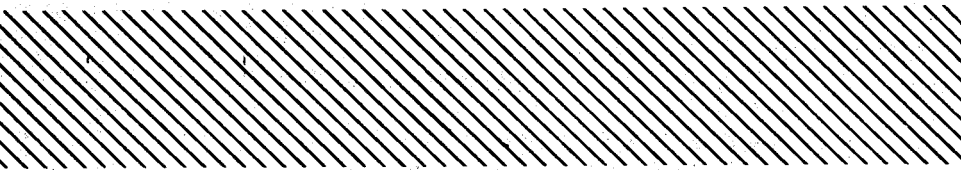


# **Problems of American Policy-Makers In the Middle East**

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# I

## Old/New Problem

As something other than a neophyte, there is in my opinion no problem in the whole spectrum of American foreign policy in which it is more hazardous to challenge the consensus than the problems of our country in the Middle East and particularly in the context of Arab-Israeli-United States relations. There is a certain degree of being "in" insofar as dissent on Vietnam is concerned. It is possible to rationalize the moralities and take a pragmatic view about the white settlers in Rhodesia and still not be excommunicated. You may, if you are so minded, find acceptable excuses for apartheid in South Africa. You may advocate a more lenient or flexible American policy with respect to the present government of Mainland China and you may, with reasonable degree of impunity, express reservations about Chiang and Formosa. If you stop short of canonizing Castro or Che Guevera you are fairly safe in being critical of the vestiges of United Fruit Company policies in our relations with Latin America. It is even possible to raise a doubt about the strategic or tactical maneuverings of NATO with respect to the future of Europe. All of these terrifyingly complicated and profoundly important issues are fair game for debate in political campaigns, in the great freedom of the American press, in the full-color exposure of the pundits of world affairs who are electronically photographed every weekday between 7 and 7:30 p.m. in the Eastern time zone.

But none of the rules, no margin for error, no sense of humor and above all no striking, basic dissent from United States policy in the Middle East, particularly in the Arab-Israel controversy, is really acceptable as an act of gentility, of knowledge, of participation in the newest American game of dialogue.

Some of you may have seen in The New York Times for October 5, the full-page advertisement for an organization called NEED,<sup>1</sup> which was a response to the tragedy in the Middle East following the Israeli military victory in June. NEED is guided by some very imposing names in American business and finance, including people like David Rockefeller, John McCloy, General Lucius Clay, Dwight Eisenhower, Lewis Straus. It raises money from equally prestigious people for Arab refugees. But unlike the incessant campaigns in support of Zionism and Israel, NEED campaigns with a minimum of public attention. The full-page advertisement was a departure, but not a serious or question-raising departure. For only an already informed reader would have guessed the several hundred words in the text of this full-page ad referred to Arabs--the refugees, the victims of the Middle East war who are to be the beneficiaries of NEED; or that the country which probably will benefit most from the beneficences of NEED will be the Arab Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Neither the word Arab nor the sovereignty of Jordan was mentioned in this "fervent" appeal for funds.

If it is any consolation, the problem is not new. A decade ago, Dr. George Lenczowski, one of America's most reliable students of Middle Eastern affairs, in a standard work on the area, described the zigging and zagging of United States policy on the "Palestine" problem. At that time Dr. Lenczowski said:<sup>2</sup>

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1 Near East Emergency Donations

2 The Middle East in World Affairs, George Lenczowski, Second Edition, Cornell University Press, Ithaca. N.Y., 1956, p. 350.

These twists in American policy were to a large extent due to the division of responsibility between the White House and Department of State. While the latter was concerned with the Middle East as a whole, the former tended to treat the Zionist problem in isolation from the rest of the area and as a factor of domestic politics; hence the inconsistencies. The White House prevailed on all important occasions, and despite its tortuous ways American diplomacy could generally be described as pro-Israeli.

Nor was the opinion limited to ex post facto judgments of historians. At least as early as 1944--four years before the State of Israel was established--United States Ambassadors in the Middle East were cabling Washington to be wary of surrender to Zionist pressures.<sup>3</sup> And in the frenzied politics of the 1947-48 campaign, James Forrestal, then our first Secretary of Defense, cautioned eloquently about the distortions of American national interests in the Middle East due to domestic political pressures on the major parties. At one point he recorded in his diaries that he had told then Secretary of State James Byrnes:

...I thought it was a most disastrous and regrettable fact that the foreign policy of this country was determined by the contributions a particular bloc of special interests might make to the party funds.<sup>4</sup>

And for an even more recent examination of these

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3 See Foreign Relations of the United States, 1944, Volume V, The Near East, South Asia, Africa and the Far East, United States Government Printing Office, 1965, pp. 560-660.

4 The Forrestal Diaries, edited by Walter Millis, The Viking Press, New York, 1951, p. 347. See also pp.

pressures--and a detailed exposure of how they are brought about in American life--there are 300 pages of testimony given under oath, in 1963, to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States Senate.<sup>5</sup> The testimony makes fascinating reading. Roughly, 5 million dollars were spent over a period of about seven years, which were under examination, in activities which can be described only as those of unregistered foreign agents.<sup>6</sup> Not the least interesting of these disclosures is that substantial parts of these not insignificant funds were originally tax-deductible contributions to the United Jewish Appeal. They had been given for the most part innocently enough, in response to charitable appeals in behalf of distress immigration to Israel. But they had been transmitted back to the United States, through what Senator Fulbright called "conduits," to support Israeli press services, to buy chairs of supposed teaching and research at distinguished American universities, to finance trips to Israel for news media people and clergymen, as only examples of a full inventory of astute propaganda services and indoctrination.

It must be clear, therefore, that in a democracy where enlightened public opinion is essential for the formulation and implementation of a rational foreign policy, one of the first problems confronting American policy-makers for the Middle East is this long history of formidable pro-Zionist and pro-Israeli propaganda.

It is only the part of candor to admit that the statement I have just made can be described as slanted, loaded, implying something other than the best inter-

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5 Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 88th Congress, First Session, "Activities of Non-Diplomatic Representatives of Foreign Principals in the United States," U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963, Part 9 and Part 12, May 23 and August 1, 1963.

