

All the World Loves a Winner  
(or The Danger of Letting the Arabs "Think" You Lost a War to Them)

The problem with losing a war to the Arabs is that it doesn't end there. Of course, the Israelis think that they did not lose The *Yom Kippur* War to the Arabs in October of 1973 and perhaps they are right. Certainly they were able to recover from the initial setback, regroup their forces, and deliver the counter blow that drove the enemy forces out of the Country.

They even had encircled two opposing Armies at the Suez Canal and were in the process of destroying them when they stopped – or were stopped. Unfortunately for the Israelis it does not matter what they think however correct they may be in thinking this, or even perhaps know. It does not even matter what the World thinks, though it is not at all clear what the World thinks. It matters what your enemies think and, owing to a peculiar characteristic of the Arab Mind, the Arab feels that not having lost the War he has won it – and who can say, perhaps he is right.

The World, for its part, rather than having any concrete opinion on the matter is satisfied to go in the direction of least resistance – in this case, paying lip-service to the Arab view of things or even indulging and encouraging the Arabs in their view of things, however distorted, since that is where the economic benefit is to be derived, that is where the all-too-necessary oil supplies are to be found. Certainly events in the year or two since The *Yom Kippur* War have borne the Arab out in his strange formulation of things. To a mind that sees things with the peculiar twist of the Arab Mind, not winning a war is equivalent to losing it, especially where the other side is concerned; and far the other side, not winning a war is a very dangerous thing indeed.

The present writer lived from 1968-73 in the aftermath of the Six Day War in the Occupied Territories on the West Bank of the Jordan. He would often sit in cafes with the local Arabs and listen to them ruminate about the then most recent War, that of 1967. The conversations would often go something like this:

They: "Do you think King Hussein lost the War here in 1967?"

I (naively): "I think so."

They: "He did not lose it (emphatically with nods all around)."

I: "What do you mean?"

They: "How could he lose it if he did not fight?" (Much laughter.)

I: "But I thought there was a war here in 1967 (the Area being around Jerusalem). I read about it in the newspapers. I heard about it from people who took part in it. Heavy fighting took place all around here, on Ammunition Hill, around the UNWRA Headquarters, at Government House."

They: "You are telling us, Habibi? (as if knowing some secret that I did not.) We were here. We saw it. There was no fighting."

I: "But I thought there were artillery duels and planes coming over every day bombing and strafing."

They: "There was no war. A few planes came over. That was all. We even sat outside on our porches (this on the Mt. of Olives) and watched them. King Hussein just withdrew his forces and went home. He had already agreed with the Americana that he would do so. He did not wish to lose his tanks here. (And what was perhaps the clincher ) Do you think if there had been a war here, you could have won so easily? Do you think if King Hussein had really wished to fight, all would have been over in a few days?" (Everyone nodded in agreement.)

To be sure, there was some weird logic in all of this. An alternative shorter form of the same argument might run:

They: "Do you think there was a war in 1967?"

I: "I think so, or at least I thought so.:

They: "There was no war. Do you think if there had been a war, we could have lost it in six days?"

Another formulation of the same way of thinking would run:

They: "Do you think the Israelis took the Golan Heights?"

I: "I thought there had been fighting there."

They: "You are mistaken."

I: "No, on this point you cannot contradict me. I know there was fighting there. I know several people who took part in that action. A friend of mine was killed there."

They: "There was no fighting there."

I (incredulously almost bordering on anger): You cannot tell me there was no fighting on the Golan Heights. I was there. I saw the burned-out bunkers the ruined tanks. The Israelis took it in a frontal assault. They went right up the hillside. They took it by storm."

They: "They did not. They could not have gone up that mountain. It was impregnable. The Americans came in from behind and took the Syrians unawares."

I (almost laughing at the absurdity of it all): "What did the Americans have to do with it?"

They: "They already had a deal with King Hussein. He cooperated with the Israelis. He allowed the Israeli tanks to pass through his territory and they took the Syrians by surprise from behind. How else do you think they could have taken the Golan Heights in one day? Do you think if they had gone up there in a frontal assault they could have taken them?" (Crazy, but endearing, grins greeted me from all sides.)

