

Fabian Press Rejects Carter's Mideast Diplomacy

New York Times, *editorial, "The Geneva Express (via Moscow)"*, Oct. 4

... So the decision to bring the Soviet Union into the action needs to be explained. To do everything possible to reach Geneva is one approach to a settlement, but is a Soviet-sanctioned deal the only path? The use of different language than appears in the universally accepted resolution of the United Nations also requires further explanation. The Israelis had a firm pledge that those terms would not be altered and now one wonders whether they have been. The hard decisions they would be asked to make in any negotiations require their confidence in American guarantees. When diplomacy begins to swirl over their heads, Mr. Carter must make sure that they understand.

Washington Post, *"Muddle in the Middle East"* by Joseph Kraft, Oct. 4:

A delicate compromise linking the Israeli, the Arab, and the U.S. positions seemed to be emerging after Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan visited Washington two weeks ago. Dayan indicated Israel would accept Palestinians as part of an all-Arab delegation in a preliminary conference. He said that the Israelis would not admit PLO members, but would not object if the Palestinians leaned toward the PLO.

The joint Soviet-American statement knocks that delicate compromise into a cocked hat. It implied that the United States and Russia were going to impose a Middle Eastern settlement that would begin with PLO representation at Geneva and inevitably end with a Palestinian state.

...The burden of proof is on the Administration. As of now, anyway, it is a mystery why the United States agreed with so much fanfare to the joint statement with the Russians. The explanation that comes to mind is that once again, the Carter Administration has muddled matters in the Middle East.

Washington Post, *editorial, "The Mideast: A U.S. Policy Shift?"*, Oct. 4:

... This (U.S.-Soviet) joint statement *suggests*—we would put it no stronger than that—a change in American emphasis in favor of the Arab side of the argument

some years now the American game has been to try to keep the Soviets out of the Middle East...

Equally understandably; the U.S. government sees it all quite differently. True, there were some concessions to Soviet demands... some passages in the statement actually break new ground in Israel's favor, and that in any case, a joint statement of this sort should be read not as a balanced, comprehensive statement of American policy, but rather as the most that the United States and the Soviets could agree to...

Perhaps so though we have our doubts. On the large question of whether the joint statement reflects some significant switch in U.S. policy, we are considerably more confident that it does not...

Washington Post, *"An Erratic Swerve in U.S. Policy," column by George F. Will, Oct. 4:*

...By collaborating with the Soviet Union, Israel's principal enemy, on a declaration of objectives for a Mideast settlement, the United States took a giant step toward imposing a settlement agreeable to Israel's enemies. The United States had undermined the Geneva conference, transformed the Soviets from passive to active participants in the diplomatic process, resuscitated a terrorist organization (the Palestine Liberation Organization), hardened Arab negotiating positions and emboldened those Arabs who say negotiations are unnecessary because, eventually, Israel's friend will sell her cheap.

...The policy of the preceding Administration, though flawed, rested on an obvious truth: The Soviets should be eased out of, rather than catapulted into, a central role in the diplomatic process. The Carter Administration's sudden and severe tilt in the Soviet direction (just when Egypt is completing its disengagement from the Soviets), reverses U.S. policy in several significant areas...

Israel's friends must ask if an administration this reckless or incompetent (or both) can be compatible with Israel's security...

Washington Post, *"...And the Anti-Soviet Roadblock"* syndicated column by Rowland Evans and Robert Novack, Oct. 4:

...In short, the President has handed Israel an ally of great potential importance: those anti-Soviet hard-liners who have taken an evenhanded approach to the Mideast until now. They fear Russian encroachment on the region's oil riches more than they fear that continuing Israeli intransigence will bring a war that could wreck the economies of the industrial democracies.

This country's pro-Israel lobby by itself has undermined peace efforts of recent American Presidents; Carter now must also face the full potency of the anti-Soviet bloc on Capitol Hill. Typical of conservative Republicans whose support the Carter Mideast peace plan has been undercut is Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.), who called the joint U.S.-Soviet declaration "an act of insanity"...

