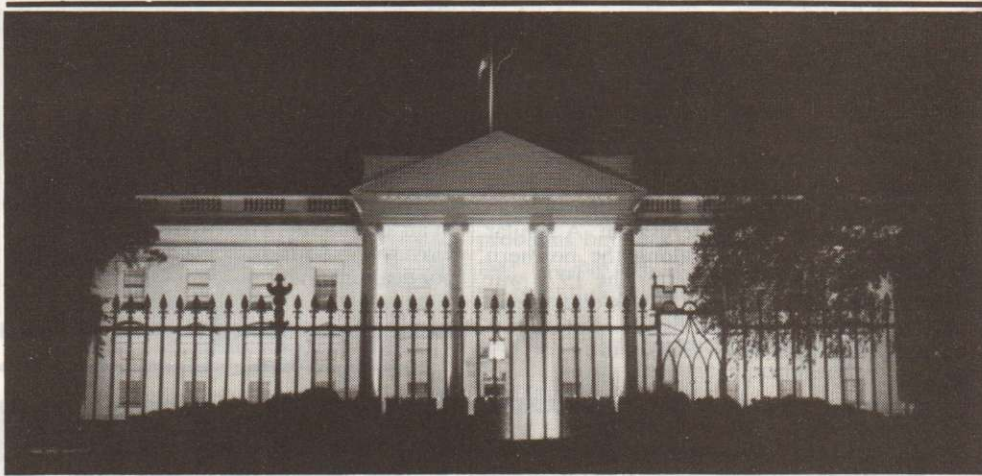
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COVER STORY

Many people believe that the Middle East conflict will not be decided in the Middle East itself but in Washington. For this reason the battle between the Jewish and Arab lobbies for the support of Congress takes on considerable significance. The power and success of the Jewish lobby is well known and in the past it has faced little opposition from any Arab counterpart. Now, however, there is evidence that the Arabs are becoming aware of the importance of this theatre of operations with the revamping of the National Association of Arab Americans. It is largely because of the efforts of this organisation and its new Public Relations Director that Congress passed the controversial arms package including planes for Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It may only have been a narrow victory, but in view of the big guns brought to bear by the Jewish lobby, it was an important one and may be a pointer to the future.



LOBBIES ON THE HILL



THE NEW BATTLEGROUND

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) has long been an influential body in the US Congress supporting policies favourable to Israel. Now it is being challenged by an Arab organisation, the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA), which could in time counter the pro-Israeli bias in the US Congress which AIPAC has brought about. Mark Bruzonsky, in Washington, looks at the aims and methods of both groups.

A few days before the US Senate endorsed the Carter Administration's sale of military aircraft to Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel, a unique event with considerable symbolic importance took place on Capitol Hill.

Testifying and being questioned together on the arms package before the Senate Foreign Relations committee, two lobbyists faced the divided senators.

One was well known — Morris Amitay, Executive Director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the Washington umbrella for over 30 American Jewish organisations which has earned the title "the Jewish lobby".

The other was a newcomer, John Richardson, Director of Public Affairs for the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA) — the only Arab American organisation devoted to political affairs and registered to lobby the Congress.

For the first time, the once invincible "Israel lobby" — "We've never lost on a major issue," Amitay told *The New York Times* in 1975 shortly after taking his job — was required to share the stage with an upstart Arab American counterpart. This symbolism reflects what the *National Journal*, in a major review of the Jewish lobby, termed "fundamental shifts in attitudes and perceptions" regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict.

"I hope we are becoming known as 'the Arab lobby'," NAAA's former President, Joe Baroodi, said a year ago. The NAAA, though still unable to mobilise the two-and-a-half-million-strong Arab American community as efficiently as AIPAC enlists American Jews, has in the past year become an embryonic Arab American counterpart whose activities are beginning to be felt, and in some quarters, including the White House, appreciated.



**John Richardson (top);
from left, Hisham Sharaki, Sen. James
Aburezk and Joseph Baroodi;
AIPAC boss Morris Amitay (bottom)**

"The voice of the Arabs is heard more clearly in the corridors of power today," a recent lobby comparison in *Atlantic* magazine concluded. "But their lobby remains a distant second to Israel's when it comes to size, efficiency and fire power."

During the days of the Senate's historic debate on the arms package in early May, both NAAA and AIPAC held their annual membership conferences. The contrast between the two was striking.

For NAAA it was only its sixth annual convention. It holds the convention every other year in Washington, and this year's was held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. With less than 2,000 members, only 300 of whom assembled in Pittsburgh, its grass roots support is weak. More important, NAAA's membership — largely of Lebanese Christian ancestry — is politically conservative and rather unsophisticated about the Washington scene.

Although NAAA's leadership and staff are more politically astute, John Richardson felt it necessary to warn even his most active members: "If we can't deliver this constituency for which we speak, we're going to look like a paper tiger. AIPAC is

effective because when Morris Amitay testifies on the Hill he has a constituency whom he represents and which will back him up."

Baroodi and Richardson have been the key architects of NAAA's recent success. Previously it had primarily been an elaborate social club concentrating more on joyous "haflis" than brutal "realpolitik".

Shortly after becoming president in April 1977, Baroodi purged the Executive Director, Michael Saba, and engaged John Richardson, (formerly President of the American Near East Relief Agency, a Palestinian relief organisation) as Public Relations Director. Throughout his tenure, Baroodi had directed an exhaustive search for a good Executive Director — a position now redesigned to handle mostly organisational affairs. Jean Abinader, a young, personable and energetic specialist in intercultural communications, was selected at the Pittsburgh meeting from a group of five.

Thanks largely to Baroodi's decisive leadership, NAAA has now established itself in a modest suite of offices and has raised its operating budget beyond \$200,000.

AIPAC's Annual Policy Conference, attended by some 700 delegates, was its 19th and was held, as always, where the power is in Washington. With about 10 times NAAA's membership, AIPAC is able to enlist the efforts of dozens of well-established American Jewish organisations, their staff and their members. Its research capabilities and organisational facilities are unmatched by any Washington foreign-policy organisation. *Atlantic* concluded that AIPAC, with an annual budget of around \$750,000, continues to create "an impact that others could not achieve with millions more".

While the NAAA conference was partly an exercise in public relations — the press was eagerly courted and all meetings were open — AIPAC's affair was a highly politicised, unusually secret gathering. The press was barred from most sessions and only AIPAC members were allowed to pass special security guards.

It was a difference of style reflecting the political realities facing the two competing lobbies. NAAA is still feeding on publicity and operates with a candour befitting a political group whose fortunes are on the upswing. AIPAC's leadership, on the other hand, has developed a somewhat paranoid vision which neatly divides the world into "us against them" — "them" being everyone, press and presidents included, except the hard-core applauders of Israeli policies.

Since Amitay's takeover, AIPAC's hold on the American Jewish community can be compared to the more recent Likud grasp on Israeli politics. Neither has majority

support but both maintain control by appealing to emotion and fear and lack any populist opposition.

Amitay has become inaccessible to the press. His abrasive personality and belligerent views have earned him a rather sinister reputation. Hyman Bookbinder, representative in Washington of the American Jewish Committee, and one of the most respected Jewish "diplomats" there, has indicated that Amitay "has personal qualities which are outrageous and very harmful to the cause we all share". Even more cutting are the recent public remarks of Senator Abraham Ribicoff — Amitay's former employer. He told *The Wall Street Journal* that AIPAC does "a great disservice to the US, to Israel and to the Jewish community". Upon hearing this Amitay was said to be uncontrollably enraged.

With the crisis felt by American Jewry in the wake of the arms package sale, the opposition to AIPAC's leadership and attitudes may become less soft-spoken. But, the American Jewish community has little tradition of removing entrenched bureaucrats. Other officials — such as the Executive Director of the President's Conference, Yehuda Hellman, whose job it is to lobby the White House — are widely criticised but remain in power. Amitay's grasp may therefore remain firm.

Ironically, many American Jews may privately agree that NAAA may be one of the main beneficiaries of Amitay's continuing reign. Richardson's calm, reasoned attitudes are in such contrast to Amitay's behind-the-scenes, fist-pounding approach that there is bound to be an effect as issue after issue pits the two against each other. Furthermore, while NAAA is reaching out to embrace a large network within the Washington scene, AIPAC is increasingly turning inward, refusing to breathe the new atmosphere of "even-handedness".

In time AIPAC could become the victim of its own inbreeding — its once expansive base of support seriously eroded. Fear of such a development may be leading to a basic transformation of the "Jewish lobby", with various functions being divorced from AIPAC without an actual purge of the organisation's leaders.

World Jewish Congress President Philip Klutznick may have had this in mind when he told *The Middle East* last month: "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."

With registration as a lobbyist a few months ago, Richardson has increasingly given NAAA the task of acting as AIPAC's nemesis. NAAA's entrance into lobbying was best symbolised last December by its co-ordination of the first

meeting between Arab Americans and an American president. Then came its major effort on Capitol Hill on behalf of the arms sale package.

In endorsing the sale, NAAA indicated "that much of the opposition to the Arab portion of the proposed arms sale is an attempt to thwart a shift in American political relations in the region rather than fear for the military security of Israel". It was a truthful deflation of AIPAC's primary argument.

Taking a long-term view, NAAA added a call for the Administration "to build into its arms policy a schedule for systematic reduction in total transfers to the Middle East over a 5-10 year period and to seek commitments from other major manufacturers to do so too". NAAA's statement showed an awareness of congressional anxieties about the ever-increasing American role as arms arsenal and was an imaginative move designed to build credibility.

NAAA's most recent major effort involves a court challenge to block American arms to Israel until Israel completely withdraws from southern Lebanon. The suit, filed in a US District Court on 11 May, names Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and the US Government as defendants. It seeks a halt to all further arms sales or deliveries until Israeli violations of the conditions under which it receives arms have ceased — meaning that Israel must move back across its northern border.

With Israel now pledged to do so, it is unlikely that the NAAA action, even if it should survive in the courts, will have any effect. But here, too, NAAA has given Israel notice that there are vigilant and capable opponents able to exploit the American legal and political systems to thwart Israeli designs.

There is concern in Washington that the arms package defeat may make AIPAC especially determined to prove itself in the next few tests of strength on the Hill. In April 1977, *The Middle East* quoted a senior American journalist, Joseph Harsch, to the effect that the new American president would have to face up to "the Jewish lobby" as all former presidents had tried to do.

Middle East policy "really comes down to a test of strength in Washington between the White House and the Israeli lobby," he noted. "The lobby has won most rounds since the days of Lyndon Johnson. Which will win this new round? It will be a fascinating test of Carter's political skill and strength."

To the surprise of many, Carter has won an important round, but the real test of his abilities will be whether he can enlist Congress to support his overall peace plan — now being formulated for public presenta-

tion within a few months. He would also need agreement on a strategy for nudging the parties to accept it, and there is considerable doubt here that his arms victory portends dethronement of the still potent Jewish lobby to such an extent.

One early sign of Administration squeamishness came a few days after the Senate vote when Vice President Mondale addressed the American Jewish Congress. He deleted from his prepared text the statement that America's "commitment (to Israel) will never be properly defined by a single or monolithic lobby". Domestic political considerations apparently caused him to feel constrained about publicly pronouncing in diplomatic phrases what has become a constant White House refrain.

One of the Administration's greatest anxieties is that the Jewish community will turn to the Republican Party, which is already running advertisements in Jewish newspapers outbidding everyone in allegiance to Israel. Here too there is a considerable irony, for Morris Amitay, only two years ago, led the Jewish community in a major effort to defeat Ford and bring Carter to power.

As for NAAA's importance in this White House-Jewish lobby wrestling match, so far the going has been easy. "People are looking for an Arab point of view; it's great," Richardson recently exclaimed. But NAAA's influence will not become really significant until Arab Americans act upon the realisation that they are up against a commitment far surpassing their own.

While NAAA members were entertained by the Royal Jordanian Folk Troupe and wine and dined by Alia Airlines, AIPAC members were attending two congressional receptions and spent an afternoon deluging congressional offices with home-town constituents. Whatever one thinks of the Jewish lobby, the dedication of its broad-based membership is to be admired and remains completely unmatched by that of NAAA.

With Joe Baroody's resignation and Hisham Sharabi's election as NAAA president, there is, however, a sign of maturity. Baroody represented a kind of Arab-WASP image — he is a member of a prominent Republican family and heads a public relations company. Sharabi, who holds an endowed chair in Arab Culture at Georgetown University's Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies, is of Palestinian origin. He remains highly active in Palestinian intellectual and political circles and is editor of the well-respected *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Sharabi brings to NAAA a much more visible "Arab image" and probably a more positive attitude towards the PLO than the organisation has hitherto been willing to express. □

NAAA vs AIPAC

The Arab lobby tunes in

The NAAA has scored one success in its fight for a more even-handed Middle East policy on the part of the US. But it has a long way to go before it can match the efficiency of its Jewish counterpart, AIPAC. Mazin Omar assesses the NAAA in the light of the US's traditional support for Israel and discusses the reasons for the impotence of other pro-Arab groups.

It was coincidental, but the fact that the Senate vote on 15 May allowing President Carter to go ahead with his sale of advanced war planes to Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel fell on Israel's 30th anniversary celebration jolted the Zionists.

Another anniversary was also dampened by the precedent-setting decision. Three years ago last May, 76 senators sent a letter to President Ford urging him "to make it clear, as we do, that the United States, acting in its own national interests, stands firmly with Israel in the search for peace in future negotiations, and this promise is the basis of the current reassessment of US policy in the Middle East".

The so-called "reassessment" came on the heels of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's failure to make any headway in his "shuttle diplomacy", when Israel was blamed by both President Ford and Kissinger for the stalemate.

Thus the senators' letter, an observer wrote, "was a stunning triumph for the (Jewish) lobby, a capital rebuke for Kissinger in Congress". In effect it nipped in the bud the much-trumpeted reassessment which was the Administration's way of inducing Israel to adopt a more moderate stance.

But not this time. The tables have been turned. American policymakers have argued convincingly in the furious debate over the sales of the F-15s to Saudi Arabia and F-5Es to Egypt that it is now necessary to work with moderate Arab forces if peace is to be achieved in the Middle East.

Top White House aide, Hamilton Jordan, said, according to his one-time Jewish assistant, that the Administration's commitments to Egypt and Saudi Arabia "are as strong as US commitments to Israel".

But it would be foolhardy for the Arabs to see this admittedly severe blow to the formidable Jewish lobby as the abandonment of pro-Israel sympathies or the weakening of Jewish influence in the US. After all, Carter was supported by only 28 of the 61 Democrats who voted, the other votes coming from the 26 Republican senators, many of whom were influenced by business interests.

US support for Israel

US support for Israel has been staggering. In the last four years US military and economic assistance totalled \$10 billion — more than for any other nation. Of total US security assistance proposed in next year's budget, 42 per cent of aid, 48 per cent of military sales credits and 56 per cent of all military grants are for Israel. Repayment on half those credits, which total \$1 billion, is waived. "That's a benefit enjoyed by no other nation on earth," declared Vice President Walter Mondale



Mondale reassured Jews (Central Press)

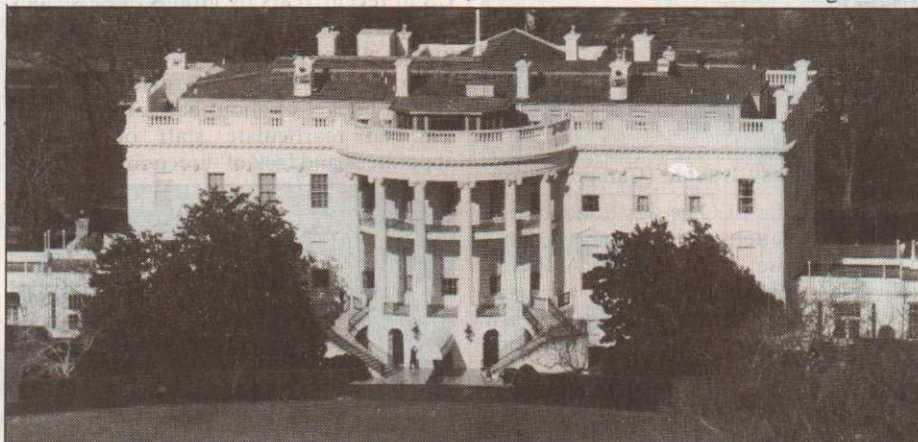
to Jewish leaders meeting in New York shortly after Carter's startling victory in the Senate.

The influence of the Jewish lobby and its abrasiveness cannot be over-rated. In a speech during the debate on the arms sales, Senator Mike Gravel, a Democrat from Alaska, said that he understood this vote to be "the litmus test" for many Jewish individuals and groups. "This vote, if it is not done properly, kisses away in the future all kinds of financial support..." He continued: "I think this will be the watershed year of Jewish influence in this country. When you deliver an ultimatum you cannot deliver it twice or three times."

Senator George McGovern, warned "Israel's most outspoken American advocates" not to press their case "to the point where America loses its capacity to influence the Arab leadership towards the

peace table". This could "set in motion a backlash both in the Middle East and in the United States that can only harm the Israeli cause," he said.

I. F. Stone, a respected Jewish journalist and recipient of an Israeli medal for his coverage of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, wrote that whenever he spoke up for the Palestinians he found himself ostracised. "On the Middle East, freedom of debate is



The White House... Arab lobby winning more influence (Camera Press)

not encouraged," he said. "Much ill will has been piled up on the streamroller tactics of the hardliners."

Seth Tillman, a former congressional aide of ex-Senator J. Williams Fulbright, has no illusions about the power of the Israeli lobby. "It's fear of political reprisals, loss of funds — in some cases just fear of abuse and unpleasantness."

Of the 12 Democratic senators running for re-election this year, only three voted for the sales, all from states without significant Jewish populations. According to the *Washington Post*, four to six senators prepared to vote with President Carter for the package deal if their votes were crucial, in the event they voted against it.

How then did Carter score his triumph? No doubt the concessions — an increase in planes for Israel, and restrictions on the Saudis — were a factor, and there were also contradictory signals from Israel on the package.

When the senators were told that according to Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan Israel wanted the planes even if Saudi Arabia and Egypt got their share, the opponents of the package lost one of their major arguments. Many legislators were convinced that there would be havoc in the Middle East if Saudi Arabia and Egypt were denied this symbolic gesture of American support.

Jewish support for the Carter Administration is falling. John C. White, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, has acknowledged that the Administration's Mideast policy has resulted in a decline of financial support from Jewish

contributors. American Jews have formed an important part of the Democratic Party's "constituency" since the 1930s, however, and Carter is obviously keen to retain as much of his support as he can. Vice President Mondale was quick to reassure the Jewish community of continued US support for Israel. "Let no one doubt this nation's commitment to the strength and survival of Israel. It was forged in 30

years of partnership under seven American presidents. It is a special relationship and it will not be undermined."

The pro-Israel lobby, unlike the Arab League's five information centres and the newly-founded information office in Washington of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), is not "a foreign agent". It does not have to register with the Justice Department and to face periodic Government scrutiny.

Jewish lobbyists have over the years established excellent access to people in Congress and within the administration. They deny the common belief that they are like "a monolithic giant with agents scurrying around Capitol Hill." But one lobbyist was quoted as saying, "We can get to see them (congressmen) when we want to, and if that's clout then we have it."

AIPAC, with its budget of \$700,000 and an unrivaled research library, reportedly keeps a computer list of "key contacts" for every congressman, and they will be called upon whenever there is a need to apply pressure. Often support for Jewish causes can be orchestrated through a recently revealed device called telegram banks. Under this system, American Jews and their friends allow AIPAC and other Jewish groups to send telegrams on their behalf and charge the cost to their individual telephone bills. So whenever a protest is deemed necessary, the bank is activated with the result that thousands of telegrams descend on the key official.

When Senator Charles Percy said in early 1975 after a tour of the Middle East that Israel was being unrealistic in avoiding



Stone . . . aide in trouble (Camera Press)

contacts with the PLO he was flooded with some 20,000 letters and telegrams.

Among those who receive AIPAC's undivided attention are aides of key congressmen. One of them is Stephen Bryen, a former aide to pro-Israeli Senator Clifford Case, and at present an assistant to Jewish Senator Richard Stone who heads the Near East and South Asia subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Bryen is now in hot water. He is being investigated by the Justice Department because he was overheard at a Washington hotel coffee shop offering classified Pentagon documents on Saudi air bases to four Israeli Embassy officials.

The power of key aides to mobilise opinion on Capitol Hill can hardly be overestimated, the *Congressional Quarterly* says. In 1975, for example aides like Bryen and Richard Perle, an assistant to pro-Israeli Senator Henry Jackson, were credited with mustering the support that stalled the sale of Hawk missiles to Jordan. Bryen, Perle and Michael Kraft (Senator Case's foreign affairs specialist) have been described as a volunteer army crusading for Israel in the halls of Congress.

AIPAC's strength, one analyst noted, comes from the cohesiveness of the Jewish community, and the ability of many Jewish opinion-makers to equate the slightest reservation about Israeli policy with blatant anti-Semitism. Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Advisor to President Carter, said recently: "If you don't agree with us' they are saying, 'we're going to stamp you as an anti-Semite'."

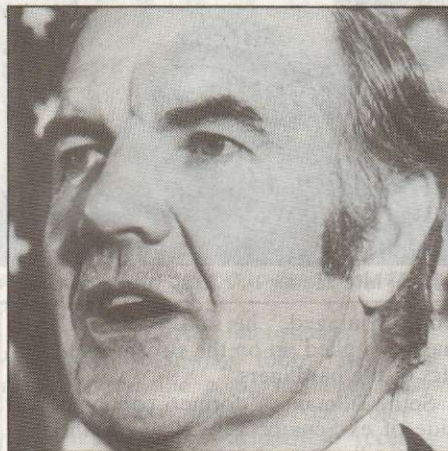
Vice President Mondale told Jewish leaders in New York in an emotional passage: "We will never reach the goal (of Middle East peace) if every step demands new proof, not of the rightness of our cause, or the rationality of our judgment but of the purity of our intentions."

The political muscle of the Jewish lobby can best be measured by the forces that were rallied against it in the acrimonious Senate debate. It took the prestige of the

American President with his Secretaries of State and Defence, the King of Saudi Arabia (who sent Carter a letter on the eve of the vote) and three of his cabinet members, senior Administration aides, and lobbyists beating on the doors of 100 senators to deal a resounding blow to Israel's supporters.

The Arab case

The Arab case has been presented in the US in recent years by groups of all shades and persuasion. Probably the least effective of all are the Arab embassies and the Arab League's five information offices. With a budget of about half a million dollars, an inarticulate staff of political appointees and lack of direction (they have



McGovern . . . a warning (Camera Press)

no telex lines to their head office in Cairo), the League can hardly do more than place occasional advertising, send lecturers from the Arab-American community to speak before student groups and publish a colourless newsletter. Its impotence is illustrated by its publication called *Palestine Digest*, a reproduction of favourable articles that appear in Western publications.

A newcomer to this field is the Palestine Information Centre in Washington opened by the PLO in early May. But it cannot expect to do much better if its budget continues at its present level of only \$80,000.

One articulate Arab American group is the Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG) which was established after the June 1967 war. Ideological purity reigns supreme, a factor that sometimes hampers its effectiveness. Nevertheless the AAUG, whose membership of over 1,000 is mostly composed of academics, has been successful on campuses and in eliminating misinformation in school textbooks as well as in preparing position papers on various Arab ills and raising the consciousness of the Arab American community. Its recent campaign on behalf of Palestinian human rights has attracted wide press coverage.

The objects of the National Association

of Arab Americans (NAAA), however are different. NAAA saw itself from the beginning as a lobbying group, seeking friends and influencing decision-makers in Washington, but its labour pains have been excruciating. It has changed executive directors three times in three years. Its finances are pitiful, depending mainly on membership dues and advertising revenue from its convention programme, and its annual budget is only about \$200,000.

NAAA is as significant to the Arab American community as it is on Capitol Hill. The politicisation of the community, NAAA leaders acknowledge, has been an uphill fight. Immigrants from the Arab world, according to one Democratic Arab American legislator, were interested mainly in becoming wealthy Republicans. But the fact that Hisham Sharabi has accepted the presidency of NAAA this year underlines the potential of this group.

The appointment of John P. Richardson, as public relations director was another milestone. The timing of the appointment could not have been better, considering the changes in the political climate in Washington, and NAAA has never before had as much press coverage.

Richardson says that his object "is to make it possible or necessary, or both, for the United States to practise its political ideals in Middle East policy". He believes NAAA and the Arab American community "have a unique opportunity to contribute to this cause". He sees NAAA as different from the Jewish lobby as its "political centre of gravity is here while Israel's lobby is there". That is why Richardson, who has no Arab ancestry, says he can work with NAAA.

Although the hiring of prominent Americans like former Senator Fulbright or Frederick G. Dutton, a top liberal political adviser, to help the Saudis to get their F-15s has been rewarding, says a veteran congressional aide, nothing can match the grass-roots operation which the NAAA could ultimately provide. "It's a waste of money," he said, "and besides the prices are too steep."

In Richardson's opinion there has been a change in the country. "Until recently it was heretical to be sceptical about the politics of Israel," he said, "but now the degree of scepticism on the Hill is far greater than surface manifestations would indicate. The bloom is really off the rose."

Senator Abourezk, one of the most forceful speakers on Arab concerns in the US, told a group of visiting Arab businessmen: "The battleground is not in the Golan Heights or the Sinai Desert — it is in Washington, DC. And the reason the Arabs have lost those battles in the Middle East is because they have lost them previously here in Washington." □

FORUM



SHARABI: STRENGTH IN RESTRAINT

"After 30 years," Dr Hisham Sharabi told *The Middle East's* Forum Editor Mark Bruzonksy, "I've learned that the most dangerous thing for a Palestinian to do is to submit to his emotional sense of moral outrage. His greatest strength lies in restraint and in giving reason full play in dealing with this problem."

Sharabi now wears three important hats in Washington. His newest and most politically visible is that of President of The National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA) — the mushrooming Arab lobby, featured in *The Middle East* in July.

Sharabi has taught at Washington's Georgetown University for the past 25 years. He entered the US from Palestine in 1947, received his Ph.D in history from the University of Chicago, and worked for a brief time at the UN Secretariat in New York. Sharabi holds an endowed chair in Arab History at Georgetown University's Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies. He is also editor of *The Journal of Palestinian Studies*.

In coming years, he said, he plans to give all his energy to the Arab American Foundation, which he is now helping to establish and which will work with NAAA. (Photos by Mark Bruzonksy).

Bruzonksy: You recently said that you think the US Government should be heavily involved financially in rebuilding Lebanon. What do you have in mind?

Sharabi: Yes, I did. And this is a matter we in NAAA are going to pursue with all our energy. I think the US has been, if not cynical, certainly insensitive in its policies towards Lebanon. Except for some peripheral aid in food and for refugees the substance of American support to Lebanon has been in the form of a \$100 million arms grant.

What Lebanon needs — besides rebuilding its security and armed forces — is to rebuild the economic infrastructure of the country. It needs expert advisers which the US could provide, material aid, and it needs good faith where political issues are concerned.

☐ **Don't you think the American people think the Arab world is rich enough to take care of Lebanon — that it's not an American responsibility?**

☐ The US is helping Egypt to the tune of \$750 million. And Lebanon has been a long-standing friend of the US. It deserves at least equal treatment.

If the US did come up with substantial economic aid to Lebanon, that would give the necessary political reassurance to some of the oil countries to participate. Now they are undecided whether the country is politically stable enough to put whatever aid they might give to proper use.

☐ **When Sadat decided to go to Jerusalem on his "sacred mission," did you support him?**

☐ On the emotional level I did. A large number of Palestinians and Arabs, though apprehensive about the final outcome of the step, were hopeful that it might indeed constitute a breakthrough and bring about an acceptable peaceful settlement. Intellectually, however, I was sceptical from the very beginning as to the wisdom of the step and the Israeli reaction to it. Unfortunately, my scepticism has proved to be more well-grounded than my emotional expectations.