6 *Ibid.*, Part 9, pp. 1403-1410.

ests of the United States is at the heart and core of Zionist and Israeli propaganda. Indeed, one of the consistent aberrations of American public opinion with respect to Middle Eastern affairs is the almost unchallenged assumption that what is good for Israel is good for the United States; and the further assumption which claims Zionism is a beneficial movement for American society.

## II

### U.S. Interests

All of these assumptions need challenging. To determine whether what is good for Israel is good for the United States requires a statement of United States interests in the Middle East and some examination of strategies and tactics acceptable to the United States to defend and perhaps to advance those interests. A mere listing of those interests is, in itself, a kind of first grade lesson in what might be good for the United States in the Middle East. I should say the following objectives or interests cover United States concerns in the area. In listing these I avoid, for the moment at least, moral judgments and look at the problem in some approximation of the calculated and calculating Realpolitik of the world.

First of all, as an overall policy objective there is the desire to contain Communist power of the Soviet variety and to bring about the withering of the small, but already threatening advances of the Chinese variety. An important corollary to this policy objective is to realize it without major military confrontation between the super-powers. I shall say more about this fundamental American policy objective in a different context. Here, I wish only to observe that for all of our pro-Israel, pro-Zionist policies in the past twenty-odd years, far from having prevented Soviet penetration, we have witnessed its steady expansion. I am not blaming Israel. It has relentlessly merely pursued its own policies and supported its own interests as

Israel saw those interests. I am simply observing that American support for Zionist and Zionist/Israel policies in 1948-49, in 1967, and to a lesser extent even in 1956, at least in the Gulf of Aqaba understanding, has not deterred Soviet expansionism in the area; and in fact the stultified and stalemated United States policies with respect to the Arab refugees from the first Arab-Israeli war, probably opened the door to the beginnings of Chinese Communist mischief-making in the form of some support to the Palestine Liberation Organization's army.

But even this posture with respect to Communism of the two best known varieties can be too simplistic and cliché-ridden an exposition of American concerns. I do not happen to be one of those--however appealing their case--who believe "anti-Communism" is an adequate rationale for American foreign policy. There must be substantive interests, vital to our national life and outstanding on their own merit, or else we end up in a battle of words, of over-extension of power, of emotionalized confusions. And in the Middle East the three other reasons or interests I find for United States concern are, I believe, in this category.

Two of those interests were put briefly and well in an excellent article in Fortune magazine for September of this year. The article is significantly entitled, "But What Do We Do About the Arabs?" And the author, beginning with an analysis of the United States interests which require that we do anything at all, says:

...The region is still the fastest, cheapest transportation route--by air or sea--between Western Europe and Asia. And still more important, beneath its desert sands lie close to 300 billion barrels of petroleum, about three-fourths of the non-Communist world's proved reserves. Daily production of the Arab wells totals more than nine million barrels. According to oil consultant Walter Levy, the complete loss of this oil could not be

made up by any combination of other sources within a decade--if at all. Western Europe imports 5,600,000 barrels of Arab oil each day, 65 percent of its requirements, and Japan 1,200,000 (60 percent). If the Russians should achieve domination of the Arab countries, as many Arabs now fear they will, they could blackmail both Western Europe and Japan by threatening to turn off the taps and cripple their economies. The ultimate price for assured oil supplies, some American diplomats grimly speculate, could well be a sharp diminution of U.S. influence in Europe and Asia.

The major goal of most of our efforts in the Middle East is to keep that from happening. There are serious doubts today that we are succeeding.<sup>7</sup>

And finally, the Middle East is comprised of developing nations. An important--if not vital--American foreign policy interest is concern for the orderly evolution of these earlier subjects of colonialism into stable, peaceful societies. This is the most distinctive phenomenon of our age, in terms of international affairs. It hangs like the sword of Damocles over the greatest part of the world, both in terms of territory and numbers of people. It is the problem of the rich nations versus the poor. It is the problem which lends itself to guerrilla military tactics. It is the problem of revolution versus status quo. And in the Middle East, the Arabs--largely--fit into the patterns of those agonizing through what Adlai Stevenson first described as "the revolution of rising expectations" while, for a wide variety of reasons, Israel has established a pattern of stability, of advanced technological development, of broad social responsibility toward its own, however uniquely determined nationals.

These four considerations then provide the frame-



work within which American policy-makers look at the Middle East. Let me recapitulate them, for they must provide the basis for any rational policy. They are: opposition to a Communist take-over, vast resources of oil, fast, cheap communications and the peaceful evolution of stable societies in formerly colonial areas.

### III

#### Israel Exists

Now the significant fact about these vital interests or important strategic considerations is that none of them--not a single one of them--is within the State of Israel, is dependent upon the State of Israel, or ultimately could be safeguarded by the State of Israel. Despite this fact there must be added--as an item on the American agenda in the Middle East--a commitment to some kind of Israeli sovereignty which would provide security and dignity of life for Israel's legitimate citizens. This commitment derives, at least, from the United States support for the 1947 Palestine partition plan and from early United States recognition of and consistent support of Israel. It may be that this commitment was imprudent in terms of long-range American interests. There can be little question that both Western and Soviet Union support for Zionist territorial claims in 1947 flouted basic democratic principles and ignored fundamental Arab rights. But some commitment exists to Israel and, at its proper place in this presentation of problems confronting American policy-makers in the Middle East, I shall try to narrow and define this commitment, even though I warn in advance I will not presume to try to solve the Arab-Israel problem.

But let me repeat--because it is at the heart of the American dilemma in the Middle East--that while we have this moral commitment to Israel, none of this country's vital or strategic interests in the Middle East is defensible or amenable to advancement in any

preferential relationship or favoritism to the Zionist state. Yet, the existence of such a relationship, or the clear impression that such a relationship does exist, complicates, to the point of a threat to our national interests, our relations with the majority of people inhabiting the area from Casablanca to the Persian Gulf and sometimes reverberating even into Pakistan, India and the heavily Moslem parts of Africa. And because this is true and because Zionist drum beating propoganda is dedicated to maintaining this preferential relationship, the Zionist apparatus operated in the United States by the Israeli government is a major--perhaps the major--obstacle in the way of policy-makers seeking to establish a rational American policy in the area.

