



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
JOURNALS + DIGITAL PUBLISHING



The Brookings Report on the Middle East

Source: *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Winter, 1977), pp. 195-205

Published by: [University of California Press](#) on behalf of the [Institute for Palestine Studies](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2535521>

Accessed: 10-03-2015 20:08 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



University of California Press and Institute for Palestine Studies are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of Palestine Studies*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

THE BROOKINGS REPORT ON THE MIDDLE EAST

[EDITOR'S NOTE: The *Journal* reprints below the Brookings Institution's study group report *Toward Peace in the Middle East*.¹ Although published in December 1975, it has received current attention because several of the participants of the group now hold top-level positions in the Carter administration. Among those participating were Zbigniew Brzezinski, now Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and William Quandt, now Office Director for Middle East and North African Affairs—National Security Council staff. Other study group members were: Morroe Berger, Robert R. Bowie, John C. Campbell, Najeeb Halaby, Rita Hauser, Roger W. Heyns (Chairman), Alan Horton, Malcolm Kerr, Fred Khouri, Philip Klutznick, Nadav Safran, Stephen Spiegel, A.L. Udovitch and Charles W. Yost.]

The study group reached five main conclusions.

1. *U.S. interests.* The United States has a strong moral, political, and economic interest in a stable peace in the Middle East. It is concerned for the security, independence, and well-being of Israel and the Arab states of the area and for the friendship of both. Renewed hostilities would have far-reaching and perilous consequences which would threaten those interests.

2. *Urgency.* Whatever the merits of the interim agreement on Sinai, it still leaves the basic elements of the Arab-Israeli dispute substantially untouched. Unless these elements are soon addressed, rising tensions in the area will generate increased risk of violence. We believe that the best way to address these issues is by the pursuit of a comprehensive settlement.

3. *Process.* We believe that the time has come to begin the process of negotiating such a settlement among the parties, either at a general conference or at more informal multilateral meetings. While no useful interim step toward settlement should be overlooked or ignored, none seems promising at the present time and most have inherent disadvantages.

4. *Settlement.* A fair and enduring settlement should contain at least these elements as an integrated package:

(a) *Security.* All parties to the settlement commit themselves to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the others and to refrain from the threat or use of force against them.

(b) *Stages.* Withdrawal to agreed boundaries and the establishment of peaceful relations carried out in stages over a period of years, each stage being undertaken only when the agreed provisions of the previous stage have been faithfully implemented.

(c) *Peaceful relations.* The Arab parties undertake not only to end such hostile actions against Israel as armed incursions, blockades, boycotts, and propaganda attacks, but also to give evidence of progress toward the development of normal international and regional political and economic relations.

(d) *Boundaries.* Israel undertakes to withdraw by agreed stages to the June 5, 1967, lines with only such modifications as are mutually accepted. Boundaries will probably need to be safeguarded by demilitarized zones supervised by UN forces.

(e) *Palestine.* There should be provision for Palestinian self-determination, subject to Palestinian acceptance of the sovereignty and integrity of Israel within agreed boundaries. This might take the form either of an independent Palestine state accepting the obligations and commitments of the peace agreements or of a Palestine entity

¹Copyright © 1975 by the Brookings Institution.

voluntarily federated with Jordan but exercising extensive political autonomy.

(f) *Jerusalem*. The report suggests no specific solution for the particularly difficult problem of Jerusalem but recommends that, whatever the solution may be, it meet as a minimum the following criteria:

—there should be unimpeded access to all of the holy places and each should be under the custodianship of its own faith;

—there should be no barriers dividing the city which would prevent free circulation throughout it; and

—each national group within the city should, if it so desires, have substantial political autonomy within the area where it predominates.

(g) *Guarantees*. It would be desirable that the UN Security Council endorse the peace agreements and take whatever other actions to support them the agreements provide. In addition, there may well be need for unilateral or multilateral guarantees to some or all of the parties, substantial economic aid, and military assistance pending the adoption of agreed arms control measures.

