

The Crisis Of Israel And The West

Relations with the United States

by Samuel Katz

The shortcomings of the Israeli Military Establishment before the Yom Kippur War and the mistakes in the field of the Army commanders in its initial stages, grave though they were, and disastrous though they might have turned out, were not inevitable, nor were they built in to the structure of the Army. The price paid by Israel was tragic; but the lessons to be learnt were obvious enough, and the weaknesses once diagnosed, could be corrected. There is reason to believe that the lessons have in fact been learned.

Tragedy Through Political Decisions

What is not so universally realized is the grave political background to Israel's agony at the outbreak of the war. The military blunders were in fact only an unplanned compounding of an opening situation for which the soldiers were not to blame.

The initial tragedy of the war was the exposure of the tenuous line of young regular soldiers to the attack of a gigantic mass of Egyptians in the South and Syrians in the North. Surprised and monstrously outnumbered--and though they defended themselves and fought to the last with a valor that will surely be remembered in history--many of them were doomed from the outset.

That a possibly rational military risk was thus turned into a tragedy was the result of two calculated decisions by the Israeli Government. After Intelligence briefing, albeit belatedly, had made plain that the Arabs were on the point of attacking, they decided to refrain from pre-emptive attack, and then to refrain also from an immediate and maximal calling-up of the Reserves. A call-up of the Reserves would have reduced by many hours the period of overwhelming Egyptian and Syrian superiority on two fronts.

The reason for these decisions by the Israeli Government was political. The Government, as was pointed out at the time by both the Prime Minister (Mrs. Meir) and the Foreign Minister (Mr. Eban), wished it to be clear to the world and most specifically to the United States Government, that it was the Arabs who were the aggressors, and Israel the victim of aggression.

How many Israeli soldiers were killed and by how much Israel's difficulties in the field were increased as a result of these decisions it is impossible to say. What is certain is that the decisions did not have the intended effect. They were put to the test in stark drama. All but one of the European Governments - including Germany - who were asked by Washington to allow U.S. planes, on their way with supplies to a severely battered victim of aggression, stonily declined. The Portuguese Government alone agreed to fulfill their treaty obligations by permitting the use of a U.S. base in the Azores. As for the United States itself, the Secretary of State, immediately after the war, hastened to make plain his condonation of the Arab aggressors. He explained pointedly (on 26 October 1973) that the conditions before the Yom Kippur War were "intolerable to the Arabs."

The Arabs had for twenty-five years threatened to destroy Israel As a State, had indeed built that purpose into the very fibre of their culture. They had three times tried to accomplish it by force of arms. They were at that moment, on the eve of Yom Kippur, making all the obvious preparations for a new imminent onslaught. Yet the Israeli Government's view of its own credibility was so low that it felt compelled to accept a

stunning new blow from the Arabs in order to convince, not its enemies or some indifferent bystander, but its best friend, the United States, of its innocence. Clearly either its diplomacy and its information services had over the years been hopelessly inefficient, or the friendship of the United States Government at a critical moment was at least equivocal; or a combination of both these factors was operating.

Such, however, was the relationship, as seen by the Israeli Government, between Israel and the United States at the opening of the Yom Kippur War. It may well be that on the projection of that relationship, or on its replacement, the very fate of Israel may depend.

The Dictated Cease Fire

When Israel had recovered from her initial, nearly disastrous setback, the resourcefulness, and courage and qualitative superiority of her soldiers so succeeded that - in the view of all the responsible military analysts - she was on the brink of achieving the greatest victory in her history. She could without difficulty have broken at least Egypt's power of aggression, thus ensuring for herself a long period of peace. Precisely then Dr. Kissinger, in agreement with the Soviet Government and at the request of the Egyptians, conveyed from Moscow the peremptory advice that the Israeli Government agree to an immediate Cease Fire.

The Israeli Government, in spite of Israel's by then decisively advantageous military position and the great political hopes it aroused, hastily announced their acquiescence in his demand. In informing the Opposition leader of this decision, the Prime Minister explained that the Government had had "no alternative." This is the classic formula of a defeated nation.

It is plain from the physical circumstances of their decision that the Israeli Government did not take the time to weigh the many far reaching consequences, both of leaving the war thus unfinished and of accepting a dictate, against their better judgment, on an issue of the gravest import for the State.

It was their fear, justified or unjustified, of reactions by Washington, that was decisive.