Among those qualified to speak knowledgeably and globally about United States foreign policy, Senator Fulbright has probably spoken out on this problem--as on others--with unique candor. On April 28, 1960, speaking to the question of Senate action with respect to freedom of transit for Israeli shipping through the Suez Canal Fulbright told the Senate:

I hope no one in the Senate is so naive as to believe that the amendment will accomplish its ostensible purpose, which is to open the Suez Canal to Israeli shipping and to end the Arab economic boycott against Israel. What it will accomplish is to annoy the Arabs and fortify them in their conviction that in any issue arising from the Arab-Israeli controversy the United States, because of domestic political pressures, will be on the side of the Israelis. This Arab conviction, for which I regret to say history affords some justification, is the greatest single burden which American diplomacy has to carry in the Middle East.<sup>8</sup>

Not all of the problems of American Middle East

policy-makers reside in this domestic situation, however. This problem hamstrings and frustrates policy-makers. It rigidifies American policy, deprives it of mobility, drains it of rationality in terms of American interests. But all this is in a context of problems which are indigenous to the area itself; problems which, in many ways are typical of our problems in all areas of the world where there are emergent nations, impoverished and less than literate people. And it would be a distorted picture if these problems of the Middle East itself were not subjected to examination here.

There are three wars or incipient wars or conditions of intense hostility in the Middle East; and in its own way, each confronts American policy-makers with a problem. At the same time, all three of these Middle East conflicts are interrelated. Our attitude toward any of them affects our approach to all the others and our overall policies for the whole area are affected by our attitudes to each of the three.

#### IV

#### The Cold War in the Middle East

1. There is first of all a problem to which I have briefly alluded--Soviet and, to a lesser extent at the moment, Chinese Communist--aspirations for control. The Middle East, in other words, exhibits all of the ingredients and staging of an important arena in the "cold war." This complicates the problems of American policy-makers because it confuses the merits of the area's own problems and because approaches to those problems must be tested and proved as part of global strategies in the "cold war." If the United States and the Soviets work out a deal for the Middle East--at least on a tactical basis to deal with a crisis of intensity in the area itself--is such a deal contingent upon a bargain involving an issue in the war between the super-powers in some other area of the world? Did this, in

fact, take place at Glassboro, or even before in the "hot-line" exchanges reportedly held between the Kremlin and the White House? I confess I do not know. But for the people of the area themselves the suspicion is strong; and while it would be rational to believe these people of the area would vent their resentment at both super-powers, the fact has been that greater Soviet resiliency, cynicism or duplicity--call it what you will--has repeatedly enabled the Soviets to recoup. This happened following the partition and the fighting of 1948-49. For the Soviets made partition possible and were among the first, through Czechoslovakia, to provide the Israelis with military material. Despite these established facts, Soviet influence--and in some places probable control--has steadily mounted while Western influence, particularly of the United States, has steadily been shrunk and is again in retreat.

It is necessary to add as a footnote for Americans, that Soviet penetration of the area has not been at the invitation or instigation of the Arab states. Soviet aspirations in the area go back to Peter the Great in the 17th century. The first encounters were with the Turks and, telescoping a great deal of history, reached another visible landmark in the years of World War II in the Azerbaijan area of Iran. This Soviet thrust has progressed slowly but steadily, from those perimeters of the Middle East. Today it has reached to the heartland of the area and is already probably well established in at least infra-structure form in Yemen to the south and in Algeria to the west and Syria in the north. Soviet backing of the Zionists in 1948 supported this three-hundred-year dream of empire. Its purpose was to accelerate the eviction of a weakened Britain from Palestine, counting upon just such United States acquiescence to Zionism and therefore mounting exacerbation with the Arabs as has occurred. The stakes today are considerable. There is very substantial Soviet influence in Syria on Turkey's flank, in Algeria in the middle of North Africa, and in Yemen, with--no doubt--an eye on Aden and the East

Coast of Africa which is a stone's throw away. It is now too late--as the British and French did in the days of mere swashbuckling diplomacy--to exclude the Soviets from the area. There may be--for whatever it is worth--a general agreement between the super-powers not to engage in nuclear confrontation in the area. But both the West and the East are playing a dangerous game of escalating the sophistication of weaponry that each puts at the disposal of the small states caught up in the confrontation. The very best the United States can hope for at this stage of the game is the least violent version possible of Mr. Khrushchev's "peaceful co-existence" plus unstable postures in wars of national liberation, which in the Middle East embrace resistance to what the former colonized people call neo-colonialism.

## V

### The Arab Nation?

2. If this is the best we can now hope will eventuate from the super-power confrontation in the Middle East, that possibility is intimately related to the second category of internal Middle East problems which confront our policy-makers. These problems revolve about internecine quarrels among the various Arab states themselves. The history of Arab unity is, indeed, largely one of failure to find workable and pragmatic structures to institutionalize and make functional what is in fact a deep-seated Arab emotion and motivation. There are many reasons for these failures. Among them are the character of the Arabs themselves, some deliberate interference from outside the area, and what may be an all too brief period of escape from colonial control and a too eager, headlong rush into a still elusive future. Whether Arab unity is in fact a genuine aspiration or merely a fetish of usual and characteristic Arab eloquence is a debate which consumes a fair amount of the attention of academicians and students of the area. I deliberately sidestep that debate tonight. I will simply say that despite all of the abundant evidence

suggesting Arab unity is more demagoguery than substance, no policy-maker--American or of another brand --can expect to made any headway in genuine, stable and meaningful relations with the Arab world by any frontal attack on Arab unity or by conduct which wholly ignores the phenomenon. And yet it would be foolish to argue that beyond its emotional and psychological value it does, today, provide any strong reed upon which to lean a Middle East policy.

