

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
DEFUSING THE MIDDLE EAST
RABBINICAL COUNCIL OF AMERICA
JANUARY 23, 1979

I'M DEEPLY HONORED BY YOUR INVITATION TO SPEAK BEFORE YOU, THE LARGEST ORTHODOX RABBINICAL GROUP IN NORTH AMERICA. I CAN THINK OF NO MORE APPROPRIATE FORUM IN WHICH TO QUESTION THE POLICY OF THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION TOWARD ISRAEL AND THE ENTIRE MIDDLE EAST. TONIGHT THE PRESIDENT WILL SET FORTH HIS VISION OF AMERICA AND HER ROLE IN THE WORLD. AND IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AT LEAST, IT IS NOT TOO MUCH TO ASK WHETHER THAT VISION IS SUFFICIENTLY BROAD AND SENSITIVE ENOUGH TO ACCOMPLISH THE LONG DELAYED GOAL OF A JUST AND EQUITABLE PEACE.

DURING HIS CAMPAIGN FOR THE PRESIDENCY, JIMMY CARTER ANNOUNCED HIS PREFERENCE FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. ON THE SURFACE, THIS APPROACH HAD A CERTAIN APPEAL. A PERMANENT, BROADLY-BASED PEACE, IT WAS ASSUMED, WOULD BY NATURE BE A GOOD PEACE, AN ENDURING SOLUTION TO THE HATREDS AND BITTERNESS WHICH HAVE SLASHED THE FABRIC OF BROTHERHOOD IN THE MIDDLE EAST IN OUR TIME.

YET MR. CARTER OVERLOOKED THE FACT THAT THERE IS SUCH A THING AS A BAD PEACE. HE OVERLOOKED THE FACT THAT ALL ARAB NATIONS DO NOT COOPERATE AS BLOOD BROTHERS.

INSTEAD, THE PRESIDENT INSISTED ON DIVIDING THE MIDDLE EAST INTO TWO NEAT AND MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE CAMPS. IT WOULD BE ISRAEL VERSUS THE ARABS, EVEN IF THE ARABS THEMSELVES WERE DIVIDED OVER FUTURE ARMS.

THE PRESIDENT TREATED ISRAEL LIKE A CLIENT STATE, AND THEN ACTED SURPRISED WHEN THE ISRAELI PEOPLE CHOSE THEMSELVES A NEW GOVERNMENT, HEADED BY THE PRESENT PRIME MINISTER, MR. BEGIN.

-3-

THE ELECTION DID NOT HALT PRESSURE BY THE UNITED STATES UPON ISRAEL. INDEED, SUCH PRESSURE WAS STEPPED UP. WHEN ISRAEL AGREED TO GO TO GENEVA, THE ARABS REFUSED. THEY INSISTED THAT ISRAEL MUST RETURN TO PRE-'67 BORDERS, A CURIOUS POLICY WHICH, IF FOLLOWED, WOULD ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR ANYONE TO GO ANYWHERE TO NEGOTIATE ANYTHING. ALL THE WHILE, THE UNITED STATES LOOKED ON. EVEN UP TO CAMP DAVID, PRESIDENT CARTER SEEMED RELUCTANT TO ENCOURAGE THE PARTIES THEMSELVES TO ACCEPT ANYTHING OTHER THEN A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT.

THE PROMISE OF CAMP DAVID

CARTER, BEGIN AND SADAT WENT UP THE SUMMIT TO CAMP DAVID AND CAME DOWN WITH WHAT TURNED OUT TO BE TWO COLLAPSIBLE FRAMEWORKS FOR PEACE. AT THE TIME, OUR REJOICING WAS GENUINE AND DESERVED. FOR THE OLD IDEA OF A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT HAD BEEN LAID TO REST, REPLACED WITH A MORE REALISTIC STEP BY STEP PROCESS. A PEACE WITH EGYPT APPEARED IMMINENT, TO BE FOLLOWED BY A GENERAL PEACE THROUGHOUT THE VOLATILE MIDDLE EAST.

-4-

BUT CAMP DAVID TURNED OUT TO BE A BROKEN PROMISE. WHEN THE TUMULT SUBSIDED, OUR HOPES SUBSIDED WITH IT. IT TURNED OUT THAT CARTER AND BEGIN DISAGREED AS TO JUST WHAT HAD BEEN DECIDED AT CAMP DAVID. ONCE AGAIN, THE GROUNDWORK WAS LAID FOR A PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORT WHICH PORTRAYED ISRAEL AS THE ROADBLOCK IN THE PATH TO PEACE. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE VERY NATURE OF AMERICAN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST UNDERWENT A NOT SO SUBTLE CHANGE.