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Nevertheless, at this point the Israeli Army had created an excellent bargaining position for whatever negotiations might ensue after the Cease Fire had been formalized in a resolution by the U.N. Security Council. It held firmly a wide salient deep into Egyptian territory proper, with the road to Cairo open. The Egyptian Third Army, one of the two Egyptian forces that had crossed over to the east bank of the Suez Canal, was encircled and its supplies completely cut off. Many people in Israel believed optimistically that this time it would be possible to insist that Egypt negotiate a peace treaty. Less optimistic people assumed that Israel would have to be content with a restoration of the status quo: they urged the simple, if uneven, exchange of the large salient held by Israel west of the Canal in return for the narrow strip on its east bank held by the Egyptian Second and Third Armies. This in fact was what the Israeli Government proposed.

But in two further decisive steps the U.S. Secretary of State dictated the conversion of Israel's advantageous position into a posture of defeat. He insisted on the unconditional lifting of the siege of the Third Army. Brief Israeli resistance (by the Minister of Defense in a telephone conversation) was brusquely rejected.

This unconditional surrender by an army victorious after fighting a defensive war is unprecedented in history. It was to be softened ostensibly by Egypt's agreeing to an exchange of prisoners. This added insult to injury: the Egyptians were in any case obliged by the Geneva Convention to effect an exchange: and the Israelis held over 8000 Egyptian prisoners, as against 241 Israeli prisoners in Egyptian hands.

The Israeli Government accepted and executed the dictate. The Egyptian Army was saved.

Israel Pressed into Losing the War

There followed the agreement between Israel and Egypt on the "disengagement of forces." The rational proposal by Israel of a mutual exchange of salients - thus also re-establishing the water-barrier, the Suez Canal, as a natural separator of forces - was rejected out of hand. The Israeli Army withdrew from Egypt proper without any quid pro quo. Then, leaving the Egyptians established in their salient on the east bank of the Canal and, moreover, free to bring across all the arms and equipment needed for a renewed offensive, and without any shadow of a hint of a promise of peace, Israel also withdrew further into Sinai, taking up a new line on the Mitla and Gidi passes.

By February 1974 Israel had by diplomatic negotiation lost the Yom Kippur War, and the aggressor had been awarded the beginnings of a retrospective victory in the Six Day War. The Egyptians moreover made no secret of their confidence that this was only the first step to Israel's being forced out of all of Sinai. The Egyptian President in particular repeatedly gave expression to this confidence, indicating without inhibition that this is what he had been promised by the U.S. Secretary of State whom he trusted absolutely in view of what he had already done for the Arab cause.

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The statement made above that the Israelis received no quid pro quo for their withdrawals requires some qualification. The Egyptian President gave a verbal undertaking to the u.s. Secretary of State, who proffered it to the Israeli Government as part of the agreement, that Egypt would have the Canal cleared and opened for shipping, and would also restore the Canal-side cities. This concession was much publicized as justifying the surrender of the strategic advantage of the Canal. It was held up to the Israeli public as an earnest of Sadat's intention to keep the peace; and, if it were not implemented, the Mitla-Gidi passes were an eminently defensible line.

The One Egyptian Undertaking – Unfulfilled

Holding out the opening of the Suez Canal as a concession to Israel, or as an earnest of peaceful intentions, is one of the absurd elements in the situation. The Israeli leaders overlooked the fact that Sadat believed and had every reason to believe that if there were another war with Israel, it would not be fought in the vicinity of the Canal or its cities. He expected Israel to withdraw from the whole of Sinai through U.S. pressure and without war. The front line would then be as in 1967 - much nearer to Tel Aviv than to the Canal. Apart from which, as Sadat gently pointed out in a subsequent speech, the Suez Canal cities could be bombed in any case - as could Israel's cities.

However, all three parties did choose to regard the opening of the Suez Canal to shipping as a condition for the Israeli withdrawal in Sinai and as a pre-condition for any further negotiations in Sinai.

When the United States, France, Britain and the Soviet Union had cleared the Suez Canal of its debris and other obstacles, the Egyptian President and the Foreign Minister announced publicly and unequivocally that Egypt had no intention of opening the Canal to shipping until the Israelis carried out a further withdrawal from Sinai - at least from the Mitla and Gidi passes and from the Abu Rodeis oilfields on the Gulf of Suez coast.

The response of the United States Government has been to support President Sadat in his stand. The "gentleman's agreement," the underwriting by the United States of Sadat's commitment - the one sop thrown to Israel, spurious RS it was, for her massive surrender of territory, of topographical advantage, of geopolitical security - has never again been mentioned.

To this cardinal breach of faith the Israeli Government surrendered without even a word of remonstrance. By accepting the Egyptian commitment to open the Canal and rebuild the cities, and by emphasizing that its fulfillment was the indispensable proof that the Egyptians were in fact interested in peace with Israel, the Israeli Government had given an implicit undertaking to their own sorely tried people. It meant that they would insist on, and wait for, the opening of the Canal and the restoration of the cities before considering any further negotiations with an Egypt whose aggression had cost so much bloodshed.