I thought so – but what was the use of going on?

To be sure there is a fine line of anti-Hashemite feeling running through many of these details, but the main points are clear as are the workings of the Arab Mind in these sorts of situations – perhaps not the workings of all Arab Minds but a goodly number of them.

It is very dangerous to allow such a Mind to believe it has beaten you when in fact it has not because serious consequences are then liable to follow. Since the end of The *Yom Kippur* War just such serious consequences have ensued as regards the Israelis. In relation to the problem of freeing the trapped Egyptian armies at the Suez Canal at the behest of Secretary-of-State Kissinger and the Russians such a process is particularly evident. A Mind addicted to such modes of thought does not credit that an opposing Army would free another Army from an alleged trap or encirclement – when all the cards were stacked on the side of that opposing Army – without some reason.

The reason is, of course, obvious. That Mind feels, they had to free us. They had to let the Egyptian Army out of the encirclement – out of the trap. Otherwise they would not have done so. We would not have done so. Therefore why would they have? This is simple logic for a simple Mind and it is cogent. Perhaps more sophisticated Minds might take a lesson and think more simply.

“What forced them to let us out?” – “them” in this case being the Israelis. “We forced them to let us out.” We, we, we! “We are the powerful ones! By dint of our power they were forced to withdraw. Why else would they have done so? They had over-extended themselves.”

There is no room in such a picture of the World for things like pity – that one might have felt sorry for the trapped Egyptian Armies and, therefore, supplied them – for human emotions. We would not have supplied them in such a situation. Therefore, why should they have? There is not even *any* room for things like practical behind-the-scenes politics or negotiations. The point is that something happened and what forced it to happen was our power. Otherwise it would not have happened. There is no room for any other kind of conception.

But such logic does not stop there. Such logic carries further. Once having loosened the noose and opened up the trap, once having supplied the encircled Egyptian Armies, as the Israelis did in the first days following the cessation of

hostilities of The *Yom Kippur* War – the vaunted invading Armies, the Israelis, pulled back.

The ordinary Arab did not follow the complicated negotiations that took place over a two-month period in the Tent at Km. 101 under L auspices with the *eminences grises* of the Russians and the Americans standing in the wings. All they saw was the vaunted invader going home. Not only did they do so willingly, but pictures were seen on all the world's television stations and printed in the newspapers of Israeli soldiers toasting each other as they withdrew. They scrambled back across the improvised bridges, much as the original Egyptian wave that first overwhelmed them – shaggy soldiers singing and laughing in army trucks as they retreated. They were happy to be withdrawing. They were happy to be pulling back.

What kind of strange logic was this? Not only were they withdrawing to their old positions, they were giving up these as well and pulling back some ten or fifteen kilometers further. They were giving us the Suez Canal without even a struggle. Plus, they were interjecting foreign troops in the guise of UN soldiers in between us and them. They were pulling back into the Desert from where they came when, in fact, there seemed to be no real reason why they should do so.

Ah yes, but my friend, the real reason they were doing so was because of our strength. What other reason could there be? They were frightened, my friend, frightened. They are frightened of our power, and so the logic proceeds inexorably. And soon they will be pulling back some more. Why should they be pulling back some more without even a battle, without even a struggle, if they were not frightened of our power, the combined strength of the Arab Armies, if they were not frightened of the economic muscle of the OPEC Nations, the Arab Oil Cartel, the Arab Oil Embargo, the Arab strength? And is it not so, is this not what they are frightened of?

Or is there more? If there is more, then it is too subtle for the unsophisticated mind of the simple Arab man-on-the-street to grasp. "We have forced them to withdraw, we have forced them to retreat. We have done it without even firing a shot and we will force them to withdraw further.

Who knows how far back before it comes to a shot?" This is the logic of the *Fellah* (Arab Countryman), cafe-sitter, and the simplistic Arab Mass.