☐ **So you see the Sadat initiative as having failed?**

☐ A failure in what it intended and what people expected it to achieve, namely, to initiate a process that would result in a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem.

☐ **Did he accomplish anything?**

☐ Two things, I think, both on the psychological rather than the political level — although this will have some impact politically. First it showed that the Arabs are indeed sincere in wanting peace. Although Sadat did this on his own, the gesture was perceived correctly as an Arab gesture. Had he been better received by the Israelis he would have had more open,

more articulate, Arab backing.

☐ **From what countries?**

○ From all over the Arab world. Certainly from all the Arab governments described as "moderate" or "non-extremist", including Syria. Sadat's gesture considerably changed the image of the Arabs in the US and also in Western Europe.

The second thing is a new perception of Israel's true posture on the question of peace and war in the Middle East. Sadat put Israel to the test and showed that the Israelis are more interested in preserving territory than achieving peace. As long as they have military superiority they will not accept peace with the Arabs except on their own terms, which are very close to unconditional surrender.

☐ **Do you think that a Labour Government would have acted like Menahem Begin's Government?**

○ Yes I do, except probably with more cleverness, with greater ability to mystify the issue than Begin who is a sincere, outspoken person for which, as a Palestinian, I'm most grateful.

☐ **Don't you have some anxiety that the Egyptians will forget the Palestinian cause because of their own problems and accept a separate arrangement with Israel?**

○ I doubt that.

☐ **But supposing the Israelis under American pressure did provide some sort of five-year plan, some concept of Palestinian participation in their own future? Might not the Egyptians see this as enough to go forward with an agreement with Israel?**

○ No. Why assume what already is obviously not forthcoming. The Israeli Government has said very clearly that it will not withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza and will not give the Palestinians the right to self-determination — two conditions on which Sadat has been very adamant and consistent.

☐ **Joseph Sisco said a few months ago in a Forum interview that Sadat's stated attitude towards the Palestinians was really just a cover and that he was prepared to make a separate arrangement with Israel if it would offer the things the US is telling it to offer.**

○ I don't know where Sisco gets his information about Sadat's true intentions. I have no reason to believe that Sadat or the Egyptian Government are lying.

☐ **Then how do you make sense out of American policy which seems to want only very marginal concessions from Begin? Carter said in May that the Begin plan could be the basis for an agreement between Egypt and Israel. Are the Americans operating in complete ignorance of what is really possible with Egypt?**

○ As time goes by, I can make less sense of American policy and of Carter's position on the Arab-Israeli conflict. His interview

with Trude Feldman that you referred to is quite contradictory to statements he made earlier. He has been wavering, but now he has entered a new stage in which he is taking contradictory positions.

I hope that the Carter Administration will stick to its initial position that a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict must be comprehensive and based on the solution of the Palestinian question. This means Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories and the Palestinians having a homeland of their own in part of Palestine where they can determine their future.

☐ **Arafat recently said he no longer believed that President Carter supports any kind of real Palestinian homeland.**

○ I don't know what Carter really believes. All I'm trying to say is that I wish to give

"As time goes by I can make less and less sense of American policy, and of Carter's position on the Arab-Israeli conflict. He has been wavering but now he has entered a new stage in which he is taking contradictory positions."

him the benefit of the doubt. Maybe I'm being too generous.

☐ **Might it be deliberate ambiguity, for domestic political reasons?**

○ At an earlier stage we all agreed this might be a possible explanation, but now I really wonder.

☐ **Perhaps he's waiting for Begin to collapse politically or physically?**

○ If so, then it would be a sad comment on Carter's policy. If he's reduced to that, then one cannot reasonably expect any fruitful result.

☐ **Do you think the time has come for a Palestinian government-in-exile?**

○ I think it's probably premature. The establishment of a provisional government-in-exile would hardly change anything today. Unless the Palestinians have something to gain by taking this step, why take it?

☐ **Do you think the time has come to amend or repeal the Palestine National Charter?**

○ If it were helpful to do that I would advise it. But I don't think it is helpful. It will change nothing, and therefore I'm against changing anything in the Charter. The Palestinians have nothing to gain by any further unilateral gestures. I think the PLO has gone very far in trying to get

accepted, in making concessions on substantial political issues.

Unless these are met with concrete possibilities . . . like a willingness by Israel to make similar gestures as the ones being required of the PLO. . . .

☐ **If the Israelis agreed to negotiate with whatever Palestinians are willing to negotiate with them, would you then contemplate revising the Charter?**

○ Then there would be some reason to consider the problem.

☐ **What if the Americans said they would recognise the PLO if the Charter were revised?**

○ Again this is another kind of step that I think would be necessary before the PLO made further political concessions. Since the 1973 October war the Arab countries and the PLO have made concession after concession. The Israelis' position has become more inflexible.

Consequently, I think, the Arab governments and the PLO — all the so-called moderates — have their backs to the wall.

☐ **If you don't think that political or ideological changes should be made by the PLO, what is the PLO's strategy?**

○ The PLO and the confrontation states, including Saudi Arabia, cannot maintain their present position for long. The way that Israel has held on to hard and inflexible policies regarding peace has put all these governments in a position where they will soon have to take a more aggressive attitude.

☐ **Are you diplomatically predicting another war?**

○ That at least.

☐ **What more?**

○ Resort to some sort of . . . the other options.

☐ **Actions against the West? Against Israel's supporters? Economic actions? Financial?**

○ All possible options including the military one, including the oil one. . . . Otherwise these governments will be hard-pressed to justify their position. They will be eroded from within.

☐ **But with Begin in power wouldn't that play right into Israeli hands? And all military analysts agree that the Arabs would be destroyed in another war.**

○ Yes, but if we take the assessments given to us prior to the October war everybody said war wasn't possible and the Israelis thought so too. What I'm saying is I'm not willing to rule out the military option on this basis.

☐ **How much time do the Arab governments have before their positions begin to be eroded?**

○ It's beginning already, I think. If nothing comes through by next autumn I think we will enter into a new phase in the Middle East.

FORUM

☐ Do you think Sadat's repressive steps at home are a means of tightening his eroding position?

○ Probably, although with Sadat you never know. The logic behind his actions is not always apparent.

☐ You sound very critical of the actions he's taken.

○ It is more sad than anything else. The democracy he is now dismantling was pitiful to start with. His actions are empty of content. He's like someone confronted with a fatal disease who addresses himself to treating a cold.

☐ Do you think he's lost touch with domestic political realities?

○ You're assuming that he was in touch in the first place.

☐ It's no secret now that Carter made the PLO an offer last summer. He told them the US was prepared to talk with them and to advocate a chair for them at Geneva if they would accept 242. Did the PLO miss an historic opportunity?

○ As far as I know, there must have been a change of heart on the American side. I was in Beirut at the time and the atmosphere among the PLO was very positive. They were almost certain that this hurdle had been overcome in August last year. But then something happened, the details of which I do not know. President Carter stated in Plains, Georgia, that the US had been informed by a third party that the PLO was ready to accept 242.

☐ Were the Saudis the third party?

○ That's right. Carter added, that the Palestinians wanted to insist that they should be considered as a people with national rights rather than as mere refugees. And, he said this is okay with us. I think this was the apex of the process. After that there was a freezing of the situation.

☐ The Americans say the PLO then refused to recognise 242, and that Washington felt betrayed.

○ On the contrary. The PLO feels this.

☐ But why didn't the PLO recognise 242?

○ They wanted recognition by the US of their status — the status of the Palestinian people as a people with national rights and not as refugees. This is absolutely crucial to them.

☐ But Carter said he was prepared to tolerate a reservation as long as 242 itself was recognised.

○ The reservation as I understand it, was to be made by the US. All the PLO wanted was for the US to link Resolution 242 with a statement by Carter like those he had made previously that the Palestinian people have the right to their own homeland.

This did not come. And when they asked the Americans, 'suppose we accept 242, what will you give us?' The answer was, 'we promise you nothing. All we give you is



"The establishment of a Palestinian government-in-exile would hardly change anything today. Unless the Palestinians have something to gain by taking this step, why take it?"

agreement to discuss the issues.'

☐ But the Carter Administration says it offered to begin negotiations for talks between the US Government and the PLO and was willing to move in the direction of American support for PLO participation at Geneva. Didn't the PLO really miss an opportunity and wouldn't it jump at such an offer if it were made again?

○ My feeling is, in retrospect — I have no evidence to base it on — that the US came under great Israeli pressure as the Carter Administration appeared to be moving towards a greater understanding with the PLO and probably recognition in late summer or early autumn, last year. Carter buckled under the pressure as he did after the October Soviet-American agreement, the homeland statement, and so many other positions that he has taken which elicited strong Israeli opposition.

☐ There was another chance last December when the PLO could have gone to the Cairo Conference and put the Israelis on the spot.

○ Theoretically this is probably correct.

Practically, it would have been impossible for the chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO to send a delegation to Cairo. Politically he couldn't do it, given the psychological apprehensions, the feelings of betrayal, and so on.

It's very easy to say that they would have been clever to do it, but they couldn't have done it.

☐ If you were to see President Carter in your capacity as President of NAAA, what would you tell him about the Palestinian problem?

○ I wish I could have the opportunity to see him privately and to have his ear on this issue. I would first try to convince him of the sincerity of the Palestinian and Arab leaders for peace. I would also try to show him how impossible it is that any kind of stability in the region could be attained by mystifying the Palestinian issue; that the Begin plan has absolutely no hope of acceptance by any Palestinian or Arab leader or government; that the principles for a just and reasonable and internationally acceptable resolution must be based on what has world consensus, that is, Security Council Resolution 242, Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza, and implementation of the principle of self-determination for the Palestinian people.

To deny these principles or to try to go around them is not merely counter-productive but can result in the breakdown of the first genuine opportunity that we have in 30 years for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This could thrust the entire area into a new era of instability and probably war and chaos.

☐ You've not always held the view that there should be a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, Arab recognition of Israel and co-existence with Israel. When did you reach this conclusion?

○ When I became convinced that if such a state were not established then the rest of Palestine would be absorbed by the Zionist settlers and that the Palestinians would lose any hope of ever getting back any part of their homeland.

☐ But the Israelis believe that you want to get what's possible now and maybe all of Palestine later, say in 10 or 20 years when the Arab world is stronger.

○ I'm not going to give guarantees to Israel of my or my people's hopes and fears for the distant future. No enemy can ask of his opponent to mortgage his soul and mind for 30 years. This is absurd. What Israel is saying is said in bad faith to distort the issues.

It's said to prevent a peace settlement, to gain time, to do precisely what I'm afraid might happen, to be able to maintain the status quo long enough to take the land from the Palestinians who have remained in the occupied areas and to face the world

and the Palestinians and the Arabs with a *fait accompli* as they did after they occupied and conquered the area of pre-1967 Israel in 1948-49.

☐ Well, what kind of relations would you envisage between a Palestinian and Israeli state, assuming that some of the people in Israel who support a Palestinian state ever came to power?

☐ I used to make assumptions quite freely. Now I cannot. I've really lost confidence that there is any substantial group in the mainstream of Israeli life who want peace on the basis that I think is minimal from the point of view of the Palestinians.

I think that overwhelming military power, the zealous policies of the ruling coalition, the hesitation and even weakness of the American Administration in dealing with Israel have led them to believe that they do not have to make substantial concessions.

☐ Earlier you said that the Arab states were prepared for real peace and normal relations with Israel if the kind of settlement we've been discussing could be brought about. But you don't seem to extend this to the Palestinians.

☐ Why should I when the Palestinians have been denied all recognition. They barely exist for the Israelis! The Palestinians are constantly asked to recognise Israel and its right to exist, to agree to and have normal relations. But what good will this do the Palestinians?

☐ Zionist leader Nahum Goldmann recently stated that the Israelis should talk to the PLO, that Israel should accept the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and that there should be a Palestinian state. Who in the Palestinian camp is saying comparable things?

☐ Officials of the PLO like Hammani and others! Officials of the PLO have said that! He said that we accept a Zionist Israel and are willing to co-exist with Israel as it is.

☐ You've been quoted many times saying Zionism is racism. If you believe that, would it not be difficult to co-exist with a racist state?

☐ In order to get my own state, for the Palestinians to get their right to national self-determination in Palestine ... this could be a price that has to be paid. It doesn't mean that I like it. There are many things in life we have to accept even though we may be opposed to them.

I hope, and I think history will make it inevitable, that before too long the Jews themselves in Israel — in a situation that has been pacified — will get rid of Zionism. I mean Zionism as racism. That is, those aspects of the Israeli-Zionist-Jewish state that are racist. By racist I mean very simple things like the Law of Return.

☐ But that's absolutely crucial to the Jewish state.

☐ It is crucial to the racist attitude of the Israeli-Jewish state, the way they are treating the people in the Negav today. They treat poor bedouins as "bush natives". Their treatment of these people is Nazi — more than Nazi because it is not an aberration as it was the Germans who were temporarily seized by that madness.

But what we have in Israel is 30 years of trampling over the Palestinians as a people, of treating them like dirt, of killing their men, women and children as if they are flies.

☐ The US is not asking Israel to end the Law of Return, nor is the United Nations.

☐ Well, the Palestinians are, believe me!

☐ So regardless of any territorial settlement and the establishment of a Palestinian state the Palestinians will demand an end to certain aspects of Zionist ideology.

☐ They're making no such demands. I'm giving you my own feelings about Zionism and my hopes about the future of Zionism and the future both for the Palestinians and for the Jews living in Palestine. If we are going to live together in other than a suspicious, hostile existence, Zionism has to go!

☐ Does a Jewish state stay?

☐ Yes, anything. I don't know how the operation, the excision, is going to take place and keep this body — whatever body — they want to keep, I want the racism out! Because this is the barrier between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East today and as long as it lasts. Until they get out of their minds this racist attitude toward Arabs there will be an unbridable barrier, an element that will never allow the Middle East and the Arab world to be secure home for the Jews. Because, until this happens, the Arabs will feel that the Jews in Israel and elsewhere in the Arab world are not in their homes.

☐ But knowing what you know about Israel and American Jews do you have any real expectations that the State of Israel will become a non-Zionist state in the foreseeable future?

☐ Not in the near future, but definitely in the foreseeable future.

☐ I'm not trying to find a philosophical dividing line between what you accept and don't accept. Do you accept the concept that if Jews want to be a nation, want to call themselves a nation, that's their decision? But in their relations with the Arabs they cannot be allowed to have racist aspects to the policies of their Jewish state?

☐ If they want to live among Arabs, precisely that.

☐ So it's not Jewish nationalism you're questioning. It's the way that nationalism interacts with the Arabs living in and around Israel? You accept a Jewish state with a different psychological attitude toward its minority Arab citizens and

neighbouring Arab states?

○ Yes. The issue is how that nationalism expresses itself as Zionism.

□ **Won't your Palestinian state have a Law of Return? Won't you, as an American born in Palestine, or your child, have special privileges to return to the new Palestinian state?**

○ Yes, but without excluding everyone else.

□ **So, it's the exclusivity you object to, not that it's made easier for Jews to become Israelis.**

○ Precisely. It's the exclusivity.

□ **You've lived in the US for 31 years and have been an American citizen for 16 years. Would you contemplate going back and living and building a Palestinian state?**

○ Certainly. Of course.

□ **And would most of your colleagues in the US do the same?**

○ Many of them would.

□ **The professional and personal sacrifice would be tremendous. You're a tenured professor at a major university here, the head of an important Arab American organisation. What would this new Palestinian state offer you?**

○ It offers me a homeland, a home which I haven't had for 31 years!

□ **Would you give up your American citizenship?**

○ I don't need to. You know, many Israelis have . . .

□ **But that's a special case. I'm not sure it would be extended to the Palestinians. I don't think you can be both a Frenchman and an American.**

○ Well, if it came to that, yes I would give it up.

□ **Is this true that, at least in the beginning, there probably wouldn't be a great influx of professional and middle class people?**

○ Yes. It's probably true. But still it would make a tremendous difference to them to have a Palestinian state even if they didn't go to it. To be able to have a Palestinian passport. To be able to go there, say, in the summer or whenever you want and feel that you are in your home.

□ **Where would the capital of the Palestinian state be?**

○ In Jerusalem.

□ **Do you envisage it as an open city with the Jewish part the capital of Israel and the Arab part the capital of the Palestinian state?**

○ Yes. Everything can be worked out. Once we get to that point there will be no problem that can't be worked out.

□ **Is President Carter beginning to lose the trust of the Arab American community?**

○ He's certainly beginning to lose mine. But by and large the Arab American community is politically unsophisticated and they like the leader.

□ **Do you draw much hope from the**

"Peace Now" movement's growth in Israel?

○ But I hear very little even from these people about the real conditions of peace.

They should say: "God damn it! We've been cruel to these people. We've been heartless to these people for 30 years. Human decency, political interests, the future of our children, our place in the world, all require it. Let's stop the Zionist crazies like this man on top and take the bull by the horns and solve the Palestinian problem."

□ **Don't you have some hope when Israeli establishment figures like Harkabi break with Israeli policies?**

○ Harkabi is a man who speaks with bad faith. He is a paranoid, former chief of intelligence, who has all the basic racist attitudes toward the Palestinians. He may think that he's being just, benign and fair-minded. But take the body of his works and put them together. They show the mentality of a settler who is perhaps less ideologically zany than people like Sharon or Begin . . .

□ **But what about Peled, Eliav, Avneri and Yitzhak Navon, who has always advocated talking to the Palestinians and is now President of Israel?**

○ If the Peleds, the Avneris, the Eliavs were in the government, if their ideas were supported by the mainstream, fine, I would change my argument. But they're not.

□ **Are Hammami's ideas supported by the mainstream of the Palestinians?**

○ No, but when you asked me whether there are persons in the Palestinian ranks to correspond with the moderate and fair-minded people in Israeli ranks I said yes there are.

□ **But that's my point. There are such people in both, but neither have major political importance.**

○ With one basic difference. The Palestinians are the victims and the Israelis are the victimisers. What you expect, what you demand from one does not with logical symmetry apply to the other.

□ **How do you rate the Western media as it reports on the Arab-Israeli conflict?**

○ I must admit that the media in the West has become more fair-minded in its attitude. It no longer dismisses out of hand the Arab-Palestinian position. It no longer — and this is perhaps more important — accepts uncritically Israeli positions, attitudes and statements. Even in this country (the US).

I think we are at the beginning of an irreversible development. The process of demystification has set in. It cannot be reversed. And I think Israel, Zionism and the pro-Israeli position can no longer dominate the definition of the situation.

□ **If a settlement were reached and the US were to offer the Israelis a security guaran-**

tee — a treaty which two-thirds of the Senate would have to ratify, would your organisation support or oppose it?

○ I wouldn't oppose anything out of hand. After 30 years I've learned that the most dangerous thing for a Palestinian to do is to submit to his emotional sense of moral outrage. And that his greatest strength lies in restraint and in giving reason full play in dealing with this problem.

□ **Hasn't the PLO violated that by returning to terrorism. The bus incident in March for example?**

○ Yes, I don't want to go into that now, but I do not want to leave you with the impression that the Palestinians are apologetic about their use of violence. Terrorism as the Palestinians have used it was created and perfected by the people now in power in Israel.

What you call terror has been used against them when they were totally vulnerable; when they had no way of protecting themselves. Just read the accounts of what they did to the Palestinian people! Deir Yassin is just one of the incidents. Deir Yassin is not the exception. It is more and more a sort of a pattern.

I'm against the use of terror because it is counter-productive. It puts the Palestinians exactly where the Israelis want them, making it possible to portray the Palestinians by an image which is completely false.

I'm against terrorism because innocent people suffer, they shouldn't. But I know that in a situation such as ours innocent victims, unfortunately, will have to pay for what they were not responsible for in the first place.

□ **You've just become President of the NAAA. What are your main goals for the coming year?**

○ First, to build up the organisation so that it will have a national character by increasing the membership to between 10,000 and 15,000 this year. On the political level I would like the Association to take a more aggressive attitude to Administration positions on the Middle East.

□ **Do you think NAAA has become the main Arab lobby opposing the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the "Jewish lobby" in Washington?**

○ I do, provided that NAAA is not considered solely as a lobby. We're interested in all sorts of activities concerning the Arab American community. We are concerned, for instance, with cultural aspects and the question of "Arab image". An Arab American Cultural Foundation will be established. Although not a subsidiary it will co-operate with NAAA. I intend to give it all my energy when it is established and when I complete my present tenure as NAAA president. We are more like the Jewish community as a whole, engaged in all sorts of activities, than like AIPAC. □

FORUM



URI AVNERI TALKS OF: Arafat - doing a good job Begin - losing public confidence Carter - everything wrong Weizmann - transformed

A Palestinian state "will terminate the radicalisation process of the Palestinian people", Israeli publisher and political activist Uri Avneri told *Mark Bruzonsky*. Since 1948 Avneri has advocated the two state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation. In 1950 he purchased a then family magazine, *Ha'olam Haze* (This World). Today this weekly is a mass-circulation news magazine combined with a forum for aggressive political exposes of economic and political corruption. It has also become a champion of the Palestinian cause.

Avneri established contact with senior PLO officials in 1974, when the PLO's posture was shifting toward the two-state approach. He became one of the leaders in the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace which established official contact with the PLO in mid-1976. In March 1977 he helped create the Shelli Party, which gained two seats in the 1977 elections. As the third candidate on Shelli's list Avneri will return to the Knesset under a rotational scheme adopted by the party. When he was in the Knesset from 1965 to 1973 he was a thorn in the Labour Party establishment. Golda Meir once took the Knesset rostrum to declare "I am ready to mount the barricades in order to expel Avneri from the Knesset."

Bruzonsky: How do you characterise Israel's political environment today? What is the strength of Likud and of the Labour Party?

Avneri: Begin has lost the confidence of the upper class in Israel, by which I mean the well-educated, established people. These people are becoming extremely disillusioned by Begin — not only by his politics, but also by his personality.

Of course Begin is not, and never has been, a real Israeli in the sense of having an Israeli style in thinking and in talking. This is now becoming much more pronounced in the last few months. The style of Mr Begin is irritating a bigger and bigger number of Israelis. This, by the way, finds its statistical expression in public opinion polls where Mr Begin, while still commanding a great majority, is steadily declining.

What this means in political terms is difficult to forecast. Likud — together with its allies — has a majority in Parliament and this is reflected in Knesset votes. But this doesn't really mean anything at all beyond day-to-day practical politics, because the question is how will this majority stand up in a real political crisis. For example, if public opinion in this country reaches a point where enough people realise that Begin has personally become an obstacle to peace how will this influence his standing inside the Likud bloc, inside the government coalition and inside the country at large?

As long as things go on as this — there's no real American pressure, and people still are not quite conscious of a crisis with Egypt — then Begin can go on as he does. He's being attacked and he reacts. A lot of people have their doubts about his mental stability now, but this can go on.

But if any of these things assume crisis proportions things may happen. There can be a kind of civilian public uprising. This has happened in Israel before. It's one of the characteristics of Israel that in certain situations the public becomes disgusted with the political establishment and starts to make peaceful, non-violent protest demonstrations which sometimes have a very interesting and big impact on political life.

□ It is generally argued that if the US were to create or let be created a political crisis with Israel — try to push Israel or impose on Israel — this would unify Israelis behind the Government, not bring it down.

○ Either thing can happen. You can't plan. It depends how it looks to the public and how the public reacts to this. If it's done in a brutal and harsh way the public may say we can't let our government be pushed around.

The peculiarity of this kind of thing is that it's quite impossible to calculate what will happen in advance because of the many imponderables. First there is a crystallisation of public opinion in a certain direction under the impact of events. Then politicians react to public opinion. Everybody thinks its now popular to do this and not to do something else. And then the political establishment, in

some way not easy to forecast, adjusts itself to the new public climate.

For example, when this new movement started, the "Peace Now" movement, it looked like the beginning of this kind of process. It had a big momentum. Then, for some reason which is very difficult to analyse, it suddenly got bogged down. And today it is bogged down. It's not the same as it was two or three months ago. Now tomorrow this may change again.

□ Assuming there were a crisis and Likud and Begin did lose public confidence completely, what is the state of the Labour Party? Is it capable of taking over and asserting a more flexible leadership?

○ First of all, losing confidence in Begin and losing confidence in Likud are two different things. In the Likud you have Ezer Weizmann, you have the Liberal Party. The Likud is not a unified party, it's a bloc with many different components and the change may first of all try to take expression in the Likud itself.

For example, if Mr. Begin for some reason, let's say for reasons of health, was compelled to lay down power, the whole process would happen differently than if Mr. Begin were there in full command.

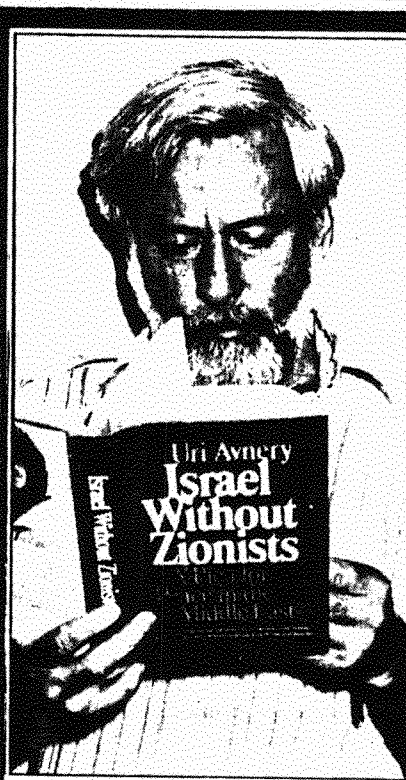
□ Before talking further about Weizmann and other potential Likud leaders, what is the state of the Labour Party?

○ The Labour Party was in a very sorry state after its tremendous election defeat — totally demoralised and disoriented. The first year after nothing happened to change this. There is no new leadership in the Labour Party at all. Nothing new is emerging there — not one new leadership personality has emerged since the defeat. There are no new groupings or realignments inside the Labour Party. Everyone has been totally demoralised, even ideologically.

There was no real criticism of Begin during this year. Some poked at Begin from the left, others from the right. As a matter of fact, the Labour Party has criticised Begin for being too eager to give Sinai to Sadat, for being too ready to give up the Jewish settlements in North Sinai. They've even criticised Begin's so-called "administrative autonomy" proposal for the West Bank as being dangerous because it might lead to a Palestinian state. It means they have tried to outflank Begin on the right, something absolutely ridiculous! And they are still continuing with this line. It shows the total disorientation of the party. They thought that the country had been shifting to the right and that they must shift to the right with it otherwise they'll lose even more.

□ But you've implied that Labour is improving now.

○ Yes, all this has been partly changed by the recent Kreisky initiative. Austrian Chancellor Kreisky brought Labour leader Shimon Peres to Vienna and got him to meet Sadat. And when Begin reacted the way he did the Labour Party became, to a certain extent, revitalised. It got a new confidence. Peres himself, who is a very shifty kind of fellow, suddenly sees himself in the role of an elder statesman, with a



"Ezer Weizmann is now the best choice for Prime Minister . . . I would say that he is perhaps the only one in Israeli Government circles who really grasped the historical significance of Sadat's visit . . ."

new political line. This concept of territorial compromise is nonsense by itself, but still looks more moderate than the Begin stand. It's nonsense because not one single Arab who I know would agree to what the Labour Party calls a territorial compromise. But it's not nonsense in the sense that this might be a step forward in getting negotiations going again.

□ You have just written a rather positive article about Ezer Weizmann for *Der Spiegel*. Why does someone like you who's known for advocating Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and creation of a Palestinian state hope for Weizmann to take over from Begin?

○ One has to start with the assumption that there's not going to be a revolution in Israel in the near future, that the programme of my party, Shelli, has no chance of becoming overnight the majority opinion in Israel. And therefore we are looking inside the existing establishment for the best choice there is.

