

EXCURSUS 1

Mark A. Bruzonsky on AFTER SADAT

Those who say it was really Sadat's friends who did him in express the underlying problems of the post-Camp David environment in the Middle East. For Sadat was being gradually destroyed by his own Camp David partners. In their various ways Carter, Begin, and Reagan left him dangling—a victim of their myopia, lack of resolve, and perceptions of their own domestic political situations.

There are abundant signs that Sadat had begun to panic in his last months, aware of his predicament but unable to find a way out. The bullets from Muslim fanatics—who no doubt fancy themselves both Egyptian and Arab patriots—made it a clean kill.

Of course there can be no certainty that had the "peace" process not degenerated into an undisguisable Egyptian-Israeli deal and had Israel not repeatedly violated Arab honor in Baghdad, Beirut, on the West Bank, and, to many in Egypt, on the streets of Cairo, the events of October 6 would not have occurred. But what can be said with some certainty is that American and Israeli policies and attitudes in the wake of the March, 1979, treaty progressively weakened Sadat, forced him to repress broad segments of Egyptian society, cut him off from his natural Arab allies, and thus created a climate conducive to martyrdom and fanaticism.

Now Mubarak faces the same dilemmas, but without having Sadat's authority. The U.S. confronts a Middle East more torn by social tensions and divided by political frustrations. Israel finds itself on a crucial hinge on which Menachem Begin can swing Israel's future (and that of the entire region) in the direction of reconciliation or toward inevitable catastrophe.

It will be many months, if not years, before the true direction of Mubarak's Egypt is known. Sadat, it should be remembered, was forced to feint and twist in the early '70s before arriving at the course he initiated in Jerusalem just four years ago last month. He would not have been the Nobel Laureate of Peace had he not been the Hero of the October War. Indeed, it is likely that Mubarak's direction, as Sadat's, will be dictated by the flow of events rather than by well-developed plans. He is known more as an operator than a thinker, more for his shrewdness in handling the Army and the bureaucracy than for his strategic concepts.

Consequently, today's U.S. and Israeli policies and attitudes will help to determine Mubarak and Egypt's fate, as well as the final outcome of Sadat's grand gamble. For Egypt has fully exhausted its flexibility and much of its self-confidence. It has gone as far as it can in nurturing a peace process that few believed could be accelerated at the pace Sadat insisted was possible. Normalization of relations between Egypt and Israel will continue to be touted publicly, but it may simply freeze in place or atrophy if the inescapable Palestinian issue remains stalemated.

America's postassassination attempts to buttress Egypt with displays of rhetorical toughness and military prowess may provide marginal reassurances about U.S. muscle, but they hardly speak to Egyptian and Arab doubts about America's political determination and sophistication. Under Reagan, U.S. Middle-East policy has gotten tangled up in simplistic notions, foremost among which is that of "strategic consensus." Yet neither the

Soviet Union nor Libya is actually challenging basic American interests in the region right now, though it is convenient to have these whipping boys so as to avoid the more immediate and fundamental issue: how to approach a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace, including a fair solution of the Palestinian predicament.

A coalition of moderate Arab states is quite prepared to follow U.S. leadership on strategic matters if American political credibility is restored. But not now, when they perceive American insensitivity and ignorance to be threatening their internal cohesion and what remains of pan-Arab honor. And if the U.S. were less hung up on protecting specific regimes in the name of the false god "stability," we could get on with the far more difficult task of consolidating social, cultural, political, and economic links with the key states of the region, transcending individual personalities.

Much more transpired in the '70s than the West's uneasy dependence on OPEC and the creation of petrodollar power. As Arab societies have matured and modernized, they have made deep psychological adjustments. Coexistence with Israel is no longer a heretical notion; Sadat was prescient in perceiving that the conflict was ripe for resolution. But the requisite conditions have yet to be established. From Washington vision and courage are required, from Israel a new attitude toward the Arab Middle East—not just toward Egypt—and a willingness to thrash out a partition compromise with Palestinian nationalists.

As for Washington's record thus far, James Reston has hit the nail on the head: The Reagan administration's performance borders on "diplomatic scandal."

Mark A. Bruzonsky is a consultant on Middle Eastern affairs and a Worldview Contributing Editor.

EXCURSUS 2

Lawrence D. Hogan on THE PRESIDENT AND THE GENERAL

Twice in 1981 Ronald Reagan spoke from a platform haunted by the memory of Douglas MacArthur. And on both occasions—at the Pentagon on September 10, where he dedicated a memorial to the general, and on the plain at West Point in May, where he delivered the commencement address—the president overlooked what Douglas MacArthur had been stressing during the last years of his long career.

In speaking to the cadets in May, the president ignored, as he has consistently ignored in articulating a foreign policy for his administration, the matter of survival, the very question that occupied MacArthur and the most important one we face today. Editor Edwin Guthman of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* noted at the time that the same exhortations to newly commissioned officers about leadership and adherence to West Point traditions could as easily have been delivered to the graduating classes of 1811, 1861, 1916, or 1941.