5. *U.S. role*. The governments directly concerned bear the responsibility of negotiation and agreement, but they are unlikely to be able to reach agreement alone. Initiative, impetus, and inducement may well have to come from outside. The United States, because it enjoys a measure of confidence of parties on both sides and has the means to assist them economically and militarily, remains the great power best fitted to work actively with them in bringing about a settlement. Over and above helping to provide a framework for negotiation and submitting concrete proposals from time to time, the United States must be prepared to take other constructive steps, such as offering aid and providing guarantees where desired and needed. In all of this, the United States should work with the USSR to the degree that Soviet willingness to play a constructive role will permit.

Events of the past two years—the fourth Arab-Israeli war in October 1973, the Arab oil embargo and its impact on the West, the interim Sinai agreement of 1975—have increasingly brought home to the American government and people the far-reaching U.S. stake in peace in the Middle East. How can a comprehensive and durable settlement between Arabs and Israelis be achieved?

This report addresses that question in the hope of contributing to a constructive answer by its analysis and recommendations.

The following sections discuss (1) the U.S. interest in a peaceful Middle East; (2) what is required for a settlement; (3) the main components of a settlement; (4) the process of negotiation; and (5) the U.S. role in the settlement.

I. THE U.S. INTEREST

The United States has a vital interest in the establishment of a stable peace in the Middle East for the following reasons, among others.

1. Rising tensions in the Middle East, which experience suggests are ultimately almost certain in the absence of a settlement, might well lead to another Arab-Israeli war and even provoke a major confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, substantially elevating East-West tension and threatening the recent many-sided effort toward greater international stability. As a signatory of the UN Charter and permanent member of the Security Council, the United States has a major responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

2. The United States has a strong interest in the security, independence, and well-being of Israel and the Arab states of the area and in the friendship of both. Their security and future development will remain in jeopardy until a durable settlement is concluded. Both would be bound to suffer gravely from another war fought with the advanced weapons now available to both sides.

3. The United States has a strong interest in the unimpeded flow of Middle Eastern oil to itself and to its European and Japanese allies, which are even more dependent on this supply. In the event of another Arab-Israeli war, or even a serious crisis short of war, Arab oil shipments to those markets might be disrupted.

4. The United States has a considerable and growing interest in trade with, investment in, and communications through the entire area.

5. Efforts by the United States to establish greater global stability and to help manage the growing economic interdependence

among nations more effectively are likely to be frustrated as long as conflict and confrontation seem probable in this area where so many national interests converge. U.S. interests in this respect are congruent with those of the states in the area.

II. WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR A SETTLEMENT?

If it is essential to U.S. interests and to those of the parties to the conflict that a settlement acceptable to those parties and binding upon them be promptly found, what are the requirements that must be met?

1. The momentum toward settlement, which was strong immediately after the 1967 war but gradually subsided, was revived after the 1973 war and has continued through the Sinai agreement of September 1975. It is important that this momentum be maintained. A prolonged stalemate, a failure to move forward in a significant way over a period of months, would increase tension and could lead to renewed hostilities. It would be imprudent and unsafe to attempt to leave the situation "frozen" for any prolonged period. That is probably not a genuine option. Even though further results may not be obtained quickly, the process and momentum of negotiation must be maintained. In the absence of progress, the obstacles to settlement could harden again, moderate policies and leaders be superseded by more intransigent ones, and the security of all parties be gravely imperiled by the failure of all to act while the time was ripe.

2. On the other hand, basic conditions are now more propitious for a settlement than they have been or may be again for some time. The Arab states bordering Israel have all publicly recognized its existence and indicated a willingness, under very specific conditions, to negotiate a permanent settlement. There are corresponding indications, since the 1973 war, of an Israeli disposition to negotiate either further interim steps or a comprehensive settlement, including one that would take account of the Palestinian problem.

The United States, by its intensive participation in negotiations since the 1973 war, by the substantial assurances and contributions it has already undertaken, and by its repeatedly stated belief that these are but steps on the road to a comprehensive settlement, has

demonstrated that it recognizes its own vital interest in an early end to conflict and enduring peace.

3. Since the 1973 war the emphasis of peacemaking has been on interim steps, designed to reduce tension and move gradually toward a comprehensive settlement. Interim steps have advantages and disadvantages but it now seems probable that further steps of this kind will not prove feasible in the immediate future. If the momentum of negotiation is to be maintained and a prolonged stalemate avoided, peacemaking efforts should henceforth concentrate on negotiation of a comprehensive settlement, including only such interim steps as constitute essential preparations for such a negotiation.