They failed to honor that obligation, and have to all intents ignored the far-reaching implications of its non-fulfillment. They have moreover, since autumn 1974, affected a further series of political retreats.

Indeed, the first indication that the Egyptians had been forgiven their debt came in the repeated announcement by leading Israeli spokesmen, including Prime Minister Rabin, that the Government was eager to open a new round of negotiations with Egypt. Mr. Rabin even revealed what he proposed should be the content of such negotiations.

Mr. Rabin proclaimed that Israel would agree to a further withdrawal but only as part of a peace agreement.

Shortly thereafter the reference to peace was abandoned; Mr. Rabin spoke of Israeli readiness to give up territory in Sinai as part of an agreement of non-belligerency.

Soon afterwards Mr. Rabin announced that Israel would agree to withdrawal in return for a state of non-belligerency; then Mr. Allon, the Israeli Foreign Minister, proclaimed that Israel would be content with "elements of non-belligerency." These bewildering statements were followed by an official interpretation by the Attorney-General that non-belligerency" did not mean anything specific.

Rabat: The Arab States Flaunt Their Purpose

It would seem incredible that these exercises in "flexibility" by the Israeli Government proceeded without any regard to the increasingly sharpened expression of the Arab national purpose concerning Israel.

During this period the world was given an incisive demonstration of that purpose. Meeting in Rabat, Morocco, in October the representatives of 21 Arab States resolved any doubt as to their determination to achieve it. Not only did they reiterate their demand that Israel surrender unconditionally the territory she captured in the Six-Day War, and their insistence on the "restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people," but they also

pointedly proclaimed the "Palestine Liberation Organization" as the sole representative of the "Palestinian people."

They thus gave public and formal effect to the relationship that has ever existed between the Arab States and the terrorist organizations. It was the various Arab States who, from their beginnings in 1964, inspired and organized them, gave them bases and financed them, armed and trained them.

The terrorist organizations, united under the roof of the P.L.O., are dedicated to the operational destruction of Israel as a State and indeed the elimination of its people. They are distinguished in their statement of purpose by their contempt for any of the euphemisms regularly employed for the same objective by the leaders of the Arab States.

The Arab leaders at Rabat sealed their sponsorship of the P.L.O. by organizing the invitation, and the official welcome, to Yasser Arafat by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

These events - the decisions at Rabat and the appearance of Arafat at the United Nations - demonstrably shocked many people throughout the world who had previously shut their eyes and ears to the declared lethal objective of the Arabs. They were now forced into recognition of that objective and its horrifying implications.

An Admission

The former Chairman (1972-1973) of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, a foremost supporter of the Israeli Government's policy and thus a defender of the Nixon-Kissinger policy during and after the Yam Kippur. War - Mr. Jacob Stein - expressed an emphatic yet measured reaction to what had happened at Rabat and at the United Nations. In a letter published in the New York Times (17 November 1974) he wrote, inter alia:

"Israel gambled and lost.

"In the hope that after four wars in 27 years the Arab nations would be prepared to seek peace, and in reliance on the effectiveness of Secretary of State Kissinger to help fashion a peace, Israel lifted its siege of Egypt's Third Army, withdrew its forces from the West Bank of the Suez Canal and then from the East Bank of the Canal so that Egypt might reopen the waterway... Arab intentions are now clear and were confirmed at the recently concluded Conference at Rabat. Not peace but more withdrawals; not peace, but the creation of a Palestinian state controlled by terrorists with the publicly stated and avowed aim of the destruction of Israel... "This is the moment to stand fast until Syria and Egypt and Jordan are prepared to sit with Israel and fashion a real peace... A peace agreement, however fragile, is preferable to a series of interim withdrawals or stages which the Arabs would accept as continuing until the last Israeli pulls back from Tel Aviv - into the Mediterranean Sea."

The course thus suggested, however, runs counter to Dr. Kissinger's undertakings to President Sadat and to the overall concept they have patently nurtured together.

It is relevant to add that Dr. Kissinger has uttered no word of comment on the Rabat decisions, and proceeds as though the Rabat Conference never took place. What of the Israeli Government?

The public effervescence, in Israel and outside, over the Rabat Conference and the appearance of Yasser Arafat at the United Nations had not yet subsided when the Israeli Government, acting as though oblivious of the significance of these events and specifically of the Egyptian part in them, expressed the hope that President Sadat would be prepared to negotiate with them. They now continued, moreover, in their astonishing progress from one political withdrawal to another.