In fact it can be argued that there have been periods in recent years when, not entirely without justification, United States policy-makers leaned more on this reed than any solid, day-to-day intelligence reporting appeared to justify. Just as a rule-of-thumb, those periods can be detected by what may well have been an entirely too simplistic approach to Gamal Abdel Nasser who, while certainly a heroic figure in modern Arab history, was also and often not above being victimized by his own eloquence and dreams for restoring great stature to what he and other Arab leaders consistently refer to as "the Arab nation." At the same time it is certainly true that not all of Nasser's obstacles derived from internal Arab dissension or self-intoxication. If no other proof existed, Anthony Nutting has chronicled a weird and revolting story of the events at Suez ten years ago which are likely to disturb even strong stomachs accustomed to the bizarre diet of intrigue in international affairs.<sup>9</sup>

But whatever the cause and despite an unrelenting drive for Arab unity on the part of the liberal and intellectual leadership of the Arab world, such unity does not yet exist; and its absence is a serious cause of instability in the area.

It is probably too simplistic to describe the various diversities in the Arab world as generally progressive or revolutionary states, on the one hand,

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<sup>9</sup> No End of a Lesson, Anthony Nutting, Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., N.Y., 1967

and status quo or reactionary states, on the other hand. Furthermore, the stratifications in the area go beyond the Arab states to Turkey and Iran, and this must concern American policy-makers. For example, Syria and Iraq may not, of themselves, be essential to a rational American policy. But Syria, as I have already indicated, flanks Turkey and Iraq could be half of a pincer of which the other half is the Soviet Union itself, squeezing Iran.

In the Arab world, there is a full 180° spectrum of governmental institutions and societal structuring. At one end are the really isolated and almost medievall absolutists of the sheikdoms on the Persian Gulf. Until very recent years Yemen enjoyed the unquestionable distinction of belonging to this category. Whether or not, after more than five years of bitter civil war, some formula will be found for a peaceful emergence of Yemen into at least a more advanced system of government and structuring of society, remains to be seen. But in many ways, that conflict epitomizes the revolution sweeping the Arab world: intellectuals against feudalistic vested interests; the emergent literates of the cities against the free-booting, tribal loyalists of the desert wastes, an embryonic middle class against the landed rich and their virtually enslaved peasantry. And the principals in that conflict are also symbolic. On the one hand, the conservative royalty of Saudi Arabia and on the other hand, Nasser of Egypt, the zealous crusader for what is called Arab socialism. Somewhere between these stands the sophisticated, commerce-minded parliamentary system of Lebanon, the precariously balanced and for some time now the stultified revolution of Iraq, the radical and unstable Baathist regime in Syria, and the moderate, enlightened--and until recently British and American subsidized--monarchy in Jordan. On the African continent there is, again, the conservative but reasonably energetic monarchy in Morocco, the dangerously penetrated regime of Algeria, the strong-man, individualistic and quietly progressive Bourguiba leadership in Tunisia, the monarchy in Libya which struggles with all of the

explosive ramifications of newly developed oil concessions and which depends, momentarily, on the aging King Idris for stability. To all these must be added the Sudan, belonging to both Black Africa and the Arabs, suffering the agonies of both and recently, through its energetic and able leadership, hosting an Arab summit conference and taking the initiative in attempting to pacify the warring parties in Yemen.

It is I am afraid illustrative of a not very responsible American press that this turmoil in the Arab world is usually related to alleged instabilities inherent in specifically Arab character rather than to this revolution of emergent peoples which is perhaps our historical era's most compelling phenomenon. But the superficiality of the American press and of other communications media does not alter the substance of the problem. It does not mitigate the rising self-consciousness of these people. It does not defeat--even if it does discourage--the struggling Arab intellectuals. It frustrates, sometimes, but does not obviate the passion for social improvement which is sometimes so compelling that it results in less than carefully thought-out plans and in extravagant experiments.

And these substantive elements of the problem comprise another problem for American Middle East policy-makers. It is probably more than a superficial coincidence that the largest American capital investments are found in the Arab states where progress is more cautious, and may even be obstructed by vested interests. The king-pins in the structure today are probably King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and the Shah of Iran. It is an understatement to say that American prestige and influence are virtually nil in Syria and little better in Iraq, although there are considerable British holdings in Iraq and a substantial portion of the Syrian economy is dependent upon pipe-line royalties which bring Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean. Until the most recent Arab-Israel war, King Hussein of Jordan was included in the more conservative bloc.



This alignment, however, was dependent upon purely strategic considerations rather than upon any United States interests in natural resources in Jordan, since the country is by natural endowment poor, and there are those who question whether it should ever have been constituted a country. It was established on a purely artificial basis in the post World War I years, when it was more the pattern of diplomacy than it is now to make or unmake countries according to imperial, strategic designs.

It is largely true that American interests, structured so heavily in the more conservative Arab states, are under attack from the progressives or revolutionaries of the area. Those interests are often hostage to American policy. And there is also a large measure of truth in the allegations that Gamal Abdel Nasser has been--and probably still is--the symbol of revolution to the masses in these conservative centers of American interests. But it is an over-simplification to credit all of the popular unrest in the Arab world to a super-powerful and super-intelligent Cairo spy system and intelligence service, as is so often done by some American policy-makers and some citadels of United States information, not to forget The New York Times. The more realistic analysis--even if it is often unpleasant to American policy-makers and The New York Times--is that Nasser is the kind of charismatic figure throughout the Arab world which Winston Churchill or Franklin Roosevelt or John Kennedy was on the broader stage of history. It took more than spies and a few Egyptian plasters to put Nasser's photographs in the lowliest peasant homes in Iraq or Lebanon, or even in Jordan. And it did not take active, organized subversion from Cairo to arouse the resentment of the ruling groups in these countries to such demonstrations of Nasser's mass appeal. I am afraid American policy-makers have not always read this fundamental situation accurately. They have alternately wooed and spurned Nasser--and therefore the Egyptian people and therefore the most populous of the Arab states--hoping either to contain the revolution in the Arab world or to ride

