Beyond the Sinai Agreement

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The significance of the Egyptian-Israeli interim agreement of 1975 is less in its specifications than in its implications, and these, as matters stand, are by no means clear. If the disengagement generates momentum toward further, more substantial agreements and toward a general settlement, Dr. Kissinger's diplomacy will be vindicated as successful and farsighted. If, on the other hand, the agreement becomes an excuse for Israeli intransigence, extremism on the part of one or more of the Arab parties, and a holiday from statesmanship during the forthcoming American political season, the Sinai accord will stand—depending upon events—as something between a futile exercise and an outright disaster.

One point I cannot emphasize too strongly is that it is proper, indeed essential, that the interim agreement be thoroughly examined by the relevant committees of Congress. It is just eleven years since the Congress, under a misapprehension of its significance, approved the Tonkin Gulf Resolution under heavy pressure from the President and without thorough consideration, and the results were disastrous.

Given the extraordinary difficulties that had to be overcome to reach the Egyptian-Israeli agreement, the temptation to overcelebrate is natural. If arduous effort were the sole criterion of diplomatic success, President Ford would perhaps be justified in hailing the Sinai agreement as "a great achievement, one of the most historic certainly of this decade and perhaps of this century." If, on the other hand, we take the scope and sweep of an achievement as the measure of its significance, I do not think the Sinai accord is to be compared with, say, the Treaty of Versailles, the World War II peace treaties, or even more recent agreements with the Soviet Union on SALT or on the status of Berlin.

Perhaps, where Arabs and Israelis are concerned, the truly remarkable fact is that, after decades of intransigence, they finally agreed on something, however limited. As Dr. Johnson said of the dog walking on his hind legs, "It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."

An objective evaluation of the agreement requires a close, dispassionate examination of its specifications—explicit and implicit, public and secret—and also of its costs. Equally, if not more important, is an appreciation of the interests and objectives of all those involved. Before commenting further on the interim agreement itself, therefore, and on what may be beyond it, I would like to suggest what I believe to be the central, crucial interests of the United States in the Middle East—interests that must serve as guideposts to a rational, responsible policy.

The catalog of our interests is well known and hardly contested: the survival of Israel; access to oil and the friendship of the Arabs; the avoidance of confrontation with the Soviet Union; and the strengthening of the United Nations as an international peace-keeping agency. What we evidently do not agree upon among ourselves is the priority of these interests and the appropriate means of reconciling them where they conflict. To the Israeli lobby, if I may use the newspaper term—with its extraordinary influence on our politics—the requirements of Israeli security, as judged by the Israelis themselves, are the commanding objective of American policy. In my view—which is a minority view in Congress and the press, but which I have a hunch is more widely shared among the people at large—the commanding American interest in the Middle East is access to oil. Our interest in Israel is emotional and ideological; it is in our interests for Israel to survive because we wish Israel to survive. Our interest in Arab oil is a matter of vital economic necessity, tangible and urgent—more urgent indeed.
than is now recognized by any but a few energy experts.

There is little reason to hope—and much reason to doubt—that the trumpeted "Project Independence" in energy is going to succeed within the next five or ten years. One reason for this is political. As of now Congress simply does not have the will or capacity to adopt a rational program of energy conservation and of incentives for new production. Beset by political pressures, the majority in Congress seem committed to a national policy—if it can be called that—allowing rising consumption of a diminishing resource at artificially suppressed prices. Since even the United States Congress cannot legislate into being resources that do not exist, the inevitable result has been rapidly rising imports. Between 1967 and 1974, while our overall oil consumption rose from something over 12.5 million barrels a day to more than 16.5 million barrels a day, the proportion of our overall oil requirements imported rose from just over 20 per cent to almost 37 per cent, while the proportion of overall imports coming from the Middle East and North Africa more than doubled, rising from 10.2 per cent to 20.6 per cent.