The cadets to whom President Reagan spoke deserved better from their commander-in-chief than the repetitious pledges of higher pay for the military, a stronger defense establishment, and sweeping, largely rhetorical assurances that a new spirit of confidence is pervading America. An earlier West Point graduating class had in fact gotten better from the general whom the president now

took pleasure in invoking. In a voice that rang out across the plain on commencement day 1962, a voice that managed to speak to the nation and the world as well, five-star General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, then retired, spoke of a "new world" that had to be faced, a world "of change and staggering evolution." The promised new frontiers offered hope—"of harnessing cosmic energy and sending men to the moon; of finding disease preventatives to expand life into the hundreds of years; and of controlling the weather for a new and more equitable distribution of heat and cold, of rain and shine." But they presented dangers too, a world "where the primary target in war is no longer limited to the armed forces of an enemy" but now includes his civilian population.

On September 10, amid the pageantry of booming canons and beating drums, Ronald Reagan mounted a stage at the Pentagon to ask the nation to pay heed to Douglas MacArthur's warning that in war there can be no substitute for victory. The president went on to recall the highlights of the general's career, "a legend that began on cavalry outposts in the Old West where the son of a medal of honor winner first heard the sound of a drum and the shout of cadence." He noted how prophetic MacArthur had been when, as Army chief of staff during the '30s, he had warned Congress of "the need for military readiness and a modern army featuring strong armored and air forces."

The president or his speech writers might as readily have recalled the main points of a speech the general made several years prior to the 1962 commencement address. The occasion was an American Legion convention in Los Angeles, the subject one on which MacArthur was (and perhaps remains) more qualified to speak than any man. Looking back on a career that spanned five decades, he recalled that when he entered the Army on those "cavalry outposts in the Old West," "the target was an enemy casualty at the end of a rifle or bayonet or sword. Then came the machine gun, designed to kill by the dozens. After that the heavy artillery, raining death by the hundreds. Then the aerial bomb, to strike by the thousands. Now, electronics and other processes of science have raised the destructive potential to encompass millions." Then he noted, with a tone approaching despair, that today we must find a way to live with the awful specter of "restless hands" working "feverishly in dark laboratories to find the means to destroy all in one blow." For MacArthur the lesson was clear:

This very triumph of scientific annihilation has destroyed the possibility of war being a medium of practical settlement of international differences. No longer is it a weapon of adventure whereby a shortcut to international power and wealth—a place in the sun—can be gained. If you lose, you are annihilated. If you win, you stand only to lose. No longer does it possess the chance of a winner of a duel—it contains rather the germs of double suicide.

What should be done? The only answer: abolish war. It is "the one issue upon which both sides could agree, for it is the one issue—and the only decisive one—in which the interests are completely parallel. It is the one issue which, if settled, might settle all the others."

MacArthur recalled that after such a provision had been inserted in Japan's postwar constitution—a document he had largely written himself—Prime Minister Kijuro Shidehura told him: "The world will laugh and mock us as impractical visionaries, but a hundred years from now we will be called prophets." Shidehura might have added, if

there is still a world a hundred years from now.

It seems no exaggeration to say that there never has been a time when it appeared more necessary for people in high places to speak out clearly and courageously about the perilous and complex reality that sets the conditions for survival today. Just last spring, in a speech in Washington upon accepting the Albert Einstein Peace Award, former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union George Kennan pleaded for the United States and the USSR to agree to an immediate across-the-board reduction of 50 per cent in their nuclear arsenals as a first step toward controlling the armaments madness that grips both nations. Mr. Kennan asks for a 50 per cent cut in our mutual ability to destroy each other five hundred times over. The general would have had us outlaw war. But then, as he said in 1962, it is a new world we face.

President Reagan's electoral mandate in the first year of this decade gives him the special responsibility to address in clear and sober terms the facts of survival in our time. The welfare of the nation, as well as the memory of Douglas MacArthur, would be better served by a foreign policy and foreign policy rhetoric that addressed itself not to winning wars but to outlawing them.

Lawrence D. Hogan is an Assistant Professor of History at Union College, New Jersey.

EXCURSUS 3

Sy Syna on FILMS DOWN UNDER

In the last decade a fledgling Australian film industry has gathered such momentum that it is making a successful assault upon the world's consciousness. New York recently was host to an Australian film festival, and the prestigious D. W. Griffith Theatre announced its intention of showing only Australian and New Zealand films.

The festival offered five feature films previously released in the United States—*The Last Wave*, *Picnic on Hanging Rock*, *My Brilliant Career*, *The Getting of Wisdom*, and *Breaker Morant*—and the premiere of *Tim*, based on the book by Colleen McCullough and starring Piper Laurie and Mel Gibson. Mr. Gibson also stars in *Gallipoli*, commercially distributed here but not included in the festival, though the two runs coincided. Viewers were treated to provocative and often powerful matter, and many of the films will be circulating in art houses across the nation for some time to come. From the dozen films produced in Australia that have been released in the States, certain striking features emerge.

Most apparent, Australian cinematographers have a love of the land, which they capture in vibrant, sharply etched color. Notable in this regard is *My Brilliant Career*, whose landscapes are imbued with the sensuous tones of a Renoir canvas. Directors and cameramen alike seem to revel in the contrasts their country affords—from the city sewers in *The Last Wave* to the primitive outback (the American Great Plains *cum* Dakota Badlands) to the seashore so prominently featured in *Tim*.

Every country has its own mythic period. For the U.S. it is the opening of the West; for Japan the clash of rival clans during the feudal period; for England the time of Elizabeth I. The Australian sensibility seems to have been formed not during the Botany Bay period of earlier settle-