Several visits to Washington by the Prime and Foreign Ministers, further statements by these and other Ministers, and inspired Press reports from both Jerusalem and Washington were followed by a new visit by the Secretary of State shuttling between Jerusalem and Aswan in Egypt. The thinly-disguised purpose was to establish the terms on which the Israeli Government would concede to the demand of the Egyptian President that Israel withdraw from the Mitla and the Gidi passes and from the Abu Rodeis oilfield. Mr. Sadat made it plain in public statements that the proposed giving in return not even the semblance of a cessation of hostilities. His demand was backed unreservedly by Dr. Kissinger. Its implications are of the gravest significance for Israel's security.

Giving Up Vital Interests

At the time of the agreement on the "disengagement of forces" after the Yam Kippur War, the unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the Canal to the Mitla and Gidi passes was declared to be militarily acceptable to Israel because they provided an excellent natural defense line particularly against tanks, and, moreover, a relatively short one - 160 kilometres (100 miles).

In a purely military sense the Mitla and Gidi passes do indeed provide Israel with a sound defensive belt. Behind them, to the east and north, there are no significant natural defences in Sinai. Abandonment of this line would bring the Israeli forces to a line two to three times as long - 400 kilometres (250 miles) or more. The burden, on Israel's manpower and economy, of maintaining such a line and the funding of its construction would be even greater than this proportion because of its very lack of natural defensive qualities. As for the demand for the abandonment of the Abu Rodeis oilfield - this would seem grotesquely unbelievable. It bears all the signs of an invitation to suicide. The U.S. Secretary of State is indeed said to have promised the Israeli Government that, if she gives up the Abu Rodeis oilfield, the United States will supply Israel with the quantity of oil she would thus lose. Israel, therefore, would add to her already substantial dependence on American aid in money and arms a new dependence now for the very breath of life of a modern State:-oil. This - at a moment of increasing American dependence on oil imports, and the continued prospect of domestic fuel shortages, so that every American citizen would become in effect a forced donor of some of his own petrol to Israel. Israel's image and inherent character as a bastion, already eroding, may well begin to be replaced by that of an irreversibly poor relation, a burden, a nuisance.

Yet both demands, with their cumulative threat to Israel's elementary security, were not only given consideration by the Israeli Government. Already in advance of the negotiations the Prime Minister announced their readiness to withdraw both from the passes and from the oilfield. At this point, however, in the face of a growing public outcry in Israel they did indeed hold out for an Egyptian declaration of non-belligerency. Yet, to Sadat's refusal, and his cynical suggestion that Israel should be content with an undertaking by him not to launch hostilities as long as the agreement, limited to months, was in force - that is, for as long as the Israeli forces were in fact retreating- the Israeli Government replied with a counter-proposal. They were still prepared to give up the oilfield, and still prepared to hand over the western entry to the passes to the Egyptians, and the passes themselves to the United Nations! They would, however, retain only the eastern entry - and all for a vague form of words by Mr. Sadat.

This gift Sadat refused - insisting in the full pound of flesh which Dr. Kissinger had promised him. Dr. Kissinger's effort here broke down.

But the Israeli Government hastened thereafter to affirm and reiterate that their offer still stood.

Breakdown of Will

This necessarily brief outline of developments since the Yom Kippur War provides the stark evidence that Israel's dire situation evolves from a breakdown in its Government of thought, of will and even of the essentials of acceptable public accounting for its policies. Even after the Yom Kippur War, the Israeli nation could honorably take the upright stance of a retributively victorious victim of aggression. They have been led towards the postures of a defeated nation. From reasonably defensible boundaries the Israeli Government has been leading them towards a condition where they would be compelled to fight a life-and death struggle in borders demonstrably indefensible.

This breakdown was achieved by the pressure of the American Government, exerted, with unremitting vigor, with unrelenting determination and with polished diplomatic stratagem by the Secretary of State. Since the failure of his latest visit this pressure has become open and unreserved.

It has been suggested that the pressure began with his delaying the shipment of supplies during the Yom Kippur War. Re that as it may, it was certainly the central ingredient of the ending of the war by means of the Cease Fire of 22 October, 1973.

It is universally agreed that by the 19th October the Israeli Army had achieved a position where a few more (days of fighting could have brought about the rout of the Egyptian forces.

The prospect, believed in by some, of then persuading Egypt to make a real peace was no doubt unduly optimistic; but Israel could certainly have ensured for herself a long period of quiet which, properly exploited, could conceivably have brought the Arabs gradually to the understanding that they had no hope of achieving their objective of eliminating the Jewish State from the map.

Certainly in the days preceding the Cease Fire the Israeli Government - having emerged from the furnace of the war's first phase - had every intention of completing the war. They did not dream of a Cease Fire before completing their victory. The volume of evidence on this is unequivocal and overwhelming. Reference to the experience of the Israeli Foreign Minister, Mr. Abba Eban, is most edifying.