4. The primary basis for a settlement must be a negotiated and agreed tradeoff between the Israeli requirement for peace and security and the Arab requirement for evacuation of territories occupied in 1967 and for Palestinian self-determination.

Satisfaction of the Israeli requirement would involve binding commitments by the Arab states to a stable peace—that is, commitments to recognize and respect the sovereignty of Israel, to refrain from the threat or use of force against it, to desist from other hostile actions against it, and progressively to develop with it normal international and regional political and economic relations.

Satisfaction of the Arab requirement would involve Israeli withdrawal to the June 5, 1967, lines with only such modifications, as well as such particular arrangements for Jerusalem, as might be agreed upon. It would involve the right of the Palestinians to self-determination in one form or another, consonant with the above Israeli requirements. The Arab requirement for security would be satisfied by making reciprocal the commitments outlined in the previous paragraph.

5. So that both sides may be persuaded to make the concessions which this integrated accommodation between peace and withdrawal would require, it will be necessary that, while comprehensive peace agreements stipulating the whole range of commitments be concluded, their implementation be staged over a period of years. The stages would be clearly defined in the agreements.

Each stage would be undertaken only when the agreed provisions of the previous stage had been carried out. Under this procedure Israeli withdrawal and Arab movement toward normal relations would proceed in tandem. If at any stage of implementation, there should be failure by one side to carry out agreed measures, corresponding measures by the other side could be suspended. Bilateral or multilateral commissions should be established in the agreements to hear and investigate complaints about alleged failures to carry out provisions of the agreements and to iron out differences arising in their phased implementation.

6. A further requirement would no doubt be international endorsements, guarantees, arrangements, and assistance to support and supplement the peace agreements. It would be desirable that the agreements be endorsed by the UN Security Council. If they provide for demilitarized zones, the UN would be expected to provide peacekeeping forces or observers to supervise those zones.

It is likely that there will be a supplementary requirement for explicit bilateral or multilateral guarantees by one or more of the great powers. The United States should be prepared to extend such guarantees as are feasible and necessary to achieve a settlement.

A stable settlement will also need to be reinforced by measures to end the arms race in the area. Until agreed measures to this end are adopted, there will be a continuing requirement to supply weapons to the parties to enhance their sense of security.

There will also be need for substantial economic aid to many of the parties and to repatriated and resettled refugees.

7. Finally, on the basis of the experience of the past twenty-five years, it is clear that the parties are unlikely to be able to negotiate a comprehensive and durable settlement unassisted. There are powerful political and psychological constraints within each nation or movement, which could not at present be wholly overcome even by governments and leaders desiring to do so. They need help. It is here that outside powers—particularly the United States because it enjoys a measure of confidence on both sides and has the means of assisting them economically and militarily—have a substantial, possibly a decisive role to play.

Soviet cooperation would also be most desirable to the extent the USSR is willing to play a constructive role.

These seven essential requirements for a settlement are examined in fuller detail in the following sections.

III. THE MAIN COMPONENTS OF A SETTLEMENT

Mutual Acceptance and Peaceful Relations

The peace agreements must contain binding reciprocal commitments by all parties to the settlement to respect the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the others as defined in the agreements and to refrain from the use or threat of force against each other.

They must equally contain commitments by all parties to the settlement to put an end to all hostile actions against the others, including armed incursions, propaganda inciting hostile acts, economic blockades and boycotts, obstacles to the normal movement of shipping, goods, and people. They should also provide for steady progress, in defined stages, toward the development of normal international and regional political and economic relations and cooperation. Specific reciprocal actions by the parties themselves demonstrating progress toward normal relations are an indispensable part of the process of settlement.

Palestinians

The Palestinians for the most part believe that they have a right to self-determination. For a peace settlement to be viable, indeed for it even to be negotiated and concluded, this right will have to be recognized in principle and, as a part of the settlement, given satisfaction in practice.

