

Correspondence

OSIRAK: PRINCIPLE & PRACTICE

To the Editors: As a new subscriber to *Worldview*, I have just read William V. O'Brien's article defending Israel's "just war" (Excursus I, November). His legal interpretations seem reasonable:

1. Iraq *might* use its nuclear reactor to help produce nuclear weapons.
2. It *might* use such weapons for an attack on Israel (though such a move would be clearly suicidal, given Israel's long lead in nuclear weapons production).

Therefore, says Mr. O'Brien, a preventive first strike is justified.

If I try to apply this logic to the Soviet Union, I find:

1. The United States is not just developing the *potential* to build nuclear weapons, it has tens of thousands of warheads already in place aimed at the Soviet Union, with an overkill capability of 1,300 per cent in strategic weapons alone.

2. Given the U.S. Senate's rejection of SALT II, the Reagan administration's frantic escalation of the arms race, its inflammatory rhetoric that blames the Soviets for every breach of the peace anywhere in the world, the fact that the U.S. is the only nation actually to have *used* nuclear weapons in war, and especially the fact that it has been developing *such clearly "first-strike" weapons as the MX and the Stealth airplane*, the Soviet Union would have far better justification for a pre-emptive attack upon the United States.

The U.S., in its turn, could make almost as good an excuse for attacking the Soviet Union.

Clearly Mr. O'Brien's logic, and perhaps international law, needs to be amended in some way so that the issue of human survival takes precedence over threats, real or imagined, to the self-preservation of any one country. And just as clearly the United Nations needs to be strengthened to the point at which it can exercise some control over the production and proliferation of nuclear weapons, free of U.S. and Soviet vetoes.

Until that great day arrives, our chances of survival at least will be increased slightly if countries like

France, the USSR, and most especially the world's No. 1 arms merchant, the United States, can be persuaded to stop peddling nuclear power plants and offensive military hardware wherever they think they can make a buck or jab an additional thorn into their opponents' sides. We may have deplored the Israeli attack, but didn't we supply the planes that did the job, and aren't we continuing to arm the aggressors?

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McCLOY, THE NISEI, & JEWISH-AMERICANS

To the Editors: The need for solidarity among all ethnic minorities in America was confirmed to me, a Jew, when I read of John J. McCloy's testimony to the Congressional Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians — essentially the Japanese during World War II. I did not see a transcript of his remarks but only the version that appeared in the *New York Times*, thus far without objection. It is a matter I would like to call to the attention of *Worldview* readers, as I have done previously to a primarily Jewish audience.

Mr. McCloy was one of the key government officials who oversaw the relocation, but has long since left government. Unlike some of his colleagues in that program, he still defends it as really for the Japanese-Americans' own good. They found "a healthier and more advantageous environment [in the internment camps] than they would have on the West Coast." They were not "unduly subjected to the distress of the war," since it "caused disruption in all our lives." Besides, he described conditions there as "very pleasant."

Thus far we have only the banality of bureaucratic evil. But what aroused my Jewish sensibilities was Mr. McCloy's cause. He came to the Commission to caution it, says the *Times*, "not to advocate policies that might someday prevent the forcible relocation of other American citizens because of ethnic background." If you don't let us do it to the Japs,

how will we be able to do it in the future to . . . well, I suppose, whom-ever we come to think is an enemy of the state.

McCloy is right. If we don't let it happen to the Japanese, then it won't legally be possible to do it to anyone else. So if other ethnic groups abandon the Japanese, they open themselves up to similar treatment. Nisei civil rights may not be very high on the Jewish list of survival priorities, but to ignore them is to imperil our survival. We have had the courage openly and visibly to fight our president and his understanding of American interests in the Middle East. All the more reason then why some of our energy must always be devoted to assuring the rights of dissident, troublesome, disliked, or otherwise provocative citizens. We know painfully what it means not to have rights but only the privilege of residence. We have special incentive, then, to make the struggle for civil rights a permanent, active part of our Jewish agenda. And for that, sporadic arousal only when Jewish interests are immediately at stake is no substitute.

John J. McCloy was no hack official. He was U.S. High Commissioner in Germany after World War II and chairman of, variously, the Chase Manhattan Bank, The Ford Foundation, and the Council on Foreign Relations, as well as one-time president of the World Bank. When calculated bigotry speaks with such clout, it is no wonder minorities need the protection of the law.

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