Mr. Eban returned to Israel from a visit to the United States on the afternoon of Friday, 19th October. Dr. Kissinger had by then arrived in Moscow. In a radio interview on his arrival at Lod Mr. Eban admitted that when he left New York some 24 hours earlier he had not known that Dr. Kissinger was about to visit Moscow. He had learned of Dr. Kissinger's move only on his stopover in Paris. Mr. Eban flatly rejected the suggestion that Dr. Kissinger was about to negotiate a Cease Fire agreement in Moscow. It was indeed unbelievable that if this were the object of his mission Dr. Kissinger should have failed even to inform the Israeli Foreign Minister - with whom he had had a conversation a few hours before his departure.

Mr. Eban continued:

"we have before us no initiative or discussion in regard to a Cease Fire, and this subject is not on our agenda. Our victory will be the key to future political steps. I see no prospect at the moment for a Cease Fire... The Americans believe we shall succeed in the war and win, because it is important to them."

Mechanics of Pressure

In this mood of rational confidence Mr. Eban and his colleagues less than forty-eight hours later were confronted with a laconic and unequivocal demand by Dr. Kissinger, conveyed from Moscow through General Alexander Haig at the White House to Israeli Ambassador Dinitz, to agree to a Cease Fire on which he, Dr. Kissinger, with the Soviet Government, had already prepared a Resolution to be presented on the Monday evening to the Security Council of the United Nations. (Dr. Kissinger's invitation to Moscow had followed a hurried visit by Soviet Premier Kosygin to Cairo where he had learnt of the dire prospect facing the Egyptian Army if the Israeli counter-offensive were not halted by "diplomatic" action).

According to the report given by the Israeli Prime Minister to Opposition leader Menahem Begin early in the morning of Monday 22 October, Mr. Dinitz had asked for time for the Government in Jerusalem to consider the proposal, and had been told brusquely that a decision was required immediately and that "we advise you to accept it."

The shock accompanying the American manner of delivery - which bears an astonishing resemblance to the role assigned to the Czechs, victims of the Munich Pact, by the British and French negotiators - had its devastating effect. The Israeli Government hastily accepted the dictate.

In the Israeli Government's subsequent surrenders, withdrawals and retreats, territorial and political, the tone of direct dictation from Washington was usually replaced by more subtle suggestions that aid, military or economic, would be withheld. Dr. Kissinger indeed varied his tactics, but proceeded with uniform confidence to ensure the subjection of the Israeli Government to the requirements of his policy of staged "salami" concessions by Israel.

Israel's-Plight if Dr. Kissinger's Policy Succeeds

If this policy is pursued to its logical, and indeed stated, conclusion it will reduce Israel to a rump state, surrounded by a coalition of triumphant Arab States, confident of their ability to fulfill the ambition for which they have striven since 1948, with every part

of Israel exposed to attack by artillery as a softening for the "final" entry of Arab forces (perhaps in the guise of "Palestinians" seeking the "restoration" of their "rights"). American willingness at that stage to send military aid to Israel (a most unlikely prospect, yet expansively hinted at from time to time by the Secretary of State) would be irrelevant. As former Premier Golda Meir pointed out:

"By the time they got here they wouldn't find us."

Perhaps the most tragic aspect of the pass to which Israel has been brought is the apparent conclusion of her Government that, having to accept the dictates of the U.S. Secretary of State, they had also to accept the corollary of denying his responsibility for their incomprehensible behaviour. Having convinced themselves that the revolver digging into their ribs is in fact loaded and that its wielder, if angered, will use it, they obeyed the order to 'smile and make no move.' From time to time, and to the accompaniment in Israel of increasing ridicule and Despondency, Israeli government spokesmen announced that they were not being subjected to any pressure from Washington.

Failure of American Jewish Leadership

Americans are under no such duress. Yet the U.S. Jewish community has behaved as though paralyzed - or hypnotized. Its titular leaders - the Presidents' Conference - after each of their innumerable Meetings with the Secretary of State (or the President) invariably made it clear that they were "satisfied" with American policy. They have subjugated the evidence of their own senses and their own intelligence to the policy of the Israeli Government.

In private some of these leaders have been prepared to state that the need of the hour is not only to admit the existence of, but also to expose and stand up against the State Department's policy of pressure to Israel's mortal peril; but because the victim of that policy felt too weak to resist, they have taken shelter behind Israel's plight to justify their own inaction.

Undoubtedly the task of opposing the U.S. Administration is not a pleasant one, and the inclination to hide behind the skirts of the Israeli Government is great. If disaster should come it will always be possible to say that the Israeli Government had only itself to blame, that nobody could have guessed that Dr. Kissinger was so obsessed with the desire to achieve what he saw as his objective in courting the Arabs that he was prepared - knowingly or not - to reduce Israel to a state of mortal danger; that nobody could assume that he "did not know what he was doing."