Whoever represents the Palestinians must recognize the equal right to self-determination of Israel and Jordan. In particular, the Palestinians must recognize the sovereignty and integrity of Israel within agreed frontiers and must accept whatever security arrangements, mutual guarantees, demilitarized zones, or UN presence are embodied in the peace settlement.

Such a settlement also cannot be achieved unless Israel accepts the principle of Palestinian self-determination and some generally acceptable means is found of putting that principle into practice.

Possibilities for doing so might include (1) an independent Palestine state accepting the obligations and commitments of the peace agreements or (2) a Palestine entity voluntarily federated with Jordan but exercising the extensive political autonomy King Hussein has offered. Either of these arrangements might be supplemented by close economic cooperation with Israel and Jordan, possibly evolving into a wider regional common market.

Moreover, a peace settlement should include provision for the resettlement of those Palestinian refugees desiring to return to whatever new Palestinian entity is created, for reasonable compensation for property losses for Arab refugees from Israel and for Jews formerly resident in Arab states, and for sufficient economic assistance to the state or entity in which Palestinian self-determination is realized, from its neighbors and from the international community, to enable it to survive and to develop.

Accomplishment of these essential aspects of a settlement is complicated by disagreement and uncertainty as to who can negotiate authoritatively on behalf of the Palestinians.

While the Arab states at the Rabat meeting in 1974 accepted the Palestine Liberation Organization as representing the Palestinians, and many other states have also done so, its claim is not unchallenged. Many Jordanians continue to believe Jordan has a better right to this representation. It is not clear to what extent the PLO can negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians on the West Bank, in Gaza, or in Jordan, to whom it does not have ready access. The PLO has not publicly recognized Israel's right to exist. Israel has not recognized the PLO or agreed to accept the establishment of a Palestine state.

Nevertheless, it can certainly be said that a solution to the Palestinian dimension of the conflict will require the participation of credible Palestinian representatives who are prepared to accept the existence of Israel.

Boundaries

The basic principles governing the territorial aspects of the settlement should be those laid down in UN resolution 242 of November 1967 and accepted by most of the parties: "inadmissibility of the acquisition of

territory by war"; "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict" (the 1967 war); and the right of all nations of the area "to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries."

We believe that, in exchange for the assured establishment of peaceful relations with its neighbors and suitable security arrangements, Israel should and would agree to withdraw to the June 5, 1967, lines with only such modifications as might be mutually accepted. Jerusalem is discussed separately below.

In the Middle East as elsewhere, the only "secure" boundaries are mutually "recognized" boundaries, that is, boundaries freely accepted by the parties concerned. As long as there are irredentas that one or more of the parties passionately believes are unjustly annexed or held, no boundary incorporating those irredentas will be secure. This is particularly true in a situation where the parties have access to more and more sophisticated weapons, including missiles capable of easily spanning the contested territories and striking the cities of the other side. In an area where centers of population of the contending parties are so closely juxtaposed, security can be assured only by the establishment of normal peaceful relations.

Jerusalem

The issue of Jerusalem is especially hard to resolve because it involves intense emotions on the part of both Israelis and Arabs. It embraces sites that are among the most holy for Muslims, Jews, and Christians. It has been the focus of Jewish messianic yearning and has had special significance in Muslim history. The city was bitterly contested in the wars of 1948 and 1967, and its division in the interwar years left a heritage of deep mutual recrimination. Finally, it is the capital of Israel and might also be sought as the capital of a Palestine state.

For all these reasons the issue is highly symbolic for both sides. Consequently, it may prove wise to leave its resolution to a late stage of the negotiation. Whatever that resolution may be, it should meet as a minimum the following criteria:

(a) There should be unimpeded access to all the holy places and each should be under the custodianship of its own faith.

(b) There should be no barriers dividing the city which would prevent free circulation throughout it.

(c) Each national group within the city should, if it so desires, have substantial political autonomy within the area where it predominates.

All these criteria could be met within a city (1) under Israeli sovereign jurisdiction with free access to the holy places, (2) under divided sovereign jurisdiction between Israel and an Arab state with assured free circulation, or (3) under either of these arrangements with an international authority in an agreed area, such as the old walled city, with free access to it from both Israel and the Arab state. These or any other possible solutions should incorporate all three of the criteria set forth above.