its tide to fulfillment. When they have spurned the Egyptian they have--too often and too clumsily--embraced one of the seemingly promising alternatives to Nasser on the conservative side. And most catastrophic of all, at times this embrace of alternatives to Nasser's prestige has zeroed in on Israel. This tactic leads me to anticipate, for a moment, to suggest --and no more than to suggest--that one of the reasons why our policy-makers have dragged their feet in the present Arab-Israel crisis has little to do with the merits of either the Arab or Israeli case; and is not conditioned entirely by "cold war" considerations. It may be ten years again before we know the truth, as it has been ten years since Suez, but it is possible to argue a very good case of circumstantial evidence to show that the real target of the fighting in June of this year was not the Straits of Tiran, the Gulf of Aqaba, or even some recognition of Israeli sovereignty. Rather, future historians will not ignore the possibility that most of all in the Middle East in June of 1967, both the British and the United States wanted Egyptian forces out of Yemen, hoping--I think unrealistically--to reduce, in this way, the threat of Soviet expansion of power in Aden when the British leave, now within a matter of days. In fact it should be noted here, as a bit of relevant even if still circumstantial evidence, that once the chain of events forced an Egyptian withdrawal from Yemen, the British schedule for relinquishing authority was advanced about six weeks.

I am not at all acquiescing in the Egyptian allegation that there was United States military intervention. I am suggesting that American policy-makers have not yet offered a plausible explanation for a certain diplomatic parallelism between the United States and Israeli positions with respect to the cease fire and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from occupied territories. I cannot and I am not now attempting to prove anything--except by the logic of results and a certain illogicality in failing to insist upon other results. But I do suggest something other than the reasons so

far advanced must explain why the United States has, for all practical purposes, reneged on the President's pledge, given a few days before the shooting started, to guarantee the territorial integrity and self-determination of all states in the area. And I simply suggest that this unexplained defeat for America's moral stature in the world may be related to American designs to weaken the revolutionary position in Yemen.

This strategy--American policy-makers playing off or checkmating the revolutionaries with the conservatives--has a tendency to develop into "cold war" polarization and there is more than a little evidence suggesting such "cold war" polarization has now proceeded far enough to fuse this problem of inter-necine Arab differences into the broader conflicts of the "cold war." The lines are still not completely rigidified. But they do become more pronounced year after year. It has accelerated for the worse since February of 1955, when Nasser turned to the West for arms after the first big Israeli raid into Gaza. The West refused--or set conditions which amounted to a virtual refusal--and the Soviets eagerly seized the opportunity and are today the major supplier of arms to an alarming number of Middle Eastern states. And in many of these states the military establishment determines political and social destiny, at least pending the agonizing development of alternative political power-structures. And so seeds are put down for the "wars of national liberation" and life is pumped into the haunting ghosts of slogans like imperialism and neo-colonialism. These, too, are problems for American policy-makers and whether they are image or substance, suggest caution in terms of United States relationships to any of the problems which impinge upon the interests of the people of the area.

The dilemma for the United States, the West and the liberal, often Western-oriented Arab intellectual or statesman, is not a happy one. Earnest efforts are often made to accelerate progressive, gradual evolution in the conservative states. And progress is

measurable. But none of it is free of suspicion where the power-structure remains in control of the vested interests, and the fear exists, whether legitimate or not, that rights and fundamental equities will never really replace paternalism, even if the paternalism is generous and by earlier standards, enlightened.

## VI

### The Arab-Israel Conflict

3. And then finally, central to all the problems in the Middle East for American policy-makers, is the Arab-Israel conflict. Some of you may have been wondering why I have not long before dealt with this question in depth. I say only that in my opinion one of the reasons why there has been so little progress toward resolution of this old and tired problem is the tendency to approach it in virtually a one-dimensional way. This one problem does affect American policies in the other two broad categories of Middle Eastern problems. The Arab-Israel problem cannot be resolved in any context favorable to American interests if it is not viewed against the background of the "cold war" and internal Arab discord. And in all probability neither of those problems can be resolved, in terms favorable to United States interests, without a concomitant effect on the Arab-Israel situation. This is also a good place to say that even now I will not initiate very much discussion or speculation about the precise situation which erupted in June. If what I do say stimulates questions pertaining to this immediate situation, I shall be happy to try to answer them, without--I hope--looking like the fool who rushes in where the angels fear to tread. But what happened in June, 1967 cannot be understood without understanding the so-called Palestine problem for the past 50 years. And despite a good deal of bombast on all sides, what happened in June has not altered the fundamentals or basically affected the root-causes which brought on the June explosion.

The first thing that needs saying is that the problem in the Middle East which now confronts the world in threateningly dramatic form is really 50 years old. On the 2nd of this month, as some of you may have observed, there were a number of events celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. The June, 1967 war had its origins in that unilateral proclamation by the British government.

It is a vague document, on its face. It contained promises to three separate groups: to the Zionist organization, to the Arabs of Palestine, and to anti-Zionist Jews in countries other than Palestine. The present Arab-Israel confrontation and the controversy between Zionists and anti-Zionists can both be simply stated as the predictable, tragic consequences of the failure of Great Britain--and following 1948, of the United States--to insist upon equal, full implementation of the promises made to two of the three parties specified in the Balfour Declaration. To put it another way, for 50 years the Zionist movement unremittingly pressed its own interpretations of that part of the Declaration which viewed with favor the establishment of "a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine." In this pursuit, the Zionist movement has had the largely uncritical support of people in the Western world. This uncritical support enabled the Zionist movement to pressure Western governments into support of the clause in the Declaration which made the Zionist movement a beneficiary. At the same time, similar pressures have obstructed or diluted intentions--and sometimes efforts--of Western governments to give full implementation to the intent and substance of the other two clauses which were specifically drafted to safeguard the rights of Palestinian Arabs and "the rights and political status" of Jews in countries other than Palestine. For nearly all of these 50 years this imbalance has produced clashes between Zionism and Arab nationalists in Palestine and a contentious difference of opinion and a quarrel over principles between Zionist and anti-Zionist Jews who are citizens of other countries.

