

Anglo-Soviet condominium in Mideast supplants U.S.A.

by Criton Zoakos

The Reagan administration remains silent on the subject because "it's an election year," yet the fact is that throughout the entire Middle East, all United States policy, influence, and presence has utterly disintegrated. The power vacuum left behind is more devastating, more dramatic, and more strategically dangerous than the one created when American Marines were fleeing Saigon from the rooftops of the American Embassy.

What once was United States influence has been replaced by a Russian-British condominium.

On Feb. 15, the Soviet Union laid down the following demands for the future of the Middle East during a United Nations Security Council meeting: 1) All Western troops must leave Lebanon; 2) All Western navies must leave the area; 3) All Western powers must promise not to return; 4) All Western powers must guarantee not to intervene in Lebanon.

By March 30, the Reagan administration had, on behalf of the United States, complied with all of the above Soviet demands. On Sunday, March 18, Henry A. Kissinger proposed in a nationally televised program, that the United States should abandon the idea of proposing any further policies toward the solution of the Middle East problem for the indefinite future. The following day, Monday, the State Department informed Congress that "the United States is not planning to offer any Middle East policy initiatives in the foreseeable future." On the 30th, President Reagan announced that the American naval task force off the Lebanese coast had been ordered home.

Thus concluded an era in world politics which had begun when American armies first engaged in combat in the Middle East during the Second World War.

On the day of the fifth anniversary of the Camp David

Accords, March 26, Queen Elizabeth II of England arrived in the Jordanian capital of Amman to the sound of 101 gun salutes resounding against the hills surrounding the city.

The return of Her Majesty

Responding to an invitation given her back in 1966, Elizabeth had become the first British monarch ever to visit the area. King Hussein at that evening's royal banquet, with television cameras blazing, marked the historic occasion with the following speech:

" . . . This day will be recorded in the history of Jordan as it marks the first visit here by a British sovereign. It crowns the friendly relations between our two peoples and it will be treasured for a very long time to come.

"Your Majesty, the close ties existing between our countries today are the result of the continuous contact between our peoples throughout a long period of time. The explorer, the trader, the scholar, as well as the soldier and the statesman have contributed to forging these links. Such relations, developing as they did for a long span of time, were bound to lead to many different kinds of shared experiences. It is natural that these relations should have become deep and intimate, that our two peoples should come to share common principles, values, ideas and interests.

"Your Majesty's visit to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is particularly a happy addition to a series of pleasant memories and experiences. We both came to the throne and assumed the mantle of leadership in the service of our two peoples in the same year. . . .

"The Jordanian people, who are proud of their Arab, Islamic identity and the mission of the Great Arab Revolt, and who wish to promote cultural exchanges with the rest of the world, recall with pride and appreciation that the English

language was and still is their main outlet on the modern world. The pioneers of innovation in Jordan acquired their knowledge in British universities and institutions. The cultural contacts between us are still marked by vitality and vigor. . . .”

Queen Elizabeth replied with a banquet address leaving no doubt as to what the new era of her Middle East policy will be based on:

“Your Majesties . . . It is a very special pleasure and privilege for us to be here as your guests. This visit to Jordan fulfills a life-long ambition. For me, as for so many of my people, Jordan is a country where legend and history meet. . . . For it was here, where the desert meets the cultivated land, that the prophets of the great monotheistic religions drew their inspirations. . . .”

“But Jordan also represents much more than this to us. Your Majesty, your family’s name and dynasty are forever linked with the Great Arab Revolt and with the movement for independence of the Arab peoples, in which your great-grandfather, your grandfather, and so many other distinguished members of the Hashemite family played prominent roles. My country too was closely involved in those momentous events and in Jordan’s early years of nationhood. We recall with pride the British officers and men who fought alongside the Arabs in their war of liberation; the part played by Britain in the movement of Trans-Jordan, as it was then called, towards independence; and the role of those dedicated British officials, both military and civil, who served your grandfather at the time. We also had reason in those years to know the staunchness of your friendship, and we shall not forget that in the darkest hours of the Second World War King Abdullah placed Jordan at Britain’s side in the defense of freedom. . . .”

And finally, to the practical matter at hand: “The tragedy which has befallen the Palestinian people affects no country more than Jordan. My government will continue to support all constructive efforts to achieve a peaceful, just, and lasting solution to this problem in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations Organization.”

Keep the Americans out

The previous day, Jordan’s rubberstamp Parliament voted a resolution in support of King Hussein’s condemnation of the United States. The statement reads: “The House of Representatives supports His Majesty King Hussein’s statements and his courageous leadership in his condemnation of the U.S. role represented in supporting the Israeli entity’s aggression against the Arab nation; supplying Israel with all forms of military, political and moral support to continue its aggression and occupation of Arab territory. . . .”

“The House of Representatives condemns the Israeli-U.S.-Zionist alliance against the Arab nation and strongly and firmly denounces the U.S. policy which supports Israel and which aims at besieging the Arab homeland and tying it with agreements and alliances to serve the interests of the

Israeli enemy. . . .”

“The House of Representatives believes that the continued U.S. support for and bias toward Israel has caused the United States to lose its credibility as a superpower which must respect its international commitments. This situation has made the United States, in the opinion of the region’s peoples, a country which is not honest in adopting the neutral position required in the Arab-Israeli dispute. Hence, The House of Representatives supports the convening of an international peace conference to discuss the Arab-Israeli dispute in which the five U.N. Security Council members and the parties to the dispute will participate. . . .”

The Jordanian condemnations of the United States and the subsequent calls for a Geneva peace conference with the Soviet Union participating were widely hailed throughout the Arab world, including, especially, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait, and all the lesser states in the Gulf. Most telling was an interview given to the *Jordan Times* by Egyptian President Mubarak’s Director of Political Affairs Office, the widely respected, U.S.-educated Uzama Al Baz, on March 24.

Mr. Al Baz, who is generally considered the “genius” behind Egypt’s foreign-policy direction in the last five years, whose views about the United States are the most lenient one can find among Arabs during this period, stressed the following: “The United States was obviously unable to deliver in Lebanon, and the policy that was adopted there proved to be inconsistent. It was also below the level that one would expect from a country that volunteers to bear the responsibility, the country that was given the responsibility and the opportunity by all the parties concerned to help solve the outstanding problems. What happened is that the U.S. policy in Lebanon failed the expectation of almost everybody. . . .”

Respecting the Soviet Union’s future role in the Middle East, Al Baz said the following: “The Soviets have a role to play and a responsibility to assume, they are a superpower. The Soviet Union could play a constructive role by adopting a certain line of policy which promotes the goal of reaching a just and comprehensive settlement. The Soviets should be given credit for supporting the Arab position basically since the early fifties and have remained supportive of that position. . . . The Soviet Union, through its contacts with the other superpower, should give a certain priority to the Middle East and should make clear to the U.S. that peace in the Middle East is high on the agenda and it is as important as the question of disarmament and non-proliferation of arms. In other words, the Soviet Union could assume a constructive role by entering into serious discussions on the Middle East issue.”

Thus, the entire Arab world is begging the U.S.S.R. to replace the U.S.A. as the force to bring peace. The Soviets will reply in their own good time, after private arrangements with Britain’s Lord Carrington. The probable time for them to move as mediators in the Arab-Israeli conflict will be after they have emerged, as the arbiters and successful mediators of the Iran-Iraq war.