Of and by itself there is nothing wrong with moderately increased dependence on Arab oil. But Congress, while allowing the dependency to grow, at the same time gives all-out military and political support to the Arab oil producers' most feared enemy, Israel. Doubly reckless, Congress both refutes domestic conservation and jeopardizes foreign sources, and with this there is a great deal wrong. One does not have to be a master political strategist—one only needs an iota of common sense—to recognize that it is not prudent to allow yourself to become economically dependent on a foreign supplier while at the same time you pursue political policies guaranteed to antagonize that supplier. We may denounce the threat of embargo as blackmail, and perhaps that is the right name for it, but it is more to the point to note that if the Arabs did not use their economic power in their national interest, they would be the only nations in the world—most assuredly including the United States, and perhaps the first nations in history—who declined to do so. In short, to give priority to Israeli interest would logically require Draconian measures of conservation, such as high prices and rationing, while to give priority to domestic energy requirements would require an Israeli pullback to the 1967 borders and a comprehensive settlement in accord with Resolution 242. It is a hard dilemma, but it is inescapable.

Besides the political reasons, there are weighty economic and technical reasons why "Project Independence" is unlikely to succeed within the next ten years. The so-called exotic new sources of energy—nuclear fusion, solar and geothermal energy—cannot be expected to contribute in any important degree to our energy supply within the next decade. The more practical short-term alternative to petroleum—coal and nuclear energy—will certainly be used in far greater quantities, but it now seems unlikely that it can come anywhere near filling our fast-rising domestic energy deficit over the next ten years. The opening of the Alaska pipeline, expected in 1977, will give a welcome boost to our domestic oil supply, and the decontrol of domestic oil prices, if it occurs, may provide incentive for new domestic exploration and production. But these too will be insufficient to fill the gap, all the more for the fact that any short-term gains in domestic oil production will be counteracted by the steady, rapid decline in our domestic natural gas production.

Not only is energy self-sufficiency a virtual impossibility over the next decade or more; our dependency on imported oil is almost certain to increase, unless we are prepared to pay the price of deep, long-term recession in our national economy. There is an historically established link between economic growth and rising energy consumption. Perhaps some day the two can be decoupled, but that does not seem imminent. Undoubtedly, too, a depressed economy would have beneficial energy-saving and environmental effects. The price, however—high unemployment, underfinanced education, deteriorating cities, and rising crime—is clearly unacceptable, both socially and politically.

The alternative—the only alternative—is rising oil imports, which brings us to the question of where the imports are to come from. Throughout the 1950's and 1960's at least two-thirds of our oil imports came from Western Hemisphere sources, primarily Canada and Venezuela. But Venezuelan production has peaked and is now declining, and Canada has adopted an official policy of phasing out oil and gas exports to the United States—a policy. I might note parenthetically, that has elicited no calls for the invasion of Canada. By 1974 only 60 per cent of our oil imports were coming from the Western Hemisphere. At the same time, as already noted, the proportion of our imports coming from the Middle East and North Africa doubled between 1967 and 1974, rising from 10 to over 20 per cent of total imports.

We may expect in the next few years to buy more oil from Nigeria and Indonesia and a few other countries, but most of our rising import requirement is going to have to come from the Middle East. The reason, quite simply, is that that is where the large reserves are; that is where production can be increased to meet our needs. And there is no other place in the world, so far as anyone knows, with comparable reserves—except possibly Soviet Siberia. A forthcoming Library of Congress study projects that within the next decade we will be getting about half of our total oil and natural gas imports from the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia possesses no less than 25 per cent of the world's oil reserves, and another 22 per cent lies beneath the territory of the neighboring countries of the Arabian peninsula. These countries, especially Saudi Arabia, have governments that greatly desire to
cooperate with the United States for reasons of their own national interests. The Saudis have made it abundantly clear that they wish to trade their oil, in effect, for our technology, and further that they wish to invest much of their surplus capital in our economy while relying primarily upon their association with the United States for their national security. The Saudis do not propose—nor should we seek—an exclusive association to the detriment of others. But they offer us an arrangement of special cooperation and mutual advantage. I have no doubt the French or Japanese, for example, would seize upon as a gift from heaven.