Now it must be clear that forces which can produce hostility and controversy of such duration and intensity are, of themselves, something more than the rather casual sentimentality which Zionism, on the one hand, is represented to be and something more than mere pig-headed emotionalism and intransigence which Arab resistance or anti-Zionist rejection of Zionism is represented, on the other hand, to be. There has been too much suffering, too many intelligent men, too much substance put into the prosecution of these several cases to dismiss the interested parties as mere fanatics, die-hards or misguided misanthropes. And it is my own considered judgment that there can be no peace in the Palestine problem until the people and the policy-makers of the United States candidly face up to the genuine character of Zionism and, either in frank support of it or in adequate opposition to it, confront it as the central obstacle to peace.

#### a. Zionism

When I speak of Zionism in this context I am referring not to the Messianic dreams of Zion--the restoration of Zion delineated in the Old Testament Prophets --which are respected and critically important theological substance to many Jews and many Christians. Both the regulations for this restoration and for governing the restored Zion are--to those who believe in this theology--Divine decrees; and the event itself will take place through Divine power and at a time which is of God's choosing in His judgment of man.

If it is possible to quote Scripture without assuming the role of devil, we are told:

Zion shall be redeemed with justice,  
And they that return of her with righteousness.<sup>10</sup>

I mean nothing invidious by invoking this one Biblical text. I mean only to illustrate the spiritual

character of the redemption which the Prophets proclaimed. The present mundane annexation may be no better nor worse than other mundane acts in a mundane world. It is not my purpose here to make that judgment, but simply to point out--better or worse, whichever it is--that this is not the redemption which Scripture prescribes.

The Zionism which did come to the Middle East 50 years ago was--and is--a movement of modern political nationalism. It has been guided and directed not by clericals or by God, but by able, even brilliant political strategists. The idiom of the movement has not--except for camouflage--been that of Isaiah, Jeremiah or Amos, but of a 19th century Viennese journalist named Theodor Herzl, of international lawyers, of political and military specialists. What this Zionism is--and has been--is a movement, well organized, to persuade the world community of nations, by the use of all available instruments of national policy, that all the Jews of the world voluntarily elect to possess a so-called "Jewish nationality." Prior to 1948 and the establishment of the Zionist State of Israel, Zionism argued that this "Jewish" nationality was homeless. Jews were an unassimilable nationality group which had been and always would be plagued by anti-Semitism. The solution of this problem, according to Zionism, was for the world to recognize, in fact and in law, a nationality entity called "the Jewish people" and, in fact and in law, to give to this "homeless" nationality entity territorial rights in which this displaced nationality could be sovereign and would then operate in the interests of this alleged scattered or "exiled" national entity, mobilizing it, Zionizing or nationalizing it, eventually "ingathering" to this Zionist sovereignty as many members of the "exiled" nation as possible. In somewhat more political jargon, perhaps, this Zionism conceives of all Jews as part of a "Jewish people" nationality, possessing nationality rights and nationality obligations to the "Jewish national home," now called the State of Israel. There is Israeli legislation to support this

supra-national nationality claim. And there is the Zionist organization, operating in many nations, including the United States, to implement this Israeli legislation.<sup>11</sup>

The point is crucial. The hostility, at least in its origins, was not between Arabs and any Jews who might elect to come to the Middle East as future citizens of a democratic governmental structure for Palestine. The hostility from its beginnings has been between this Zionist political-national answer to anti-Semitism in many nations, on the one hand, and the rising national self-consciousness and self-determination of the majority Arab population on the other hand.<sup>12</sup>

The classical political--even moral--framework

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11 "The World Zionist Organization/Jewish Agency for Israel (Status) Law," enacted by the Knesseth in 1952 and incorporated, in substance, in a 1954 "Covenant" signed by the World Zionist Organization and the Israeli government.

12 This statement, it should be acknowledged, does not take into account the distinguished tradition of what is sometimes called "cultural Zionism." In an over-simplified way the proponents of this Zionism wanted a Jewish collectivity (perhaps "a national home") in Palestine because they believed a reuniting of Jews with the Holy Land would result in great cultural or spiritual creativity. Their motivation, therefore, was essentially positive, reflecting positive values in the Jewish tradition. But they were gradually eclipsed in the Zionist Movement as the power came more and more into the hands of the "political Zionists." Since the thrust of this paper is essentially on the political problems of American policy-makers, it is important that this reference to "cultural Zionism" be noted. But the relevance of the tradition in this context goes little, if any, beyond this acknowledgment of its existence.



of the conflict was stated with unvarnished candor by Lord Balfour himself in 1919, in a long memorandum to the British Cabinet. I quote the relevant excerpts:

Whatever be the future of Palestine it is not now an "independent nation," nor is it yet on the way to become one. Whatever deference should be paid to the views of those who live there, the Powers in their selection of a mandatory do not propose, as I understand the matter, to consult them. In short, so far as Palestine is concerned, the Powers have made no statement of fact which is not admittedly wrong, and no declaration of policy which, at least in the letter, they have not always intended to violate.<sup>13</sup>

A few years ago, the then Foreign Minister<sup>14</sup> of Jordan, sitting in my own home, put it somewhat differently. "It is not that the State of Israel exists," he said to me, "but how it came to exist, which the Arabs find so difficult to accept." And a few years before that, a man who is now one of the Vice-Presidents of the United Arab Republic,<sup>15</sup> in reply to my question inquiring under what conditions an accommodation might be negotiated, replied:

"First tell me with what Israel you wish us to negotiate; with the Israel now there (in 1955) or with the Israel, plus its Zionism which it announces will be here in some future time."

Now the fact is that the Arabs simply refuse to

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<sup>13</sup> Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, Edited by E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London 1952, p. 345.