It matters little what other things might be said, what the fine-print is beneath the contracts, or how such event's are rationalized either by the World's Leaders or their own Leaders for or against (they do not, as a matter of course, pay any attention to what Israel's Leaders say). It matters little whether this is cloaked under the guise of a Kissinger Mission, UN Summit, Geneva Conferences, or behind-the-scenes politicking.

The point is quite simple. Regardless of right or wrong, regardless of whether it is our Land or theirs, regardless of whether it is Occupied Territory or not (all Territory at one point or another is occupied from someone else), regardless of questions of aggression or non-aggression:

"We forced them to withdraw. Otherwise, they would not have done so. That

is the only thing that could have made us do it in their position."

No other position is comprehensible. Certainly, nothing that has to do with moral questions or whether a thing is right or wrong that very often occupies the Israeli Public is ever taken into consideration.

This is a very important communications impasse, for the Israeli Public hardly understands the Arab Public at all. Of course they understand the results of certain currents of mass hysteria that run as if at random through the Arab Masses. They have learned what to expect from the Arab Man-on-the-Street – if indeed one can postulate such a hypothetical personage. This has been learned over a long Period of conditions and responses, of thrust and counter-thrust, perhaps over a Period of fifty years depending on which generation of Israelis one is talking about – which wave of *Aliyah* (Immigration), whether from the riots of 1921-22, 1928-29, 1937-38, the Hebron Massacres, the Hadassah Hospital Convoy Massacre, the more recent waves of Terrorism: the Tel Aviv Bus Station, the *Mahane Yehuda*, the Zion Square blasts, the Lod, Munich, *Kiryat Shmoneh*, Lod, Tel Aviv Beachfront massacres; or the Periods of relative harmony and tranquility in between – the lulls. But they have not learned the whys of such

actions. They have not learned what to expect from their neighbors when. They have often lived within a dream world, a bubble of illusion – a self-imposed bubble at that.

While I was living on the West Bank, one often saw Israelis but always they seemed to be on their way to somewhere else. Israelis rarely, if ever, sat at the cafes or walked among the Arab Masses except in the Market in Jerusalem – and this on *Shabat* (Sabbath) – to buy quaint objects or things they thought were being sold for bargain rates. They were being "tourists" in their own land, the only tourism perhaps allowed them in their besieged geographical position. They used to drive through the "Occupied Territories", as they referred to them, or "Yehudah" (Judah) and "Shomron" (Samaria, the military designations for the Southern and Northern Regions of occupation respectively – insulting to most Arabs), but always on the way to somewhere on some trip or some *Shabat* outing. It was never, or hardly ever, the intercourse of their normal day.

In their normal life, except on the criminal level in East Jerusalem and the day-labor pool in West, they avoided Arabs like the plague. On *Shabat*, really, one could see them coming like some horde since they always stuck to the given routes: the Road behind the Intercontinental Hotel on the Mount of Olives down to Bethany (or *Azzariah* as they called it) or down the Jericho Road to the Baths at *Ein Feshka* along the Dead Sea or to the Jericho Market itself – usually on the way back – but never to such places like the Baths of Jericho themselves which were frequented solely by Arabs.

They came along these "beaten tracks" in long lines driving – driving one after the other – but always in the safety of their cars hardly, if ever, stopping or getting out for a walk. When people did walk by, they were usually groups from tourist buses, mostly foreigners who had decided to have a little walk because their buses could not come up to meet them at precisely the appointed spot or they were pilgrims or they were groups of *Kibbutz* Youngsters, spread out like some locust swarm usually singing very loudly or gesticulating to each other in rough crude Hebrew storming through the Land on their way to some distant pre-arranged location.

Though they had conquered the land and though at that time (1968-73), for all intents and purposes, it was utterly pacified – one cannot say the same for this time –

and though no-one had any intention under those circumstances of harming them or committing any Terrorist Act (not when the consequences were so obvious for everyone to behold); they were utter strangers – tourists in their own Land. The average Israeli intuitively understood this. Therefore, except for the rare spot of entertainment or moment of business, he stayed on his own side of the former border between them (the old "Green-Line" as they called it) and in what still could be considered his own enclave – his *Shtetl* or *Ghetto*. Though they had conquered the Land, they were absolute strangers to the Arab Part of it.