IGNORING HISTORY'S LESSONS

IN REVERTING TO THE OLD POLICY OF A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT OR NO SETTLEMENT, THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IS ATTEMPTING TO TURN BACK THE CLOCK. AT CAMP DAVID, YOU WILL RECALL, THE LEADERS SOUGHT WHATEVER COMMON GROUND THEY COULD FIND, PREFERRING TO LAY ASIDE FOR THE MOMENT SUCH THORNY ISSUES AS THE GOLAN HEIGHTS AND THE FUTURE OF JERUSALEM. FLEXIBILITY WAS A HALLMARK OF THE NEGOTIATING AND ALL SIDES BENEFITTED AS A RESULT. CAMP DAVID WAS NOT THE MILLENIUM, BUT IT COULD HAVE BEEN A CRITICAL BEGINNING.

BUT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS CHOSEN TO OVERLOOK YET AGAIN. HE OVERLOOKS THE VERY LESSONS OF HISTORY, WHICH HAVE SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE IN THIS PARADOXICAL CORNER OF THE GLOBE, WHERE GOD IS MOST EVIDENT AND MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN MOST PERVASIVE.

IT IS A GROSS MISREADING OF HISTORY TO DENY THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE TO THE HOLY CITY OF JERUSALEM, A CITY BUILT BY A JEWISH KING, BECAUSE A PART OF THAT CITY HAS ONLY RECENTLY TAKEN ON TERTIARY SIGNIFICANCE TO ANOTHER PEOPLE. THE PRESIDENT CONSIDERS THE FUTURE OF JERUSALEM TO BE NEGOTIABLE. HE IS WILLING TO OVERLOOK THOUSANDS OF YEARS OF JEWISH POSSESSION OF THAT CRADLE OF RELIGIONS, IN FAVOR OF A NINETEEN YEAR OCCUPATION OF THE CITY BY THE JORDANIAN KINGDOM.

BUT PRESIDENTS, LIKE ALL OF US, IGNORE HISTORY'S LESSONS AT GREAT PERIL. VOLTAIRE SAID THAT HISTORY DOES NOT REPEAT ITSELF; MEN INVARIABLY DO. AND THE MAN WHO CURRENTLY OCCUPIES THE WHITE HOUSE BEARS OUT THAT MAXIM WITH PAINFUL PRECISION. FOR PRESIDENT CARTER APPEARS ONCE AGAIN DETERMINED TO FORCE A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT ON THE MIDDLE EASTERN PARTIES. HE HAS ABANDONED FLEXIBILITY IN FAVOR OF A PRIORI ASSUMPTIONS. FOR INSTANCE, THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, NOT PART OF THE ORIGINAL CAMP DAVID ACCORD, IS ONCE MORE INJECTED STAGE CENTER. INDEED, IT OFTEN SEEMS AS IF THE PRESIDENT IS ASKING MORE FROM ISRAEL THAN DO HER NOMINAL ADVERSARIES, THE ARABS.

IN THE WAKE OF CAMP DAVID

MUCH HAS TRANSPIRED SINCE THAT EUPHORIC SUNDAY EVENING IN SEPTEMBER, WHEN THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED NEWS HISTORIC ENOUGH TO INTERRUPT THE EMMY AWARDS AND OVERSHADOW BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. IT IS NOT THE SAME MIDDLE EAST THAT CONFRONTED AMERICAN POLICYMAKERS JUST FOUR SHORT MONTHS AGO. IRAN HAS BEEN RUPTURED BY POLITICAL UPHEAVAL, WITH POTENTIALLY CATASTROPHIC RESULTS FOR ADVOCATES OF STABILITY AND DEMOCRACY IN THAT TROUBLED REGION. A PRO-SOVIET COUP HAS SEIZED CONTROL OF AFGHANISTAN. POLITICAL TURMOIL RACKS TURKEY AND PAKISTAN, OLD AND RELIABLE ALLIES OF THIS COUNTRY, WHILE FURTHER PENETRATION BY THE SOVIET UNION INTO THE HORN OF AFRICA AND THE ARABIAN PENINSULA HAS UNDERMINED THE DELICATE BALANCE OF POWER THROUGHOUT THE CONTINENT.