If all this does not add up to something that deserves the name of "vital national interest," I cannot conceive of what would. And the importance of our good relations with Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states is reinforced by the fact that as our short-term import dependency grows, we are going to have to ask the Saudis to do certain things that are not necessarily to their own advantage. When the current recession of the Western economies ends and the demand for oil rises accordingly, soaking up OPEC's current spare production capacity, we shall have to ask the Saudis to take the lead in resisting large new price increases, as they are now doing, and in increasing oil production beyond the level of their own greatest advantage. As of now there is reason to hope that they will do both, but their future responsiveness to our needs will, of course, depend upon our overall good relations.

To this end it would seem prudent, to say the least, to reconsider our current attitude of ambivalence and suspicion toward the Arab oil-producing countries. Instead of treating their prospective investments as a threat, we ought to welcome them as a boon to our economy. Even indeed if we do mistrust them, we should know from our own foreign investment experience that sizable assets in a foreign country serve more nearly as a hostage than as a threat to that country. Similarly, I think it both unfair to the Saudis and detrimental to our own national interest when the press and Congressional committees reap harvests of self-serving publicity from the fact that certain companies have sought to advance their business by the payment of what in some cases may have been commissions, and in others more accurately bribes, to certain Saudi nationals. It is rumored that the practices in question are not unknown here in our own country. One wonders, therefore, whether the righteous indignation now being directed toward reforming the business ethics of foreigners could not more usefully be applied at home.

The deep suspicion directed toward Arabs in general—and toward the Saudis in particular—is not, I think, really rooted in questions of business ethics, or fear of the takeover of important segments of our economy. Nor, I suspect, is it rooted in genuine fear that a close association with Saudi Arabia and the other Arab oil-producing countries will be bad for the United States. It is rooted, I suspect, rather in a deep-seated, perhaps not even wholly conscious, fear that the association will be good for the United States—so very good indeed as to erode or undercut our allout, emotional commitment to Israel.

It is at this precise point that our interests in Israel and in the Arab world intersect. Far from being separate and distinct, as we are often asked to believe, the interests involved are inseparable, so much so, in my opinion, that neither can be realized in any satisfactory, enduring way except with reference to the other. To state the matter in concrete terms: Our emotional and ideological interest in Israel must be reconciled—not sacrificed but reconciled—with our inevitably growing economic dependency on the Arab oil-producing countries.

This necessity, if we are rational, need not strike gloom and fear into our hearts. The Arab states, for reasons of their own security and economic development, with perhaps one or two minor exceptions, are willing and even eager to cooperate with the United States. Nor is there any direct conflict of interests between the Arab countries in general and the United States. The only issue that sets us against each other is our continuing support, through military assistance, of Israeli occupation of Arab lands taken in 1967. The Arab leaders who play decisive roles in this issue—Presidents Sadat and Assad, King Khalid and Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia, King Hussein, and, I believe too, Mr. Arafat—are rational and moderate men who are prepared to accept Israel within its 1967 boundaries with all appropriate foreign and international guarantees. "The Arabs," King Khalid said recently, "have learned to be moderate, reasonable. Gone are the days of Nasser's period when the Arabs threatened to exterminate the Israelis."

Our job is to get Israel to withdraw—not to sacrifice or sell Israel out, but to persuade her to a course consistent with United Nations resolutions, with the United Nations Charter itself, with declared American objectives such as the Rogers Plan of 1969, and with our own traditional principle of the right of peoples to self-determination. We do not have forever to carry the assignment out. If the interim Sinai agreement is not soon followed by other, more substantial steps, espe-

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cially with respect to the central question of Palestinian rights, frustrations will increase and tensions will rise. Moderate Arab leaders will either be radicalized or displaced, and a fifth war will follow. Now is the time of opportunity, and it may not soon be repeated.