It was in this spirit that during the Second World War the American Jewish Establishment failed to take any effective action to achieve American intervention to mitigate the scope and effects of the Holocaust.

The deliberate refusal of the Roosevelt Administration to take the simple action adequate for saving specific groups of Jews from extermination was known to the Jewish leadership of the day. They remained silent and, keeping what they knew from the knowledge of the public, they made themselves partners in the Administrations inaction.

The Vital Western Interest

It may be, and indeed has been, argued that even if Jewish public opinion were mobilized to oppose the government's attitude on Israel, it does not have the strength to bring about a change in U.S. foreign policy; and that this is true of any ethnic minority.

This does not excuse inaction, but it may be accepted as a rational view. It is hardly likely that the Jewish community, even if it were blessed with a strong and courageous political leadership, would be able to achieve such a change purely on the strength of an American sentimental interest in Israel or in the Jewish people. The fact is, however, that there is a much wider, deeper and graver basis for resistance to current American foreign policy, and specifically policy towards Israel: the vital interest of the United States, and indeed of the Western World. By a quirk of fate and through geographical and political circumstance, the interest of the United States and the safety and cultural sanity of the West are bound up with the safe and secure existence and functioning of Israel. This is a truth grasped by many Americans, not necessarily Zionist in outlook, who realize that the weakening of Israel would be calamitous for the Western World.

Many people in the U.S., therefore, including many who are only broadly aware of the inter-relationship of interests, are ripe for the task of active opposition to the current policy of the American Administration.

What needs to be done, therefore, is to mobilize all these elements in American society in a natural coalition of forces.

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The policy of the Secretary of State towards the Soviet Union - detente - has been critically analyzed in great depth and detail by noted thinkers, students of politics and experts on Soviet policy and thought in the United States and elsewhere.

The thrust of their criticism has been that the policy of detente is merely helping the U.S.S.R. gain strength in what is in fact an ongoing confrontation with the West, and most specifically with the U.S., and that not only the security of the allies and friends of the United States, but also that of the U.S. itself, is being endangered and undermined.

Nowhere is the danger inherent in Dr. Kissinger's policy clearer than in the prospect opened to the Soviet Union in the Middle East. Its significance, paradoxically, is blurred by the fact that the Soviet Union's gains appear to be no more than a side-effect of that policy.

Fulfillment of the specific immediate demands made on Israel by the Egyptians and backed by the Secretary of State will result in the acquisition by the Soviet Union of predominant influence, and the option of control, indirect or direct, over the whole of the Middle East (and much more).

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The Secretary of State does in fact from time to time enunciate the principle that a strong Israel is an American interest. But the shrinkage of Israel to which he is committed cannot by any stretch of the imagination have any other effect than to weaken her beyond the bounds of any value she can possibly have in a meaningful United States geopolitical plan. In plain words, the consummation of Dr. Kissinger's policy will inevitably result at least in Israel's emasculation, and expose her directly to the threat of physical destruction. The airing of the slogan that "a strong Israel is an American interest" is either a hypocritical soporific for the simpleminded, or an example of political inanity unparalleled since Chamberlain and Daladier in 1938 handed over "only" Sudetenland to the German Nazi Government.

Indeed, if the Arabs are enabled by Israeli withdrawals to take up positions for launching a two- or three-pronged attack, as in 1967, on a shrunken Israel, the United States will be in a position similar to that of the British in March 1939 when Hitler, having six months earlier been handed the Sudetenland on a platter, now marched in and took over the rest of reduced Czechoslovakia, whose borders Britain had "guaranteed." The day after Hitler entered Prague the British Prime Minister simply announced "in the circumstances which have arisen our guarantee has come to an end."

In the circumstances which could arise for Israel as a result of Dr. Kissinger's policy, he might then appropriately repeat also the words of Mr. Chamberlain added in the House of Commons:

"It is natural that I should bitterly regret what has now occurred, but do not let us on that account, be deflected from our course. Let us remember that the desire of all the peoples of the world still remains concentrated on the hopes of peace."

(Less than six months later Germany launched her blitzkrieg on Poland.)

The Threat to the U.S. and the West

The consummation of Dr. Kissinger's policy would in fact signal the advanced stage of a major failure of United States policy.

Concomitant with a further Israeli withdrawal in Sinai, the opening of the Suez Canal (and Israel's "incidental" abandonment of the Gulf of Suez coast) will almost immediately turn the global balance of power in favor of the soviet Union.

The incontrovertible consequences of the opening of the opening of the Suez Canal are as follows:

1. Soviet ships will be able to move freely from the Mediterranean into the Indian Ocean. The present average daily presence of 200 Soviet naval vessels now in the Mediterranean will be freely transferable from one to the other.