<sup>14</sup> Antoine Attallah

<sup>15</sup> Zecharieh Moheddine

agree that the rights of self-determination of the majority population, so callously dismissed by Balfour and the Allied peace-makers in the Middle East nearly 50 years ago, are negotiable. And the Zionists claim that in the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate of the League of Nations, the 1947 United Nations recommendation to partition Palestine, and now in three wars by right of conquest, the legitimacy of the Zionist state is established and must be accepted. This is, again in over-simplified terms, the heart of the legal argument.

None of the great powers has ever seriously encouraged an orderly, legal due-process as a way out of the 50-year dilemma. And so it is not surprising that when those who do control the power of the world evade the moral questions and equities, those with only incidental power who feel themselves victims, take matters into their own hands. Consequently, during the thirty years or so between the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of Israel in 1948, Palestine was periodically torn by civil strife. And since 1948 there have been three wars, each with expanding threat to the peace of the world. But the crucial point is that none of the civil strife nor the three wars have come close to resolving the fundamental equities which are in conflict; and there is precious little evidence, if any, that those equities will be confronted now, despite all the ballyhoo about a new era and new power-structuring of the Middle East. And the further fact is that the great powers are--and have been--unforgiveably craven and immoral in their approaches while the smaller states who are the direct parties become increasingly victims of forces of desperation and extremism which, to a large extent, they can no longer control. The irrationality of the situation is apparent in the present de facto condition. There are now perhaps a million and a half Arab refugees. Until very recently the Arab states have appeared to be almost incomprehensibly stubborn in refusing to recognize some State of Israel. They said they did not want war and yet sustained a condition just short of war which

they claimed gave them the rights of belligerents. There is some evidence this posture has been altered, but the facts are still obscure. If the evidence is, however, accurate, it remains something of a mystery why the United States holds out--in Israel's behalf--against the Indian-Mali-Nigerian draft-resolution for the Security Council, which calls for a compromise with this earlier rigid Arab posture.

For its part, Israel now occupies territory which it can claim only on the basis of force. It claims it wants recognition of its sovereign character as a state, but it refuses to delineate--or excludes from negotiable items--the responsibilities of that sovereignty with respect to obligations for these Arab refugees, to boundaries and to the status of Jerusalem. It makes full maritime rights through what may well be, legally, Arab territorial waters into a cause of war. Those rights are challenged by Arabs because either they do not recognize Israel as a sovereign state or they hold a condition of belligerency exists between the State which is there and themselves. Meanwhile Israel seeks to establish her legitimacy by force and refuses to submit the core of what is called "the Palestine problem"--refugees and boundaries and Jerusalem--to arbitration or any negotiations except of a direct character which would tacitly acknowledge her existence, without first settling the Palestine problem. So the circle goes round and round and where it stops no one knows.

But perhaps most important of all, Israel insists that it is "the sovereign State of the Jewish people"<sup>16</sup>--and rejects the idea that it is the sovereign state of only its own citizens and nationals. That is to say, Israel claims it is the national state of all Jews in the world. It operates today as the chief instrument of Zionist policy and ideology.

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<sup>16</sup> Judgment, In the District Court of Jerusalem, Criminal Case No. 40/61, Section 34, paragraph 1.

On June 11, in an interview on the Columbia Broadcasting System's program, "Face the Nation," Moshe Dayan related this orientation to one aspect of the present search for peace. In reply to a question about Israel's ability to absorb the Arab population in the recently occupied territories, Dayan said:

Economically we can; but I think that is not in accord with our aims in the future. It would turn Israel into either a bi-national or poly-Arab-Jewish state instead of the Jewish state, and we want to have a Jewish state. We can absorb them, but then it won't be the same country.<sup>17</sup>

The former Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, stated the same proposition somewhat more boldly on another occasion. Since he was not speaking to a chaotic situation created by a war, but rather in the context of deliberated long-range policy, here is how he put it:

...Israel is the country of the Jews and only of the Jews. Every Arab who lives here has the same rights as any minority citizen in any country of the world, but he must admit the fact that he lives in a Jewish country.<sup>18</sup>

And from the Arab side King Hussein, the most moderate of the Arab statesmen, said only a week ago in Washington:

The Jews of Israel have a choice: the choice of living with us peacefully and eternally as they have lived in the past, or of remaining an isolated outpost in the Arab world. If for the time being, and under the influence of

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17 Quoted by I.F. Stone in "For a New Approach to the Israeli-Arab Conflict," The New York Review of Books, August 3, 1967, p. 3

18 Ibid.

Zionist leadership, they want to insist on maintaining an outpost, they must then bear all the consequences resulting from this statue (sic: probably STATUS)...

However, if Israel is a fact, what is its size and shape, which one does the world recognize?.. Israel must not only define itself geographically, but it must define itself ethnically...

In conclusion, let me say that perhaps the developments in the Arab world would one day lead to the de-Zionization of Israel.<sup>19</sup>

This concept of Zionist nationality, therefore, cannot be overlooked in the historic controversy. For with this commitment Israel cannot--by the admission of many of its own leaders--deal in political equities with the Arabs; nor will it satisfy its own national interests, conceived in these Zionist terms, with limited boundaries or without Jerusalem. For their part, the Arabs--even the most responsible of them--have no assurance that any agreement made at a given time with an Israel of a certain date will prove to be viable in terms of this supra-nationality commitment of the State.

#### b. "De-Zionize" Israel?

This basic irreconcilability has not been unnoticed in the family of American policy-makers. In 1954, the then Assistant Secretary of State weighed in on the side of distinguishing between a normal, definitively delineated Israeli sovereignty and this abnormal Zionist concept of sovereignty. In a formal policy declaration this senior United States foreign policy officer said:

To the Israelis I say that you should come to truly look upon yourselves as a Middle Eastern

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<sup>19</sup> The New York Times, November 7, 1967, p. 3

state and see your own future in that context rather than as a headquarters, or nucleus so to speak, of worldwide groupings of peoples of a particular religious faith who must have special rights within and obligations to the Israeli state. You should drop the attitude of the conqueror and the conviction that force and a policy of retaliatory killings is the only policy that your neighbors will understand. You should make your deeds correspond to your frequent utterance of the desire for peace.