-7-

IN THE FACE OF SUCH TUMULT, IS IT ANY SURPRISE THAT THE MIDDLE EASTERN ANTAGONISTS HAVE HARDENED THEIR POSITIONS? FACED WITH A COMPLETE CUTOFF OF IRANIAN OIL, CAN IT REALLY SURPRISE ANY THOUGHTFUL OBSERVER THAT ISRAEL FEELS RENEWED HESITATION IN ABANDONING HER SETTLEMENTS AND HER SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE WEST BANK?

A REASONABLE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT WOULD UNDERSTAND THESE THINGS, AND WOULD PRESS FOR A STEP BY STEP RESOLUTION OF ISSUES INVOLVED. A PERCEPTIVE ADMINISTRATION WOULD RECOGNIZE THAT THE CURRENT CLIMATE IS INIMICAL TO ANY COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION. A FAIR ADMINISTRATION WOULD AVOID PARTISANSHIP, RECOGNIZING INSTEAD ITS OBLIGATION TO TREAT BOTH PARTIES EVENHANDEDLY. A SENSITIVE ADMINISTRATION WOULD SCAN THE HISTORY BOOK FOR THE LESSONS IT OFFERS, AND MAKE MORE THAN A TOKEN EFFORT TO GRASP THE DELICATE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND MORAL ISSUES INVOLVED.

-8-

THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE DELICACY IN THE CARTER MIDDLE EAST POLICY. THERE HAS BEEN LESS SENSITIVITY OR EVENHANDEDNESS. INSTEAD, WE HAVE BEEN TREATED TO PUBLIC DENUNCIATIONS OF PRIME MINISTER BEGIN AND HIS GOVERNMENT, OF FINGERPOINTING IN LIEU OF PROBLEM SOLVING. WE HAVE WITNESSED DIPLOMACY BY PRESS RELEASE, AND IT COMES AS NO SURPRISE THAT PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS NO CLOSER TO ACHIEVEMENT THAN BEFORE CAMP DAVID.

WHAT KIND OF PEACE?

OUR GOVERNMENT IS ASKING THAT ISRAEL NEGOTIATE WITH PHANTOMS. JORDAN WON'T COME TO THE BARGAINING TABLE BECAUSE SHE HAS NO DESIRE TO BARGAIN AWAY THE WEST BANK. KING HUSSEIN HAS NO DESIRE FOR A PALESTINIAN STATE; YOU NEEDN'T KNOW MUCH HISTORY TO KNOW THAT.

SAUDI ARABIA WON'T COME, DESPITE FIGHTER-PLANES AND VERBAL REASSURANCES BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT. IN THE WAKE OF THE SHAH'S DOWNFALL, THE SAUDIS ARE NURSING THEIR OWN FEARS AND OUR INFLUENCE WITH THEIR GOVERNMENT IS UNLIKELY TO PROVE DECISIVE.

INDEED, WITH THE SHAH GONE AND CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET INTENTIONS IN THE REGION RISING, WE MIGHT ALL ASK OURSELVES SOME HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT AMERICAN MILITARY STRENGTH AND OUR WILL TO OPPOSE WHAT TENG HSIAO PING IS FOND OF CALLING "SOVIET HEGEMONISM" IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

IN A FEW WEEKS, THE UNITED STATES WILL UNDERTAKE A DEBATE OF GRAVE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE. THE WORLD WILL LOOK ON AND HUMANITY HOLD ITS BREATH. FOR THE CHOICES WE DEBATE IN DISCUSSING SALT II WILL ECHO DOWN THE YEARS. IN A VERY REAL SENSE, THEY WILL SET THE FRAMEWORK IN WHICH THE WHOLE INTERNATIONAL STRUCTURE OF PEACE WILL BE HAMMERED OUT. AND THEY WILL SIGNAL TO OUR FRIENDS AND FOES THE DIRECTION IN WHICH WE AS A PEOPLE WISH TO GO.

WHAT WE DO ON SALT REFLECTS OUR NATIONAL WILL TO SURVIVE. AND THAT WILL, IF PROPERLY INTERPRETED BY THE SOVIETS AND OTHER DESTABILIZING INFLUENCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST, WILL BE FAR MORE EFFECTIVE IN ARRANGING A MIDDLE EASTERN SOLUTION THAN JODY POWELL'S VOICE RAISED IN PROTEST AGAINST SO-CALLED ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE.