No solution will be able to satisfy fully the demands of either side. Yet the issue must be resolved if there is to be a stable peace. We are convinced that ingenuity and patience should be able to find a compromise which will be fair and ultimately acceptable, even though not ideal from the point of view of any party.

Stages of Implementation

We believe that an integral part of a comprehensive settlement must be its implementation in stages that would be clearly defined in the peace agreements.

In order that a settlement be sufficiently attractive to all the parties to induce them to make the necessary compromises, all aspects of the settlement will have to be spelled out explicitly in an agreement or agreements that will be signed more or less simultaneously as part of a "packaged deal." Some of the provisions of such agreement or agreements can be implemented shortly after signature. Others, however, will require considerable time, probably several years, for full implementation. The latter are those that should be implemented in clearly defined stages, particular steps of withdrawal being matched with security measures and steps in the establishment of peaceful and normal relations.

This phased implementation would enable each side to assure itself, before proceeding with the next stage, that the other side had fully carried out the agreed and defined provisions of the previous stage. If it

believed the other side had not complied, it would be entitled to suspend its own implementation of the next stage, while it resorted to whatever bilateral or multilateral machinery had been established by the agreements for supervision of compliance.

Through this device no party would feel that it was bound to one-sided implementation of any part of the agreement, if and when another party had failed to carry out its defined commitments under an earlier stage.

Safeguards, Guarantees, and Assistance

Finally, the peace agreements should be reinforced and supplemented by a wide range of safeguards, assurances, guarantees, and assistance, some of which would be embodied in the agreements themselves and others provided in separate instruments.

The agreements will contain the mutual commitments to security and peaceful relations among the parties described under the first heading of this section. They will probably also contain provision for rather extensive demilitarized zones, to be supervised by UN forces or observers or by joint commissions of the parties, and to be maintained for periods of time prescribed in the agreements. There should be explicit provision that the UN forces not be withdrawn by unilateral action.

It would be desirable that the agreements be endorsed by the UN Security Council, the United States and the USSR particularly committing themselves not only to respect but to support the agreements. The Security Council will need to take appropriate action in regard to demilitarized zones and to UN forces and observers.

Should these arrangements and safeguards not be considered by some or all of the parties sufficient to make certain there will be no violations of the agreements, they may wish to seek supplementary guarantees from one or more outside powers, which might either be multilateral guarantees of the agreements as a whole or unilateral guarantees extended to a single party. These contingencies are discussed in Section V below in relation to the U.S. role in a settlement.

No doubt the parties will expect to and will continue to receive external military assistance until stabilization and reconcilia-

tion have reached a point where such assistance is decreasingly necessary. Provision for eventual limitation of the flow of arms into the area might be included either in the peace agreements themselves or in the Security Council action supporting the agreements. In any case it should be an ultimate goal.

The agreements will further need to be supplemented by the provision, by wealthy states concerned with stability in the area, of economic assistance essential to the peaceful development of its states and people.

IV. THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION

Perhaps the most difficult task facing the peacemakers is not what to seek but how to achieve it.

A series of devices have been tried since 1967: good offices of the UN secretary general and his special representative, Four Power conversations at the UN, bilateral conversations between the United States and the USSR, good offices by the United States vis-à-vis some or all of the parties in pursuit, originally, of a comprehensive settlement and, subsequently, of interim steps designed to avoid a stalemate. Since the 1973 war the concentration has been almost wholly on interim steps.

The conclusion of the Sinai agreement in September 1975, significant and useful as it no doubt was, has brought out certain difficulties in this line of approach. Both parties perceive themselves as having made very substantial concessions, which may render it politically difficult for them to make further concessions necessary to a general settlement in the near future. Among the Arabs only Egypt has received any satisfaction from this agreement. Other Arabs equally involved demand satisfaction of their claims. Consequent divisions and recriminations among the Arabs have complicated the process of settlement.