As we concentrate our attention on the interim agreement, we should not overlook the seriousness of the tragedy unfolding in Lebanon. It has been estimated that as many as 3,500 have been killed and 13,000 wounded in Lebanon since April. It is reported that radical terrorists have been infiltrated from various areas and that arms and money are supplied to them from the most extreme, radical revolutionary sources. If Lebanon is torn apart by violence and a radical left-wing authoritarian government is set up, all the plans for present or future peace agreements will be seriously undermined. The seriousness of the situation in Lebanon emphasizes the urgency of a comprehensive peace settlement between Israel and her neighbors and the fact that we cannot afford to delay that settlement.

Measured against the danger and opportunity, and also in terms of our own national interest, the Sinai agreement can be represented as no more than a modest gain at best, purchased at an exceptionally high cost. It is not my purpose here, however, to review its specific terms, which have been much discussed in the press in recent weeks. Reluctantly, I have concluded that I would not wish at this late date, despite my apprehensions and reservations, to see the pact completely rejected. But I think it could be modified. I would hope indeed that all concerned would proceed to make the best of it—the Israelis by entering into negotiations in good faith with Syria, and for something more than a “cosmetic” agreement; the Egyptians by carrying out their reported promises in good faith, especially those pertaining to matters on which the Israelis are most sensitive, such as the Suez Canal, the boycott of firms that deal with Israel, and the suppression of obsolete propaganda. The United States, for its part, must not slide into a period of election-year complacency on the strength of the American promise, however qualified, to be “fully responsive” to Israel’s military, energy, and economic needs as Israel perceives them. The prospective sale—or gift—of Pershing ground-to-ground missiles seems particularly unwise and dangerous. Designed to carry either nuclear or conventional warheads, the Pershing has a range of 450 miles—sufficient to strike Cairo or the Aswan dam; all of Jordan, most of Syria, and parts of Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Defense Minister Peres’s pledge not to use nuclear warheads is welcome but insufficiently reassuring, owing to the high probability that Israel has in fact a store of nuclear arms, owing, too, to the fact that even a conventional rocket attack on Cairo or Damascus—or by the Arabs on Tel Aviv—would represent a radical escalation over the previous Arab-Israeli wars, greatly increasing the risk of Soviet-American involvement and confrontation.

At the very least Israeli acquisition of sophisticated new American weapons will add fuel to the Middle East arms race. Egypt and Syria already possess Soviet Scud missiles, shorter in range than the Pershing, but still lethal and also capable of carrying nuclear warheads. Israeli acquisition of the Pershing may well provoke Arab countries to seek Soviet missiles of equal range and yield. And if Congress is as lavish as it has been in the past in providing sophisticated arms to Israel, and at the same time as unresponsive to the arms requests President Sadat has warned us to expect, we may succeed in driving Egypt back into close association with the Soviet Union—something the Russians can have little hope of accomplishing without an assist from the Americans. In any event, it now seems probable that another Arab-Israeli war will extend beyond desert battlefields to population centers on both sides.

The asymmetry of our military aid policy is highlighted by the difficulties attending the proposed sale of Hawk ground-to-air missiles to Jordan. On the one side, we are ready to provide Israel with a full panoply of sophisticated offensive weapons, including the Pershing and Lance missiles and the forthcoming F-16
aircraft. On the other hand, the grudging, suspicious attitude of certain senators and congressmen toward the sale to Jordan of an effective air defense system has had the effect of insulting, humiliating, and perhaps alienating one of the most moderate, responsible, and pro-American leaders in the Arab world.