EVEN BEFORE SALT II, THE CONGRESS WILL CONSIDER A BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 1980, A BUDGET THAT DOES NOT NOW ALLOCATE FUNDS WITH WHICH TO IMPLEMENT A MIDDLE EAST PEACE. WE HAVE PLEDGED TO ISRAEL A BILLION DOLLARS WITH WHICH TO REMOVE TWO AIR BASES TO THE NEGEV. BUT NO SUCH FUNDS APPEAR IN THE BUDGET SENT US BY THE WHITE HOUSE THIS WEEK. FOR THAT MATTER, NOTHING IS HINTED AT IN THE WAY OF ANY SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO THE REGION--THE SO-CALLED MARSHAL PLAN FOR THE MIDDLE EAST ADVOCATED BY PRESIDENT SADAT AND OTHERS.

IS THE WHITE HOUSE TELLING US SOMETHING BY SUCH OMISSIONS?
DO THEY FAIL TO PERCEIVE THE DOUBTS RAISED BY THE BUDGETARY
VOID?

A WORKABLE PEACE

WHEN THE PUBLICITY HYPE WEARS OFF FROM CAMP DAVID, A NEW
HYPE BUILDS FOR VICE PREMIER TENG'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON.
THEN YET ANOTHER HYPE, THIS TIME FOR SALT AND PRESIDENT
BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON. BUT HYPE DOESN'T BRING
NATIONS TOGETHER. THE MIDDLE EAST IS TOO RENDERED BY OLD
RIVALRIES AND MODERN WEAPONRY TO ADMIT TO SOLUTIONS BY
IMAGEMAKERS.

-12-

FIRST THINGS FIRST. THE MIDDLE EAST IS AN AREA OF THE WORLD ALIVE WITH CONFLICTING AND EXPLOSIVE IDEOLOGIES. IRAN HAS DEMONSTRATED ANEW THAT NO GOVERNMENT IS INVULNERABLE TO SUCH PASSIONS. A MOSLEM REVIVAL SEEMS TO BE SWEEPING MUCH OF THE EASTERN WORLD, AND EXISTING ARAB GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE WELL ADVISED TO MAKE PEACE IN THE NAME OF FUTURE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STABILITY. SAUDI ARABIA IS PERHAPS THE PRIME EXAMPLE OF A NATION BUFFETED BY EVENTS IN IRAN. THE SAUDIS SHOULD GRASP WITH SPECIAL URGENCY THE NEED TO CONCLUDE AN ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN PEACE TREATY.

FOR IRAN HAS INJECTED A WHOLE NEW ELEMENT OF DANGER INTO A SITUATION ALREADY WEIGHTED DOWN WITH PERIL. MORE THAN EVER, THE TIME HAS COME TO ACCEPT AS FACT THE NEED FOR A STEP BY STEP SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM OF IMMENSE COMPLEXITY. THE INSISTENCE ON "LINKAGE", AN INSISTENCE THAT IS AMERICAN AS MUCH AS EGYPTIAN, SHOULD BE SET ASIDE IN FAVOR OF A PEACE TREATY BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT. SUCH A PEACE WOULD LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR A GENUINE PEACE THROUGHOUT THIS VOLATILE REGION, AND, MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, RENDER WAR IMPOSSIBLE IN THE SHORT OR MID TERM.

THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE UNITED STATES TO ADOPT A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO PEACE. THE TIME HAS COME TO DISPOSE OF THE DOGMA OF COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENTS. IF WE WISH TO ENGINEER A LASTING SOLUTION TO AGE-OLD ANTAGONISM, WE MUST BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING.

ANY OTHER PEACE IS A BAD PEACE. ANY OTHER PEACE INVITES WAR. ANY OTHER PEACE MOCKS THIS COUNTRY'S HISTORIC ALLEGIANCE TO AND SUPPORT FOR THE STATE OF ISRAEL. HAVE WE COME SO FAR, HAVE SO MANY BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN SACRIFICED SO MUCH, FOR AN AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION TO IMPOSE AN UNJUST SOLUTION? I PRAY TO GOD THAT WE HAVE NOT. FOR GOD WILL BE OUR JUDGE, AND HE, MAY I REMIND YOU, CARES NOTHING FOR DOMESTIC POLITICS.