Moreover, the Soviet Union is increasingly annoyed at being left on the sidelines. Its leaders believe that its extensive interests in the area and its formal role as cochairman of the Geneva Conference justify its playing a leading part in the process of peace-making, whether of a comprehensive settlement or of interim steps. While it did not interfere with Secretary Kissinger's shuttle

diplomacy in March or August 1975, it was certainly resentful of its conspicuous exclusion, of the absence of consultation throughout the process, and of the stationing of American technicians in the Sinai without its agreement. The USSR, because of its relations with Syria and the PLO, certainly has a considerable capacity for complicating or even for blocking either further interim steps or progress toward an overall settlement.

At the same time the United States, in order to obtain this limited agreement, has made a considerable number of commitments which used up some of the incentives it will need to promote a broader settlement. It has also become the target of attack from other Arabs who demand progress toward their goals. The U.S. Congress is beginning to express uneasiness at growing U.S. involvement and commitments, made not to guarantee an agreed comprehensive settlement but merely to facilitate another very limited step in the process.

In any case there may not be another interim step which is feasible at the present time.

The one most frequently proposed is an Israeli-Syrian agreement, but leaders of both Israel and Syria have expressed great skepticism about the feasibility of an agreement on the Golan Heights except in the framework of an overall settlement. In the absence of such a settlement Israel is unlikely to be willing to abandon the fortified hills and kibbutzim close to the present cease-fire line, while Syria seems in no mood to be satisfied with a token or cosmetic withdrawal. Soundings should no doubt continue with both sides, but they do not appear promising.

Since Jordan's capacity to represent West Bank interests is widely contested, and since Israel and the PLO do not recognize each other, the possibility of negotiating any sort of partial withdrawal on the West Bank seems even more remote.

Mutual recognition and the cessation of all acts of violence between Israelis and the PLO or another representative Palestine body would greatly facilitate the whole process of negotiation and would in itself constitute an important interim step.

Unilateral measures of concession and goodwill by one or several of the parties

could make a contribution to improving the atmosphere and should be stimulated. On the other hand, unilateral actions that aggravate fears and passions delay or even jeopardize settlement.

What would be most prejudicial under present circumstances would be to do nothing. Regardless of how much those involved in negotiating the Sinai agreement might wish a pause of some duration, the situation is not likely to permit it. Unless Syria, the Palestinians, and Jordan are engaged in the peacemaking process, they will exert themselves even more strongly to undermine the Egyptian-Israeli agreement and to provoke tension and disorder by inviting international attention to their claims.

On the whole, therefore, we see no promising alternative for the near future to the commencement and vigorous pursuit of negotiations directed toward a comprehensive settlement involving all the parties to the conflict.

A Process of Comprehensive Settlement

While the desirability of negotiating a comprehensive settlement is clear, the means are not. Yet if stalemate is too dangerous to be tolerated for long and no significant interim step seems feasible in the near future, there is no alternative to facing and overcoming these difficulties.

A general conference at Geneva or elsewhere has advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are substantial.

First, it would assemble all or most of the parties at interest and enable each government to assure its people that, even if the process was long, there was no stalemate, their problems were being dealt with, and progress was being made.

Second, a general conference would give Israel what it has so long been seeking, an opportunity to sit down with its neighbors and negotiate face to face. At the same time it would enable the Arabs to negotiate in parallel fashion, though not necessarily in tandem, and thus to avoid the public divisions provoked by separate interim steps.

Finally, a general conference, of which it was a cochairman, would reintroduce the Soviet Union into the negotiating process and oblige it publicly either to accept or to reject a share of the responsibility for active-

ly promoting a settlement. Certainly its role would be both more legitimate and more effective if it would first move toward impartiality by reestablishing relations with Israel.

The intentions and capabilities of the Soviet Union in the Middle East are the subject of considerable controversy. The region is geographically adjacent to the USSR, which has had extensive interests and involvement there at least since 1955. The extent of its influence has varied from place to place and from time to time, and will continue to do so in the future. The Soviet Union can be prevented from achieving predominance in the area, but it cannot be excluded from it.

It seems probable that the Soviet Union would not want another war in the Middle East, which might involve it in agonizing dilemmas as to how far to go in supporting its friends, and possibly in a serious confrontation with the United States. Whether on the whole it would prefer a comprehensive settlement to the present precarious instability, and if so how far it would exert its influence in this sense, is unknown and could only be determined by testing. Certainly the Soviet Union is unlikely to press for solutions strongly opposed by its Arab friends. On the other hand, it might be willing to contribute to a settlement which protected both Arab interests and its own and in the negotiation of which it played a respectable part.