Weizmann, to my mind, is now the best choice because he has undergone a transformation since the Sadat visit. I would say he is perhaps the only one in Israeli

government circles who really grasped the historical significance of Sadat's visit, who really understands the historical chance of achieving peace.

□ Which brings up the question what are Egypt's minimum goals, what is the bottom line for Egypt in making a settlement just supposing there was a Weizmann negotiating with Sadat?

○ Exactly nobody knows for sure. If Ezer Weizmann could make a separate peace with Egypt leaving the West Bank in Israeli hands he probably would. But if Weizmann comes to the opinion that the West Bank cannot remain in Israeli hands if he wants a peace with Egypt he will become flexible on the West Bank and look for solutions which, to his mind, safeguard Israeli security while not keeping the West Bank as Israeli territory.

This raises the question, what will Egypt really do, how far are they committed in not making a separate peace in practice as distinguished from theory and rhetoric? That they are looking for some statement of intentions in order to bring the West Bank theory into the framework of an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty is clear. The question is, is this enough, will they be satisfied with this or will they really want to make an Israeli-Egyptian peace conditional on a real solution for the West Bank and the Palestinians?

I hope they do, because, as an Israeli, I do not believe that a separate Israeli-Egyptian peace is valuable in the long term, or that it's in Israel's interests to have a separate peace. I believe that it's in the interests of Israel to utilise the present situation in order to get a general solution. In this I am a heretic in Israel because the general opinion is, of course, the opposite. It would be stupid for Israel, I think, to make a separate peace solving only one thing, because this one thing will not withstand the test of time if the conflict itself is not liquidated.

To put it in practical terms. Assuming for a minute that we do achieve a separate peace, but that the general turmoil in the Arab world continues, that the Palestinians remain the radicalising factor in the Arab world, that the Arab-Israeli conflict continues. Can one really believe that Egypt could stand outside this process, or do we have to believe that Egypt will be drawn into it sooner or late whether it wants it or not? Let's not forget that Egypt was drawn into the whole thing in 1948 against its wishes. All the pressures of the Arab world are operating on Egypt and in Egypt. This will happen again, even if not tomorrow. It will happen in five years or 10 years — the whole thing will start again.

□ Is there a solution short of a Palestinian state?

○ I don't think so. I think a Palestinian state is the solution. And I believe it's a good solution for Israel. This is heretical in Israel to most people, but by no means to all people including some in official circles.

□ That's interesting. Who in Israel is in favour of a Palestinian state assuming that you are able to find Palestinians to talk to and to work out security arrangements with?

○ Without mentioning names I know of two or three extremely important army officers — present and past. Some of the most important strategic thinkers believe that this is the best solution for Israel — that an independent Palestinian state which will have to safeguard its own independent interests will be bound to be an element for peace in the Middle East and an element for security.

□ I assume you are talking about negotiating for such a state with Fatah?

○ I mean a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip which I believe would have to be negotiated with the PLO, which means practically Arafat. And I believe that such a state will terminate the radicalisation process of the Palestinian people. Once they have achieved a minimum state in which they can live and solve their problems they will have an interest, like every people in the world, to safeguard their national institutions and their national identity. This will be a normalisation not only of the Palestinian people, but also a normalisation of Israel and a normalisation of the status quo in general.

□ How many Knesset members, not mentioning names, do you think could be brought to favour creation of a Palestinian state?

○ Depends when. Today, there has been such a demonology created around the PLO and the idea of a Palestinian state that very few people would be willing publicly to admit that they are in favour of it. Today you have only the five communist members and the two Shelli members. And there are a small number of people in Mapam and the Labour Party who would subscribe to this half-heartedly today. But when you speak with people seriously and privately you find that there are a much greater number of people who are open-minded about this, who say that if the PLO really changes its public stand it can make it possible for people in Israel to mention the PLO without immediately invoking the association of terrorism and the idea of the liquidation of Israel. Then they would be able to advocate a Palestinian state.

□ You were one of the Israelis that started meeting with the PLO in 1976. Lova Eliav was another and he now feels very negatively about Arafat's leadership of the PLO. He has even called him a "petty, little man". What do you think about Arafat and the present state of the PLO?

○ I started to have contact with the PLO long before this. I was in contact with the late Said Hammami in London from late 1974. And, of course, for me this was not the beginning of something, but the continuation of something, because I've been in favour of a Palestinian state since 1948. In the fifties I drew up and published a plan for a Palestinian state.

Now with all respect to my friend Lova, I don't think he's an expert on the Palestinian question. I think he doesn't realise the terms of reference of Yasser Arafat. Lova looks at it from the Israeli side only and thinks that if Arafat would have done this or that, he would have made our job

in Israel much easier. And he is understandably angry at Arafat for not doing these things. But if you look at things objectively, dispassionately, unemotionally, to think what is the situation of the Palestinian people, what is the situation of the PLO, what is the situation of Fatah inside the PLO and Arafat inside Fatah — if you take all these practical, political things into consideration you cannot really criticise Arafat. I think he's done a remarkable job as a person who has created some kind of Palestinian consensus in the most incredible circumstances. And he has further been up against the manoeuvrings of all the Arab states, each one of whom has promoted a different section of the Palestinian people in order to achieve different aims.

Holding things together is already a remarkable achievement. Surviving as the leader of this consensus for such a long time is a remarkable achievement too. And of course for the Palestinian people the consolidation of recognised and accepted

"I'm quite sure that even today, if you really could talk heart to heart with the 120 members of the Knesset . . . and everybody would do what a politician never does — candidly say what he really believes in — you have in this Knesset a dovish majority."

national institutions in the situation they are in is such an important and overwhelming thing that one has first of all to judge leadership in respect to this achievement.

□ What specifically should the PLO do?

○ The PLO will have to achieve a consensus which makes it possible for its leadership to say that whatever the historical circumstances were, whatever happened in this country, now it is a fact that there are two peoples, two nations, living in what used to be Palestine. Neither of these can remove the other and, therefore, both have to live with each other. They absolutely cannot live in the same state and therefore there has to be two states and therefore the national aspirations of the Palestinian people will have to be realised in the framework of an independent Palestinian national state in the West Bank and Gaza. Since this can only be achieved in agreement with Israel, direct contacts and peace negotiations will have to happen sooner or later. Therefore, if they criticise Sadat they should make it clear that they do not do so because he recognises the fact of Israel and wants to make peace, but because, as Palestinians, they may think that Sadat shouldn't have acted without the Palestinians.

The question, then, is could Sadat have acted with the Palestinians? They did not really make it possible for Sadat to start his negotiations with a Palestinian partner. So I think they must make clear in the most unequivocal terms that the historical

objective of preventing Israel from coming into being and then to destroy Israel has to be openly abandoned and a new objective adopted.

□ Two months ago in *Forum*, Hisham Sharabi outlined the possibility of such a two-stage historical compromise, but he insisted that the Zionist, racist attitudes in Israel would have to end before full peace is achieved. You're one of the few Israelis famous in the Arab world because your book, *Israel Without Zionists*, is on many Arab bookshelves. What are your feelings about Zionism today?

○ The term has lost its exact definition, no one quite knows when one says "I am a Zionist" or "I am an anti-Zionist" what it means. If Zionism means Israeli patriotism, or the belief in the continued existence of Israel I certainly am a Zionist.

□ As a Jewish state, a Jewish homeland, with the Law of Return and a special Jewish character?

○ A state which is as Jewish as France is French or Germany is German. Which doesn't mean that the Germans have a particular privilege in that state. Citizens must be equal, whatever their backgrounds. But as a state which more or less allows a nation to express its personality in their own state. I want Israel to exist — though I advocate many reforms including changes in the relationship between Arabs and Jews inside Israel — as a state, the majority of which is Jewish and, therefore, expresses a Jewish personality. This I am for and if this means Zionist I am a Zionist.

If Zionism means the belief that 15 million Jews will one day gather in Israel, I don't believe in it, I think it's obsolete.

□ What is your reaction to this statement by Hisham Sharabi? "If we are going to live together in other than a suspicious, hostile existence, Zionism has to go". Then I asked him, "Does a Jewish state stay?" And he added, "Yes, anything. I don't know how the operation, the excision, is going to take place and keep the body — whatever body — they want to keep, I want the racism out. Because this is the barrier between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East today."

○ I agree this is what many Arabs think. But this is an immensely complicated subject. Israel is a state born in unique circumstances, the outcome of a great historical movement with an ideology of some very good, and let's admit, some very bad points. Creating a state which has continued in war for more than 30 years now, can you say that there are inherent attitudes that cannot be changed? Or do you rather have to say that once you have peace most of these attitudes will disappear?

Not without a struggle, of course. But you must rely on us in Israel to fight our own battles and you must say that if you have a state of peace — if Palestinians and Israelis live together in two states, but in the same country with lots of relationships and daily contact — then people like myself will have a chance to fight for those reforms which we want to fight for and we have a far bigger chance to succeed.

I could say exactly the same about the

Palestinians by the way — I could say that we can never live together until the Palestinian people eradicate from themselves the terrorists and the ultra-chauvinistic elements — people whose slogan is the liquidation of Israel. I don't say this because I understand the Palestinians, as they are a result of their own historical experience. I'm sure once there is a Palestinian state living in peace, the existence of this state will change a lot of things in the Palestinian people putting an end to certain tendencies which have been the outcome of a state of war.

□ Let me shift to the US. How do you assess the Carter Administration's performance since the Sadat initiative?

○ Of course I can't help being extremely disappointed by the Carter Administration. Either they don't do what should be done, or if they decide to do it at long last they don't do it the way I think it should be done.

Of course one realises the domestic problems of the American Administration when one realises the pressures being exerted. Therefore, it's easy to understand why they don't do what they should do and why they are doing things which perhaps they should not do.

I believe it was wrong for Carter to celebrate Begin when he came over the first time and therefore Carter gave an enormous push to Begin at a time when the Israeli public was still doubtful about Begin and a little bit afraid that Begin's chauvinistic attitudes were going to cause damage to Israel.

□ Not to mention American Jewish attitudes?

○ Exactly. When Begin came back as the victor in triumph from America he got the power base which now enables him to reject American initiatives. I never quite understood why it was done unless they had the most curious misconceptions about Begin.

□ What has the US done wrong in the last year and a half?

○ I think everything. Absolutely everything. They should have made it quite clear what the American attitude is. They should have used American influence — and, of course, America has an enormous influence upon Israel — by keeping a very clear line: we want this, this is how we see the future, this is what American interests require.

□ Well, not everything. Carter came into office pursuing the policies outlined in the Brookings Report, advocating a "Palestinian homeland".

○ Same as with Nixon if I may mention the name. Nixon came to power. After a year or so there was the famous Rogers Plan — which was an extremely good plan. And then when there was a Jewish and Israeli opposition he just forgot about the whole thing.

Here came Carter. He said for the first time candidly things which had to be said about a Palestinian homeland. And then he said he didn't mean it all, that he meant something quite different. You can't command respect and really compel the



"I think Arafat has done a remarkable job as a person who has created some kind of Palestinian consensus in the most incredible circumstances."

Israeli public to treat America seriously if the American line changes every two days because some senator says something.

□ What about the joint statement with the Soviet Union on 1 October 1977? Was that not the right thing to do?

○ That was a curious thing, because, what did they do? They made a statement with the Soviet Union — which on the whole was a good statement. Then they immediately retreated by making a joint statement with Israel saying something quite different.

□ Well, they say there was a revolt against the US-USSR joint statement in the US.

○ OK. If you are a politician either you make an assessment before hand and say that this is a policy I can't conduct and therefore let's not announce it. But if you do announce a policy then you should be ready to sustain it and fight for it.

One thing the Americans have in common with the Palestinians, with the Arabs, is the tendency to think Israel is a monolithic thing, acting like one man who happens to be the prime minister at any given time. Perhaps they come to this conviction because they look at American Jews who

monolithically support — or used to anyway — any prime minister.

But if you believe a certain policy is good then your policy should be formed in such a way that you encourage the elements in Israel which are working for this kind of solution and discourage the kind of people working against your policies. What the Americans are doing, and also our Palestinian friends, is exactly the opposite.

□ What now in Israel? How do you now view Begin? You wrote a few months after Sadat's Jerusalem visit "The big question now is: What will Begin do if peace cannot be reconciled with his ideology? The fate of the Middle East... may well depend on the answer. It is a battle that will have to be fought in the heart and mind of Begin himself. On the one hand, the temptation to make peace is immense. If he achieves this, his name will be inscribed forever in the annals of Jewish history: Ben-Gurion created the State of Israel, Begin gave it peace. But equally great is his loyalty to the cause, the teachings of Jabotinsky, the land of Israel."

○ The question has had a final answer. Begin has not been able to change his historical objective for a newer, much more important one. Therefore we must now think how to remove Begin and what to do afterwards. This now is the big question.

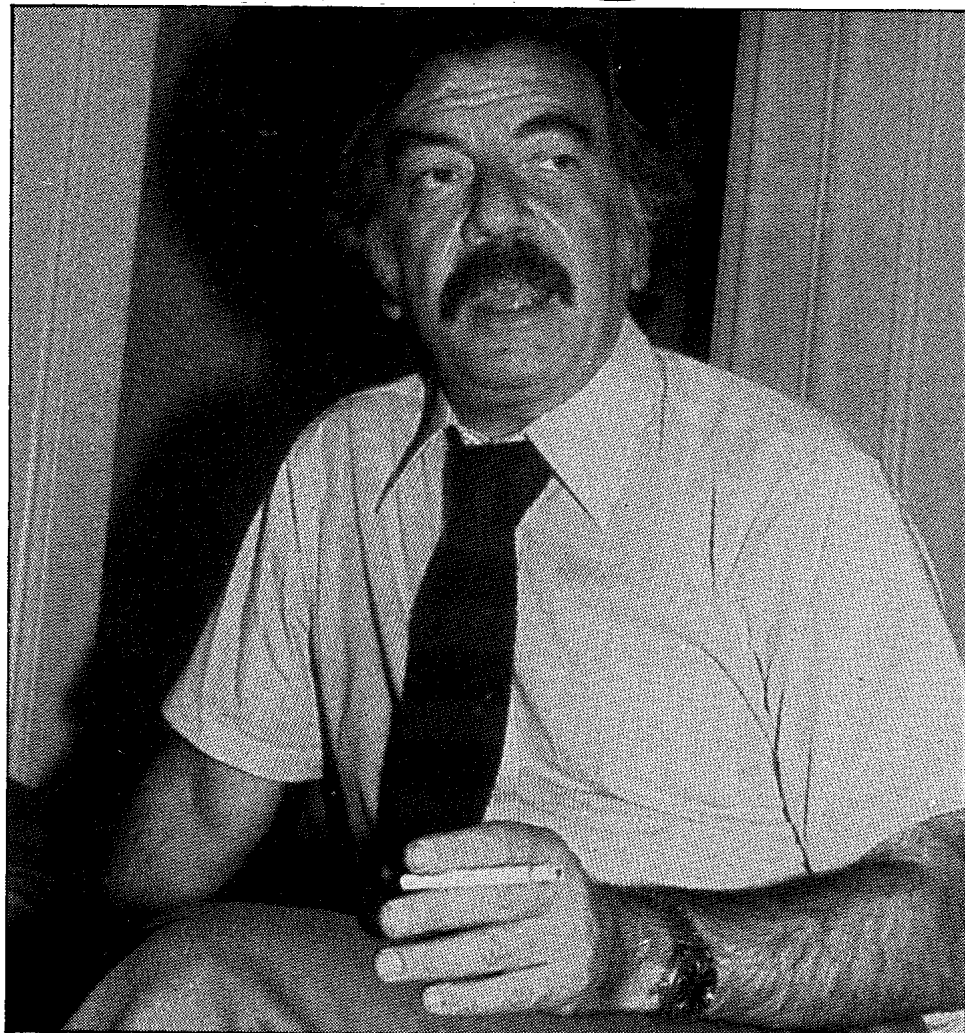
I'm rather sorry about this. I've always had a certain respect for Mr Begin. But I must draw the conclusion that he's not a big enough personality to adjust himself to a totally new historical situation, which is exactly what Ezer Weizmann has done — perhaps because he's younger, less dogmatic, because he's a military man and used to adapting himself to new circumstances.

There's absolutely no hope that Mr. Begin will change his opinion. He is now the great obstacle to movement towards peace and must be removed.

You quoted me about Begin. I would now change this quotation, enlarge on it. I said at that time that the decisive battle was being fought inside the mind of Menachem Begin. I would say now that the decisive battle is really being fought inside the mind of the Israeli people. The more that can be done to provide ammunition and reinforcements to the forces inside the Israeli mind willing to take the great leap into peace, into unknown territory, the more chances it will really happen.

I'm quite sure that even today, if you really could talk heart to heart with the 120 members of the Knesset and everybody would do what a politician never does — candidly say what he really believes in — you have in this Knesset a dovish majority. I have absolutely no doubt about it and I know all the 120 people quite well. There is a majority of 60-70 out of the 120 who ordinarily you would call doves. But they are dominated by a political structure which is commanded today by Begin. If you had an equally strong leadership by somebody else you wouldn't need new elections in Israel to have a different kind of government. □

FORUM



BEGIN'S TRIUMPH, CARTER'S AND SADAT'S GAMBLE

Eric Rouleau, Middle East Editor of *Le Monde*, was one of the keynote and summation speakers at the Middle East Institute's annual conference in Washington recently. Forum Editor Mark Bruzonsky discussed with him the reasons for and the meaning of the Camp David agreements.

Bruzonsky: What's the meaning in the large, historic context of the Arab-Israeli conflict of the Camp David agreement? How are we going to look back on Camp David? What does it mean?

Rouleau: Whatever the consequence of Camp David – whether it leads to an overall settlement or to no settlement and war – I think Camp David is a turning point. It's the very first time since the Balfour Declaration that a responsible Arab government is signing a peace agreement with Israel. It's also a turning point because the biggest Arab country is getting out of confrontation with Israel in spite of the opposition of the other Arab states and without a resolution of the Palestinian problem.

It could be an even more important event – a real watershed – if it does lead to a solution of the Palestinian problem.

□ **What does it mean for the US role in the Middle East?**

○ Camp David is a manifestation of the *pax Americana* which the US would like to conclude in the Middle East. It is also the proof that some Arab leaders have been saying – that the Americans have a decisive influence in Israel and therefore the moderate Arabs should turn to the US and abandon reliance on the Soviet Union – that this is wrong. The Americans have demonstrated that they do not have much more influence on Israel than say France or Europe or even the Soviet Union. In the eyes of many Arabs, Camp David is proof that Sadat's belief that the Americans have 99 per cent of the cards is not true.

□ **Is Camp David a triumph for Begin over Carter, especially in view of Carter's policies when he first came into office?**

○ I would say yes. Carter was against a separate peace because he realised it didn't serve American interests. The US came to the conclusion that a quick and overall peace was the goal because they thought, and they still think, that strife and conflict in the Middle East is a potential threat to their interests in the area. And they believed and still believe that never in the history of the conflict have the objective conditions been so favourable to an overall settlement.

□ **But now they risk the overall settlement for the separate peace.**

○ This is why it's a victory for Begin. Since 1967 I've heard from many Israelis that a separate peace with Egypt was possible and was their objective, their dream – to cut off Egypt. I remember in 1973 just after the October war I met General Bar-Lev and he told me, to my great surprise, that Israel had very strong indications that there was a good chance for a separate peace with Egypt. And I just could not believe him.

But my argument is, what is the use of a separate peace? Of course it reduces the possibility of pressure by the Arabs. But it's not leading to the kind of settlement which can be stable in the Middle East.

□ **So why did the Americans do it? If Carter believes that stability is so essential, he's now risking that stability?**

○ He's taking a big gamble. But I don't

think he had another way of doing it, for two reasons. His two guests, Begin and Sadat, having a confrontation under his own eyes, were of unequal strength. Begin came to Camp David saying it's not the last chance, we can still wait though we would like to reach an agreement. He really felt this, it wasn't just propaganda, because he was coming from a position of force. Begin wasn't threatened if Camp David failed. On the contrary he could go back and say to the Israelis that they were trying to force me into a settlement jeopardizing the security of the State of Israel. And few Israelis would have then turned against Begin.

The person who was really threatened by the collapse of Camp David was Sadat. He had promised his people that if his initiative failed he would resign. Failure would have put him in a very difficult position. And if he did not want to resign he could have put up a show by saying he was now going to try other means – in other words go back to the Arab fold, to the people he dislikes, Syria and the PLO and especially the allies of those people, the Soviet Union, for which Sadat has an allergy.

As a matter of fact, I think one of the reasons which took Sadat to Jerusalem in November was that he wanted to break up the possibly approaching Geneva conference where he was going to find the Soviets.

So Sadat was in a far weaker position than Begin. He had to get something out of Camp David. Sadat was coming without the support of the Arab world and taking an independent path, reduced his strength. Egypt's strength is not only because of its geography and demography but because Egypt traditionally has been the leader of the Arab world and had the support of at least parts of the Arab world in which the Western world has interests. Egypt, coming to Camp David without the Arab world supporting it explicitly, had been reduced to a minor power – important, but still minor. So that also made of Sadat a weak person.

Now, to come back to your question. Carter was having these two people facing each other and one of them was giving in to the other. He could not be more royalist than Sadat. He himself was also in a weak position because on one side he had the pressures of the domestic groups – who are unconditionally for the policies of Israel – and on the other he had Arabs who did not exercise enough pressure on him. Of course, the Americans perceived a potential threat from the Arabs. But that threat was not there, it wasn't real at the time.

These abstractions, I think, do reflect reality. And Carter maybe thought that for his own good – because his image in the US would improve and because he couldn't exercise any more pressure on Begin anyway and because maybe he thought why not, let's try it, even a separate peace might lead to a comprehensive settlement – for these reasons we have had Camp David.

Many people have talked about "Palestinian participation" and "Palestinian self-determination". The Egyptian ambassador has even referred to the "Palestinian nation". Is there any significant likelihood in your

view that out of the Camp David framework will eventually come a real Palestinian state? I know that there's always hope. But does it make any real political sense?

○ You are right. Hopes mean nothing. Hopes can be expressed on both sides and in contradictory directions.

Let's go back to the political basics. What gives momentum? Momentum doesn't come out of a written text like Camp David. Momentum comes from a push and a push comes from political forces. The Camp David agreement could evolve into a positive momentum – and by this I mean a solution to the Palestinian problem – or it could, on the contrary, be a momentum in the other direction, a step backwards. It all depends on the balance of power.

If the Arabs, to take a scenario, organise

"The Israelis are prepared to give back the Golan Heights to Syria on the same basis as Sinai to Egypt – in other words another separate peace and then leave the Palestinians to their fate."

themselves, unite, and exercise very strong pressures on the US, or if the Palestinians, as another example, would organise themselves and put real pressures on Israel – and pressures are not necessarily military, they could be political or economic or social or, for instance, a general strike in the West Bank – then the Camp David agreement would evolve into something else. It would no longer be Camp David, it would then be Camp David plus.

But you don't think there will be such strong, united Arab pressures, do you?

○ In the immediate future I don't think it can happen. Because, let us take the factors of pressure on the US and on Israel.

Saudi Arabia has condemned Camp David but has immediately, and in the very same communique, said it does not want to interfere in Sadat's getting Sinai back. This means Saudi Arabia will go on giving money to Sadat. The Saudis should be judged on their actions, not their words. And in this particular case there are just words of condemnation and real acts in the other direction. Also, Saudi Arabia has consistently in the past few years repeated it would not use oil as a political instrument. So we should exclude any pressure on the US of that nature.

Jordan also has an ambivalent position. Even Syria, although it has taken a very hard line in appearance, is keeping its channels of communications with the US. And we know the Israelis are prepared to give back the Golan Heights to Syria on the

same basis as Sinai to Egypt – in other words another separate peace and leave the Palestinians to their fate. I don't think Syria will go as far as this, it's impossible for many reasons. But anyway, Syria's position is really not a hard-line position.

Isn't there a potential for the Soviet Union to put its foot down?

○ Of course. This is the factor which hasn't been discussed very much and it's very important.

The Soviet Union, because it has lost a lot of its influence in the area, is thought by many people to be finished. But, it's not finished, it's still a factor in the Middle East. It's not only in Iraq, in Syria and in South Yemen. It is also everywhere else in the Middle East in forms which are not obvious or visible.

More important, the Russians are on the periphery of the Middle East. They have good influence in Afghanistan and in Ethiopia and maybe tomorrow in Iran, we don't know. It's not out of the game.

It's just being blind to say we can do it alone and without the Soviet Union. In fact, it was this US administration's point of view in the beginning that it would be a fatal mistake to exclude the Soviet Union. The opinion of this administration was to bring in the maximum of powers to guarantee a peace. But again, the US has given in to double pressure – not only Sadat who doesn't like the Russians, but also Begin. Carter seems to have departed from his path under pressure from his minute allies, small countries such as Egypt and Israel.

Carter has returned to the Kissinger approach hasn't he – by saying he will not deal with the PLO, by trying to keep the Soviets out and by accepting a step-by-step process!

○ I think so, yes.

So Henry is the real winner of Camp David?

○ Yes, you are right. The Camp David agreement is just an outgrowth of Kissinger's policies, a continuation of those Kissinger policies which were condemned by this administration. Yes, Camp David seems to go counter to what Carter has been saying about a settlement.

You have warned of the risks of Camp David saying we might regret what we have done. What are these dangers and risks?

○ If we have to look at the pessimistic side – and I don't say this will happen, but only that there are real risks – the following could happen:

1. The complete isolation of Sadat – what I call pushing Sadat into the ghetto, the same ghetto where Menahem Begin is. In other words, a man and a country could be burned and they could have played a very important role as go-between between Israel and the more hard-line Arab states. Sadat could have been much more useful to both the US and Israel if he remained in a middle-man position. His usefulness will be completely lost if he can't convince other states to come into the process. This is why I say Israel is being short-sighted. They think that cutting off Egypt is a good thing. But they should have preserved Egypt's

legitimacy in the Arab world. The consequences could be that Sadat's regime could destabilise and fall.

2. The second risk is that of division of the Arab world into two camps. As you know it was decided at the Damascus "steadfastness" conference practically to create another Arab League outside of Cairo. Let us suppose they are able to do it – thus creating two Arab Leagues. When you divide the Arab world, you make a settlement with Israel much more difficult. Because you create a polarised situation where overbidding and exaggeration are the rule as you have to demonstrate that you're a better Arab than the next. We knew a period like this in the 1960s. When you polarise, in other words, you invite the big powers into a struggle which would look very much like the cold war. So, by doing this, you are substituting from a situation in which the big powers throughout the Arab world were agreeing in principle to make peace with Israel and conclude peace treaties to a new situation in which you have two Arab worlds – one so-called hard-line linked with the Soviet Union and the other so-called moderate linked with the US. So you are postponing peace and opening the way for strife and possibly military conflict. If this does happen then it would be preferable to have had no Camp David.

□ If you were Yasser Arafat, responsible for making decisions fateful for the Palestinian people, how would you react to Camp David?

○ Well, nothing is offered to Yasser Arafat as a PLO leader, except, there's one thing in which he can play a role – the elections.

Now if, and I say if, those elections are completely free, then I believe it is a basic right of anybody, whether PLO or not, to play the game of the elections. This is not just an abstract democratic right. It is a way of making the voice of your own people heard to the whole world.