And this feeling was reinforced by their own attitude towards the Arabs. Whether it was because of years and years of mistrust and suffering at Arab hands or simple bitterness, they did not like Arabs. It matters little how an Israeli protests to the contrary or how even an Upper Elite tries or pretends to be "Liberal." There is usually, if not almost always, an air of the synthetic about it. They just do not like Arabs and really do not want to know them or be a part of their World or even associate very much with them. Perhaps they like to titillate themselves with romantic notions of going to Syria or Beirut or Amman or Cairo, but this is tourism once again and does not reflect any real interest in or desire to get to know the Arabs actually indentured to them and sitting in their own Land.

Among the Lower Classes of Israel, particularly the *Sephardi* (Oriental Jewish) Masses who have themselves experienced Arab Life in their Countries of origin or whose parents did, this hostility is even more pronounced and open for anyone to witness. The Arabs, for their part – particularly in the Occupied Territories – never understood the attitude of this Group and always insisted on speaking about their "Arab-Jewish Brothers" as if there was some common interest that united them, perhaps even in their hostility towards the "real" Jews/the *Ashkenazim*, and as if the deep gulf that separated them did not exist at all.

The PLO too seem to think in these terms. In their various proposals for the Reconstitution of Palestine, it is the European Jews, the *Ashkenazim*, who are called upon to return to their homes as if the *Sephardim* do not exist as a body. They do, of course, making up today in Israel over 50% of the population. The Arabs just cannot understand how a Group of People like the Copts in Egypt or the *Sephardim* from

Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, the Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Turkey, Palestine, and Iraq or the Christians in Lebanon or even the Druse from Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria (the last two groups anyhow originally actually of Arab origin), knowing their culture and living in Arab Lands, could dislike them (and what is meant here by "Arab" is primarily "Muslim Arab").

Among the more educated *Ashkenazim* this feeling is perhaps more difficult to detect, especially when there is a veneer of attempting to be Western or being moral laid over it, but it is there. With this dislike of the Arabs – in some walks of life even contempt: for instance, among the ranks of the regular Army or even at the building sites where Arabs work among the contractors or foremen or fellow-workers – there is really not too much interest in finding out how the average Arab thinks or what makes him behave the way he does. "*Maspeek*" (enough!) is usually the cry. Haven't we had enough of Arabs with all the wars and all the killings? Haven't we lost enough dear ones? What does the World want from us? In our spare time let us be among ourselves, and let us spend it as we wish.

And who can blame the average Israeli for such an attitude, having little enough spare time as it is – having only one day off a week in most cases? Oh yes, one often hears comments like, "the only good Arab is a dead one" as one might have done in the days of the American West (indeed, there is a startling similarity between the attitudes of Israelis towards Arabs and the attitudes of Americans towards Indians in the days of the Old American Frontier) or "You cannot trust an Arab" or "the Arabs will never agree to our being here". Therefore the understanding of what makes the Arab behave in this way is missing. Therefore, too, the ability to predict a certain given behavior pattern, except along the old beaten paths and according to the old clichés, is also missing.

As well, there is a certain tendency "to try" things. One hears this kind of terminology emanating out of Jerusalem quite a bit these days, particularly in the context of the various Disengagement Agreements and Pull-Backs engineering by Henry Kissinger in relation to the Suez Canal and Sinai Desert. As well and coupled with this, there is an inclination towards wishful thinking, e.g., "When will it all end? Haven't we had enough dying and killing and is it worth all this suffering?", i.e., a

certain war-weariness.

This must be looked upon as being normal under the circumstances but, with it, comes a certain predisposition towards self-delusion. In the year or so following The *Yom Kippur* War, Henry Kissinger was almost looked upon in some circles in Israel as "the Savior", "a Magician". No account was ever taken of the pressure that was brought to bear on the Israeli Government during the War itself and which has not relaxed to any appreciable degree in the time since.