To the Arabs I say you should accept this State of Israel as an accomplished fact. I say further that you are deliberately attempting to maintain a state of affairs delicately suspended between peace and war, while at present desiring neither. This is a most dangerous policy and one which world opinion will increasingly condemn if you continue to resist any move to obtain at least a less dangerous modus vivendi with your neighbor.<sup>20</sup>

But unfortunately, as with so much American policy, the idea or the declaration is not always father to the act. A tidal wave of Zionist pressures was mounted against the Assistant Secretary and while the declaration of policy has never been repudiated or retracted, it is also true that nothing has ever been done to put it into force.

And so we are back to where we started--to the precautionary advice of a Forrestal, of a Fulbright, of a George Lenczowski. We are hung up on Zionist pressure and by the operation in this country, by the State of Israel, of a mechanism which can be described only as an unregistered foreign agent.

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20 The Middle East, Henry A. Byroade, The Department of State, Department of State Publication 5469, Near and Middle Eastern Series 16, Division of Publications, May, 1954, p. 11.

In the long pull, this immobilization of American power can serve no constructive ends for ourselves, for Israel or for the whole Middle East. It endangers --if it has not already irreparably damaged--our national interests. It intensifies the polarization of the Middle East in the context of the cold war, for it leaves the Soviet Union to argue the equities of the political-legal situation while we add patch to patch in an effort to avoid confronting them. It diverts the attention of the rising class of intellectuals and people with greater political literacy in the Arab world, from their pressing domestic social and political problems. It corrodes the faith of this leadership group in the credibility of the United States as an influence for morality and law in world politics. And it aggravates the internal Arab conflict between the revolutionaries and the conservatives, for to avoid a confrontation of the fundamentals in the Arab-Israel problem the United States uses whatever influence it has to extract more and more concessions from the conservatives. Each time we have encouraged a moderate to believe we will use our influence to persuade Israel to normalize its relationships to the Middle East and then acquiesce in a further demonstration of its Zionist orientation, some new casualty occurs among Arab moderates and is usually replaced by some more radical person or movement. This syndrome produced an Ahmed Shukairy and his Palestine Liberation Army, which may be receiving more than insignificant help from the Chinese Communists. It is, in my opinion, doubtful if in all of the jungle of world politics, power-struggles, intrigues and cynicism, there is a more exasperating syndrome. I also doubt if there is one of comparable importance which would be easier to move toward resolution by a few acts of simple political courage. Dr. Richard Nolte, the ill-fated United States Ambassador-Designate to Cairo at the time of last summer's crisis, put it well in a statement published on September 24, in The New York Times. As one of six steps recommended to American policy-makers, Nolte said:

...while continuing to allow private citizens to send funds to individual countries, grant them tax exemptions only for "strictly humanitarian" donations.

The reference could be only to United Jewish Appeal funds which the 1963 Senate investigation disclosed provided substantial support for Zionist operations in the United States.

Amplifying, Nolte then added:

Above all, the one-sided official intervention by the U.S. in support of Israel and the overwhelming partisan private support of Americans for Israel have established the U.S. in Arab eyes as the unswerving champion of Zionism, in spite of efforts by American officials to be fair and even-handed.

Under these circumstances, U.S. policy interventions labor under so severe a handicap that they are mostly ineffective and downright counterproductive.

## VII

### Cutting the Gordian Knot

I have no better advice to offer as a place to begin. And the advice must be taken by the highest policy-maker of them all in the American system. It is essentially a choice between easily determined and objectively evaluated facts involving equities on both sides of the Arab-Israel quarrel on the one hand, and the presumption of votes and campaign contributions, on the other hand.

It is difficult for a speaker as for an audience, to end so long an address on so inconclusive a note. I feel a little like a character in a Brecht or a Pinter play who has dragged my audience on stage; and



the curtain is about to go down leaving the actors and the audience more bewildered than when it was raised. And yet, as of tonight no other conclusion would be honest. Somewhere in the future a new Vietnam threatens in the Middle East if the present policies of expediencies are pursued. Almost everyone knows better than what is now being done; and almost everyone who knows better lays the blame for not doing better upon forces beyond his control. Down this road, beyond Brecht and Pinter, lies only a Greek tragedy. And it is perhaps an index of naivete today to bring this presentation to a close with an exhortation to solid American democratic and liberal principles. But I know no other way.

For the central proposition, the rock upon which this democracy is founded, can be summed up in four words: "Let the people know." These words apply as precisely to our national interests in the Middle East as they do to any of our domestic liberties and responsibilities. If we are to match policy with our national interests in the Middle East the American people will need to be more critically alert. The American press has been almost criminally negligent in helping to provide such vigilance. The incumbents and aspirants to incumbency of elective office have been more culpable. But a vital, free people can re-examine their opinions and conduct. America still has great assets in its relations with the difficult, individualistic and resourceful people of the Middle East. The proper cultivation of these assets can realize our national objectives, which on the whole, I believe--and not forgetting inevitable conflicts of strategies and tactics--are held in mutual interest with the people of the area, themselves.

**For further information or additional copies of this pamphlet contact:**

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*American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism, Inc. is a District of Columbia Non-Profit Organization. Its educational program applies Judaism's values of justice and common humanity to the Arab/Zionist/Israeli conflict in the Middle East. In the United States we advocate a one-to-one human relationship between Jews and all Americans. In both areas of our concern we reject Zionism/Israel's "Jewish people" nationality attachment of all Jews to the State of Israel. These political-nationality claims distort constructive humanitarian programs. They are inconsistent with American Constitutional concepts of individual citizenship and separation of church and state. They are also a principle obstacle to Middle East peace.*

*Our program, we believe, helps advance peace in the Middle East. It also prevents Zionist/Israel from successfully achieving its legislated objective of reversing the integration of American Jews by "capturing the Jewish community" for its self-segregating "Jewish people" nationality attachment of Jews to the State of Israel.*

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