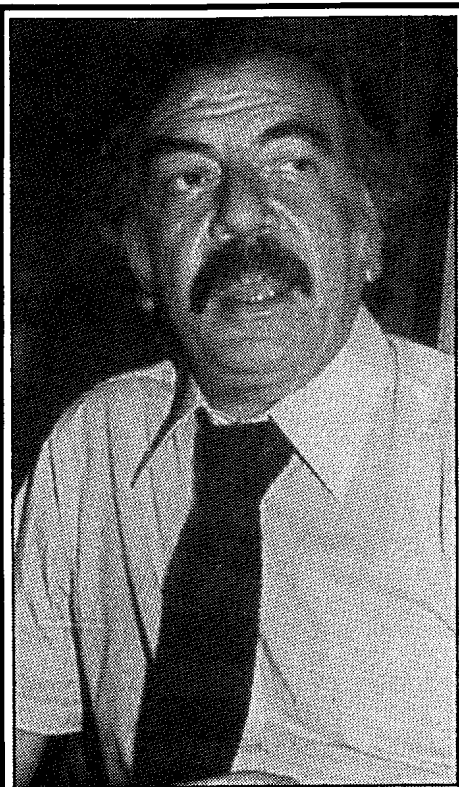
In this way elected persons might be able to stand up and say they are for an independent state. And saying this would be a victory for those like Yasser Arafat who believe that this is the only solution.

□ Does Begin intend to maintain Israeli settlement rights and land purchase rights in perpetuity?

○ Of course he will try. His whole life has been based on that. There was even an exchange of letters with Carter to dispute terminology, Begin saying the West Bank means Judea and Samaria. This made me laugh. If they can't even agree on the name of the West Bank it shows how deep the conflict is. Begin is so adamant about it he even got Sadat to use the term Judea and Samaria back at Ismailiya last Christmas.

So, Begin will try to keep Judea and Samaria Jewish, not just settlements. He may also try to bring back what he suggested publicly in December – his plan which contains the idea that the territories will never be given back to the Arabs but the inhabitants will chose a nationality, some Jordanian and some Israeli.

□ About the settlements. Has Camp David superceded 242 in the following way – not legally but politically? Before Camp David Israeli settlements were



"Carter maybe thought that for his own good . . . even a separate peace might lead to a comprehensive settlement . . ."

not only illegal, but the terms of 242 implied withdrawal of settlements along with withdrawal from territories. After Camp David, we have only discussion of future settlements and no discussion of present settlements which implies de facto acceptance.

○ Not a definitive one. The great success of Begin at Camp David is to have obtained acceptance of the settlements for another five years at least. What the Americans and the whole world were asking before was to get the settlements out right away. Today there is a kind of legitimacy given to Mr Begin's policies. In a way this has neutralised the 242 resolution, creating a new legal framework superceding 242.

□ Even though it would be denied because 242 is mentioned in the Camp David formula. It's not a legal change, but a political change?

○ It's more. It's a legal change for at least five years. Nobody is going to ask Begin now to take away those settlements for five years at least.

Suppose that Begin agrees to freeze new settlements, which is the maximum that he

can accept. Then the trade-off is no new settlements and for those there nothing more will be said.

And if negotiations don't succeed in five years then things remain as they are. And maybe they'll expand the settlements to 30,000 from today's less than 10,000 settlers. This will make it more difficult to reach a settlement.

□ What about Jordan? Do you conceive of any circumstances under which the Camp David agreements can be modified with Israeli approval so that King Hussain would take the risk of joining the negotiations?

○ First, there is no unanimity within Jordan to get back the West Bank. Crown Prince Hassan and others are telling the King to forget about the West Bank, that it will be a source of trouble and that Jordan is doing okay now. Let the Palestinians be Israel's neighbour they argue.

The King himself though is interested in the West Bank but he's being very cautious. The King cannot look as if he's selling out Palestinian rights. He can still envisage himself at the head of a unified Jordanian kingdom if he can get the minimum of what the Palestinians are demanding today. But you can't ask him to go against both members of his family and parts of the Arab world and then give him half of the West Bank as the Labour Party wanted to do and no East Jerusalem!

At this point, it is certain that he doesn't want to risk too much.

□ What's your judgement if the Americans do decide to take Begin on about the settlements issue?

○ Well, it seems now that many people do consider this issue of a freeze on settlements and especially the right of any West Bank autonomous government to have a right of veto over settlements as the crucial test for Carter.

Let me tell you a story which I hold as authentic and which came from very good sources.

At Camp David when Sadat called his Foreign Minister, Mr Kamel, to say that he was going to agree, Kamel protested. He said that this is the very agreement we've refused for 12 days so why are we accepting it today?

Mr Sadat's answer was, well, we have to help President Carter who's been so good to us and anyway he's given me his word of honour that he will stand on our side and press Begin into making more concessions leading to a solution in the West Bank and Gaza. And Kamel's answer was that however good the President of the United States and however much we like him, we cannot base the policy of the state of Egypt and our future on the basis of the word of one man, or trust in one man. And he resigned.

In other words, I want to say, if Mr Carter cannot get his own way on a freeze on settlements, the whole basis on which Mr Sadat agreed to sign the accord is collapsing. If he can't get this, how can he get anything else for Sadat or the Palestinians or the Jordanians or whoever it is. So it's considered a test case both by Sadat and Hussain and probably by the Saudis and other Arabs. □

Alghanistan 50 AF/Algeria 5 D/Bahrain 500 Fu/Canada 1755/Cyprus 400 Ms/Egypt 50 Ps/Ethiopia 25
Eth. 5/France 750 FF/Israel 100 Ru/Iraq 300 Fu/Italy 1000L/Jordan 400 Fu/Kuwait 400 Fu/Lebanon 4 LL/
Libya 300 Ms/Malta 35 c/Morocco 5 D/Nigeria 75 K/Oman 500 Bs/Pakistan 8 Rps/Qatar 5 R/Saudi
Arabia 5 R/Somalia 8/-/Sudan 40 Ps/Syria 4 SL/Tunisia 500 Ms/Turkey 25 TL/UAE 5 D/UK 50 p/
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THE MIDDLE EAST

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PLUS
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Palestine's men
speak out

FROM MOGULS TO MULLAHS



Iran's
new face

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FORUM



Ambassador Dean Brown has had a long career in Middle

East affairs so he is in a position to pick holes in Jimmy Carter's policies in the region. Brown tells *Mark Bruzonsky* just where he thinks the US President has gone wrong. Page 81

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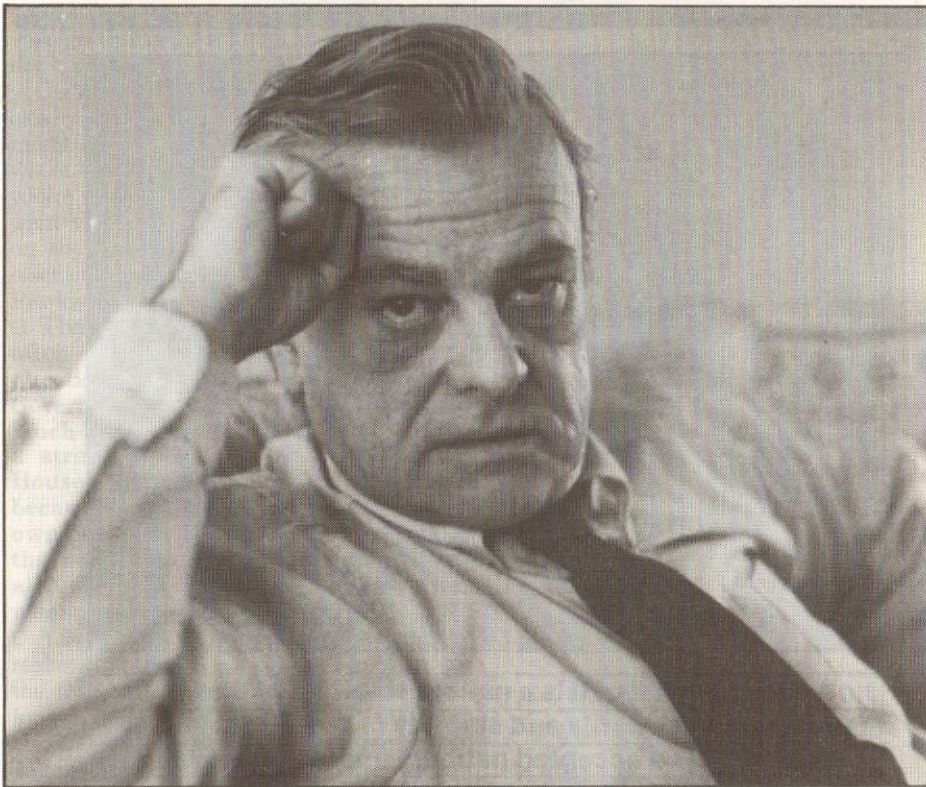
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FORUM

AMBASSADOR DEAN BROWN



"It's as if the last man in the room is the one that has the most influence" on US President Carter, laments the President of Washington's Middle East Institute, Ambassador L. Dean Brown.

In a foreign service career spanning 30 years, Ambassador Brown has observed and participated in American foreign policy throughout the zigs and zags of the Arab-Israeli dispute. He arrived in Jordan as Ambassador just before the 1970 civil war and served throughout the October War. Then he returned to Washington as Deputy Under Secretary of State for Management before retiring in 1975 to head the Middle East Institute. During the past few years Brown has continued to serve the US Government in a variety of capacities. Under President Ford he was director of the interagency task force for Indochina and later special presidential envoy to Lebanon.

In this wide-ranging interview with Mark Bruzonsky, Brown predicts that the Saudis will reassess their whole relationship with the US.

Carter's M.E. policy: trial and error

Bruzonsky: Two years ago Jimmy Carter came to the Presidency, apparently with the right instincts about the Arab-Israeli quagmire. But now we have at best a separate peace with little hope for more. How does one explain what's happened to the Carter Presidency?

Brown: I think Carter was full of surprises to us. I think we should step back a little further and take a look at the campaign.

In the campaign Carter repeated a lot of the slogans and rhetoric of Democratic candidates running for President over the years. You remember him proclaiming that if elected he would move the embassy to Jerusalem immediately and a whole series of things like that which led everybody acquainted with the Middle East to sort of

throw up their hands and say, "Oh my God, we have to go through this whole educational process all over again".

And then somehow during his first few months in office a series of rather odd speeches came out where the code words were used in slightly different ways than they had been used in the past.

He'd talk one day about secure boundaries and everybody would say, "Oh my God, we've been trapped in something or another", but the way he'd say it would be slightly different than said before. And then he finally got to talking about the Palestinians - "homeland", "entity", "rights", and then in the Joint Statement with the Soviet Union, "legitimate rights".

□ Which went beyond the former American position of "Palestinian in-

terests" to a homeland.

○ It went to the point where people could say he stands for the creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza. That was that spring; then there were some serious, curious things that happened. When the Arabs all came here - Fahd, Hussain, Sadat - all of them went away convinced that Carter was really going to cope with the entire Middle East problem, including the question of a Palestinian state.

But something happened over the summer. Because you got one flair of this attempt to cope, the Soviet-American communique, but other than that, nothing.

Somehow over the summer people began to have a different analysis of Carter. And I still don't know what happened to Carter's plans.

☐ **That's the period when the dialogue with the PLO that was just beginning, ended.**

○ Everything, of course, was affected by the Begin election and visit. In other words I think maybe Carter's ideas of what he would be able to do with the Israelis were put off the track.

☐ **Don't you think the Joint Statement symbolises where Carter finally learned that the power of the Presidency was extremely limited? Wasn't that the break point?**

○ I'm not sure. I suspect the break point came somewhere in the summer before that.

☐ **Brzezinski was still trying?**

○ Yes, Brzezinski probably thought: well, let's try it this way to see if we can shake things a little bit loose since things have been going to pieces. Remember before that you were essentially moving rapidly towards Geneva. What kind of Geneva? A Geneva without a plan or agenda, where the United States would be just one of the public participants but not a leader. Carter seemed to believe that if you can only get people in a room together somehow or other there will have to be progress cause that's the way human beings behave.

☐ **Are you suggesting that Carter has been a trial and error President engaged in on-the-job training when it comes to the Middle East?**

○ I think so, very much so... I always thought he thought that sweet reason would be accepted by other people.

☐ **You're smiling as you say this. He is the President of the United States.**

○ He is, that's right. And he had and I think he still has traces of the idea that somehow since he's a good man, an honest man, people should understand. A lot of other people think like that that are leaders, as we know.

You might say that part of the problem was the fact there was a deliberate policy in the beginning to understaff the National Security Council. That is to say they didn't want to replicate Henry Kissinger. I think you've noticed they've sort of added a couple of people since.

☐ **Who does Carter have around him whom he could really go to when the going gets rough and talk about the problems the United States has with the Arab-Israeli conflict?**

○ He doesn't have anyone. One of the things that has always struck me about the President, and I think this is reflected in some of the odd statements we've seen coming out of the President at different times, it's sort of as if the last man in the room is the one that has the most influence. And usually the last man in the room is a Jody Powell or a Hamilton Jordan or somebody like that who is talking to him about domestic things - how to make it look good domestically, what will sell, as they

used to say in Nixon's days, in Peoria.

And this is not the way to deal with foreign policy issues, as we know. By implication, Carter believes that all people in the intimate staff have equal access and equal right to discuss all subjects, and by implication, equal expertise. Which isn't the case.

That's where I think he's lost out and that's why we get some of these very odd statements where he really went bad historically because somebody threw a wrong fact.

☐ **Right after Camp David you in-**

possibility of even doing that type of consultation they need with their people if they're going to make a major policy statement that is in complete variance with what they've been saying before.

I think that there was a window or a door that was slightly open. I still think it's true that the Arab leaders didn't have to be negative.

☐ **But didn't Carter lose his credibility shortly after Camp David when he got into this debate with Begin about the settlement moratorium?**

○ Well, this is true...



"We may think that it is a national interest of the US to preserve the security and stability of Israel. But I don't know if it is an accepted national interest of Israel to enhance the security and well-being of the US"

indicated you thought the Saudis and King Hussain would be restrained, would ask for time but would not be overtly negative. Why were you wrong?

○ I'd hoped they'd be more positive. I wanted them to be positive. And I suppose that probably affected that judgement. Looking back we can see that what we didn't do is give them the time they needed to work out the type of consensus they need when they're making major policy decisions.

☐ **Did the US actually give them sufficient policy?**

○ No, we didn't. But the main point is we didn't give them time. What we did was confront them with the Vance visit too quickly. And the Vance visit required them to say something because Vance was saying things in the plane before he landed - such as "The King owes us this one". And then this confronted both Kings with the im-

○ And within a few days the Prime Minister of Israel effectively called the President of the United States a liar, and the President of the United States gave in and no letter exchange ever took place about the settlements?

○ And that's when the door closed in a sense, because that confronted the Arabs and the Palestinians with an impossible situation. What they were doing is, I think, hoping against hope that somehow the relationship of Sadat with Carter would reopen that window, that Carter would lay it out on the line.

☐ **Do you think Carter should have stood up to the Israelis then?**

○ Yes.

☐ **And that would have made a difference?**

○ I think it could have made a difference.

☐ **Do you think there's any way, as the**

Camp David thing has evolved, that the Jordanians can reverse their attitude and participate in this process?

○ No, no. There's nothing for them. Not without something new. I mean if we're just relying on Camp David they're not going to take part.

□ Well, there's not much chance, in a pre-election period, that the Israelis are going to give more to Carter now than they've given him so far, is there?

○ I doubt it very much. Unless Carter wants to lay it all on the line, for the first time, clearly and explicitly to the American people what he considers the problem and what he thinks the solution should be. And I don't know if he's going to do this.

Certain people who are involved and closely wrapped up in the Middle East might suggest this. Others who look at the whole mass of problems tell him, "Since you're not going to get too far with it, if you want your SALT you may have to give up on the Middle East". This is one of the essential types of compromises that Presidents make.

□ That raises a problem which is not often discussed in the press – the question of whether the American Government is effectively penetrated so much by the Israelis that evolving such a strategy on the part of the White House becomes hampered simply because you can't even count on your own people in the bureaucracies to keep the secret, that the Israelis find out about it fast enough to take counter measures.

○ Yes, there is a problem here. The Israelis realise that the US is a key issue to them, so the task of the Israeli foreign service is to know as intimately as possible what the currents of thinking are in the US. and the Israelis are very good at anticipating where America is going and when it is necessary to get an ambassador in or have a telephone call made. This isn't just on foreign affairs but on economic matters as well. They are pretty tough and dedicated in preserving their national interest.

There's a confusion in people's minds about national interest and I think the President suffers from this. I think he suffered from it in dealing with both Sadat and Begin. He assumes that what he considers the global interests of the world, which are essentially those that are also the interests of the US, are shared by all other people.

But I don't think that's necessarily so. We may think for instance that it is a national interest of the US to preserve the security and stability of the State of Israel. But I don't know if it is an accepted national interest of Israel to enhance the security and well-being of the US. Certainly it is not if that adversely affects, in any way, the security and prosperity and well-being of the State of Israel.

□ You suggested it was difficult to see how the Camp David agreement necessarily furthered American national interests. I would assume that as Camp David unravels you would have an even more gloomy assessment.

○ Very much so. The attitude taken by Senator Church is a perfect example of what happens as all this starts to unravel. The fault somehow becomes that of the Saudis and we should take their airplanes away from them. A very interesting concept, a naked power play that Senator Church would oppose for any other part of the world.



"Carter believes that all people in the intimate staff have . . . equal expertise. Which isn't the case."

□ Is it possible that with people like Senator Church beginning to try to drive a wedge between the US and Saudi Arabia, the Saudis are going to get upset and back off from the US?

○ Yes, I think it is. I think the Saudis will be reassessing their whole relationship with the United States, and I think they're doing it right now.

I think now with the collapse of Iran, with the likely dissolution of the whole Camp David process, and their interests in Jerusalem and in somehow taking care of the Palestinian problem, they seem to be getting uneasy about whether this is the US they had thought it was.

It's a good question to ask because we're not the self-confident nation, the almost aggressive nation in trying to reform and change the world that we were in the decades right after World War II.

□ When it comes to Egypt, is the US creating a situation where a year or two from now its promises aren't going to be delivered either economically or politically, and Sadat is going to be way out in a corner?

○ I'm not sure that we can or will give Sadat all he'll probably need. I remember briefing congressional staff aides before they made a trip to the Middle East, who brought up this point – "Why can't we just pick up the bill and take care of Sadat". And I said "Just pass authorisation for \$25 billion for five years." They said, "That's ridiculous", and I said, "That's the point".

If you're going to cut Sadat off from other sources of aid, you're going to have to provide this kind of money on a long term basis. And if he signs this agreement now with nothing further on the second framework, even the Saudis will carry out what was agreed in Baghdad, cutting off all economic assistance to Egypt.

And I don't think we'll match it. I don't think we can do it any more. I think that the President of the US simply could not sell this to Congress at this time, even if it made sense.

□ The pressure on Hussain, I understand, has been quite extreme. I've heard conversations where the King is reported to have told the Americans he'd rather give up his throne and die than be the Arab leader that gave up Jerusalem.

○ I think that's exactly right. King Hussain to this day resents Camp David. The fact that Jordan was mentioned without a telephone call or a consultation with him of any kind.

□ What are the Americans going to say to him now? If Vance is ordered by the President to try to save Camp David he's got to come up with something.

○ That's right, and what can he do? Is he going to threaten? If he wants to threaten the King, I think the King will only respond, "I cannot accept these threats".

□ It's a pretty hollow bluff on the American part isn't it?

○ Well, I think it's a hollow bluff now because whereas at one time we were the major provider of aid to Jordan, we're no longer there, we're just one of the providers. And actually the major amounts of money and certainly the freer kind of money is coming from the Arab states. And King Hussain is now in the process of reinvolving himself in the Arab nation.

□ Camp David looks like the place where the US, in order to put off troubles with the Israelis, risked its relations with the moderate Arabs and brought about an alliance between Syria and Iraq.

○ Involving, by the way, Jordan, because Jordan has very definite links with Syria.

□ Plus a rapprochement between the

PLO and Jordan and the alienation, at least to some extent, of Jordan and Saudi Arabia. The US has risked everything that it has worked for for the last couple of decades in the Middle East for the sake of not pushing the Israelis in a way which broad segments of the US intellectual community, ever since the Brookings Report, have said should be done.

○ Exactly. And when we talk about the alienation of Jordan and Saudi Arabia, what we've done is silence their voices within the Arab circles speaking the moderate, the pro-American course of action. When they say something it seems to be a fainter echo of what's being said by the tougher ones, the Iraqis, the Algerians, the Syrians. So we can even say the US has recreated the left in Lebanon. You have noticed the Shiites and the Palestinians are now back together after having been sharply divided for some time.

□ **Three or four months ago, President Carter asked George Ball to draw up a long term view of what American policy should be toward the Gulf. Supposing he turned to you, what would you tell him?**

○ I'd tell him to get George Ball's report out and read it again, whatever waste basket it's in. I'd say read that again and let me know what you think about it, and if you and Brzezinski still think as you thought about it at the time, then no thanks, I don't want the job.

□ **How would you differ from the Brookings Report? Or would you basically tell Carter that's still the framework America should be operating on?**

○ I think I'd still do that. I think I would spell out a little bit more than the Brookings Report did about interim steps to be taken. The more I think about it, the less I want to see a quick transition, a quick and dirty transition, to a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza. I want a series of time gaps, but not ones which allow the Israelis on one side or the PLO or the Iraqis to say "Halt". I want some sort of involvement perhaps of the Security Council or some kind of international group.

□ **You want an image of where it's going but then to do it in a step-by-step way.**

○ In a step-by-step way with a certain checking at each step but no great veto powers built in to stop it from moving to the next step.

□ **What would you tell the President about the Palestinian problem and about the Americans dealing with the PLO?**

○ I would say that what we should basically be doing is going to the Palestinians and saying, "We are willing to deal with Palestinians. Would you create a mechanism that has more representivity

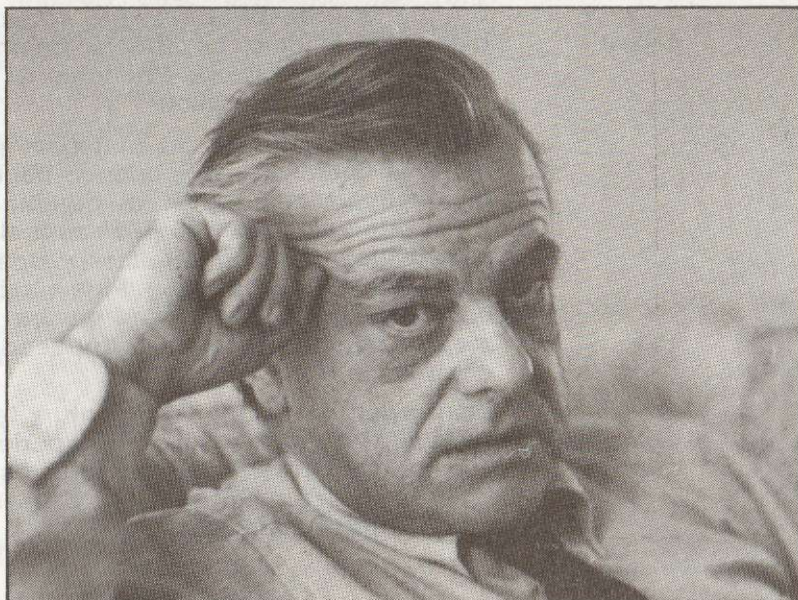
than the PLO"?

□ **Carter thought at Camp David that he could get around dealing with the PLO.**

○ Well, one of the great problems of Camp David's West Bank framework is that it talks about the inhabitants in the area. In other words, it says that what we're talking about is those Palestinians who are presently living in the West Bank, we're not talking about the million in Jordan, the 400,000 in Lebanon, all these people who have to be involved sometime in the Palestinian state. One reason I want a time mechanism is that

recommend that the Palestinians create a more representative body. In reality the PLO is clearly representative.

○ For public relations reasons. We are stuck ourselves. Even the American people, sympathetic as they are in general towards the Palestinians as people, have no patience with the PLO. The PLO by being both a political and military and then guerrilla organisation in the minds of the American people has identified itself more with the latter two things and more particularly with the third. And I'd like to see the PNC take



"I'd like to see the PNC take some of these Palestinians who exist throughout the Arab world, including some here in the US, and get them into an organisation which can think more along political terms and present a different image."

I want the people in the West Bank and Gaza to be voting eventually. But I first want time for them to decide who's going to be living in the West Bank and Gaza. I don't think you can run a vote where Palestinians who are living anywhere can vote.

□ **But what about those in southern Lebanon or Syria?**

○ Well, they may make the decision to go back.

□ **Before the vote?**

○ Before the vote. In other words there has to be a time period where people can decide where they're going to live and people can't make that decision overnight. If the gates were open to Palestine, huge mobs of people would be in there and then huge mobs of people would be leaving fairly soon.

□ **Let's go back to that Palestinian question. Why is it that you would**

some of these Palestinians who exist throughout the Arab world, including some here in the United States, and get them into an organisation which can think more along political terms, strategic terms, and present a different image.

□ **It's March 1979. Carter has only a few more months before he's really running almost full-time for President again. So in that context doesn't the Middle East situation really get put on hold until 1981?**

○ If so, it could be disastrous. I don't think it can hold for ever. Now what does that mean? I don't think it means wars or anything like that; I think the possibility of war can never be dismissed, but in the foreseeable future it would be accidental, more than anything else. Unless it becomes pre-emptive. □

Izzy and the Other Zionism

Mark Bruzonsky

Shortly after Camp David, *The New York Review of Books* blessed the Egyptian-Israeli deal Jimmy Carter had stumbled on. I.F. (Izzy) Stone's by-line heralding Camp David as "The Hope" neutralized legions of skeptics. "This is the beginning of peace between Israel and the Arabs and that is a prime event of history," Izzy proclaimed.

That issue of *NYRB* arrived just as I was leaving for London, and I took it along on the flight. I was impressed, though not fully convinced, by Izzy's enlightened prophecy. I had just written for *Worldview* my own rather restrained judgment that "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."

But Isidor F. Stone, like few American writers, has earned the right to have his opinions given considerable weight. And thus my own partly cynical reaction to the Carter "accomplishment" had been shaken by Izzy's conversion from biting critic to applauder. The next day, dining with an Israeli friend who works at London's Institute for Strategic Studies, I was doubly impressed because Stone's epistle had already been read and accepted there.

Rumor has it that Izzy is somewhat chastened now, many months later and into a new year. Even his earlier awareness that "We are heading into a kind of planetary wrestling match, replete with the most frightful grimaces, exquisite howls, agony, and sudden eye-gouges between, among and within all the far-flung capitals involved" apparently had not prepared him for the uncertainty that still surrounds the "process" inaugurated in September—and which will continue even if the Egyptian-Israeli arrangement is soon implemented.

Whether Camp David in retrospect will again be seen as initiating "a prime event of history," Izzy Stone's contemporary comments are undergirded by the length,

depth, and compassion of his involvement in the Arab-Israeli quagmire for over a generation.

It all began for him in the rubble of devastated Europe and with the remnants of his own people's rebirth from the ghastly horrors that European civilization had unleashed. Stone dedicated his 1946 book describing the Jewish exodus from Europe—"the greatest in the history of the Jewish people, greater than the migrations of the past out of Egypt and Spain"—"To Those Anonymous Heros the *Shelikhim* of the Haganah," who shepherded the DPs ("displaced persons," for those who have forgotten that sanitizing term) on their illegal and often incredible journey to British-controlled Palestine.

He opened the book with a Jewish ex-partisan's simple truth: "The Germans killed us. The British don't let us live." And he explained in a personal note: "I did not go to join them as a tourist in search of the picturesque, nor even as a newspaperman merely in search of a good story, but as a kinsman, fulfilling a moral obligation to my brothers. I wanted in my own way, as a journalist, to provide a picture of their trials and their aspirations in the hope that good people, Jewish and non-Jewish, might be moved to help them." He then added: "The plight of the Jews may be a minor affair, but world indifference to that plight is of spiritual significance for the future of us all."