Indeed, if the recent comments of the Ford Administration after the collapse of the First "Shuttle Mission" in March which led to the success of the Second in August, are construed in their overt sense; this pressure has probably even increased. If one paid close attention to the Israeli Press after The *Yom Kippur* War, one might have thought one was reading Henry Kissinger's own press releases. Now, of course, just prior to and since the collapse of the First Shuttle Mission, a certain hardening of attitudes has taken place – if one can believe the latest sounds coming out of the Israeli Press, a certain disillusionment; but the hope is still there and "hope" was not called "the Bitch Goddess" for nothing by the Ancient Romans.

Such an attitude too might well have characterized the mental atmosphere surrounding the plight of the Jews going docilely into the Concentration Camps unaware to their fate during The Second World War. Hitler made good use of the infirmity – even preyed upon it. The words greeting the newcomers at the entrance to the Camps were a good case in point: "*Arbeit Macht Frei*" – as was also unfortunately the method used to conceal from some their imminent extermination, the showers.

Not knowing what to expect from one's neighbors or not knowing one's neighbors at all – or being addicted to certain stereotypes with regard to one's neighbors – puts one in a very difficult position, if not a most dangerous one, especially when these neighbors are also one's self-declared, sworn "enemies". When a dog tastes human blood for the first time, it does not make him a more peaceable dog but rather a more vicious one – more bloodthirsty, wild, and unpredictable – and very often he must then be destroyed (this is not to say that the Arabs are in any way to be compared to dogs as is any other People for that matter. It is simply to point up in a vivid manner

some widespread behavior patterns). When a tiger tastes human blood for the first time in the Indian Sub-Continent, he is hunted from then on as a "man-eater".

A fairly common custom throughout the whole of the Middle East — among Greeks and Turks and Arabs and most of the Peoples living around the Mediterranean Island Structure — is to buy an animal for a Festive Occasion, usually a sheep or a lamb but sometimes a large fowl of some kind, and slaughter it in the presence of the assembled guests. The Arabs of Muslim background particularly enjoy doing this when one or another of their sons is about to be circumcised. Very often they even circumcise several sons at one time to economize since many have such large families and since, unlike among Jews, the Ritual of Circumcision is not incumbent at any specific age before puberty.

Among Village Arabs, this is a very intoxicating occasion (as is a wedding) and the swarms of young people from the general clan or enclave literally dance around the slaughtered beast and it becomes a game to dip their hands in the blood. Like any Village or Pastoral People, the respect for animal life is not on a very highly developed level and, at least among the children, virtually anything that moves — puppies, cats, squirrels, turtles — are fair game. The latter are attacked with rocks or sticks and very often tortured but, then, there is very little "free" animal life running loose in any of these regions. In this context, the treatment of beasts of burden — donkeys, mules, and such-like — in Semi-Urban and Provincial Regions is hardly more laudable.

The treatment of camels in the Desert and horses by *Beduin* and the Tribal or Upper-Class Nobility is of a wholly different kind. These are valued companions or symbols of wealth. The treatment of dumb animal life and the witnessing of the shedding of living blood in such a festive manner and at such a tender age, though by no means unique only to the Middle East, is more prevalent there than in most places and is hardly conducive to a very high regard for the shedding of living blood generally later on in life outside the immediate confines of one's own Clan, Tribe, or Neighborhood.

The point of all of these examples is not necessarily to compare the Arabs to animals

anymore than any other People – particularly any other more-or-less Primitive Rural or Provincial People. It is simply to state that very often these Peoples, particularly those so patronizingly termed "Developing" by the World's more Developed Peoples or those just emerging from a Feudal or Tribal Environmental Structure, do not necessarily operate according to the principles taken for granted by the World's supposedly more sophisticated Nations. Neither very often do the World's supposedly more sophisticated Nations – if the Truth be told.