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

New Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 224-6521

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

DEFUSING THE MIDDLE EAST

RABBINICAL COUNCIL OF AMERICA

JANUARY 23, 1979

I'm deeply honored by your invitation to speak before you, the largest orthodox rabbinical group in North America. I can think of no more appropriate forum in which to question the policy of the current administration toward Israel and the entire Middle East. Tonight the President will set forth his vision of America and her role in the world. And in the Middle East, at least, it is not too much to ask whether that vision is sufficiently broad and sensitive enough to accomplish the long delayed goal of a just and equitable peace.

During his campaign for the Presidency, Jimmy Carter announced his preference for a comprehensive settlement. On the surface, this approach had a certain appeal. A permanent, broadly-based peace, it was assumed, would by nature be a good peace, an enduring solution to the hatreds and bitterness which have slashed the fabric of brotherhood in the Middle East in our time.

Yet Mr. Carter overlooked the fact that there is such a thing as a bad peace. He overlooked the fact that all Arab nations do not cooperate as blood brothers.

Instead, the President insisted on dividing the Middle East into two neat and mutually exclusive camps. It would be Israel versus the Arabs, even if the Arabs themselves were divided over future arms.

The President treated Israel like a client state, and then acted surprised when the Israeli people chose themselves a new government, headed by the present Prime Minister, Mr. Begin.

The election did not halt pressure by the United States upon Israel. Indeed, such pressure was stepped up. When Israel agreed to go to Geneva, the Arabs refused. They insisted that Israel must return to pre-'67 borders, a curious policy which, if followed, would eliminate the need for anyone to go anywhere to negotiate anything. All the while, the United States looked on. Even up to Camp David, President Carter seemed reluctant to encourage the parties themselves to accept anything other than a comprehensive settlement.

THE PROMISE OF CAMP DAVID

Carter, Begin and Sadat went up the summit to Camp David and came down with what turned out to be two collapsible frameworks for peace. At the time, our rejoicing was genuine and deserved. For the old idea of a comprehensive settlement had been laid to rest, replaced with a more realistic step by step process. A peace with Egypt appeared imminent, to be followed by a general peace throughout the volatile Middle East.

But Camp David turned out to be a broken promise. When the tumult subsided, our hopes subsided with it. It turned out that Carter and Begin disagreed as to just what had been decided at Camp David. Once again, the groundwork was laid for a public relations effort which portrayed Israel as the roadblock in the path to peace. More importantly, the very nature of American policy in the Middle East underwent a not so subtle change.

IGNORING HISTORY'S LESSONS

In reverting to the old policy of a comprehensive settlement or no settlement, the Carter Administration is attempting to turn back the clock. At Camp David, you will recall, the leaders sought whatever common ground they could find, preferring to lay aside for the moment such thorny issues as the Golan Heights and the future of Jerusalem. Flexibility was a hallmark of the negotiating and all sides benefitted as a result. Camp David was not the millenium. But it could have been a critical beginning.

But President Carter has chosen to overlook yet again. He overlooks the very lessons of history, which have special significance in this paradoxical corner of the globe, where God is most evident and man's inhumanity to man most pervasive.

It is a gross misreading of history to deny the fundamental right of the Jewish people to the holy city of Jerusalem, a city built by a Jewish king, because a part of that city has only recently taken on tertiary significance to another people. The President considers the future of Jerusalem to be negotiable. He is willing to overlook thousands of years of Jewish possession of that cradle of religions, in favor of a nineteen year occupation of the city by the Jordanian kingdom.

But presidents, like all of us, ignore history's lessons at great peril. Voltaire said that history does not repeat itself; men invariably do. And the man who currently occupies the White House bears out that maxim with painful precision. For President Carter appears once again determined to force a comprehensive settlement on the Middle Eastern parties. He has abandoned flexibility in favor of a priori assumptions. For instance, the Golan Heights, not part of the original Camp David Accord, is once more injected stage center. Indeed, it often seems as if the President is asking more from Israel than do her nominal adversaries, the Arabs.

IN THE WAKE OF CAMP DAVID

Much has transpired since that euphoric Sunday evening in September, when the President announced news historic enough to interrupt the Emmy Awards and overshadow Battlestar Galactica. It is not the same Middle East that confronted American policymakers just four short months ago. Iran has been ruptured by political upheaval, with potentially catastrophic results for advocates of stability and democracy in that troubled region. A pro-Soviet coup has seized control of Afghanistan. Political turmoil racks Turkey and Pakistan, old and reliable allies of this country, while further penetration by the Soviet Union into the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula has undermined the delicate balance of power throughout the continent.