Stone was the first reporter to travel with the illegal Jewish emigrants running the British blockade into Palestine. His *Underground to Palestine*, now republished after thirty-two years, can still bring tears as he passionately describes individuals caught up in historical whirlwinds, seeking life and hope in a promised land few had ever seen or even contemplated (*Underground to Palestine and Reflections Thirty Years Later* [Pantheon; 206 pp.; \$10.00/\$3.95]). Stone describes, for instance, a young girl on the boat he eventually joined on its fateful journey from Italy to Palestine. She was part of the "nationalist awakening which was sending these youngsters to a new and difficult country in a kind of fierce, proud reaction to the events of the Hitler period." "I never was a Jew before the war," she stoically told Stone. "But now that six million Jews have been

killed, I will be a Jew too,' she said with an air of cheerfully stubborn defiance."

And he recalls his conversation with the Jewish "Red Army" major: "I'm a communist. I'm not a Zionist," the major insisted. "But we must support the building of Palestine. For many Jews in Eastern Europe west of the Soviet border there is no other way."

Stone's enduring capture of the human dimensions of the Jewish national rebirth must be read by anyone who wants to understand Israel's origins or to probe Israel's often irritatingly defiant attitudes. But it is Stone's political insights, then and now, his provocative ideas about Zionism and about the seemingly intractable Palestinian issue, that merit special attention.

Three decades ago Stone was one of the few to recognize that the "British are not playing a pro-Arab game. I have heard the amused contempt with which British officials in Cairo react to talk of Arab aspirations." Rather, "the British are trying to build an alliance with the Moslem upper classes in the Middle East against the Soviet Union, and also against France and the United States. They want to keep the whole area under their control and they are prepared to sacrifice not only the Jews but the Christian minorities of the East in the program." In 1917 there were worldwide reasons for the Balfour Declaration. By 1946 there were overriding regional reasons for the British to clamp down on the Jews and attempt to subordinate Arab aspirations.

There was, largely for this reason, a potential alliance between Jewish and Arab nationalists against British hegemony—which partially explains why the left wing of the Zionist movement (including Stone) advocated a bi-national, Arab-Jewish state encompassing Palestine as well as Transjordan. But this possibility faded as class rivalries succumbed to a combination of religious and nationalist chauvinism on both sides, and as traditional British divide-and-conquer tactics prevailed.

Nevertheless, British designs soon crumbled as the Empire found itself floundering to retain even a modicum of influence in the area. After toying with a brutally repressive policy, it appears Whitehall decided on a strategy of tactical withdrawal, hoping that the ensuing chaos might propel British power back under a United Nations shield. As Stone revealed then:

When I was in Jerusalem, I was told by one of the best informed sources in the Middle East that the British military had drawn up a three-part plan which was to culminate—if sufficient excuse could be found—in an offensive operation designed to smash Jewish settlements and cities. One high British military official told a Jewish leader frankly—I assure the reader this is not just gossip—"The world took the killing of six million Jews and if we have to destroy half of Tel Aviv, the world will take that too."

It was within this atmosphere and with an awareness of the grim possibilities that Izzy Stone took leave of journalism and became an advocate, took leave of impartiality and supported his people.

"I found myself reacting like a DP," Stone admitted. "I hope I may be pardoned if . . . I speak as one of them." He then concluded his book with the following plea:

I believe that full support of the so-called illegal immigration is a moral obligation for world Jewry and a Christian duty for its friends. I believe that the only hope lies in filling the waters of Palestine with so many illegal boats that the pressure on the British and the conscience of the world becomes unbearable.

And if those ships are illegal, so was the Boston Tea Party.

Yet Stone's personal identification with Jewish suffering, and the fact that his book was influential in promoting the Zionist cause, did not earn him a secure position in American Jewish circles. Within a few years, and ever since, Izzy Stone has been something of a pariah. In a sense the second part of Stone's republished book—"Reflections and Meditations Thirty Years After"—is Izzy's self-defense as well as his counterattack.

Stone committed two basic sins as far as American Jewry is concerned. First, he refused to buckle under to a newly imposed party-like "discipline" that organized American Jewry instituted as a reaction to its impotence during the Thirties. And second, he always maintained that whatever the pluses and minuses of Zionism, the interests of the Arab population of Palestine were also an important Jewish concern.

Part two of the new edition of *Underground to Palestine* consists of two short essays that many readers will already have seen in *Harper's* and in *The New York Review of Books*. In the first essay, "Confessions of a Jewish Dissident," Stone lambastes the American Jewish establishment. "Despite all these credentials," he notes after listing his Jewish ties, including a Haganah medal, "I find myself—like many fellow American intellectuals, Jewish and non-Jewish—ostracized whenever I try to speak up on the Middle East."

Stone's original sin was committed in a single sentence in his book. After suggesting that "In a sane and orderly world, the U.S.A., USSR, France and Britain would join in an international development scheme for the Middle East and in a context of rising living standards provide ample room for the Jews in Palestine," he suggested: "I myself would like to see a bi-national Arab-Jewish state made of Palestine and Transjordan, the whole to be part of a Middle Eastern Semitic Federation."

Though later his name was specifically associated with the Palestinian cause and later still with the notion of a Palestinian as well as a Jewish state in historic Palestine, in 1946 Stone made no further comment on these issues. But when the book was published and friends from the Zionist movement approached Izzy about an advertising campaign, he put his foot down on their polite insistence that the offending sentence disappear. Recalling the experience half a lifetime later, Stone notes: "That ended the luncheon, and in a way, the book. It was in effect boycotted."

Since then the name I.F. Stone has been harshly treated in American Jewish circles. Izzy has been unjustly vilified as a "self-hating Jew" and an anti-Zionist, neither of which his friends have ever known him to be. On the contrary, Izzy Stone has been and remains a fine Jew as well as a dedicated humanist. Beyond that he's a rare erudite gentleman (though admittedly one who does get knotty at times) who understands and accepts the central contradiction in modern Jewish life: that there are now two competing and yet cooperating centers of modern Jewish existence—Israel and the United States.

The second essay, entitled "The Other Zionism," recalls various figures and groups within the Zionist movement who were never antagonistic or condescending toward the Arabs, who always realized that Zionism's fulfillment lies in eventual acceptance by the Palestinian Arabs. In assailing Begin's "rigid, monolithic policy totally unsuited to the great opportunities opened up by Sadat's courageous initiative," Stone recalls the schism in Zionism between Jabotinsky's Herut movement and the various Zionist groups who have always accepted the legitimacy of Palestinian nationalism. In reviewing the ups and downs of this other Zionism, Stone rightly prophesies that "To impose the kind of self-rule Begin envisages on the Palestinians is to put Israel into an endless sea of trouble." But "all else becomes negotiable," he adds, "if the principle of self-determination is recognized."

"The main current of Zionism has always nourished itself on the illusion that the Jews were 'a people without a land' returning to 'a land without a people'"—Stone begins this second, concluding essay. "But there was from the beginning of the movement another Zionism, now almost forgotten, except by scholars, which was prepared, from the deepest ethical motives, to face up to the reality that Palestine was not an empty land but contained another and kindred people."

Stone adds: "They were a lonely handful then, and a lonelier one now, when the pendulum of power has swung to the far right, to the ultra-nationalists, with their old leader, Menachem Begin, in office."

After a career as reporter, editorial writer, and columnist for numerous American newspapers, Izzy Stone published his one-man newsletter, *I.F. Stone's Weekly*, from 1953 through 1971, and in the process turned himself into both legend and hero. While writing a dozen books, he scooped up journalism awards and honorary degrees. Since 1975 he has been a distinguished scholar in residence at American University, studying the civilization of ancient Greece for its historical truths. And last year *The New York Times Magazine* paid Izzy a unique compliment by letting him act as both questioner and respondent in a remarkable interview to which they gave the title "Izzy on Izzy."

No praise can testify so well to I.F. Stone's *sui generis* contributions and visions as his own words that conclude the new edition of *Underground to Palestine*:

No matter which the choice, the two peoples must live together, either in the same Palestinian state or side



Photo courtesy Pantheon

"I. F. Stone, like few American writers, has earned the right to have his opinions given considerable weight."

by side in two Palestinian states. But either solution requires a revival of the Other Zionism, a recognition that two peoples—not one—occupy the same land and have the same rights. This is the path to reconciliation and reconciliation alone can guarantee Israel's survival. Israel can exhaust itself in new wars. It can commit suicide. It can pull down the pillars on itself and its neighbors. But it can live only by reviving that spirit of fraternity and justice and conciliation that the Prophets preached and the Other Zionism sought to apply. To go back and study the Other Zionism is, for dissidents like myself, to draw comfort in loneliness, to discover fresh sources of moral strength, and to find the secret of Israel's survival.

Alghanistan 50 AF/Algeria 5 D/Bahrain 500 Fu/Canada 1755/Cyprus 400 Ma/Egypt 50 Pu/Ethiopia 2.5
Eth. 5/France 7.50 FF/Iran 100 Ru/Iraq 300 Fu/Italy 1200/L Jordan 400 Fu/Kuwait 400 Fu/Lebanon 4 LL/
Libya 300 Ma/Malta 25 c/Morocco 5 D/Nigeria 75 K/Oman 800 Bs/Pakistan 8 Rps/Qatar 5 Ru/Saudi
Arabia 5 Ru/Somalia 6r/Sudan 40 Pu/Syria 4 SL/Tunisia 500 Ms/Turkey 25 TL/UAE 5 D/UK 50 p/
USA 1755/Yemen (Aden) 0.40 D/Yemen (Sanaa) 5 Ru/

THE MIDDLE EAST

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SAUDIS TIP THE BALANCE

Plus: South Lebanon: the inside story

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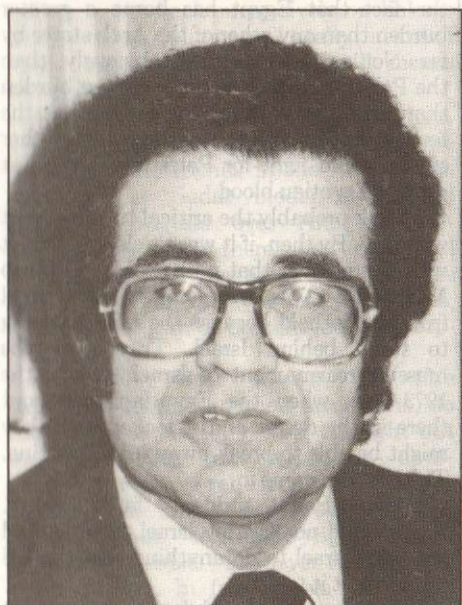
Following a pause to re-evaluate the country's needs and projects in hand, things are moving again in the Gulf State of Qatar. *The Middle East* reports on the economic sectors concerned.

FORUM



With the Egyptian-Israeli treaty signed and the process of implementation about to begin, Forum Editor *Mark Bruzonsky* sought the views of three distinguished scholars at the Georgetown University Center for Contemporary Arab Studies: *Michael C. Hudson*, Director of the Center and author of *Arab Politics: the Search for Legitimacy*; *Halim I. Barakat*, Visiting Associate Professor in Sociology; and *John Reudy*, Associate Professor of Islamic History and Chairman, Program of Arab Studies.

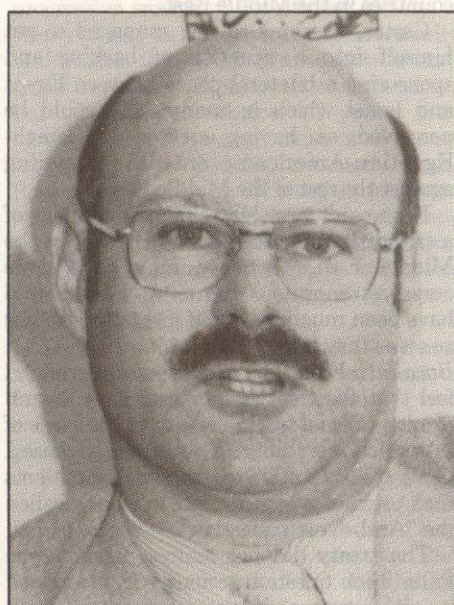
HALIM BARAKAT



JOHN REUDY



MICHAEL HUDSON



Georgetown Profs dissect "separate peace"

Bruzonsky: What are the overall historical ramifications of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty to the Middle East region?

Hudson: It's a historic document and if it remains in force – assuming there isn't a revolutionary change in government in Egypt – it will very much reshape the whole international balance of forces in the area.

For Israel it really does mean that Israel is there to stay. I wouldn't have really believed that up until now. But I think having broken off the largest Arab opponent, Israel's long-term security and its future is much brighter. If it were to last, I think it would have these major consequences, on the whole very positive for Israel. It's an economic foot in the door as well as a tremendous security boost for Israel.

I think it's much more difficult to see what this means for the rest of the Arab

world. But it certainly will further weaken the notion that there ever can be meaningful all-Arab coordination – or obviously unity – in as much as Egypt occupies that important geographical position and is pretty much out of the game now and marching to a different drummer.

What it may mean is that within the Asian part of the Arab world there will be more coordination among regimes and possibly more radicalisation. I would tend to think, contrary to what the Carter Administration is hoping and predicting, that the treaty will not tend to bring others along after they've gotten over their emotional anger. I think that everybody – no matter what his ideology – will feel increasingly threatened. The situation will be much more intense and will call for much more Arab solidarity.

So I see the possibility that there could be

another smallish and localised Arab-Israeli military conflict as a result. And that in turn depends on an assumption that "autonomy" – the whole process of doing something for the Palestinians – has been so attenuated by the treaty as it was hammered out that Israel will feel no obligation to make significant moves and Egypt will simply wash its hands of it. Egypt will make a strong stand and the Israelis will be unyielding and the Egyptians will say, "Well, we certainly did our best. If the Palestinians don't want to play ball, then..."

Reudy: The cornerstone of Israeli foreign policy is an effort to legitimise itself. As early as 1949 there was an effort to detach Egypt from the Arab coalition. There was a fundamental assumption that with Jordan – which was the only Arab winner in the 1948 war – it would be difficult to make peace because there were basic territorial conflicts.

But Egypt and Israel had no really outstandingly difficult problems. And if one could detach Egypt, the largest Arab state, from the Arab coalition then Israel would be secured.

It seems to me that this is a moment of enormous victory for the Israelis. Israel has achieved its fundamental foreign policy objective – apparently.

Jimmy Carter, I think, allowed himself to get pulled down this road. He started out with a very accurate perception that American interests in the Middle East could never be secured, as long as this Arab-Israeli conflict continued to fester, given the fundamental commitment of America to the preservation of Israel and the constant potential of having to come to Israel's support and thereby alienating other countries in the Middle East.

Carter, it seems to me, managed to get himself into a situation of backing and sponsoring a bilateral peace between Egypt and Israel which in many ways could be perceived as having created an Israeli-Egyptian-American entente standing against the rest of the Middle East.

If we can't somehow change the image of a tri-partite alliance against the rest of the Middle East, then we may have done ourselves enormous harm. And then we'd have been much better off just letting things go on as they were.

Barakat: From an Arab point-of-view, I feel that the treaty is going to have several results, but not lasting results in the sense of introducing stability in the area, because I don't think it attacked the basic problems that originally contributed to what's called the "Arab-Israeli question".

The treaty did not address itself to the Palestinian question seriously. It postponed it. It's trying now to appease some Palestinian elements and some Arab countries by projecting some possibilities for the future – that this is only the beginning, not the end of the process, that there will be further compromises. But the indications, as I see it, do not point in that direction.

The other ramification as far as Arab countries are concerned is isolation of Egypt which means several things. One is the diminution of Egypt itself in the Arab world. The importance of Egypt in the Arab world has been because it was the leader of Arab countries. Now, by isolating Egypt, Egypt itself is being undermined and its role will diminish in the area. The importance of Egypt is not in itself, but vis-a-vis the Arab countries. And if it gives up this role of being the leader of the Arab countries, I think it will diminish in power.

But on the other hand, I believe that making of Egypt another base for the West means not only that Egypt will be a police state of the area. It means, unfortunately, that Egypt is going to move from the role of being an instigator for change in the area to

a role of maintaining the status quo in the area.

This is a big loss for the Arab countries. Egypt has been seen as a power for change – a force for change. Now it will be seen, on the contrary, as a force for counter-change, not only in the Arab countries but in Africa too.

Bruzonsky: What caused Egypt to line itself up historically now with Israel and the US and to break away from its alignment with the Arabs?

Barakat: There has been an emergence in Egypt of a certain ruling class that believes they can do better economically by aligning



HALIM BARAKAT: "The West has not been very concerned about Arab rights and self-determination . . . the US sees the whole problem in terms of its strategy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union . . . after losing Iran, maybe Egypt will make up"

themselves with the West and with the conservative Arab governments. I don't know how much they calculated the risks with the conservative Arab governments, though, because Saudi Arabia and Jordan have many pressures on them which these Egyptian ruling classes may not have taken into account.

I don't think these classes mean it when they say there will be development and let's direct our activities toward development rather than armaments. I don't think this will happen. And the fact that they are seeking more armaments and that they want to play the role of the Shah means they will have increasing demands for arms and the strengthening of their army.

But in any case I don't think development will happen. What will happen is that some

proportion of Egyptians will benefit from the open-door policy and the link to the West; but the rest of the population will not share any fruits of development. Then there will be more polarisation – not only between Egypt and other countries but between the Egyptian ruling class and its own people. They are going to suffer more from poverty, I think, and a greater gap between these ruling classes and the masses of the Egyptian people will occur.

Reudy: I don't know that I'd agree totally with Halim. He seems to be saying that this is a function of certain capitalist-leaning classes or Western-oriented classes. I think there's a little more to it than that.

Egypt commands a certain authority and a certain respect in the Arab struggle with Zionism – an authority which comes from the fact that Egypt has borne a greater burden than any other of the Arab states by far. Not a greater burden, obviously, than the Palestinian people, but a greater burden than any of the Arab states. One has the feeling that the Iraqis and some of the other states would fight for Palestine to the last drop of Egyptian blood.

I think probably the critical turning point was 1973. By then, if it wasn't clear before, it was crystal clear that no power in the Arab Middle East was ever going to evict Israel from its foothold because the US was going to stand behind Israel. There was the massive rearmament of Israel (during the 1973 war) when the Egyptians were out there in the desert and it looked as if they might be able to break away into Palestine. The US then came in.

I think Sadat suddenly faced reality. Arabs could not destroy Israel. Arabs could not force Israel to do anything that the US didn't want it to do.

From then on I think Sadat just got drawn down the track, one step after another. I don't think Sadat started out to make a separate peace. He started out for a comprehensive peace and got himself finally outmanoeuvred.

Bruzonsky: As late as January Dr Brzezinski was saying: "The Administration is very conscious of the fact that unless there is a rapid and wider resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict then the continuation of this conflict will act as a catalyst for the more rapid radicalisation and for the wider penetration of the region by Soviet influence." What has happened to an Administration which now has made what you all seem to agree is an unstable, potentially damaging "peace"?

Hudson: I think Brzezinski's comment is a basically sound one. And my reading of what has happened since then is that the US Administration has learned, or has convinced itself, that it does not have the power over Israel that theoretically one might have

thought it did have.

And so there has been a continual scaling down of expectations in the face of very considerable US domestic support for a tough Israeli stand.

The US-Soviet statement of October, 1977, was quickly thrown into reverse. And of course, the Administration also found that it had brought the wrath of all the hard-line anti-Soviet and pro-Israel elements in the country on its head at the same time.

But I believe that just as Sadat thinks he's not making a separate peace, I think Brzezinski and the Administration are totally convinced that this is not the end of the process, that all they've had to do is adjust their tactical priorities a little bit to get the snowball rolling. They've been willing to cut-back successively on linkage and on what "autonomy" really means. I would guess that Brzezinski still means what he says – and he certainly should.

Another element is – in their calculations, as Halim indicated earlier – that we feel we have moderate friends in the Arab world. And just as Sadat moderately placed Egyptian interests over Arab responsibilities, I think there's a feeling in Washington that the Saudi elite and the Jordanian elite and maybe even the Syrians, in due course, can be brought into an acceptable process.

Bruzonsky: But even if the Administration has good intentions, do they have a serious well thought-out understanding of what a comprehensive peace requires?

Hudson: The farthest Carter ever went was to talk about "legitimate rights of the Palestinian people." He never really talked about a state. In fact, he said he didn't mean a state. And Brzezinski said "Bye-bye PLO."

So what I see as their ultimate vision of where the road ends is a lot sooner than where it would end for even relatively moderate Palestinians. And I don't think they're being duplicitous in following a road to that point. I think they feel that if they can do that then they're doing OK and they will pull along, reluctantly, the more conservative ruling elites in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf and even, possibly, in Syria which they regard as really crucial.

Barakat: I believe, historically, that the Arabs can judge that the West has not been very concerned about Arab rights and self-determination – ever since the 30's.

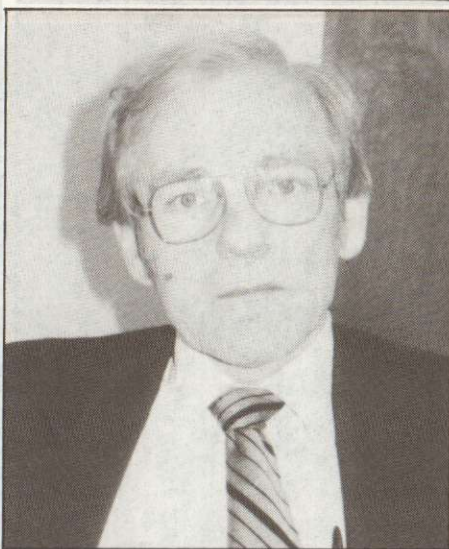
There's always been two trends among the Arabs. One trend led to peaceful negotiations, to moderation and to realism in attempts to solve the Palestinian problem. This argument in all instances has failed by showing that the West is not really interested in solving the Palestinian problem. Historically I think there is much evidence to indicate that the West is not

going to go as far as supporting the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Secondly, the US sees the whole problem in terms of its strategy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union in the area. It's more genuinely concerned with the Soviet Union than in solving the basic regional problems.

This treaty, the isolation of Egypt, is seen as a victory. After losing Iran, maybe Egypt will make up. The concern is not with the Palestinians as such.

Because of this treaty, Israel is going to be much tougher in dealing with the question of the West Bank and Gaza than with Sinai.



JOHN REUDY: "Carter managed to get himself into backing and sponsoring a bilateral peace between Egypt and Israel which ... could be perceived as an Israeli-Egyptian-American entente against the rest of the Middle East"

And even that was a very frustrating situation for the US in its relations with Israel. In the future it will even be more sensitive for the US to pressure Israel because the West Bank has a different meaning to all the parties. The Israelis are going to be less compromising.

Bruzonsky: Is this treaty, potentially, a fatal blow to Palestinian nationalism?

Reudy: Potentially. I said last September that I thought tactically it would have been much wiser for the Palestinians to have at least agreed to test the Israelis – to put them on the spot then and find out what they really meant by a process of autonomy – instead of boycotting. I don't believe that the Palestinians, as any other people who've ever existed, have any God-given right to eternal existence.

Barakat: I don't believe so myself. This is another battle. It's a blow, but not a fatal blow. The Palestinian community is well-rooted and strong, highly developed relative to other Arab countries.

And they have popular support all over the Arab world. This increasingly is going to mean that they have to establish better alliances with the people in Lebanon and Syria, in Jordan and Iran, and even Saudi Arabia.

Reudy: Halim, I think there's a fundamental error here on the Palestinian side, on the Arab side, in strategy. The assumption for years has been that time is with the Arabs and against the Jews in this situation. I don't agree. I think the Arab character of Jerusalem and the West Bank is being transformed daily before our eyes. There's a progressive erosion of Palestinian society, it seems to me, as the product not necessarily of dramatic things like confiscation of land or the intrusion of Zionist settlements per se, but of individual choices of young men particularly and young women who see no future in the Israeli-dominated areas. Politically it may be interesting to try to stick it out, but not in professional terms and in terms of the one life one has to live. The Palestinian diaspora grows and grows and the Palestine in Palestine shrinks and shrinks. This is the reality.

Hudson: I would think that what Jack says about the Israelisation of the West Bank in terms of many things is certainly true enough, but you still have a very rapidly growing population there, a population that is increasingly politicised to a far greater extent than it ever was in the past. Even Israeli Arabs who were quiescent for a long time have now become very outspoken and are starting to support the PLO. And I think the salience of the Palestinian issue does not diminish. And I'm inclined to think it won't diminish as a result of this treaty.

This doesn't mean that the Palestinians are an inch closer to getting anything tangible. Tangible gains do seem an awful long way off. But I can't see anybody saying "bye-bye-PLO" or "bye-bye Palestinian rights or self-determination".

Barakat: I see the Arab world as emerging. Arab society is being transformed. It's not a declining society. And we have to see the Palestinian society as part of this Arab world.

I expect changes in Egypt and in North Africa. And what's starting to take place in the eastern Arab world, the unity between Iraq and Syria, these are responses to the Israeli challenge and also to internal challenges, contradictions, within the Arab world.

So, I see the Arab world as dynamic and the Palestinians as part of this. And that's why nothing can be a fatal blow to the Palestinians.

Bruzonsky: Do any of you think the

autonomy process will go forward with any significant participation by the Palestinians resulting in any kind of Palestinian self-rule?

Hudson: It's difficult to imagine any politically credible Palestinians on the West Bank standing for the elections that will be conducted.

Reudy: One can't ever close the door completely. But I'm very pessimistic. It's not just Menachem Begin who wants to hold on to what he sees as "Eretz Yisrael." It's the people of Israel. And if you look at public opinion polls since summer of 1967, if you look at the Allon plan, if you look at all of the colonisation that was done almost a decade before Begin came in; the determination of Israel to hold on to the territory and in fact to Israelise it progressively comes out of Israeli public opinion; it's the will of the people overwhelmingly, and I don't think that they intend to let go. Perhaps they'll agree to create what's being called a "Bantustan" of some type to solve the immediate problem, but...

Barakat: Even if it succeeds at all, it's going to be a very limited autonomy. And because of the radicalisation process it means the Israelis have to be a stronger and a more repressive force. They won't be able to solve their problems with the Palestinians on the West Bank. And as Michael indicated, expect more radicalisation also of the Arab Israelis, those who have lived under the Israelis since 1948.

Bruzonsky: **What about US-Saudi relations a year and a half from now?**

Hudson: The dilemma for the Saudis is that they fear the rise of a radical ruler in Egypt such as Nasser was. They remember that Nasser had designs on Saudi Arabia back in the 1960s. So it's a cruel choice they have to make.

But relations will be very stormy with the US. There are and presumably will remain internal factions in the Saudi government. The US will be very concerned what is going on in Saudi internal politics. It's very hard to predict what will happen, but it's not going to be the same old friendly relationship that prevailed.

Bruzonsky: **And why is King Hussain so out-front, almost to the point of provoking the US?**

Barakat: I think this is because of the emerging Syrian-Iraqi alliance, on one hand, and the crisis between Saudi Arabia and the US on the other. And also because of Jordan's assessment of what the Israelis will give back on the West Bank - Hussain thinks they are not going to give it back.

Hudson: I think the Jordanian rulers are more advanced in the degree of their disillusionment with the US than the Saudi rulers are. Hussain has come out strongly because he's really made a decision that the US is not able to or interested in delivering

on key issues, of which to him, in particular, Jerusalem is very important. Hussain knows there's a long struggle ahead and he might as well get his act together with his friends to the north and the east.

He wants to try to reestablish his credibility as the leader of the Palestinians. And he's trying to roll with the tide. He's trying to improve his legitimacy in this way.

Bruzonsky: **What kind of policy do you expect the Soviet Union to pursue in the area as the autonomy process continually disenchant everyone?**

Reudy: This is very hard. But it's a very important question. Obviously their policy



MICHAEL HUDSON: "The Israelis and the Americans think they've got the Palestinians in a 'heads I win, tails you lose' situation. If they accept... they acknowledge the legitimacy of the process and... the shadow of Palestinian rights"

is to step in and exploit wherever possible and to make every kind of effort to exploit the disillusionment where it exists with the American role.