We have only to take the examples of the last hundred years of Western behavior if any proof were needed of this statement. It is also simply to say that the propaganda that has so often been heard in the last few years – especially after the Israeli setback in The *Yom Kippur* War – in favor of Disengagement Agreements and Settlement possibilities that now that the Arab has tasted Honor, victory on the battlefield, now that he has tasted Israeli Blood, now that he knows that the Israeli is not invincible – is not a god – he will be more manageable and more satisfiable; and therefore that now is the last best chance for Peace, because the Arab Honor has been assuaged, does not necessarily follow. The opposite is just as likely to be the case and, in fact, given the sort of behavioral patterns portrayed above, perhaps even more probable (as it would be for many so-called Western Nations).

Perhaps the most crucial decision the Israelis were forced to make in the last two years after the initial mistakes which precipitated the debacle of The *Yom Kippur* War had been overcome, i.e., the years of high-living and unpreparedness prior to and the meager security arrangements and refusal to mobilize on the eve of the War, was whether to stop on the West Bank of the Suez Canal where they were called upon to stop and whether in the process to free the two trapped Egyptian armies they had encircled. The answer to these latter two questions was crucial and, once the decision with regard to them was determined, all that has followed in the two years since that time became inevitable.

The discussions at Km. 101, the decision to resupply the beleaguered Egyptian Armies, the Disengagement Agreements, the withdrawal over to the East Bank of the Suez Canal, the abandonment of the Bar Lev Line, the interjection of a UN

Peace-Keeping Force between the hostile camps on the East Bank of the Canal, the build-up of American pressure on the Israelis for further concessions, the withdrawal from the Mt. Hermon emplacements and the Syrian Disengagement, the surrender of Kuneitra on the Golan Heights, pressure for further withdrawals in Sinai in the wake of Arab Oil Embargoes end the continuing Western Economic Crises, the Kissinger Shuttles, the Agreement finally to surrender most of the Gidi and Mitla Passes and the Sinai Oil Fields and to interpose an American Team of Technicians between the opposing forces – all these things were the inevitable consequences of the change of direction embodied in and the new momentum engendered by the caving-in to International Pressure and the decision not to destroy the entrapped Egyptian Armies, which would have brought the War to a definite and clear-cut close.

Clearly, then, a deliberate decision was arrived at not to win and the results of the War, as a consequence, were left purposefully indeterminate. The impression that a stalemate had been achieved was created and the matter was then left up to the eye of the individual beholder to decide who had, in fact, achieved the upper hand. This was the crucial moment and these were the crucial decisions – and the question is whether the Israelis evaluated the character of their immediate adversaries, the Arabs, and the character of the Peoples of the World, either opponents or supporters, correctly in making the decisions they did.

All that has ensued in the last two years ensued from this point and all that will, no doubt, continue to ensue: decisions for further withdrawal (already in the wake of the latest Sinai Agreements, Sadat has made it clear that this is only the beginning of what he requires ), future Golan Agreements, and the future resolution of the problem of the Occupied Territories with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will, also no doubt, take as their point of departure this event. What is going on at present and what will go on in the future follows as incontestably from those events two years ago just as different events today would have incontestably followed a different constellation of decisions then. Had the Israelis taken a different course at that time, had they chosen to be triumphant rather than leaving the end of contest in doubt – despite the great pressures brought to bear on them, despite the seemingly overwhelming weight of public opinion arrayed against them – doubtlessly a wholly other

set of circumstances would have followed.

But now that the forces have been set in motion resulting from the Israeli decision to retreat, they cannot be reversed without a superhuman effort of will. Just how difficult such an effort of will is to muster and sustain can be seen in the collapse of Kissinger's First Shuttle Mission in March of this year and its success the Second Time Around in August. Such a supreme effort of will and the concentration of decision-making power it would represent is probably impossible in the semi-Democratic, semi-Autocratic, partially Anarchistic Bureaucratic Structure that is Israel's Government.