The American commitment to sustain Israel’s economy and satisfy her energy requirements is no less sweeping than the underwriting of Israel’s military arsenal. The language of the specific economic commitments, as reported in the press, is provisional, but hardly so provisional that Israel will not charge—and be justified in charging—betrayal if we fail to deliver in all categories. It is technically true, as State Department officials have pointed out, that the Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement will remain binding, regardless of American compliance or noncompliance with ancillary military, economic, and political inducements. But as was discovered following the Paris accords on Vietnam, there is danger in this kind of sleight of hand—danger of misunderstanding and miscalculation, of bluffs being called and delicately balanced structures coming unglued.

I note with particular apprehension the United States commitment to provide oil to Israel even in the event of an embargo, and also to compensate Israel through foreign aid for the loss of the Abu Rudeis fields in Sinai. One wonders why it should be necessary to compensate a country for giving up resources that did not belong to that country in the first place. Consider, too, the possibility of a general embargo, one against the United States as well as Israel, in which event we would still be bound to make oil available to Israel under the allocation formula of the International Energy Agency, and also help to transport it. A period of sustained oil embargo would not seem the ideal time for the United States to take on added economic burdens. Extrapolating from the experience of the 1973 embargo, a Library of Congress expert calculates that a six-months’ embargo in 1977 would result in additional unemployment in the United States of a million to a million and a half and a loss in gross national product ranging from $39 billion to $56 billion.

In view of the fact that an embargo is only likely to occur in the event of another Arab-Israel war, the question arises whether we would provide Israel with oil regardless of the circumstances that gave rise to the embargo and to the consequent hardships imposed on the American people. Would we provide Israel with oil even if the embargo were precipitated by a war started by Israel? Under the agreement as it stands it would seem we would be bound to do exactly that. How much more preferable—and how much more responsible—it would have been if we had qualified this commitment and used it as leverage to discourage any possible Israeli preemptive strike.

The overall cost of the Sinai agreement to the American taxpayers is not easily calculated, among other reasons because the commitment—or provisional commitment—to “make every effort to be fully responsive” to Israel’s military, energy, and general economic requirements is open-ended as to time, amount, and circumstances. The “memorandum of agreement” defines no conditions under which the United States would be released from its promises, even if Israel were to initiate a future conflict. The cost of the foreign aid commitments in the package, however, are more predictable. It has been widely reported that the cost of the Sinai agreement for this fiscal year will be about $2.9 billion—$2.3 billion for Israel and $600 million for Egypt. And Israel’s defense minister, Mr. Peres, was recently quoted as saying that Israel will need $1.5 billion in military aid annually for at least four or five years. In addition, there will be the cost of the commitment to pay for the oil Israel was drawing from Egypt’s fields in the Sinai, at least $350 million annually. All these elements add up to a total of about $1.9 billion for the annual foreign aid package for Israel. Projecting this conservative estimate over a five-year period, total aid to Israel will come to $9.9 billion. When aid to Egypt at the level now being discussed is added in, the total direct cost over five years for this modest pullback, in foreign aid alone, will come to $12.9 billion. This turns out to be some $7.5 million for every square mile of sand to be given up by Israel, more per square mile than we paid for all of Alaska back in 1867. It staggeres the imagination to contemplate what an agreement on the Golan Heights might cost. The cost to our economy of continuing uncertainty regarding access to oil is incalculable, quite impossible to estimate, but is surely very great.

The second basic difficulty with the Sinai accords is the far-ranging, potentially conflicting political and diplomatic promises made by the United States, which seem to add up to a de facto underwriting, for an indefinite period, of the new status quo. There would seem to be no technical inconsistencies in the language of the accords, only substanc-

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tive ones that are not easy to reconcile, especially with regard to the withdrawal from the Golan Heights, a serious and difficult problem for Israel as well as Syria.