Bruzonsky: **Are the Saudis serious about a possible Soviet relationship?**

Reudy: We're beginning to think this is so. This isn't the strangest thing that could happen. I don't believe that ideology, fundamentally, holds people apart forever. Common interest brings them together. And the absence of common interest drives them apart. I wouldn't be at all surprised to see very peculiar things happen.

Bruzonsky: **What do any of you think the Soviets could do? Where do they have leverage? Where do they have influence?**

Reudy: Well, I think it's much more

difficult to envision basic, fundamental Soviet development in Iran than it is in the Arab world. Everything is against it in Iran - the whole tradition of Iranian nationalism is against a relationship with the Soviets. They're just kind of hereditary enemies. They've got to be. And Iran has got to hold Russia off or there won't be an Iran.

On the other hand it seems to me that by this kind of chess-board effect that we see in the Middle East as well as in other parts of the world a leap-frogging by the Soviet Union down the Gulf makes sense.

Bruzonsky: **Is there a serious possibility of an Eastern Front against Israel backed and armed by the Soviet Union?**

Hudson: Well, the Eastern Front, such as it is, is now armed by the Soviet Union with the exception of Jordan. I think the Soviets will continue to draw the line before any confrontation develops between their friends versus our friend, Israel. They always have drawn this line. Their priorities, it seems to me, are pretty clear. The Soviets are pretty cautious and consistent players, and they're pretty successful players on the whole in the Middle East despite what's happened in Egypt. I don't think that they will encourage - if they have the leverage to do these delicate things - the development of an eye-ball to eye-ball situation between standing armies. I would think their strategy is one of making political gains.

The Soviets are well aware that they will lose potential advantage and influence if they overplay their hand. They must have noticed very clearly that there's a general Arab consensus, one indeed in which Egypt joins with everybody else, against South Yemen. And the reason the Syrians and Iraqis are alarmed about South Yemen is that it's just too controlled by the Soviet Union. So I think the Soviets realise that the Arabs don't like to see any of their people too controlled.

But short of that, I think there's all kinds of room to manoeuvre. One of the ironic consequences of the treaty process will be the opening up of all sorts of new vistas for the extension of Soviet influence in the Arab world - throughout.

Bruzonsky: **Let's go back to "autonomy" now. You were suggesting, Dr Reudy, that if the Palestinians were smart they might keep condemning the whole thing publicly but they might get in on the action privately. You said you suggested this last September. Do you still believe this?**

Reudy: I didn't even say privately. I said they should try the Israelis out and find out exactly what they meant. I said I personally would understand why they would not want to trust the Israelis' motives, but, fundamentally, had the Palestinians stepped in last fall and challenged the Israelis to say

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Palestinian Prospects Now

Edward W. Said Speaks With Mark Bruzonsky

BRUZONSKY: What's your personal background? Were you born in Palestine?

SAID: Yes, I was born in Jerusalem; my family is a Jerusalem family. We left Palestine in 1947. We left before most others. It was a fortuitous thing. My family was in business in Egypt and so we moved between Palestine and Egypt. I didn't suffer at all. My immediate family was affected only commercially. I was twelve when we went to Egypt. Then I emigrated [to the U.S.] when I was sixteen, but not my family.

Let's turn to the Palestinian issue. What should the Palestinians do at this historic time?

I feel that what is needed is a very clear enunciation of a Palestinian political process around which people can organize and work and significant advances can be made. We need a clearer program for progress toward peace—forthright statements of a two-state solution and some indication of how this might come about beyond slogans like "armed struggle," "continuing the struggle," and so forth. We know we're all going to continue the struggle. The question is: How do you advance the political process to your advantage, given the world in which we live—a kind of post-Camp David world? The armed struggle that was enunciated back in 1969 is not the principal program of the Palestinians. Now, if that's the case, what is the political program? I don't have an answer. It's not something I can give.

But you must have some ideas.

Sure I do. But I'm simply talking about the need to open a space for debate in the Palestinian community. There's a lot of surreptitious discussion that we need to talk to the U.S., we need to do this, we need to open our ties with Jordan, we need to do something to get the Syrians off our back. I want this debate to take place in forums that will give the possibility for these things to happen, not just an occasional journalistic leak such as

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MARK BRUZONSKY is Associate Editor of *Worldview*.

Arafat talking to Anthony Lewis and saying x, y, and z, and then the whole thing is dropped the next time somebody comes around. I want it to be embodied in Palestinian political activity. That's all I'm saying.

How do you evaluate Arafat's leadership of the PLO? Are you indirectly criticizing his leadership?

No, no. I think that in the present circumstances he's the only person who could lead the PLO. That's where I begin. He is the figure who represents the Palestinians' fate today. And I think that he now needs the support of more Palestinians like myself who believe that what is necessary is something more than just survival. We want to try to translate the Palestinian dispersion and fragmentation into a kind of process that won't leave us always on the margins, attached to one power or another.

Why am I having such trouble getting you to tell me something about this more concrete process?

Well, because, you know, it's not something that an individual can do.

Well, you told me the Palestinians should do more with the Americans, and more with the Jordanians, that they don't have a clear enough program....

I think we should do it! That's what I'm saying. I'm saying we should do all of those things that need to be done at this moment.

So what are the priorities?

I'll tell you. *First*, we ought in some way to regularize and institutionalize our relations with Jordan. *Second*, in some way we should begin to address in a serious way the U.S. If we believe the U.S. has interests and institutions and things that it supports in the area, and that we stand in an adversarial position with regard to these, then I believe we should address the U.S. politically and not leave it to an occasional statement rejecting [Resolution] 242 and then dropping everything. In other words, I think that what we should do is something that we've never done, and that's to engage the U.S. politically.

You're talking about showing the U.S. how a Palestinian state could be in the interests of the U.S.?

Precisely. Not only in the interests of the U.S., but in

the interests of peace. In other words, demonstrating that peace is in the interests of everybody who now has interests in the area. If indeed what we're talking about is peace that will be in the interest of our people, then I think we should make that policy and our vision available to more people.

Then all you have to do is let the Carter administration know you'll accept 242 with reservations.

But that's not necessarily the way we perceive it. That's precisely what I'm trying to say. If we reject 242 with a reservation, what then is the alternative we present? And so far there's no alternative. But I can't outline the specific steps because then I'll get into problems.

But don't you continue to beg the question of what that new clear policy should be?

Well, because I myself am confused. I'm not clear just what our positions on these questions are. I don't think many Palestinians are. Look, the main thing is: Are we a national independence movement or are we a national liberation movement? In a certain way we're claiming that we're both. We're at the juncture where we have to make a decision. What I'm really saying is that the whole period of indecision between one alternative and the other is pretty much at an end.

And when do you foresee this decision being taken?

I think within the year. And I would rather that it was taken by us than, in a certain sense, imposed upon us. Imposed by any combination of the Arabs, the Israelis, and the U.S.—and even the Soviet Union.

What are the ramifications of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty?

The general sense of disenchantment in the Arab world with the U.S. will increase. The feeling that in a sense Egypt has been transformed from an Arab state into a new quantity that is generally unacceptable to the Arab world will intensify.

Palestinian resolve, and with it Jordanian resolve, not to be a part of this—in the present form at least—will stiffen. In this sense Palestinian determination to provide a sort of alternative will become more crucial and will, in the end, prevail on the Saudis. I don't think the Saudis can go along with this, not only because of the separate peace thing, but also because the Israelis have gone out of their way to spell out in no uncertain terms that the "autonomy" is—as a recent article in the *Jerusalem Post* pointed out—an attempt to eliminate Palestinian national aspirations and not satisfy them.

Another thing will be that the demarcation between Israeli and U.S. intentions will grow. And U.S. intentions may well be good.

Do you think there's any significant likelihood that the Americans and Egyptians will be able to prevail and push this beyond a separate peace?

No, my perception of this—and also the general feeling in the Arab world that I sense—is that the treaty in its present form has to be seen as an attempt to throw

the clock back to the days before the revolution in Iran. It seems like a throwback treaty that Dulles would have promoted.

But you also said you think the Americans have sincere intentions.

Yes, with regard to the autonomy. But sincere intentions are one thing, and the detailed juridical modalities of this treaty and its consequences will, I think, in the end prevail over the intentions. Because what happens is—as happened at Camp David—you get committed to what you have. And as many liberal journalists—like Anthony Lewis—have said, "Well, Camp David is all we've got." But when Camp David is pared down to its working essentials, it turns out to be this kind of treaty and then there's very little you can build on except what's in it. The Israelis have the machinery, the men and forces and resources on the ground in the West Bank. And it seems to me that just American good intentions are not going to budge them.

So a year from now, when the Egyptian populace realizes they've been told things that aren't happening—for instance, Prime Minister Mustafa Khalil has said the treaty means the Palestinians will come to control the whole West Bank plus East Jerusalem—what will happen in Egypt?

Exactly. And, by the way, Mark, I'm not even sure it will begin in Egypt.

What will begin?

The instability and the oppositional current that will grow. Maybe I'm giving too much credit to what may in fact not exist in the way of oppositional elements. But a lot of what's in this treaty banks on the fact that the regimes—especially the Sadat regime—are the prevailing realities and will continue and that their people can be made to swallow the line of the regime. So, I could be wrong, but....

In this atmosphere is it conceivable that the Palestinian leadership can make the clear choice you call for: to choose between being a national independence movement or a national liberation movement?

I don't know.... I can't tell. It's a very difficult question now. I'm worried that the Palestinian movement will be completely left out of whatever comes now.

And you're worried that Arabs other than Sadat will cooperate with the Americans?

Yes, of course, it's perfectly possible that at some point the Jordanians might enter in, that some Palestinians might be found on the West Bank and Gaza to cooperate. Sure.

What would be the reaction within the Palestinian community if the PLO leadership decided to choose to be a "national movement" rather than a "liberation movement," as you've suggested, and then came out with a statement saying there would be Palestinian recognition of Israel if the Palestinians get their independent state?

I think...I think...if it came about within the context

of moving the Palestinians out of the present morass.... In other words, I think it can be politically prepared for. And if it were politically prepared for, then I think it would gain much acceptance.

Even at the grass-roots level, from people living in the area, in the camps?

Yes, by political preparation. What I as a Palestinian would accept is not "Take it or leave it; this is a package deal." But, rather, if it appeared, as I think it ought to, that this is part of the reexamination of the whole Palestinian case, and the whole question of Palestinian rights is being discussed in the context of peace—then I think it would be an acceptable thing. If it were possible to see this two-state solution in the context of a wider discussion of the fate of those Palestinians—let's say in Lebanon—who are not from the West Bank.... How are their national rights to be addressed, their lost property, their national identity, their repatriation? Then there's the fate of the Palestinians inside Israel.

So if the overture toward peace was made in the context of addressing all of the issues, I think it would be willingly accepted. But if it's always seen in the context of "We're going to solve the Palestinian problem once and for all by confining all Palestinians on the West Bank in a state that is dominated by Israel," then nobody will buy it. And that's been the case all along.

You personally believe all those questions can be addressed and the outcome can still allow for a viable Israeli state somewhere within the 1967 boundaries, professing to Zionist ideology in a moderate and nonexpansionist form? Or am I putting words in your mouth?

You're putting words in my mouth. There is a Zionist state. There is an Israel. I think we have to credit that most Palestinians can see that there is a state and that there is a society. We're not just talking about a collection of people who can be sent away tomorrow. Most Palestinians, if they're honest, see it as a state. Therefore, what I also give us credit for is being able to see that state and our state in the area reaching some kind of *modus vivendi*.

Then why am I putting words in your mouth?

Well, all right. But when you say Zionist ideology, for me Zionist ideology denies the existence of a Palestinian people. Anyway though, that's their problem, and I don't want to define for them what their ideology is. What I'm saying is that if there's some recognition—some accommodation—to the idea that there is a genuine Palestinian national identity that has a right to its mode of existence in the land of Palestine—which would also mean for the first time that Zionism has made an accommodation to this that it hasn't done historically—then that Zionism is quite a different thing from the Zionism of today.

Would you agree with what Abu Iyad said in Eric Rouleau's new book: that when the Palestinians get their state, the military struggle ends?

Yes, ends.... OK, I would basically agree.

Isn't this really a three-state solution?

You mean with Jordan. Yes. Demographically, the Hashemite Kingdom is part of this Palestinian entity.

So an historic accommodation to let the king live as long as....

Now that I really can't say; I really don't know. I mean, frankly, I don't see any simple resolution of the question of Palestinian nationalism versus Hashemite nationalism at this point. They do seem to me in conflict with each other.

When you talk of resolving your relations with the Israelis, why can't you resolve them with Amman?

There is a kind of overlap between the two, with both making claims to the same constituency, which is quite different from Israel and a Palestinian state. Most Palestinians understand that a choice has to be made between the monarchy and Arafat.

So in that context the kind of compromise we're talking about....

I don't like the word compromise. It suggests there's a median point. What I'm talking about is a kind of engagement between opposing positions in which in the end the just position will get the most adherents and prevail.

What does that mean? I thought we're talking about a two-state and maybe a three-state compromise—I use the word compromise—where the Palestinians will in reality, if not in complete ideology, give up their claim to 70 per cent of what used to be Palestine....

I didn't say they're giving up their claim. I said that claim will be addressed. There are 560,000 Palestinians living inside Israel. Who's denying their claim? They're there. That issue obviously has to be dealt with. I certainly don't expect that 600,000 or 700,000 Palestinians will be asked to go and leave Israel and settle on the West Bank.

No, I suppose they'll be citizens of Israel or maybe some will want to go to the West Bank.

Exactly, so that problem will have to be addressed.

Every time I try to pin you down ideologically on what we've talked about you do the same thing that the PLO does. You won't speak clearly about what you want.

Because we're talking from two different worlds of discourse. You're talking about something that can be arranged. But it's not an arranged marriage. It's something that has to be done *ultimately* by a confrontation between two peoples.

Well, I'd say the Jewish bottom line is a Jewish state plus peace. Wouldn't you agree?

Yes, I suppose that's what they want. Well, I'm not asking to define their world. I want to be given the chance to decide what are the minimal conditions for me. That's what the issue is now. We know what their conditions are.

"Policy doesn't mean you throw the Palestinians autonomy and say that they are entitled to participate in determining their own future..."



But you may never get that chance if you don't convince enough people....

It's not about convincing, you see, Mark. I'm saying that we have a political position that is basically very powerful, very potent. And a political position that we have not yet parlayed into the political process which would then force people—like the Israelis and the Americans who have for years gotten along by ignoring us—to engage with us. We have to make ourselves irresistible. And I don't mean attractive. I mean that we have to be dealt with. And the way you do that is to say, "Look, we're not going to just make remarks; we're going to engage, we're going to fight politically for a program. And the program is clearly a state whose lines are x, y, and z and whose provisions are a, b, and c...."

So I hear you saying that for the time being you need to play the political game to get a state. This is tactical. But I don't hear you saying that you are assuming an overall strategic, long-term posture.

No. It's a definite political goal. We have to stake our political activities on goals and aims for which we are responsible. In other words, these can't indefinitely be left floating and vague. And if that means that we want a state—one whose contours are clear and whose constituency is known and a state that also in some way engages the whole problem of Palestinian national rights in Israel, etc.—then we should adapt ourselves to that goal and not leave to generalities the whole question of the liberation of Palestine.... That period is rapidly coming to an end.

Why hasn't some Palestinian group—either on the West Bank or out of the occupied territories—suggested a suitable autonomy plan?

Exactly. That's what I'm saying.

Maybe the Palestine National Council should have when it met in January.

I certainly think it should have. This is the place. That's exactly what I mean.

Let's go to the Americans now. You live in the U.S. and are an American citizen. And I assume you watch Carter as closely as any of us. So how do you evaluate him?

I thought that his early statements were very encouraging and unusual. But what impresses me more than anything else as time goes on is what strikes me as a kind of total blank, I mean a human blank, where the Palestinians are concerned. In other words, one can understand that in an abstract way he wants peace and he wants justice. But as to any sense from the administration that the Palestinians are a functioning, lively, political society with a particular history, a particular culture, a particular tradition, a particular predicament—there's none of it.

I'm surprised by what you're saying. Bill Quandt is at the White House. Brzezinski was on record even before coming to office as favoring a Palestinian state that would by necessity be PLO-dominated. And the president is on record talking about a Palestinian people, a Palestinian nation....

These are abstractions that, at the time, they probably believed. I'm willing to grant the president that when he began his campaign that's really what he felt. But I'm saying that when push comes to shove, when you have to translate this into policy, there's a sort of vacuum, there's a sort of blank. Policy doesn't mean you throw the Palestinians autonomy and say that they are entitled to *participate* in the determination of their own future—which at best allows for some vague thing called "the Palestinians." In some way you take *serious* stock of what is everywhere happening before your eyes—that there's a people, that there's an organization that represents every Palestinian (and they know it as well as anybody) and which you come to terms with. There's been no coming to terms with the Palestinians.

What you said earlier, though, implied that you're still hopeful for Carter. Or did I misunderstand you?

Well, I'm optimistic in the sense that I believe in the end common sense prevails. Certainly it seems to be that, given what's happened in Iran and what's obviously happening throughout the Arab world and Asia, these kinds of arrangements, where we rely upon rulers who seem to please us and give us the satisfactions that we want, will change.

Sometimes you speak as an American and sometimes as a Palestinian.

I'm both.

You've linked in your own mind Palestinian interests and American interests in the Middle East?

No, no. Some American interests and some Palestinian interests. All of us—all Palestinians and people who live in the Third World. This is one of the interesting antimonies, you might say, of modern political life.

There's a genuine sense of idealism about America. At the same time, there's a very strong revulsion from the American political empire. It's perfectly possible to understand the sense of idealism that people have toward the ideals of a republic and the revulsion from the practices of recent American governments. But I don't think it's paradoxical to say that one feels a genuine admiration for the people and the kind of society in general in which one lives and the ideals that still find voice in the republic. And that's perfectly possible within the American tradition of dissent. And that's what I think most of us can live with.

There's another school of thought that sees Palestinian

interests linked up to Soviet interests. Is that just propaganda?

Look, I can't speak for other Palestinians, just for people like myself. I grew up essentially in the West. And there's no question that historically and culturally our ties are more intimate, more strongly linked to the West.

And politically and economically?

Well, for me—and I stress just for me—those are abstractions. I can understand and I feel a kind of sympathy with the Left. I consider myself a man of the Left. But whether that necessarily for me means Bolshevism, I would say, no, not necessarily. I have yet to see—to my mind—a satisfactory translation of European Marxism into Arab or Third World terms. That hasn't come about yet. There is no successful Marxist Arab organization. There have been attempts—noble, valiant, heroic attempts, the Egyptian Communist party, and so forth—but....

As for political and economic interests, certainly it's not lost on any Palestinian that the Soviet Union originally supported partition, that the Soviet Union supports 242, does not support all our programs, does not come to our aid (for example, in the invasion of the south of Lebanon last March). And so on and so forth. The Soviets are slow-moving, ponderous, difficult to fathom as a political force. But it is a tactical alliance.

Now that we're talking about tactical alliances, let's talk about Iran. Does the Iranian revolution really alter the whole strategic and political equation over there? Or is it just one of those passing things...?

Oh, no, it's clearly not a passing thing. I think it's



"The Soviets are slow-moving, ponderous, difficult to fathom as a political force...It is a tactical alliance."

much more than that. I think most Palestinians are reacting quite naturally and quite enthusiastically to the symbolic spectacle.

As to what it might mean in the long or even the short run, it's much too early to tell. But it's perfectly clear that aside from what will take place in Iran in terms of who comes out on top, what you see is that even the most repressive, the most determined force—with a large army and where there seemed to be no hope for change—even that is not invulnerable. In other words, it's a demonstration of political will that gives people who struggle against what they consider to be oppression and injustice a hope for change. It also dramatizes, in my opinion, even more importantly, the short-sighted folly of U.S. imperial policy: reliance upon unpopular, essentially minority regimes.

What choice does a status quo power have? There's the king of Jordan, there's Anwar Sadat, there's the Saudi royal family. You can't hedge your bets and fully support these regimes at the same time.

No, you can't. If you continue to consider everything as essentially bilateral, if you always think of the U.S. and Egypt, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, and so on—and doing so consciously promotes conflict between states in order to safeguard your position as the mediator of everything—then that is what you're going to do. But there's no reason why that need be automatically the way to proceed.

You're suggesting a regional view?

Yes, a regional, a *realistic* focus. When you don't deal with the PLO, when you don't deal with the Ba'aths, you're not making these things go away. What you're doing is provoking a harsher cycle of events, which in the end is not going to hurt you any less than it will hurt the people in the region.

Your point about "common sense will prevail." This almost sounds like the Western liberal version of historical determinism—"Somehow, it's all going to work out this way."

No, I didn't say that. Please. What I meant was the sense that is common will prevail, the position that accrues to it the most loyalties, the greatest sense of justice, the greatest sense of commitment will prevail in the end.

Well, in some ways that's the opposite of what I thought you meant. That means it is up to the struggling parties to make the future. There's no "common sense" solution we can be sure of at this moment.

Right. Absolutely not.

You perceive that the Palestinian movement could act badly and fail to get anything?

Yes, absolutely. You know, I like to say history's on our side. But history's littered with "just" causes that have just died by the wayside. It isn't enough to have a just cause. And it is perfectly possible that an overextended Israeli state, including the West Bank and maybe the East Bank too, will fall. But that by no means guar-

antees that we as Palestinians will benefit from this fall. That's what I'm trying to say.

So I'm the opposite of historical determinism. I don't believe in historical determinism. What I do believe is that you have to mobilize for a political goal that you feel committed to and which in the end will prevail if it is a common view. It's all a political process that involves constant conflict and organization.

What creates the conditions where Sadat decides to go against all past positions and accept a separate peace with Israel?

The easiest thing to say is that he does seem to me a rather strange combination of messianism and erratic qualities. At one point in his autobiography he says, "I am Egypt," or something like that. He sees himself on a very large sort of canvas. But at the same time, I think that has not traditionally been his arena. So what has happened to him, it seems to me, is a too rapid translation of himself from the small figure into the large figure; and the erratic quality is the sense of disorientation—that he's dealing in a world which, and I'm talking about the West now, in which he's not accustomed to be patient and follow things out.

And the effect on Egypt if Carter does succeed in pushing Sadat into a treaty with Israel? Obviously the Egyptian leadership doesn't agree with your assessment about them.

From the very beginning, when he went to Jerusalem, I've always felt that one of the most tragic things about Sadat is that he frequently doesn't know what he's getting into. And he only finds that out later. I felt two things very strongly when his Jerusalem trip was announced. One was surprise, a sort of combination of admiration and disgust at the theatrical quality of the gesture. It's imaginative in the sense that he prayed in occupied Jerusalem. It's very hard for me as a Jerusalemite to understand that. That's number one. Two, I felt that he didn't really know what he was doing. Had he studied and found out a bit more about Begin and about the political arena he was entering, he wouldn't have done it.

How come the Palestinian community and the Arab community as a whole don't have enough grip on American politics to be preparing the climate for 1981, when there might be another shot at a real comprehensive settlement?

They don't know anything about it! Forget it! You can literally count on your fingers (and this is something I get into in my book).... There is no place in the Arab world today—intellectual institutions, academic institutions, even commercial institutions—that considers itself responsible for the study of the U.S.

This is what I meant also by the need for serious Palestinian efforts. It's not enough.... When they want to reject 242, it takes the Palestinians at the Central Council three minutes to say "No." And then they write a little two-sentence thing. But when they want to discuss something as between the rejection front and Fatah, it takes them nine hours to sit down and write a

statement. There's something wrong here. You're dealing with a country that is a political reality in the region—the U.S. And this is part of what I said about Sadat. It's part of your responsibility as a political leader, and above all as an intellectual leader, to know something about this country.

The level of knowledge about how the society functions, how the political process works, how congressional elections work, how a municipality works.... They have no idea!

You're suggesting that the level of naiveté...

It's not naiveté! It's *ignorance*!

...that the level of ignorance in the Arab world of America is even more than the level of ignorance in the U.S. of the Arabs?

It's a different sort. There's ignorance, which my book talks about, where you've got all the resources and you study and go through the process and you produce structures of myths that do what you want.

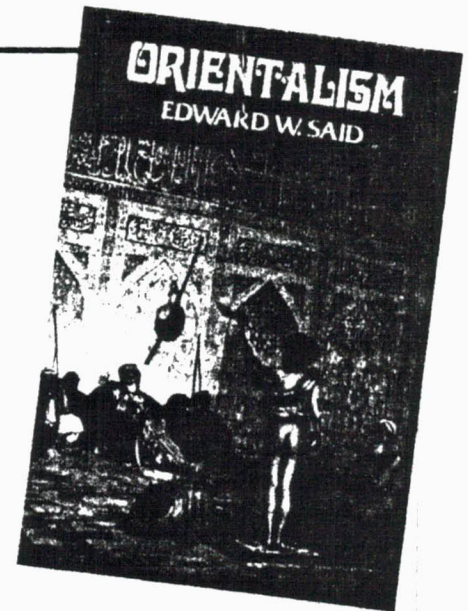
Then there's the inverse kind of ignorance that comes from the perpetuation of inequality and power—you've historically been the poor man, the weak partner in the relationship, and therefore you assume that you cannot know, that you have to take things as they're given to you, you don't make a *determined* effort to understand the society with which you're dealing. And therefore you say, "Well, the U.S. is simple," and of course you're lulled into thinking this. The Arab world has become a consumer market and you think it's all a matter of consumerism. If you wear blue-jeans and drink Coke and watch the "Rockford Files" you understand America.

Now, about your book....

It's an historical and cultural account of the notion that the world can be divided into two halves—one called the Orient and one called the Occident—and how, as a result of this division (which I call "imaginative geography," since there's no ontological distinction between parts of the world), there has been produced a whole series of knowledges that I call "Orientalism." All of these knowledges—imaginative, scholarly, and so on—essentially propose an imaginative conception that the Orient is in some way fundamentally different from the West, number one; and number two, that everything in the Orient is Oriental and therefore can be reduced to an ideal type.

Now, historically, I try to show this has never varied. Whether it's in the seventeenth century or whether it is the postcolonial period—say, from the eighteenth century on in France and Britain—whether it's scholarly writings or novelists' imagining, they essentially produce and reproduce the same thing. And ultimately, this is based on a sense of fear and distance from the Orient—the Orient is something that seems attractive and where you can be free because of sex and earthy delights. And yet on the other hand there's a feeling that the Orient is threatening and dangerous and so on.

And within the midst of this complex thing there's the notion of Islam. Islam is the religion that in a certain sense typifies all the antipodal views of the Orient. That



"The epigraph of my book is a quotation from Disraeli in which he says, 'The East is a career.'"

is to say, on the one hand it is a fearsome competitor of Christianity because, historically, the Islamic world has been the only part of the East that did not adopt the Western ways. Japan did, China did, India did. Islam never did. It's always challenged the West politically, from the very beginning until now.

On the other hand Islam is essentially something that is, to a certain kind of writer, highly attractive because Islam seems to promote earthly delights, hidden sexual pleasures, fantasies of pleasure and desire....

...and mystery.

Precisely. The inscrutable East. The epigraph of my book is a quotation from Disraeli in which he says, "The East is a career." And the first part of the book is an attempt to show how this essentially European legacy of the Orient, which is principally embodied in the imperial careers of England and France, gets transferred to the United States, especially after World War II. And all the Orientalist expertise that comes out of Britain and France is deposited in this country and vulgarized by social science and churned into the kind of parody of stereotyping about the "Arabs" and "Islam" that then rules the popular imagination, the press, and policy.

How did you time the book so well that it comes out when there's so much interest in "Islam"?