In the face of such tumult, is it any surprise that the Middle Eastern antagonists have hardened their positions? Faced with a complete cutoff of Iranian oil, can it really surprise any thoughtful observer that Israel feels renewed hesitation in abandoning her settlements and her sovereignty over the West Bank?

A reasonable American government would understand these things, and would press for a step by step resolution of issues involved. A perceptive administration would recognize that the current climate is inimical to any comprehensive solution. A fair administration would avoid partisanship, recognizing instead its obligation to treat both parties evenhandedly. A sensitive administration would scan the history book for the lessons it offers, and make more than a token effort to grasp the delicate psychological and moral issues involved.

There has been little delicacy in the Carter Middle East policy. There has been less sensitivity or evenhandedness. Instead, we have been treated to public denunciations of Prime Minister Begin and his government, of fingerpointing in lieu of problem solving. We have witnessed diplomacy by press release, and it comes as no surprise that peace in the Middle East is no closer to achievement than before Camp David.

WHAT KIND OF PEACE?

Our government is asking that Israel negotiate with phantoms. Jordan won't come to the bargaining table because she has no desire to bargain away the West Bank. King Hussein has no desire for a Palestinian state; you needn't know much history to know that.

Saudi Arabia won't come, despite fighter-planes and verbal reassurances by the State Department. In the wake of the Shah's downfall, the Saudis are nursing their own fears and our influence with their government is unlikely to prove decisive.

Indeed, with the Shah gone and concern about Soviet intentions in the region rising, we might all ask ourselves some hard questions about American military strength and our will to oppose what Teng Hsiao Ping is fond of calling "Soviet hegemonism" in the Middle East.

In a few weeks, the United States will undertake a debate of grave national and international importance. The world will look on and humanity hold its breath. For the choices we debate in discussing Salt II will echo down the years. In a very real sense, they will set the framework in which the whole international structure of peace will be hammered out. And they will signal to our friends and foes the direction in which we as a people wish to go.

What we do on Salt reflects our national will to survive. And that will, if properly interpreted by the Soviets and other destabilizing influences in the Middle East, will be far more effective in arranging a Middle Eastern solution than Jody Powell's voice raised in protest against so-called Israeli intransigence.

Even before Salt II, the Congress will consider a budget for fiscal year 1980, a budget that does not now allocate funds with which to implement a Middle East peace. We have pledged to Israel a billion dollars with which to remove two air bases to the Negev. But no such funds appear in the budget sent us by the White House this week. For that matter, nothing is hinted at in the way of any substantial economic assistance to the region--the so-called Marshal Plan for the Middle East advocated by President Sadat and others.

Is the White House telling us something by such omissions? Do they fail to perceive the doubts raised by the budgetary void?

A WORKABLE PEACE

When the publicity hype wears off from Camp David, a new hype builds for Vice Premier Teng's visit to Washington. Then yet another hype, this time for Salt and President Brezhnev's visit to Washington. But hype doesn't bring nations together. The Middle East is too rendered by old rivalries and modern weaponry to admit to solutions by imagemakers.

First things first. The Middle East is an area of the world alive with conflicting and explosive ideologies. Iran has demonstrated anew that no government is invulnerable to such passions. A Moslem revival seems to be sweeping much of the Eastern world, and existing Arab governments would be well advised to make peace in the name of future economic and political stability. Saudi Arabia is perhaps the prime example of a nation buffeted by events in Iran. The Saudis should grasp with special urgency the need to conclude an Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty.

For Iran has injected a whole new element of danger into a situation already weighted down with peril. More than ever, the time has come to accept as fact the need for a step by step solution to a problem of immense complexity. The insistence on "linkage", an insistence that is American as much as Egyptian, should be set aside in favor of a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. Such a peace would lay the foundation for a genuine peace throughout this volatile region, and, most important of all, render war impossible in the short or mid term.

The time has come for the United States to adopt a pragmatic approach to peace. The time has come to dispose of the dogma of comprehensive settlements. If we wish to engineer a lasting solution to age-old antagonism, we must begin at the beginning.

Any other peace is a bad peace. Any other peace invites war. Any other peace mocks this country's historic allegiance to and support for the state of Israel. Have we come so far, have so many brave men and women sacrificed so much, for an American administration to impose an unjust solution? I pray to God that we have not. For God will be our judge, and he, may I remind you, cares nothing for domestic politics.