But in this whole process, the direction is clear. The Arabs will not stop where they have stopped today or where they have stopped yesterday or where they will stop tomorrow. Gaddafi continues to call, echoing the real if no longer publicly announced stance of the P.L.O., for all Israelis of European descent to go back to their Native Lands, i.e. for the peaceful dismemberment of Israel. The late King Feisal continued to vow that he would one day set foot in an unoccupied Jerusalem and pray in the Mosque of Omar before he died. Sadat, despite his supposedly moderate stance, over and over again continues to aver that the Israelis must go back. Each new agreement entered into is nothing more than the prelude to the next. They must turn around, and implied in all of this is always an on-going threat. They are occupying our land. Either they must go back or suffer the inevitable consequences.

Though indebted and in some ways indentured to the Western World, Sadat puts tremendous pressure on the Industrialized Nations, either directly or through his supporters in Saudi Arabia or the rest of the Sheikhdoms of the Arabian Peninsula, to abandon whatever support they might have given Israel in the past — however meager. Even the Shah of Iran, formerly Israel's only supplier of oil, breaks his previously Aryan, non-Arab stance to speak in terms of perhaps coming to a modification of such policy. Western Arab Experts, before the recent Kissinger-proposed Sinai Settlements, were giving Israel only a little more time to decide to retreat gradually (no doubt one of the factors that brought them to decide on just such a retreat) and, in Europe, more and more the responsibility for all the World's woes with regard to oil is placed upon the back of a recalcitrant, if impotent, Israel. This is clearly the state

and direction of affairs that have emerged since The *Yom Kippur* War ended without any clear decision.

But would this have been the state of affairs if Israel had plumped for a military victory in 1973? Would they be in the same situation of being embattled on all fronts if they had legitimately followed their successes on the battlefield to their logical conclusion – the surrender of all the Arab Armies facing them? What other Nation, attacked by surprise on its Holiest Religious Holiday, would have bowed to such pressures and after such losses when victory was within its grasp only a few days away? Would the Arabs themselves, would the Americans, would the Russians? In the whole history of warfare what other Nation has been called upon to make such concessions and what other Nation, attacked in the manner the Israelis were – the real or imagined insult to their Religious Sensibilities still fresh in their minds – would have permitted themselves to be talked out of their justly desired vengeance?

In the aftermath of the Six Day War, however, and for the six years leading up to The *Yom Kippur* War, the case was just the reverse. Hardly a voice of any consequence was raised against Israel and the Israeli occupation of conquered Arab Territory during this Period and, if one was whether at the UN or elsewhere, the Israelis largely ignored it. Even the Arabs during this period, though making outrageous demands and all kinds of dire threats, did not seem to take themselves as seriously as they are now taking themselves and did not dream of making the sort of statements they are now making – nor demanding the sorts of accommodations on Israel's part they are now requiring. Of course, it may be contended they did not lose The *Yom Kippur* War in as clear-cut a manner as they lost the Six-Day War but that is just the point being hammered at here. The only difference between the Period following the Six-Day War and the present Period following The *Yom Kippur* War is that the victory gained in the former encounter was in no way repeated in the same decisive manner in the latter.

As far as the situation regarding the subsequent Arab Oil Embargo is concerned, the Arabs had as much oil then as now. Whether the effect of their Embargo would have been as severe or whether they had the same unity with which to impose it in the earlier Period is open to question; but, whatever the result of such an inquiry might

be, they did not in the first Period seem to be inclined to employ it while in the Second they were and yet the defeat and humiliation suffered in the first Period was of a far more devastating degree than the second.

It may as well be contended here that the Israelis, in the aftermath of The *Yom Kippur* War or in the course of its actual unfolding, had no other choice but to acquiesce to the demands that were being laid upon them; and this was an argument and an apology often heard especially from Israelis directly after The *Yom Kippur* War drew to a close. It was contended that the Americans were withholding supplies or that the conditions of the vast American re-supply effort and refinancing in the midst of The *Yom Kippur* War obligated the Israelis to do as the Americans wished. The Israelis had no other choice.