In other words, the Soviet Union will then be able to unite her two fleets - the Baltic and the Pacific - between which the blocked Suez Canal has served as a barrier. For reaching key points in the Indian Ocean - specifically the entrance to the Persian Gulf - the distance from Sevastopol on the Baltic, which will then become accessible, is about one-third the distance of the present nearest base of Vladivostok in the Pacific.

The importance attached by the Soviet Union to her presence in the Indian Ocean is illustrated by the fact that even now she maintains there four times as many ship-days as the United States.

With the Canal open she will be able at will, and with no increase in exertion or cost, to increase her presence considerably. Her supremacy at sea throughout the whole area will then conceivably be overwhelming.

2. The Soviet Union will be able to make absolute her domination of the trade routes to the Far East, ranging from the Suez Canal route to the southern route around the Cape of Good Hope.

3. The Soviet Union has already one base on each of these routes - one on the island of Socatra (off the coast of South Yemen, now called the People's Republic of S. Yemen) and one on the Island of Mauritius, opposite the South African coast. At the other end of the line she has acquired base facilities at Trincomalee in Ceylon.

4. A massive Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean will provide her with the capacity to blockade China, and to provide encouragement and aid on a major scale to any anti-Western movements and Governments on the East Coast of Africa.

5. It will be a simple exercise for the Soviet Union to give aid, massive in its African context, to the Eritrean separatists, helping to thwart and stultify and potentially to overthrow Ethiopian rule (and inevitably opening a threat to Ethiopia proper). Success of the Eritrean separatists would place under Moslem-Arab control a further stretch of the East African seaboard. A separate Eritrea would no doubt join the Arab League, its links with the Soviet Union would be inevitably close. Complete Moslem-Soviet control would thus be established over the Bab-el-Mandeb straits which could then be closed at will to Israeli - or any other ships.

6. The gravity of the potential threat of Soviet influence on the Eritrean coast, throws into relief another, perhaps more serious danger now on the horizon. Regular physical contact with Mozambique - now on the verge of independence - facilitating a coordinated schedule of armaments and financial aid, will make possible operational "influence" and military "advice" by the Soviets on the borders of the Republic of South Africa - the only serious Western strategic bastion in the south. The Mozambique border is two hundred miles from the centre of the Rand goldfields.

7. These can all be regarded as long-range - hence, in the immediate sense, secondary - prospects; but they could be pursued without hindering the exploitation of more urgent strategic options.

8. In the words of the head of the London Institute for the Study of Conflict, Mr. Brian Crozier, "the major oil-producing countries will" as a result of the opening of the Canal, "be effectively ringed by the Soviet Navy."

9. Physical action, or the threat of physical action, by the West to put an end to Arab oil blackmail, which is now an option open to the United States without having to fear a violent reaction by the Soviet Union, will become very much more problematical, when the Soviet Union is firmly and massively established on the coasts of the oil States, and is able to deploy a far superior naval force at every crucial point.

10. While the Soviet Union will presumably not soon venture on a physical take-over of any of the oil States, it will be completely within her capacity to inspire, encourage, finance and organize elements which she considers suitable for replacing existing governments in those States with satellite regimes. The control of the policies of the Arab oil States would thus be within her grasp; and with it the effective control of the oil sources of Western Europe and Japan.

11. It will be in the Soviet option to escalate at will the ongoing tension between Iraq and Iran to plan its phases and to give Iraq aid in the resultant clash on a scale similar to that she has been giving Egypt and Syria for use against Israel. A massive permanent Soviet presence in the Persian Gulf will moreover neutralize Iran as a 'bastion' for the West, and the value of Turkey to the West will be substantially reduced.

12. The exercise by the Soviet Union of these immediate options will render irreversible for the foreseeable future the process whereby Western Europe, already in moral decline and great economic difficulty, threatens to disintegrate as a viable, independent political and cultural force in the world.

The Alternative Explanation

If the Soviet leaders have abandoned the dream of control of the Persian Gulf and predominance in the Indian Ocean; if they have for twenty years been building up a modern navy capable of sustaining a global strategy merely in order to prove that the Communist regime is able to outdo the Imperial shipbuilding effort of Peter the Great; if they have been assiduously acquiring a network of naval bases and facilities merely in order to exhibit their diplomatic skill and their moral sympathy with under-developed nations - then no doubt they will refrain from exercising these options.

The present foreign policy of the United States Government conducted with great vigor by the Secretary of State is presumably governed by the assumption that the Soviet Union will in fact fail to exercise them. There is no rational ground for this belief, nor any valid experience that can be drawn on in its support. The American experience has been that the Soviet Government, when not threatened by military confrontation (as over Azerbaidjan or Cuba), proceed with their expansionist plans. In their new role of a ubiquitous major naval power, made effective as a result of the opening of the Suez Canal, they will have acquired the sense of assurance previously lacking that it is the United States that cannot, from a military point of view, risk a military confrontation.