Yes, fantastic! Amazing! It's the most extraordinary thing. One thing I don't say in the book is what the Orient really is. I mean I don't think there is any such thing as the Orient. I think you have to look at these things without those spectacles. You can't divide the world into an Oriental part, or an Islamic part, or anything like that. Those are self-limiting and canceling-out tools and can never deliver what reality is.

THE MIDDLE EAST

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Alghanistan: 50AF
Algeria: 5D
Bahrain: 500Fs
Canada: 1.75\$
Cyprus: 400Ms
Egypt: 50Ps
Ethiopia: 2.5Eth \$
France: 7.50FF
Iran: 100Rs
Iraq: 300Fs
Italy: 1200L
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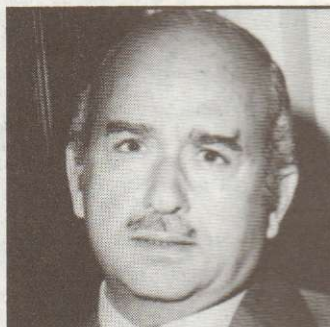
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COVER STORY:

The Palestinian commando movement is facing a crucial moment in its history, but PLO leader Yasser Arafat spoke to Editor-in-Chief *Raphael Calis* of his determination to forge ahead: "Any blow that fails to kill me gives

me additional strength," he declared.

The Middle East also focusses on the situation in the occupied lands, and talks to Arch-bishop Hilarion Capucci whose dream is to return to his Jerusalem diocese.

FORUM



When Anwar Sadat announced his "sacred mission" to Jerusalem in November 1977, Ismail Fahmi resigned from his post as Foreign Minister. Today, Fahmi is writing his memoirs from his memento-filled apartment overlooking the Nile in the Cairo suburb of Zamalek. Next to Sadat only Fahmi knows the intimate details of how the world powers conducted their Middle East diplomacy from before the October war until Egypt's decision to make a bilateral arrangement with Israel.

Ismail Fahmi rarely grants interviews. He has said very little in public since his resignation. But at the end of April he agreed to discuss Middle East developments with *Mark Bruzonsky*.

EGYPT'S EX-FOREIGN MINISTER ISMAIL FAHMI

Bruzonsky: When President Sadat first went to Israel, do you think he had in mind what most people consider to be a separate peace? Or did he realise later that this was the most he could get?

Fahmi: One of the main reasons why I refused to join President Sadat is that the only thing which could come from such a visit was a separate agreement.

☐ You had no hope in October 1977 that there could be a psychological breakthrough to a comprehensive settlement? You foresaw this separate agreement?

○ Certainly, because there was nothing else. People try to justify major political steps on a psychological basis, but I don't believe that politicians become psychiatrists.

As a politician I deal with things on a pragmatic basis, especially when these things affect human lives, the future of a whole population, the national security of nations, justice, international law, or treaties. It was clear that the Israelis could not risk their national security and their philosophy just for a psychological effect or to break psychological barriers.

All this is an invention to justify certain actions. When I deal with things I deal with them as they are. I don't dream. This is a new thing as far as I am concerned and I'm not going to take part in it.

☐ You negotiated with the new Carter Administration for almost a year before you left the Egyptian Government. Why



do you think Carter agreed to a separate agreement after insisting so strongly that there should be a comprehensive settlement and a Palestinian homeland?

○ Right up to President Sadat's visit to Israel President Carter, Cyrus Vance and their colleagues were working very hard to

have the Geneva Conference convened. And they were going to succeed! There is no doubt about it!

First they were going to have all the parties go to Geneva and sit and negotiate sometime in the last week of December 1977. And the Russians were going to participate.

President Carter himself had prepared the whole thing – procedurally and substantively. Concurrently, President Carter and Cyrus Vance negotiated for a long time with the Russians about a framework for solving the Middle East crisis once and for all. Then the Joint Statement came on the first of October 1977. It was the real framework for a comprehensive settlement, with all parties concerned attending and the two superpowers as co-chairmen.

And this is why President Carter and his colleagues were reluctant at the beginning to support President Sadat's trip to Jerusalem. They waited a little to watch things, but when they examined the pros and cons they had no choice but to support it.

Here is the biggest Arab country in the area offering a separate peace with Israel, so why the hell shouldn't the Americans profit from this, bearing in mind their own internal problems with the Jewish community and the Jewish lobby?

☐ If Sadat knew that Geneva was to be convened in a few months and that the Americans and the Russians were serious about pushing for a comprehensive settlement, he must have in-

'I propose two-year UN trusteeship for Palestine'

entionally set out to abort that process.

○ No, I don't believe Sadat did this intentionally, because Egypt was co-operating with President Carter formally on the convening of Geneva. We were not against it. We even accepted the single Arab delegation and the whole Carter formula.

□ Is that how the PLO problem was going to be solved with PLO people coming as part of that one delegation?

○ Exactly. And before that you may remember again that President Carter in August 1977 took the unusual step of proposing a formula to the PLO leaders which would enable his Administration to sit with PLO people. This was to overcome the difficulty resulting from Kissinger's agreement with the Israelis in connection with the second disengagement of the Egyptian-Israeli front that the Americans would not sit with the PLO without previously consulting Israel.

This would have been the real breakthrough between the American Administration at the highest level and the PLO. As a superpower the US should sit with anybody, everybody, especially when the problems involve war and peace, human rights and justice.

I was the intermediary between the Americans and the PLO. The process was starting – the PLO proposed another formula. And the Americans proposed a second formula. So the process of negotiations started through me. This was a major step.

□ You really think that in view of US domestic politics Carter would have been able to succeed?

○ He took the initiative! I didn't ask him to do it. He knew exactly what he was doing. And he repeated it even two months ago.

□ But he went back on the US-USSR Joint Statement within two days by producing the US-Israel "Working Paper".

○ But this was a bilateral thing. The Joint US-Russian Statement was intact and was going to be respected by the Americans and the Russians

□ Even after the American Jews and the Israelis protested so effectively?

○ I was sure of it because I saw President Carter myself after that. Up to this very minute I haven't heard any concrete statement to suggest that the Americans were going back on what they agreed with the Russians. Ultimately, if there is any comprehensive peace settlement, it will be in accordance with this statement.

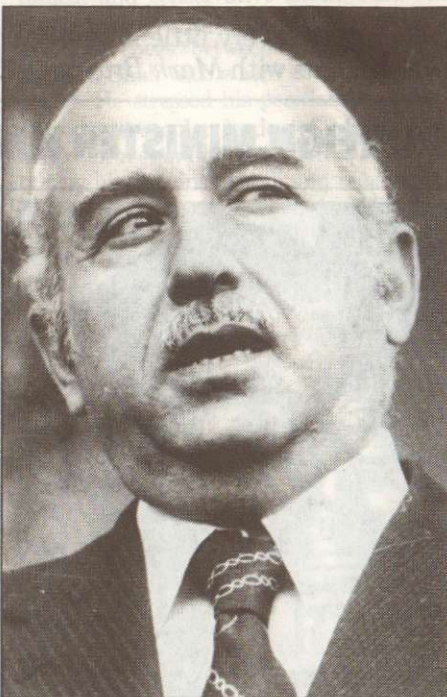
□ You consider that Statement such a historic accomplishment?

○ Yes, I may disagree with some parts of it. But I am not a superpower. I am an interested party. We don't speak the same language. Our vision is completely different and our interests are different. Our commitments are different. Our dedication to

principles is different.

□ The treaty has a large military component and there has been some discussion that the Americans are planning to buttress their military potential in the Middle East in three ways: by strengthening Israel as a potential arm of Western military might; by strengthening Egypt as a potential gendarme in the Middle East and North Africa; by a 5th Fleet and the preparation of American contingency forces.

○ (long, unusual pause) So far as Israel is concerned, I believe the Americans paid a



"Right up to President Sadat's visit to Israel, President Carter . . . was working very hard to have the Geneva Conference convened"

very high price. And this will appear in the future, because it will backfire.

□ How? Why?

○ The only thing which really generates peace is to have a balance between the major countries of any region of the world. If one of the superpowers is very weak and the other much stronger, there would be an imbalance in everything. There would be a big temptation for the strongest to do whatever it wanted.

The same applies on the regional level. If Israel realises that Egypt alone, militarily speaking, is not that weak and that in any armed conflict between Israel and Egypt there would be a lot of damage, Israel will

think a hundred times before launching any pre-emptive war or ever threatening to use force. Instead Israel would concentrate on peaceful methods.

On the other hand, if Egypt is weak militarily it will be in a very bad position to negotiate peace. The result of negotiations will reflect this weakness. Egypt would be negotiating under duress, and Israel would have the upper hand in negotiating about the Palestinians.

This means it will never be a permanent peace. Egypt, itself, when it gets stronger or when things change, will say "No, I was forced to accept this under duress, this must be changed", and the whole thing will start again. There will either be another armed conflict or some sort of massive pressure will be needed to convince Israel to agree to new Egyptian demands.

The military help which the Americans are giving to the Egyptians now is far inferior to what they are giving to the Israelis. Take, for instance, the deal of the F-5s. What the hell do I need with F-5s. They're obsolete. They are giving them to the Yemen or to Ethiopia or Sudan!

The Israelis had F-5s about 10 years ago. Now, they give Egypt, the biggest and strongest country in the Arab world, 50 F-5s. And they give the Israelis the most sophisticated planes in the American arsenal. This is a mockery!

□ If there were a new President in Egypt, could Egypt once again seek arms and political support from the Soviet Union?

○ If President Sadat or a new President really applies a diversification policy, he could certainly obtain weapons from the Soviet Union which is a big source of weapons.

Diversification does not mean that Egypt only gets its weapons from France or from the United Kingdom or the United States. Diversification means that you get whatever you need – the best quality at the proper time and at the best price – all over the world.

□ Do you see any likelihood of the autonomy negotiations leading to any solution of the Palestinian problem?

○ It depends on what you mean by a solution of the Palestinian problem.

□ A solution which will be widely considered . . .

○ You are using very evasive words. Come to the point. Do you want to ask whether I believe autonomy will lead to a Palestinian state?

□ If that's the only solution that you see.

○ Yes. I don't see any permanent peace to the Middle East crisis unless the Palestinian problem is solved on the basis of restoring the full rights of the Palestinian people in the form of a homeland with territorial boundaries.

Once this state of Palestine is established I am not at all against this new state having some relations with Israel. It's up to them – federation, confederation, even if they decide to unite in a secular state. If they choose to have a political link with Jordan, it's up to them.

But let us understand each other very clearly. There will be no peace unless the Palestine problem is solved on the basis of a Palestine state.

□ But the Israelis are hinting at a somewhat different solution which many Egyptians I've spoken with don't seem to object to too strongly. If Jordan were controlled by the Palestinians politically, Israel could argue that the Palestinians had three-quarters of Palestine – the East Bank of the Jordan River – and the Jews, one-quarter – everything to the West of the River.

○ This means aggression against the Jordanian state. It means the Arabs and the Palestinians would relinquish their rights in Palestine. More importantly, the result of the Palestinisation of Jordan would be the Israelisation of the West Bank and Gaza. This is why the Israelis are promoting this idea, but this is not the solution. This is exactly what Begin and some American strategists are trying to do. But they are evading the main problem. This is impossible.

□ Why?

○ Because it attempts to solve the problem of the rights of one people at the expense of another people.

□ History's full of examples of such things. It might not be "just," but it might be a solution.

○ If this is a theoretical exercise I can extend it to many more things. Begin and his colleagues could go back again to Poland, Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Or, they could start shopping all over again for new ground and go to Madagascar or Libya or Uganda.

□ Do you think the treaty has greatly strengthened the Likud-Begin political forces in Zionism?

○ I don't believe that there is any difference between all these people. They have their old testament. They are trying to implement it by stages, by force, or influence all over the world.

□ But don't you see a difference between Labour, Mapam, Likud . . .

○ No difference. All this is semantics, believe me.

□ Are you afraid that after the treaty the Israelis may seek excuses for further expansion?

○ You see, Israeli expansion can be in different forms – war and armed conflict is just one way. And history taught us that they can create the conditions in which they can justify through the media that what they took was in self-defence. They can

either use physical means or complete penetration through various slogans like "peace," "open frontiers," "joint projects". And all what you hear now is this new vocabulary.

□ But it's not unwarranted penetration if Egypt welcomes these things. It's not Israeli expansion, it's something that the Egyptians – desire.

○ Yes, but I don't believe that the Egyptians do welcome this. I am sure that all the Egyptians, if they understood exactly what's going to happen, would never have accepted it. And the future will show you.

□ What do you expect when the



"I was the intermediary between the Americans and the PLO . . .

The process of negotiations started through me. This was a major step"

autonomy negotiations begin?

○ The whole process is a non-starter for the Palestinians. It is based on Begin's plan, which means, as you will see, that the Israelis will try to change the demographic composition of the West Bank and Gaza and they'll try to establish a massive number of new settlements. And this is why the framework agreed upon at Camp David is a non-starter, and is rejected by all the Arab countries without exception.

□ What about Sudan, Oman . . . ?

○ No, no, no. No exception. Go to Sudan yourself. Walk in the street. Speak to the people of Sudan, the responsible people. They will tell you exactly this.

The Israelis and the Americans claim that

they are very just and fair, that they believe in international law and common sense. So I have only one very simple proposal. Let us agree to have the West Bank and Gaza under international trusteeship, under the United Nations trusteeship. I formally propose a UN trusteeship for Palestine, namely the West Bank and Gaza, for two years.

□ You don't seriously think the Israelis would be interested in such a proposal, do you?

○ I said before, if they are interested in peace, in human rights, in justice, in international law, what is wrong with the UN having a trusteeship on Palestine? After two years there will be elections under international supervision. We give to the Palestinians – like anybody else – the right to say yes or no to their statehood. And I may add, to assure the Israelis of their own security. In addition, I propose that the new Palestine state, once it is established, declares its complete neutrality – another Switzerland.

□ No army, at least not a large one?

○ A security force composed of, let us say, 50,000. A security force to control its own territory and frontiers and so on. I make this concrete proposal for, if the Israelis are really honest, why should they fear an international trusteeship.

The Americans, the Russians, the French could serve on the Board of Transition too – the five permanent members. Anybody the Israelis want!

□ Many of the leaders of the Arab states have declared that the leaders of Egypt who have entered this treaty with Israel are "traitors". Do you share that view?

○ (long pause) No. Every politician takes decisions for one reason or another and tries hard to justify his position. Statesmen rarely declare they are wrong. But calling people bad names is not my style. History will judge whether the Arabs are wrong and President Sadat is correct.

□ You are busy writing your memoirs. What are you trying to accomplish?

○ I will try as honestly as possible to put on record my views and to try to rectify many misconceptions. This I will do at the proper time and for the sake of Egypt and for history in general.

President Carter and his Administration tried throughout 1977 to approach the Middle East crisis in its totality and they rejected the Kissinger policy. Vance was convinced that all parties should go to Geneva, and the process of contact with the PLO had already started.

But now a Palestinian state will not emerge unless either the geopolitics of the area change again or the Arabs use force to bring it about. I prefer an international effort with massive support from the American President.

SEPTEMBER 1979

Sadat's Tragic Mistake —an Interview With Ismail Fahmy, Egypt's Former Foreign Minister

Mark A. Bruzonsky



When Anwar el Sadat announced his "sacred mission" to Jerusalem in November, 1977, Ismail Fahmy resigned from his post as foreign minister. Today, Fahmy is writing his memoirs from his memento-filled apartment overlooking the Nile at Zamalek, a Cairo suburb. For five years Fahmy was Sadat's front man, opening and closing doors in both Moscow and Washington. Next to Sadat, Ismail Fahmy is the only Egyptian who knows the intimate details of how the world powers conducted their Middle East diplomacy from before the October War through Egypt's decision to make a unilateral arrangement with Israel.

A few months ago in Cairo Fahmy agreed to discuss Mideast developments with Worldview Associate Editor Mark Bruzonsky.

BRUZONSKY: When President Sadat first went to Israel, do you think he had in his mind to reach what most people consider to be a separate peace with the Israelis? Or did he just finally realize that this was the most he could get from the Israelis and the Americans?

FAHMY: One of the main reasons why I declined to join President Sadat [in his visit to Israel] is the fact that the only thing that could come from such a visit is a separate agreement, not any more than that. And this is why I resigned.

You saw no hope at all back in October, 1977, that there could be a psychological breakthrough and that the Israelis and the Americans would then really pursue a comprehensive settlement? You foresaw this separate agreement?

Certainly, because there was nothing else. There was no previous preparation for such an unusual step. I'm afraid people try for one reason or the other to justify major political steps on a psychological basis. But I don't believe that politicians become psychiatrists just like that. As a politician I deal with things on a pragmatic basis, especially when these things affect human lives, the future of a whole population, the national security of nations, of justice, of legalities, of international law, of treaties.

Even for the Israelis, if one would like even for a moment to play on this psychological guitar, it was one-sided. It was very clear that they cannot risk their own national security and their own philosophy just for the sake of psychological effect or psychological barriers. All these are inventions to justify one action or another.

When I deal with things, I deal with them as they are. I don't dream.

You negotiated with the new Carter administration for almost a year before you left the Egyptian Government. Why do you think the Carter administration acquiesced in the notion of a separate agreement after insisting so loudly that there be a comprehensive settlement and a Palestinian homeland?

First of all, President Carter and Cyrus Vance and their colleagues, right up to President Sadat's visit to Israel, were working very hard to have the Geneva Conference convened. And they were going to succeed! There is no doubt about it!

In holding the conference, you mean, but not necessarily in getting an agreement from the conference?

Sure. First they were going to have all the parties go to Geneva and sit and negotiate. And Geneva was going to be convened, almost definitely, sometime in the last week of December, 1977. And the Russians were going to participate. President Carter himself had prepared the whole thing—procedurally and substantively. You may recall that this Carter formula for Geneva—how it's going to be convened, who is going to attend, what questions are going to be discussed....And procedures, when they concern an important conference like Geneva, mean substance.

Concurrently, President Carter and Cyrus Vance negotiated for a long time with the Russians a framework for solving the Middle East crisis once and for all. Then the Joint Statement came on the first of October, 1977. So there was serious work being done already—finished—procedurally, which means substance too. And substantively with the Russians—the other co-chairman, the other superpower.

And as a result of this you had this famous Joint Statement on the first of October. What was this Joint Statement? Really it was the real framework for the comprehensive settlement with all parties concerned attending and the two co-chairmen, the two superpowers. And this is why President Carter and his colleagues were reluctant, at the very beginning when President Sadat went to Jerusalem, to go ahead and support his visit. After a little while they had no choice but to do it, to support President Sadat. But at the very beginning President Carter and his administration were not *fully* supporting the whole thing. They waited a little to watch things. But when they examined the pros and cons, they had no choice but to support it. Why?

Because here is the biggest Arab country in the area offering a separate peace with Israel. And why the hell should the Americans not profit from this, having in mind their own problems internally with the Jewish community and the Jewish lobby?

If Mr. Sadat knew that Geneva was to be convened in just a few months and that the Americans and the Russians were serious about pushing for a comprehensive settlement, then he must have intentionally desired to abort that process.

I don't know. What I know for sure is that I cannot

believe that President Carter, when he reached that stage in preparing Geneva and the Joint Statement with the Russians—I don't believe that they were beating around the bush.

Well, President Sadat must have known that by going to Israel he would set up separate negotiations and that the Geneva process would not continue. He must have realized that.

No. I don't share your opinion when you say that President Sadat did this intentionally to sabotage Geneva. I don't believe so. Because Egypt itself was cooperating with President Carter formally on the convening of Geneva. We were not against it. We even accepted the one Arab delegation and the whole Carter formula.

Is that how the PLO problem was going to be solved, with PLO people coming as part of the overall delegation?

Exactly. And before that you may remember again that President Carter took, in August, 1977, the unusual step of proposing that a formula be accepted by PLO leaders so that he and his administration could sit with PLO people. This was to overcome that very well-known difficulty with which the Carter administration found itself as a result of the Kissinger agreement with the Israelis. You recall, with the second disengagement of the Egyptian-Israeli front it was agreed that the Americans would not sit with the PLO without previous consultations with the Israelis.

President Carter had to overcome this. So in August, in conjunction with his moves to push everything toward a comprehensive agreement, he proposed a formula that could go around Kissinger's commitment to the Israelis and he could sit formally with the PLO in Washington. And this would have been really a historical thing. Not only historical politically, but legally and psychologically—if I may use this word you're very fond of.

I think your president is very fond of it.

This would be the real thing, the breakthrough of the sound barrier between the American administration on the highest level and the PLO. The U.S. is a superpower, and a superpower should sit with anybody, everybody, especially when the problems at issue are problems of war and peace, of human rights, of justice.

And I am very glad that President Carter himself very lately referred to this initiative which he took in August, 1977. And I was the intermediary between the Americans and the PLO people. What happened really was that the process was starting. And the PLO proposed another formula. And the Americans proposed another formula, a second formula. So the process of negotiations started through me on various formulae. This was a major step.

Do you understand what it meant? Suppose that we would have succeeded? And we *were* going to succeed with some formula. Do you understand the political and legal, and psychological even, meaning of the Americans sitting with the PLO?

You really think that in view of domestic U.S. politics

Carter would have been able to succeed and do that?

He took the initiative! I didn't ask him to do it. He knows exactly what he was doing. And he repeated it even two months ago.

But he also took the initiative of the U.S.-USSR Joint Statement back in 1977. And within two days he had to come out with another statement that largely abrogated the Joint Statement. The new U.S.-Israel "Working Paper" said many different things from what was in the Joint Statement.

What he said with Dayan [in the U.S.-Israel "Working Paper"], this was a bilateral thing. But the Joint U.S.-Russian Statement was intact, was going to be respected by the Americans and the Russians.

Even after the American Jews and the Israelis protested so effectively?

I was dead sure of it. Because I saw President Carter myself after that. And not only that. Up till this very minute I didn't hear any concrete statement to give any impression in one way or another—even after President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem—that the Americans were going back on what they have agreed with the Russians.

Yet statements are only one form of policy and actions are another. And the actions of the American Government do not seem compatible with the stated plans of the American Government in 1977.

But you know, ultimately, if there will be any comprehensive peace settlement, it will be within and in accordance with this statement. Which is amazing.

You consider that statement such an historic accomplishment between the Americans and the Soviets?

Globalwise, yes. I may disagree with some parts of it. But I am not a superpower. I am an interested party. We don't speak the same language. Our vision is completely different from the vision of a superpower. Our interests are different. Our commitments are different. Our dedication to principles is different. Small powers are completely different than superpowers.

Let me shift from the history to the treaty that was signed recently and ask you about the superpower interests.

*The treaty has a large military component for both Egypt and Israel. And there has been some discussion that the Americans are planning to buttress their military potential in the Middle East in three ways: *One*, by strengthening Israel as a potential arm of Western military might; *two*, by strengthening Egypt as a potential gendarme in North Africa and possibly other Middle East Areas; and *three*, by a Fifth Fleet plus the preparation of American interventionist forces.*

Do you believe that there is a large military component to this Egyptian-Israeli treaty?

[Long, unusual pause] So far as Israel is concerned, I believe the Americans paid a very high price. [Pause] And this will appear in the future, because it will backfire.

How? Why?

The only thing that really generates peace is to have a certain balance between the major countries of any region of the world. Even on the level of the superpowers, what is détente? Détente was the child of what is very well known as overkill, which the two superpowers have. If we imagine for a moment that one of the superpowers is very weak and the other is much stronger, there will be an imbalance in everything. There will be a big temptation for the strongest superpower to do whatever it wants to do. Even to the extent of hitting or committing aggressive acts against the other, the weaker, superpower.

The same thing applies on the regional level. How? If Israel realizes that Egypt alone, militarily speaking, is not that weak and that in any armed conflict between Israel and Egypt there will be a lot of damage to Israel, automatically Israel will behave. And automatically Israel will think a hundred times before taking any preemptive war or any provocative move or even threat to use force. The net result of this is that Israel will divert its attention from physical misuse of force to the peaceful ways and means of how to reach peace.

The same thing applies as far as Egypt is concerned. If it is in a weak position militarily speaking, Egypt will be in a very bad position even when it negotiates peaceful conditions. The result of any negotiations between Israel and Egypt under conditions most favorable to Israel will reflect this weakness, this big difference. In other words, Egypt would be negotiating under duress, not free. So Israel will have a say in negotiating about the Palestinians. So this would be an unusual situation, the result of which would be a paper in favor of one side completely and against the other side almost completely.

The meaning of this is that it would never be a permanent peace. Egypt itself, when it got stronger or as things changed, would stand and say "No, I was forced to accept this under duress, this must be changed." The Israelis would say "No," and the whole thing would start again, and either you would have another armed conflict or some sort of a massive pressure would convince Israel to agree to the new Egyptian demands for rectification of the wrongs that were done as a result of this imbalance in power.

In fact, the military help the Americans are giving to the Egyptians now is far inferior to what they are giving to the Israelis. Take, for instance, the deal of the F-5s. What the hell do I need with the F-5s? They're obsolete. They are giving it to the Yemen now or to Ethiopia or to Sudan. But Egypt is not Yemen or Sudan or Ethiopia! Haile Selassie use to have the F-5s! The Israelis used to have the F-5s about ten years ago! They give me now, Egypt, the biggest and strongest country in the Arab world, fifty F-5s! And they give the Israelis the most sophisticated airplanes in the American arsenal. This is a mockery! This is not American military help! This means a dictate on Egypt to keep Egypt as it is militarily or to put Egypt backward ten years!

If there should be a new president of Egypt, does Egypt retain the option of returning to a policy where arms and political support could be sought from the USSR?

President Sadat, or the new president of Egypt if he follows the policy of President Sadat, if he applies really, literally, this diversification policy, should certainly obtain, if he can, weapons from the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is one of the big sources of weapons. Diversification does not mean that Egypt gets its weapons only from France or from the United Kingdom or the United States. Diversification, if it means anything, means that you get whatever you need—the best quality at the proper time and at the best price—all over the world. You go shopping for the best airplane that suits your own purposes, which your enemy doesn't have, which could be delivered to you as quickly as possible, and in terms most appropriate for you and the prices nice.

The Soviets will never supply Sadat again with weapons. And who would pay for them?

You didn't ask whether the Soviets will give Sadat or a specific person weapons. We're not talking about personalities. You asked me a simple question—that, after President Sadat, do you think that Egypt will get weapons from the Soviet Union? And my answer was very clear. That the policy of diversification—which President Sadat himself proclaimed—means, if I understand it correctly, that Egypt looks for the best arms it wants from all over the world. He didn't say that he is making diversification only to buy from the French or from the Americans. He didn't say, "I'll buy from everybody but not the Russians."

Your answer to this next question seems implicit from what you've already said, but I'll ask it in a neutral way anyway. Do you see any likelihood, any possibility, any reasonable hope, that the autonomy negotiations can lead to any form of solution to the Palestinian problem?

Depends on what you mean by solution of the Palestinian problem.

Solution which will be widely considered....

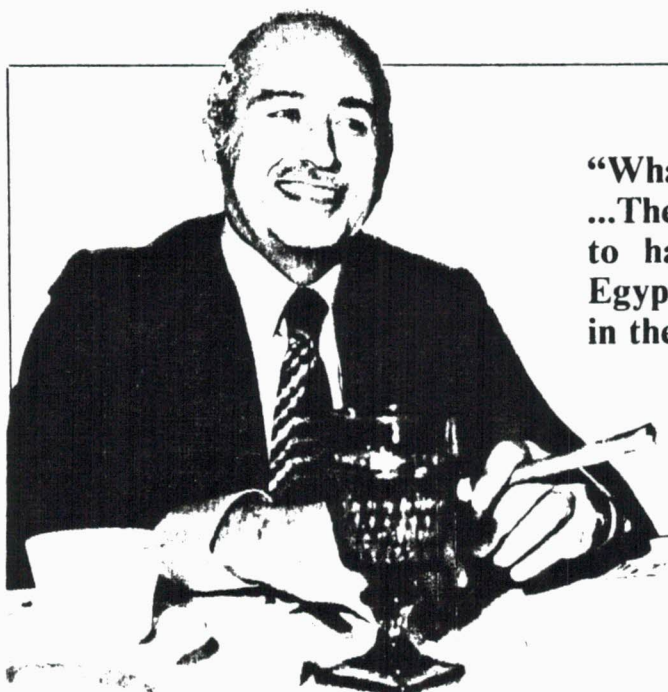
Now you are going around and using very evasive words. Come to the point. You want to ask whether I believe this autonomy will lead to a Palestinian state. Right?