The Syrian Government has been denouncing the Sinai accords both longer and more intensely than their erstwhile Egyptian allies expected, even to the extent of threatening that Syria will not deal with Egypt as long as the "strange and disgraceful" agreement, as they describe it, stands. The Egyptians, embarrassed and discomfited, point wistfully to the United States assurance that it "intends to make a serious effort to help bring about further negotiations between Syria and Israel..." The Israelis, for their part, note with satisfaction the United States assurance that in its view the agreement with Egypt stands on its own and that the Egyptian commitments are "not conditional upon any act or developments between the other Arab states and Israel." This is unquestionably read by the Israelis—and perhaps meant to be read by them—as a promise that the United States will not apply pressure on them to negotiate with Syria. Though not inconsistent in a purely technical way, the American assurances to Egypt and to Israel regarding Syria are scarcely reconcilable in substance. Behind the artful diplomatic language we seem to have come perilously close to having promised one thing to one side, something quite different to the other.

At least for public consumption the Israelis have made it clear that they expect no agreement with Syria, except perhaps a "cosmetic," which is to say meaningless, agreement. Prime Minister Rabin declared in Jerusalem on September 17: "I see the possibility for an interim agreement in the Golan, as very doubtful. And even this may be an understatement." And on September 5 he had said that there was "virtually no chance" for an interim agreement with Syria, among other reasons because the extensive Israeli settlements on the occupied lands "were not established in order to be evacuated." Perhaps secret arrangements have already been made for serious negotiation on the Golan Heights, and the tough Israeli rhetoric is only a smoke screen for domestic opinion. But until and unless evidence of this is forthcoming, interested observers must base their judgments on what is publicly known. With this qualification, my own judgment is that prospects for a new, significant Syrian-Israeli agreement are bleak.

What now of step-by-step? Where and how is further momentum to be generated toward peace? In the basic Egyptian-Israeli agreement the parties solemnly affirm that their agreement is not final, that they are "determined" to reach a "final and just peace settlement." As we consider how this general resolve may be realized, it is pertinent to note that in the two memoranda of agreement the United States concurs with Israel that any future agreements with Egypt or Jordan should be part of a final settlement, and the United States further promises that it will continue to boycott the Palestine Liberation Organization as long as the PLO does not recognize Israel. Adding these conditions to Israel's adamantness about Syria, one does not readily discern where the next step is going to be taken, or how and in what form progress may be expected at a reconvened Geneva conference.

There may be promise in Secretary Kissinger's proposal of September 22 to the United Nations General Assembly that a "more informal multilateral meeting" be convened to "assess conditions," but the proposal needs to be thought through and spelled out, especially as to the central question of the Palestinians, which cannot be forever postponed and evaded, however convenient that might seem diplomatically and politically. Pending further clarification of the Ford Administration's future policy—or some as yet unavailable evidence that there really are going to be serious negotiations between Israel and Syria—one can only discern from the package of Sinai agreements a de facto American acceptance of the new status quo.

Important constitutional questions arise in connection with the American role in these agreements. In addition to the far-reaching American commitment to meet Israel's military, economic, and energy needs, the United States is committed to "view with particular gravity threats to Israel's security or sovereignty by a world power," and also in the immediate future to "conclude the contingency plan for a military supply operation to Israel in an emergency situation." These are not absolute, unqualified commitments, but neither are the NATO treaty or our security treaties with Japan and others, all of which allow for action through our constitutional procedures. If these were thought of sufficient solemnity to justify treaties ratified by the Senate, why are they equal, if not more far-ranging, promises to Israel in the Sinai accords contracted through semisecret "memoranda of agreement"? Was the Congress's vigorous and vaunted reassertion of its foreign policy powers restricted to matters of the late war in Southeast Asia, or trade with the Soviet Union, or aid to Turkey? In short, does the constitutional principle vary with the issue? As Congress considers the various aid packages and other proposals connected with the Sinai agreements, I most respectfully urge my former colleagues to bear in mind the responsibilities they themselves affirmed through the War Powers Act of 1973, the Case Act of 1972, requiring the reporting of all executive agreements, and the National Commitments Resolution of 1969, in which the Senate expressed its sense that "a national commitment by the United States to a foreign power necessarily and exclusively results from affirmative action taken by the executive and legislative branches of the United States Government through means of a treaty, convention, or other legislative instrumentality specifically intended to give effect to such a commitment."