Since there is no question but that the USSR has a considerable capacity for obstructing a general settlement, and any settlement which it opposed would be likely to prove unstable, its involvement in the negotiating process and in the arrangements and guarantees following a successful negotiation would seem on balance to be an advantage rather than a disadvantage of a general conference.

There are also serious possible obstacles to a general conference.

First, the question of Palestinian representation has not been resolved. Some insist that the PLO could not attend as long as the PLO and Israel do not recognize each other. On the other hand, others insist the conference could not be held unless it does attend. It has been asserted by some that, if the PLO were to attend a Geneva conference, which would be acting pursuant to Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, and were there

to negotiate with Israel, it would be recognizing Israel and its right to exist in peace and security.

In any case what does have to be decided, either before a conference or not long after it convenes, is how the Palestinians are to be represented. A solution that would solve many problems would be mutual recognition by Israel and the PLO and an agreement between them to suspend acts of violence at least for the duration of the conference. Other possible solutions might be the creation of a Palestinian negotiating authority including both the PLO and elements from the West Bank and Gaza or, at least temporarily, the inclusion of Palestinians in another Arab delegation.

A second obstacle to a general conference is the fear that it might simply reproduce a polemical, UN type of general debate. It might quickly deadlock, the Soviet Union uniformly supporting the Arabs and the United States, at least on fundamentals, Israel. If it failed, it has been claimed, the situation might be worse than if it had never been convened.

These are genuine obstacles but they must be overcome if there is no viable alternative to the negotiation, in one way or another, of a comprehensive settlement.

It was doubtless with this imperative in mind that Secretary Kissinger in his speech to the UN General Assembly September 22 said that the United States would support, not only an Israeli-Syrian interim negotiation or a reconvened Geneva conference, but also "a more informal multilateral meeting to assess conditions and to discuss the future."

Such an informal meeting could prepare for a more formal conference and might have the advantage of eluding or postponing for the time being the question of PLO representation. On the other hand, if the informal meeting were to be more than preparatory and were to enter into substantive negotiations, the question of Palestinian representation would soon arise and would have to be met.

The organization of such an informal meeting also raises questions. Who would take the initiative in arranging for and sponsoring the meeting? The alternative would presumably include the United States and the USSR acting together, the United

States alone, or the UN secretary general. Whoever took the initiative would no doubt wish to consult with the others mentioned and would of course have to obtain the consent and cooperation of the principal parties in the area.

Certainly a conference to negotiate a comprehensive settlement needs to be properly prepared. On the other hand, the preparations should not be so comprehensive as to cause a deadlock and unduly delay the conference. Basic issues can hardly be settled in a preparatory process.

The conference, when it convenes, might well commence with a reaffirmation of UN resolutions 242 and 338, which provide the basis for settlement. Another possibility is that, before undertaking to negotiate the details of a settlement, an attempt would be made to agree on its general framework and essential principles. In any case, there should be a minimum of plenary sessions, the real work being done by a number of committees charged with negotiating each of the main issues.

The parties should be encouraged to present concrete proposals for resolving the main issues, but if the parties are politically constrained from submitting proposals that have any chance of acceptance, one or both of the cochairmen may find it necessary to do so. As the process proceeds, new and unexpected interim steps may become feasible; these would lower tension and buy time until the final settlement is achieved.

Timing is in some sense the central problem. With issues so complex, differences still so great, and domestic political constraints on all the parties so severe, the process of hammering out a durable settlement, even if it ultimately succeeds, is bound to take a considerable time. On the other hand, continuing progress is needed if all the risks of stalemate, deterioration, and explosion are to be avoided.

V. THE U.S. ROLE IN THE PROCESS OF SETTLEMENT

To judge by the experience of the past eight years, it seems evident that the Arab and Israeli governments cannot reach a settlement in the foreseeable future without strong encouragement from the great powers. The governments directly concerned must bear the responsibility for

negotiation and agreement, but initiative, impetus, and inducement may well have to come from outside.