If that's the only solution that you see.

Yes. I don't see any permanent peace in the Middle East crisis unless the Palestinian problem is solved on the basis of restoring the full rights of the Palestinian people in the form of a homeland with territorial boundaries. In other words, to give back the Palestinians their statehood. Without the establishment of a state of Palestine, there will be no peace in this area.

Now once you have this state of Palestine established I am not against it at all if this new Palestine state chooses to have some relations with Israel. It's up to them—federation, confederation, even if they decide to unite in a secular state—it's up to them. I'm not against it. If they choose to have this political link with Jordan, it's up to them. But let us understand each other very clearly. There will be no peace unless the Palestine problem is solved on the basis of a Palestine state. This is my opinion. I may be wrong.

But the Israelis are hinting at a somewhat different solution, which many Egyptians I've spoken with don't seem to object to too strongly. If King Hussein did not rule in Amman, if Jordan were in fact controlled by Palestinians politically, then the Israelis could argue that the 1922 division of Palestine by the British has been validated, that the Palestinians now have three-fourths of Palestine (the East Bank of the Jordan River) and the Jews have one-quarter (everything to the west of the river) and that



"What the hell do I need with the F-5s? ...They're obsolete....Haile Selassie used to have the F-5s!...They give me now, Egypt, the biggest and strongest country in the Arab world, fifty F-5's!..."

there is a Palestinian state. Isn't this a possible solution?

You see, we can write a book both of us, you and me, about the various solutions and various failures and various interpretations. Then we reenter automatically into the very strange and huge encyclopedia of the Middle East.

Every problem here in the Middle East—every problem—has a big dictionary, alone. If we go like this, we will never find a solution. It is easy to say, for instance, why the hell this big noise is made. The Jordan is there. The majority are Palestinians. Have the Palestinian state in Jordan.

Many people do say that. Especially in Israel.

Yes, in Israel. Why? Because this automatically means an aggression on the Jordanian state. Second, that the Arabs and the Palestinians relinquish to Israel their own rights in Palestine itself. More important. The result of the Palestinization of Jordan is the Israelization of the West Bank and Gaza. This is why the Israelis are promoting this idea, but this is not the solution.

Now just think very seriously about what I've told you about the Palestinization of Jordan and the Israelization of the West Bank and Gaza. This is exactly what Begin is trying to do and what some of the American strategists are trying to do. But they are running from the main problem. This couldn't happen. Impossible.

Why?

Because this attempts to solve the problem—the rights of people—at the expense of other people. And only to please the Israelis.

History's full of examples of such things happening. It might not be "just," but it might be a solution.

If this is a mental exercise, I can go with you and stretch it to many more things. One of them, that Mr. Begin himself and his colleagues can go back again to Poland and Germany and France and United Kingdom. Or, they can start all over again shopping for new ground and go to Madagascar or even to Libya or Uganda. If you want to have a mental exercise—a nice one—you can start all over again and try to dismantle the Zionist theory.

Let me ask you about Zionist theory and Zionist politics. Do you think the treaty has greatly strengthened the Likud-Begin political forces in Zionism? Has the right wing of Zionism....

I don't believe that there is any difference between all those people. They have their old testament. They are trying to implement it by stages, by force, or by influence all over the world. They succeeded, succeeded for the first time in their life to have Egypt, the United States, and the European countries—and especially Egypt—agree for the first time to have an Israeli state in the area.

But you don't see a difference between Labor, Mapam, Likud....

No difference. All this is semantics. Believe me.

Then you didn't mind that President Carter went to pray at the grave of Jabotinsky?

He didn't take my permission. He didn't ask my opinion.

Because I know many Jewish persons, including myself, who felt that Carter's praying at the grave of Jabotinsky was an act of ideological idiocy. And I'm rather struck by the fact that almost all Egyptians—and here you and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Butros Ghali have the same opinion—are not sensitive to the serious ideological differences that exist within Jewish-Israeli politics.

Who said so?

Because you think they're all about the same.

Sure, as far as their own state in Palestine and their expansion in the area, they are all the same. All of them are implementing the Zionist dream.

Are you afraid that after this treaty—after Egypt has opted out of this conflict—that the Israelis may look for excuses for further expansion?

You see, Israeli expansion could be done in different forms—physically through war and armed conflict from time to time is just one way. History taught us that they can create the conditions and the explanations and the atmosphere and the press media and, and, and, and to justify that what they took was in self-defense.

So now by physical action or by complete penetration through various slogans like "peace," "open frontiers," "joint projects." And all that you hear now is this new vocabulary.

But it's not unwarranted penetration if Egypt welcomes these things, welcomes open borders, welcomes joint projects. It's not Israeli expansion, it's something that the Egyptians—or at least some of the Egyptians—desire.

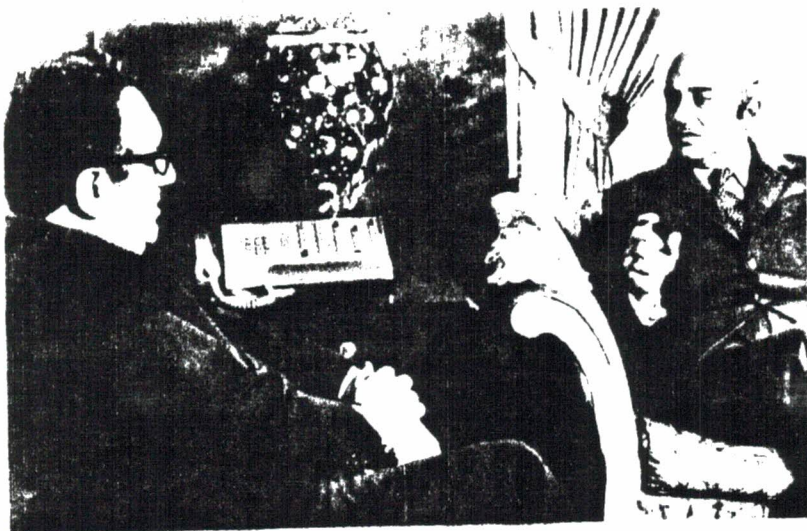
Yes, but, you know...I don't believe that the Egyptians are welcoming this. I differ with you completely—not with you personally, but with what you are saying.

I, for instance, I am dead sure that all the Egyptians, if they understood exactly what's going to happen, they would never have accepted it. And the future will show you.

What do you expect when the autonomy negotiations begin? Do you expect them to drag on for months or to break down or what?

For years, you know, this is a non-starter, the whole process for the Palestinians. Because it was based already on Begin's plan, which means, as you will see, that the Israelis will try either to change the demographic composition of the West Bank and Gaza and they'll try to plant a massive number of new settlements. And this is why the framework which was agreed upon at Camp David is a non-starter, as I told you. And this is why it is rejected by all the Arab countries *without any* exception whatsoever.

What about Sudan, Oman...?



No, no, no. No exception. I don't count those countries. Go to Sudan yourself. Walk in the street. Speak to the people of Sudan, the responsible people, they will tell you exactly this. Go and see.

My view is that if the Israelis and the Americans are really sincere about profiting from this new atmosphere, and if the Israelis are really sincere about solving the Palestinian problem.... They claim that they are very sophisticated. And they are. They claim that they are very just, fair, that they believe in international law and common sense. So I have only one simple, very simple proposal.

As a result of whatever President Sadat did and this new atmosphere, and having in mind President Carter's human rights proposals and beliefs, it's very simple. Let us agree—and this is a concrete proposal—to have the West Bank and Gaza under international trusteeship, under the United Nations trusteeship. For five years. No. I formally—if I can propose anything formally—I propose a U.N. trusteeship for Palestine, namely the West Bank and Gaza, for two years.

You don't seriously think the Israelis are interested in such a proposal, do you?

I said before, if they are serious, if they are interested in peace, in human rights, in justice, in international law, what is wrong with the U.N. having a trusteeship on Palestine and after two years there will be elections under international supervision?

We give to the Palestinians—like anybody else—the right to say yes or no about their statehood, about their new state. And, I may add, to assure the Israelis of their own security. You see, on the one hand they say we can beat everybody, all the Arabs together. On the other hand they say we are a small country, we are weak, the Arabs are going to swallow us.

This is not true, you know. At any rate, in addition to what I told you, and this is a concrete thing, I propose that the new Palestine state, once it is established, declare its neutrality completely—a neutral, another Switzerland.

No army, at least not a large one?

A security force composed of, let us say, fifty thousand. A security force to observe its own territory and frontiers and so on. After that, whether this new Pales-

tine state would like to have a linkage with the Jordanians, it's OK, it's up to them. If they want to have this linkage with Israel, it's up to them. After all, the Palestinian original position is that they are ready to live with Israelis—Christians, Moslems, and Jews under one roof.

So, they are not very bad people, the Palestinians! But I make this concrete proposal so if the Israelis are really honest, why should they fear an international trusteeship? And the Americans and the Russians and the French would serve on the Board of Transition too—the five permanent members, OK? Anybody the Israelis want!

Let me ask you about Arab politics. Many of the leaders of the Arab states—prime ministers, kings—have declared that the leaders of Egypt who have entered this treaty with Israel are "traitors." Do you share that view?

[Long pause] No. You see, I mean, I have never called people bad names. Every politician takes decisions for one reason or another and tries hard to justify his positions. Very rare that statesmen declare they are wrong. But calling people bad names is not my brand. Every politician takes his decisions according to his own circumstances. History will judge if maybe all the Arabs are wrong and President Sadat is correct. Nobody can judge this now. The future will judge.

You are busy writing your memoirs. What are you trying to accomplish?

I will try as fair and honestly as possible to put on record my views and to try to straighten many misconceptions. This I will do at the proper time and for the sake of Egypt and for the sake of history at large.

President Carter and his administration were consumed throughout 1977 to approach the Middle East crisis in its totality, and they refused all efforts to have any new steps like the Kissinger policy. Vance was convinced all parties must be there at Geneva. And the process of contact with the PLO had already started.

Now a Palestinian state will not emerge unless either the geopolitics of the area change again or the Arabs use force to bring it about. But I prefer international efforts with massive support from the American president.

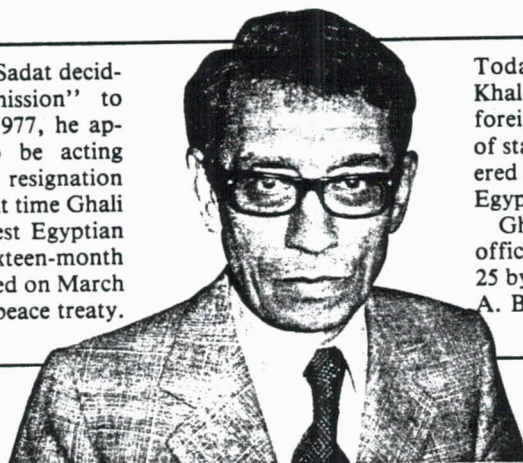
WORLDVIEW

**“The Palestinians Will Have Their
Independence!”**

**—an Interview With Butros Ghali, Egypt's
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs**

Mark A. Bruzonsky

When President Anwar el Sadat decided upon his “sacred mission” to Jerusalem in November, 1977, he appointed Butros Ghali to be acting foreign minister after the resignation of Ismail Fahmy. Since that time Ghali has been one of the highest Egyptian officials involved in the sixteen-month negotiations that culminated on March 26 in the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.



Today Prime Minister Mustapha Khalil also holds the portfolio of foreign minister and Ghali is minister of state for foreign affairs. It is considered likely that Ghali will be appointed Egypt's ambassador to Israel.

Ghali was interviewed in Cairo at his office in the foreign ministry on April 25 by *Worldview* associate editor Mark A. Bruzonsky.

BRUZONSKY: Let me ask you first what is probably the most important question. Do you feel Egypt has more or less leverage over Israel on the crucial Palestinian issue now that there is a peace between Egypt and Israel?

GHALI: I believe that now that there is peace Egypt will have more leverage than before.

Why? So many experts disagree with you.

Because through normalization of the relations between Egypt and Israel—before there were no relations, so there was no leverage. Now we will have more leverage.

In other words, when I had no close relations at all between Egypt and country A, I had no leverage on country A. But if I have relations with country A, I can stop them. I can just discuss with them, I can put pressures—asking more and asking less. The fact that I have relations with a country offers me leverage on this country. If I have no relations at all, I have no leverage.

Usually leverage is considered—in a *Realpolitik* sense—to be a factor of economic, political, and military power. If Egypt has given up the military option, if it has already given Israel normalization of

relations politically, and if it has entered into economic relations, how can it have more power over Israel than before?

No, I'm sorry. I will have power over, leverage over Israel according to this normalization of relations.

You think simply by arguing or presenting your case to the Israelis they will come to understand it and agree?

No, not just by arguing it will they accept it. The normalization is in my hands. They are not interested so much in, let us say, the “formal” peace. The Israelis are interested in moving from peace-keeping to peace-building. So they want to build peace. My leverage is that it will be impossible to build the peace unless we find a solution to the Palestinian problems. There will be no real normalization—in the real sense of normalization, like between France and Germany—unless there is a solution on the Palestinian question.

So if there is not a solution, if the negotiations do not go forward successfully, if they break down, will you withhold normalization of relations with Israel?

I would not put it in such a white and black position, but certainly this will be a major impediment to any good normalization of relations between Egypt and Israel.

But it will not necessarily prevent the process from going forward.

It certainly *will* prevent the process from going forward.

It will prevent it?

Certainly, yes. So this is the real leverage, and the Israelis know it. We discuss it very frankly.

Well, many Israelis I've discussed this with assure me that they will never allow the Palestinians to have a homeland. Never.

They have assured you that they will never leave Sharm el Sheikh, that Sharm el Sheikh is essential for their defense, and that all the security of Israel is based on Sharm el Sheikh.

They assured that they need a strip of land and a road from Israel to Sharm el Sheikh. They have assured that according to Zionist ideology, if a settlement had been built somewhere, this land belonged to them. They have assured you—Ben-Gurion in the cabinet—that the Sinai was always a part of Israel. And the position was adopted in 1957 by the Knesset concerning, let us say, the *anschluss* of the Sinai to Israel.

So you think the analogy can be made between Israeli attitudes toward Sinai and Israeli attitudes toward Samaria and Judea, as they now call the West Bank?

Without doubt! The same principles which are applied there will be applied if the Palestinians accept to enter in the process of negotiations.

And are you familiar with Herut ideology, the ideology in which *Eretz Yisrael*...?

But, this, this, this Herut ideology was saying that it is impossible to leave Yamit!*

No, that's not correct.

It isn't? Herut? According to the ideology, any new settlement that is constructed is in Israel.

I apologize for having to correct you on this, but for Herut *Eretz Yisrael* includes Judea and Samaria and the present-day Israel and actually Jordan too. But not Sinai.

Maybe you are right. I'm not sure myself. But according to what I read about the Herut program, there was a demand for partition of the Sinai.

For my purpose I believe that sooner or later we will obtain a Palestinian entity in the West Bank and Gaza.

I'm sure you are familiar with the Knesset debate in which the leaders of Begin's party assured the Israeli people that the attitude they had taken toward Sinai could never be taken toward the West Bank.

Yes.

You think this is just rhetoric on their part?

I don't think it's just rhetoric. But when you are in discussions, you need certain phrases to be used in your internal policy.

What were your feelings when President Carter went to the grave of Vladimir Jabotinsky and prayed for him?**

[Pause] I think it was just an event among different other events.

It wasn't troubling to you that Mr. Carter by his actions was legitimizing the most intransigent elements in Zionism?

I think you can be intransigent at the beginning of your life and change yourself at the end of your life.

Like Mr. Begin?

I have not said this. You can do this.

Let me ask you about the military aspects of the agreement. It's difficult for many people to understand that now that you've made peace with Israel—which was your primary enemy and the only real threat to you in the region—Egypt is strengthening its armed forces and requiring from the United States greater amounts of sophisticated weaponry. What is the reason that a peace agreement must be buttressed by so much military force?

If you have a SALT agreement between the two superpowers, or an entente between the two superpowers, in spite of this both of them have continued to have armaments. There is no incompatibility between peace and between having your own security and your own armaments. On the contrary, you need a kind of equilibrium of forces to reenforce the formal agreements.

Are you afraid that the agreement might break down and that there's still the possibility of a war in the future so you must remain strong and ready?

If you are a man dealing with security, you cannot take any kinds of risk. You must have a strong army.

What about the U.S. efforts to build up its military forces in the area? There will be a Fifth Fleet, there will be more American forces, and it's been reported that 100,000 American soldiers are being trained for possible intervention around the world and specifically in the Middle East. Do you endorse this American build-up?

We don't endorse this American policy or policies. We believe in nonalignment. When the Americans offered us a kind of memorandum—exchange of notes—as was done with Israel, we refused it because our policy is based on a policy of nonalignment. We don't want to have any; we refuse to give any military facilities to the Americans. Our policy will continue to be the policy of nonalignment.

And again, you are exaggerating a lot about the

*Yamit is an Israeli town south of the Gaza strip along the Mediterranean coast from which the Israelis have agreed to withdraw at a later stage in the implementation of the Egypt-Israel peace agreement.

**Jabotinsky is the founder of Revisionist Zionism and the Herut movement.

American presence. The American presence was always there in the region for the last twenty-five years. I don't believe that there will be more. Maybe they are talking more about it, but I don't believe you have a great difference in the American presence.

The PLO. Do you continue to consider the PLO to be the legitimate representative of the Palestinians?

We believe that the PLO can play a very important role in the next step of the negotiations.

And would you advocate that Yasir Arafat be invited to a separate seat, to a separate delegation for the Palestinians?

At what step? At the second step?

When the autonomy negotiations begin.

Yes, it depends what will be the relation between the PLO and the United States. It depends what will be the new policy of the PLO. It is an academic question to put it like this. You want this to have a headline in the newspaper....

The real problem is that we believe the PLO can play an important role in the process of the negotiations—directly. We believe that contact between the PLO and the U.S. would be very important.

If Israel refuses unalterably to accept members of the PLO, would you then advocate other Palestinian participants?

Again, you must return to the agreement of Camp David. According to the agreement of Camp David, negotiations will begin one month after exchange of the documents of ratification, and we can have in our delegation representatives from the West Bank and Gaza. And this is the first step. So you can have people from the West Bank and Gaza belonging to the PLO. There is no objection.

Do you feel isolated now that Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries have broken relations?

I can assure you that we will continue to have relations with different, other Arab countries. But for special reasons they say "Please don't mention the relations existing between us and Egypt."

But at the formal level, at the diplomatic level, at the level of normal bilateral relations...?

If you know well the history of inter-Arab relations in the last thirty years, this is not the first time and this will not be the last time in which you'll have such confrontations among Arab states. Now you have exactly the same thing that happened after 1961, after the end of the union between Egypt and Syria.

You don't think this is more serious?

No, we had exactly the same dispute in 1948, after the first Arab armistice agreement with the State of Israel. And the dispute was exactly for the same reason. Because we were for the creation of the Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza and the Hashemites were against it. And then the Arab world

was divided into two groups. And this confrontation took two years.

Do you consider Jimmy Carter to be a strong American president?

I have no comment on this question. I just can say that he has played a very important role in the process of negotiations which we've had together from Camp David #1 to Camp David #2 til the signature of the peace treaty plus the negotiations at Blair House.

If you can't comment directly on his strength, can you comment on how secure you feel that, if there should be another American president, he would continue and fulfill the promises that he has made to you?

I believe that the real problem is that we must put all our energy on our own strength rather than to think about relations with the United States or relations with the Soviet Union or relations with Europe. Egypt by itself can solve its own problems and Egypt by itself could find a solution to the Palestinian problem.

But your president for many years has said that the Americans have 99 per cent of the cards when it comes to the Palestinian issue. Now are you saying that you, Egypt, have 99 per cent of the cards?

No, I'm saying the 99 per cent to solve the Middle East crisis, which is what we have obtained now. As to the second step of the negotiations, concerning the full autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza, certainly the Americans will play a very important role. But what is more important is the role that Egypt will play in this kind of negotiations. And we come back to the problem of the leverage on the Israelis. We have today more leverage than before.

The question of leverage again. For thirty years the strategy of the Arab world was to deny Israel a place in the Middle East unless....

This was the wrong strategy. The result was that in thirty years we've obtained nothing, while Israel, from the partition on, has taken every year some more land. This was the wrong policy. And this is the problem: The Arabs take time to understand this drastic change. We believe that we'll obtain more from the Israelis through a kind of permanent dialogue and through normalization of the relations between our two countries and through the leverage we will obtain through this normalization than through military confrontation every five or six years in which the Israelis have at least a kind of guarantee from the U.S.

You are a man with deep awareness of Arab history and Arab affairs. How does it affect you when leaders of other Arab countries or responsible publications brand what has happened as "traitorous" and brand the individuals responsible, including yourself, as "traitors" to the Arab cause? It must have a personal effect. You don't agree, I'm sure, but it must cause you a certain anxiety.

No anxiety at all.

You don't respect any of the people who have used these terms?

No, I just say they need time to understand the future gain, to look to different historical precedents. I think anybody who is trying to obtain reconciliation between two states in war at the beginning will be accused of betrayal, just as happened during the French decolonization of Algeria. This is normal. I can give you hundreds of precedents. And I don't believe it is a main difficulty.

If King Hussein were not on the throne in Amman, and if a Palestinian leadership were in control of the East Bank of the Jordan River, and if the Israelis said that this is the Palestinian state and the British illegally partitioned Mandate Palestine in 1922, what would be ...?

I have no comment on this question.

On such an important question?

Yes.

It seems to many people one of the crucial questions that will have to be dealt with, though.

I am, after all, minister of state for foreign affairs. I cannot just discuss with a journal what would happen if King Hussein is not there. This would create difficulties.

Others, including Hussein, feel free to discuss your situation.

I have no comment on this question.

President Sadat once said that he did not have to go to Jerusalem in order to obtain the return of Sinai for Egypt. And yet, in the minds of many people, that is the result of his efforts. Has there been some change ...?

Those many people are wrong! If it was just obtaining the Sinai, this could have been obtained. And I was

involved from the first day of the negotiations to the last day of the negotiations; I participated in all negotiations from the trip to Jerusalem to the signing of the treaty. If it was only the Sinai, this could have been obtained on the 25th of December, 1977 [at the Ismailia summit meeting]. The fact that we have continued during one year and a half proves that we are not interested only in the Sinai, but we were trying to obtain something for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

You don't think that the "Begin Plan" for autonomy offered in December, 1977, is similar to what has been achieved in this treaty?

Not at all. I completely disagree.

Could you give me the specific differences?

I don't want to enter into detail. But I just want to confirm to you that there is no relation between the two, without entering into detail.

Well, I've read both the Begin Plan and the treaty....

Then I advise you to read them again. Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the Parliament I detailed the rights of the Palestinians to get an entity. *The future of the West Bank is not in the hands of the Israelis, but belongs to an international treaty.* We can enter into a hundred technical details to show this.

I'm still not sure what is so different about what Begin eventually agreed to and what he proposed in December, 1977. Now Mr. Yosef Burg will be leading the Israeli negotiators and will endorse the "full autonomy" Begin put forward back then.

We are sure that we will obtain for the Palestinians the right of self-determination. We will obtain for the Palestinians a Palestinian entity, and at the last step the Palestinians decide by themselves what they want to do with their rights. If they want to create a Pales-

"If you know well the history of inter-Arab relations in the last thirty years, this is not the first time and this will not be the last time in which you'll have such confrontations among Arab states."

tinian state, they will have a Palestinian state. If they just want a federation between them and Jordan, they may have a federation. Our role will be finished when they will have the right to express themselves and to decide what they want to do on their own.

And what if they say to you they want nothing to do with your negotiations?

We believe that at the second stage of our negotiations they will decide to participate.

I can't recall many historical experiences where everything seemed to be based only on "hope."

What is your age?

I'm thirty-one.

I'm fifty-seven. I remember the decolonization process step-by-step. I was in contact with Ben Bella. I saw the decolonization of the Arabs. And I'm sure as I'm talking to you [pounds table] that what has been obtained for Algeria, that what has been obtained for different Afro-Asian countries, will be obtained for the Palestinians; in spite of all the declarations of Israel, in spite of all the attitudes of the Arab rejectionists and the Israeli rejectionists which have created an alliance among themselves—an objective alliance if you want to use this Marxist terminology. I'm sure that in the next one or two years you will have a Palestinian entity.

Despite Zionist ideology, you think it's simply a pragmatic problem?

I don't say it is a pragmatic.... We will solve it as a pragmatic problem. If you just read what was the ideological position of Charles de Gaulle about the French Empire. If you read all the ideology which has been written about the White Man's Burden in Africa just forty or fifty years ago, you'd say it was impossible that all the Third World would obtain its independence. In spite of all this ideology they have obtained their independence. *There is an irreversible movement for independence all over the world. You cannot keep under a military occupation more than a million Palestinians. Sooner or later they will have their independence.* Sooner or later they will have their entity. How this entity will work in the general framework of the Middle East—in association with the Jordanians, in association with the Israelis—I don't know. But they will have their own entity and they will have the way to express their right of self-determination.

And you believe that Egypt has the right to take unilateral decisions about the future of the Palestinians?

No, we have never said that. Again, I'm sorry, you have not read your Camp David agreements. We never said that we have this right. What we are saying is that we are just helping the Palestinians to put their leg on the horse, as is said in French.

We are just helping the Palestinians. We are offering to the Palestinians a framework. We have done the

same with Sudan, exactly. We were negotiating with the British even about the Sudan, and this is how they obtained their independence. This has been done in different parts. You can have long discussions with all the different parts. We did this for Libya in 1948. Nobody knows this history. Libya was supposed to be divided into three regions. And who was behind Libya? It was Egypt at the United Nations.

We are doing exactly the same.

At the last stage it is not we who will decide. It will be the Palestinians.

Or maybe the Israelis?

No, the Palestinians, not the Israelis. The Palestinians with the agreement of the Israelis. We have decided to do this through peaceful means. And furthermore, if the Palestinians will refuse at the end in the last stage, then we can do nothing. They have to accept.

So if this process does not go successfully forward and the Palestinians do not cooperate, then you will blame the Palestinians?

No, we will not blame the Palestinians because we will have more negotiations, and we know that *sooner or later the Palestinians will cooperate because we know it is in their real interests to cooperate and to work through this process. Because they have no other alternative.*

I appreciate your talking to me. I know this is a difficult time and a busy time. You must be exceedingly busy.

No, I remember quite well your two visits in Cairo in October, 1977. But you are not happy about this peace?

Well, I'm sure from the questions I've asked you realize I have many doubts.

I'll tell you. You see, we are at the beginning of a long process. You must not do like the Arab rejectionists or like the Israeli rejectionists to say this is bad. Let us give a chance to this process in the next six months. Then we can have again a good conversation. And I will tell you with great humility that you were right and I was wrong.

Now, as we are in the beginning of the process, I believe that you are wrong and that I am right.... We know that at the final stage we will have a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.... Believe me. You will have a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. It will take maybe more than one year, but you will have this.

And if not?

There is no "if not." You will have it! I'm sure of this. You see it is like a belief here. You cannot have a discussion with somebody who says "I don't believe in the existence of paradise; it doesn't exist." He asks, "How do you prove it?" I say, "No, I believe. I believe in God." So I'm believing that you will have a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. **WV**