The Ford Administration in general—and Secretary
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Kissinger in particular—are undoubtedly taken aback to see their Middle East handiwork criticized for its limited achievement and high cost. In their view—and I believe it to be accurate—they were doing all they could do within the confines of political reality, foreign and domestic. How, they ask, could Israel and the Arab states have been brought to a general settlement when it took all the diplomatic skill we could muster—and billions of dollars besides—to bring Egypt and Israel to this very limited agreement? How, too, they must ask—and this with no small irony and vexation—can Congress express apprehension at the magnitude of our military and economic commitment to Israel when only five months ago seventy-six senators signed a letter virtually demanding—and in effect compelling—these very commitments?

All of which points up one very crucial, central fact: that the key to peace in the Middle East is in the internal politics of the United States. As long as the Israeli lobby retains its extraordinary power to mobilize large majorities in Congress, the executive will be accordingly hobbled in any efforts it may care to make to bring the Middle East antagonists to a peace based on Security Council Resolution 242. As long as congressmen and senators are unwilling to face the political risk, possible loss of campaign contributions, and personal unpleasantness of well-organized pressure campaigns, we can expect little in the Middle East except deadlock, terrorism, tedious negotiations with little if any result, and in due course, sooner or later, the fifth Arab-Israeli war.

Perhaps, not for the first time, the American people are ahead of their leaders. A poll taken for the Gannett News Service in early September showed 64 per cent opposed to the United States compensating Israel for the loss of Egyptian oil. A National Observer readership "plebiscite" taken in mid-September showed almost 77 per cent opposed to the assignment of American technicians to the Sinai. A poll taken by Congressman McClory in his Illinois district earlier this year showed 60 per cent favoring Israel's withdrawal to secure pre-1967 borders, as established by the United Nations, as a condition of continued American military aid.

Public opinion polls should not be allowed to dictate foreign policy, but neither should organized minorities. A rational American policy in the Middle East must be solidly rooted in the American national interest, modified so far as necessary by a sense of decency and compassion toward those who have suffered so much in this decades-long tragedy. The aspirations of all concerned—of Israel to a secure national existence, of the Arab states to the recovery of their territories, of the Palestinians to a national homeland, and of the United States and the rest of the world to a reliable supply of oil—are, I believe, essentially reconcilable with each other. Sacrifices will be required, to be sure, especially on the part of Israelis and Palestinians, who have been rival claimants to the same land. But if they can bring themselves, or be brought by others, to reconcile themselves to each other's national existence, the way will be open to a new era of peace and unrivaled prosperity in the Middle East.

It is in this respect, from an American standpoint, that the Middle East differs so radically from Southeast Asia. There was never anything good to be accomplished from the Indochina war, only a tragedy to be liquidated. In the Middle East there is more than a conflict to be ended and confrontations to be avoided. Great benefits are waiting to be reaped from a peaceful Middle East, and they can benefit the whole world. One can envision a whole new set of economic and political relationships through which the industrialized world would exchange technology for a steady and reliable supply of oil while developing new energy sources; the Arab countries would be free to devote their new wealth to the development of their societies; and the developing countries might benefit through development programs jointly supported by the industrial and oil-producing countries. In such surroundings there would surely be a special role—in such fields as science, management, and education—for those Middle Eastern peoples most noted for their rich human resources: the Jews of Israel and the Arabs of Palestine.

All this might seem like a distant, if not altogether fanciful, vision of the future. But it is not impossible, and if reason can be brought to bear, neither is it unrealistic. It is, I believe, the objective on which we must fix our view as we look beyond the interim agreement.