This prospect is reinforced by the fact that the exercise of none of the options enumerated above, if performed with moderate skill, can be described as an act of aggression or a threat of aggression. The United States will not hasten to oppose or prevent by force a change of regime (in, for example, Kuwait or even Saudi Arabia) if brought about by a palace revolution, or even a minor civil war - any more than the former British colony of Aden was prevented from becoming the "People's Republic of South Yemen" with a Russian naval base off its south coast.

These dangers are apparently ignored or overlooked, and certainly grossly underestimated, by the U.S. State Department. The community of interest with Israel, concerning both the maintenance of a bastion of Western culture and democracy and the very pragmatic purpose of containing the expansion of the Soviet Union, is to all intents and purposes not a factor in U.S. policy. This - notwithstanding platitudes to the contrary occasionally uttered in Washington and notwithstanding even the supply of aid and arms to Israel. These, in the final analysis are intended to give an attenuated Israel the chance of putting up a fight for the bare bones of existence against odds made overwhelming by the other, coercive, aspects of Dr. Kissinger's policy towards Israel.

The tenor of official U.S. pronouncements, of inspired unofficial statements by public figures, and of comments in the press reinforce the evaluation that Israel is no more than a "client" state for one-sided favors. U.S. foreign policy is indeed governed by a myopia reminiscent of Britain in 1935-39 in her attitude to the victims and prospective victims of the Nazis.

Can The Trend be Reversed In Time?

Can this trend be reversed? What can be done to resist and counterwork the combination of dangers which threaten Israel with extinction, Europe with subjugation to

the Soviet will, and the United States with the role of the isolated last-ditch defender of Western civilization? what can still be done to prevent or slow down the process leading to domination by the Soviet Union (already mistress of Pastern Europe) of an unbroken landmass clear through the Middle Fast, the Persian Gulf coast, the Suez Gulf coast of Sinai, her dominating influence on the fragile states on the Fast African seaboard, and her control of the major oil resources of the world?

* * *

The trend will certainly be reversed. The task that must be undertaken is to achieve its reversal before and not after the cost becomes prohibitive. The Soviet Union and the Arab States, each for their respective purpose, are pressing for the speedy creation of such accomplished facts in the Middle Fast as it will he impossible to undo without recourse to war. Most specifically they are banking on the present United States Administration's continuing its policy until 1976 in the knowledge that a new regime, headed by a Democratic President, will wish to reverse the present policy. But by that time, so the Soviet's hope, a new regime will be unable to do so without war.

Elements of Coalition

The hour is late. Action to achieve change must be swift. The necessary coalition of forces should he mobilized without delay. The elements comprising such a prospective coalition are many and diverse. They are to be found in the American Labour Movement; they are to be found in the Pentagon; they are to he found in the Universities. They include many well-known personalities on the national scene.

As to the Jewish community, notwithstanding the weakness of its leaders, there is no doubt that the mass of those concerned with the Jewish fate are alive to the dangerous realities and prospects arising from the policy of the Secretary of State. They are a reservoir of great devotion and considerable political power. Their growing solidarity, and their capacity for organized action in opposition to that policy despite the pressures of the Establishment in Washington and despite the coolness of their own communal leaders, have been demonstrated dramatically over the past few years in the struggle on behalf of Soviet Jewry. The significance of this struggle - still in progress and likely yet to make great demands on their finances, their energy and their courage - has been of historic dimensions.

This struggle, too, has been the cement of a coalition of forces in the American people. The action of Senator Jackson, Representative Vanik, and their Congressional colleagues was essentially complemented by the collaboration of the activist Jewish community. The lesson of that coalition and indeed its framework are both highly relevant to the needs of the "coalition" that must he created to set up the harrier to current United States foreign policy.

A Plan of Action

Public education and the achievement, through a campaign of enlightenment, of an adequate influence in Congress are the two essential tasks that must he undertaken.

Neither is an easy task, not only because of the problems of finance and organization, but because in foreign affairs, especially in an ongoing policy, many politicians tend to accept or resign themselves to the official line. In the case of the Middle East, moreover, there regrettably prevails a considerable ignorance of many of the essential facts of the Arab-Israeli conflict and indeed even of the proportions of the Soviet thrust. Yet precisely in our day the U.S. Congress has shown itself capable of arriving at an independent outlook which has withstood the blandishments offered and fears generated by Establishment advocates. A large segment of Congress will surely also be responsive to the theses outlined in this paper, provided they are presented intelligently and with the diligence required in any campaign of enlightenment.