... a departure
But U.S. diplomacy had labored for four years following the Yom Kippur war to keep Moscow out. So even if Moscow has made genuine concessions, the transition to a joint U.S.-Soviet policy is far too abrupt.

Oddly, Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan seems to have understood the American political process better than Carter and his aides. Preferring, above all, to keep the Russians out of the Mideast, Dayan warned the President and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance of bitter reactions in the United States. The handful of top officials in on the secret of the joint statement never saw the political issue in its true perspective. For that, Jimmy Carter may pay an exceedingly high price—and with him, the Western world.

The Washington Star, *editorial*, "Wishful Thinking on the Mideast," Oct. 4:

The weekend's joint U.S.-Soviet statement on the Middle East is at best an exercise in wishful thinking and at worst an exercise in the diplomatic art of saying little while appearing to say much. It calls the situation in the Middle East "unsafe," accurately enough, as if that were news to anyone. Beyond that, its notable effect was to incense the Israeli government and renew its fears that the Carter Administration is willing to trifle with Israeli security in a mindless push to reconvene the Geneva Conference by December of this year...

It is difficult, in fact, to view the joint statement of the past weekend as other than another mincing American step towards the accommodation of Russian views and interests in the Middle East...

We cannot imagine what the U.S. thought it was getting out of the joint statement, unless it fancied that the prospect of a U.S.-Soviet initiative might intimidate the government of Israel...

But these formulas leave us, still, a long way from peace and they are pointlessly provocative to the Israelis. Our friends in Israel take the gravest view of hints that there are "legitimate rights" to be cashed at their expense. And who can blame them?

New York Times, "The Deeper Israeli Issues" by James Reston, Oct. 4:

...The Israelis ask how they can be expected to leave the fate of their nation to the judgment of Washington: and Washington is beginning to ask—in private if not yet in public—why the United States should help finance a policy it fears will lead to another war, another oil embargo, and serious consequences not only for Israel but for the world.

One high official of the Carter Administration, reacting to Israeli criticism of the U.S.-Soviet statement on the Geneva conference, put the official Washington view this way:

"The notion that Israel can keep a million Arabs under occupation is just unreal. No way it can be done. And why

should the United States perpetually maintain that situation at tremendous cost to the international community, to its own security and eventually to the security of Israel if the Arabs become radicalized and modernized? This is why, ultimately, the present course really is disastrous for Israel."

...But it is probably too much to say that Mr. Carter has changed his commitments to Israel, he is closer to a guarantee of its modified 1967 borders than ever before, or that he calculated the U.S.-Soviet statement on the Geneva conference to impose an "outside" settlement on the Middle Eastern states.

New York Times, "Selling Out Israel," by William Safire, Oct. 5:

...For the selling-out of Israel is definitely a departure from the policy of previous U.S. Presidents. Mr. Carter has shown he is determined to take land lost by Arabs in wars against Israel, and to force the creation of a Palestinian state.

Under Soviet pressure, Mr. Carter has announced his embrace of the "rights" to a state demanded by the Palestine Liberation Organization...

Every step Mr. Carter takes is to create that state or "entity" or "homeland." The Israelis cannot tolerate it; the Saudis and the Egyptians and other moderate Arabs do not really want it; the P.L.O., after its defeat in Lebanon, is too weak to demand it. But Mr. Carter is pressing hard for it, with the cooperation of the Soviet Union, which undoubtedly will provide arms...

First, we can call for an end to duplicity. If Mr. Carter has a deal in his back pocket he plans to spring at Geneva, putting all the pressure of the superpowers and the Third World against Israel, then we ought to know its outlines now—in time to urge Israel to wait a year or two.

Second, we can expose the campaign to isolate and weaken Israel...

Third, we can lean back on those who lean on Israel. The President has shown, above all else, how susceptible he is to pressure...