The United Nations has played a significant role in the area since 1947, laid down some of the basic principles of a settlement, accepted by all concerned, in Security Council resolutions 242 in 1967 and 338 in 1973, and still maintains indispensable peace-keeping forces along the cease-fire lines in the Sinai and on the Golan Heights. Nevertheless, since 1967 the UN has neither displayed the capacity nor commanded the trust of all the parties sufficient to bring about a general settlement. It now seems even less likely to do so, although it could have a very consequential role in the implementation of a settlement through the use of UN forces and in the political, economic, and social programs that emerge from a settlement.

The interests and influence of the Soviet Union in the area and its role as cochairman of a general conference are described above. It is not yet clear how far it is prepared to work for a general settlement, but since its cooperation would certainly be helpful and may prove essential, its participation in preparing and conducting negotiations should be actively sought and its intentions thus thoroughly tested.

The United States, because it enjoys a measure of confidence of parties on both sides and has the means of assisting them economically and militarily, remains the great power best fitted actively to work with them in bringing about a settlement. The fact is that whatever the United States does or does not do is bound to affect the policies of the parties and the prospects for a settlement. By either its action or its inaction it will, whether it wished to or not, strengthen or weaken the elements on both sides which are, against all the obstacles we have described, striving for a durable peace.

On the other hand, the United States, either alone or with the Soviet Union, cannot impose a settlement. Nor would it be wise for it to attempt to lay down a detailed blueprint of what it believes a settlement should be. As much as possible should be negotiated and agreed upon by the parties on their own initiative.

These reservations about a too large US role do not at all mean that the United

States, alone or with others, should not feel free at any time to make proposals to the parties to overcome difficulties, large or small, which are certain to arise. It is entirely appropriate for a state extending good offices in an international dispute to do exactly that. Unless it does, in view of the domestic constraints upon the parties, the whole process is very likely to break down. The effective management of a general conference or an "informal meeting," for example, would require an active role by the co-chairmen from time to time, just as did the negotiation of the interim agreements.

Besides helping provide a framework for negotiation and submitting concrete suggestions from time to time, the United States can take other constructive steps. Under appropriate circumstances and in varying degrees it can offer military and economic aid. If held within reasonable limits so as not to exacerbate fears, such aid can help give the parties sufficient assurance of security and stability to enable them to make concessions they might otherwise refuse to make.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the U.S. role is whether or not it should offer commitments or guarantees in support of a settlement, supplementary to the mutual commitments undertaken by the parties and whatever guarantees and safeguards the United Nations may offer.

The recent debate on the Sinai agreement demonstrated that Congress would be extremely reluctant to offer guarantees or to undertake commitments going beyond traditional assurances of aid and consultation if these guarantees or commitments applied to the present unsettled situation. The Congress might well, however, consider favorably some form of guarantee of a comprehensive peace.

It is of course not clear whether the parties would wish a supplementary unilateral U.S. guarantee. In the past Israel has expressed lack of interest in such a guarantee, perhaps fearing that it would be deemed a substitute for security demands Israel favored, but that situation may have changed. If at any time it should appear that a supplementary unilateral guarantee to Israel alone or to other parties as well were essential to the conclusion of a settlement, we believe such a guarantee would be in the U.S. interest. It seems probable that a

guarantee to all of the parties should best be multilateral, extended by the Soviet Union and perhaps Britain and France as well as the United States.

How extensive a U.S. guarantee should be and whether and when it should contemplate the involvement of U.S. forces would need to be the subject of extensive examination and discussion, and would have to be fully understood and approved by the U.S. Congress and the public before being undertaken. Because of the obvious difficulties, a U.S. guarantee, if undertaken, should not obligate the United States to intervene to deal with violations of the peace agreements

that could be dealt with by other means, and it should be restricted to major violations of the agreements threatening world peace or the existence of states.

The main criteria for external guarantees perhaps should be:

(1) that they are essential to obtaining and maintaining a settlement;

(2) that they are no more extensive than is necessary for that purpose; and

(3) that they should not be directed *against* anyone but simply underwrite commitments undertaken in the peace agreements.