Any or all of these contentions may or may not have been the case, but one fact remains paramount: at the time the Israelis were called upon to make the decision whether to pursue the War to its logical conclusion, they theoretically had all the arms the Americans were going to deliver them up to that point. The airlift had already been completed. Any further arms or supplies they might need for the short-run, they would no doubt have a very easy time in capturing from the surrounded Arab Armies in mopping-up operations if past experience was any guide. Even if the resupply effort had not already been accomplished, this latter consideration — which to a certain extent had served the Israelis in good stead in leaner times, i.e., during the Independence War, the Sinai Campaign, and to a certain extent, the Six-Day War — could have been considered as being operative and would have produced the sort of innovativeness and resourcefulness the Israelis had become famous for in former times.

But all this is parenthetical. The point is the arms and equipment to do the job were already there. In the heat of battle and in response to the Russian resupply effort of the Arabs, like it or not, the Americans had already bailed the Israelis out. It was action and reaction. It was just that simple. Whatever threats of back-room warnings were given to the Israeli Leadership to get them to acquiesce to resupplying the encircled Egyptian Armies and finally beginning the long succession of pullbacks were meaningless since the American arms, the

stuff on which the threats were based, were already in the hands of their recipients.

The futile efforts of the American Government and Congress to dissuade and dislodge the Turks from their hardline stance on Cyprus and from their militarily-imposed Turkish Protectorate on Northern Cyprus is instructive in this regard. This Turkish Cypriot State was carved out with American arms yet no amount of American pressure after the event will bring about a reversal of the policy. Not only is the American Congress impotent, even with its embargo on future arms' supplies to Turkey, they have found themselves in the embarrassing position of wishing in some way to achieve a turn-around to save face without appearing to give in to Turkish *fait accomplis* in this regard.

The Turks will not only take no notice of what the American politicians have to, say since, for the time being they already have the arms they require, but in the future they will simply go someplace else to get the arms they need. In the meantime, as a final gesture of their contempt for American prodding after the fact, they have even closed (albeit temporarily) American Bases within their borders and resumed growing their infamous poppy fields – another snub to American public opinion. But the Turkish State will stand.

The point is that "All the World Loves a Winner". When you win, regardless of what people say or think, there is very little anyone can or really wants to do to you. Conversely, there is no way of losing and then hoping to bail yourself out afterwards. One's first priority must be winning – particularly a People in the precarious position which the Twentieth-Century remainder of the Jews find themselves in – and then he can worry about subsequent events afterwards. You cannot worry about the subsequent events before you have won them. You cannot worry about them before they have come. Both the whole World and your enemies, in

this case most particularly the Arabs, no matter what they mouth or what platitudes they repeat, love or at least respect a Winner.

It may be objected here that the Israelis could not afford to go on and take their well-deserved victory because the Russians would have then come in. The writer has heard this objection about as many times as he has heard the objection that the Americans would have cut off arms' shipments. Granted there is an element of chance and risk in International Affairs but the writer believes that such a view embodies a particularly short-sighted understanding of the workings of both the Russian desire for Adventurism and the American Congress.

The Russians have really never since 1945 involved themselves in a foreign adventure that was not directly contiguous to their own Land Mass and directly threatening their physical security itself. The Russians are just not adventuristic when it comes to committing their own troops and, besides that, the logistical problems of supplying and transporting an Army to Egypt is not something they would contemplate with much relish. On the other hand, the American Congress, whatever superficial threats the Nixon Administration may have made towards Israel and however deep the disapproval of Israeli actions might run, would simply not be ready to countenance the appearance of a Russian Presence along the Suez Canal.

Such a problem has nothing to do with liking or disliking the Israelis or their political motivations. It is simply and quite straight-forwardly Cold War Politics. It has to do with American relations with Russia. Whatever the outcome of affairs between Egypt and Israel, the Americans – Presidency and Congress alike – as well as the Europeans are not going to let the Russians gain control of the Suez Canal

and make of it a Russian Waterway. Besides all the problems concerning threats to the West's oil supplies, such a contingency was simply inconceivable and both the Russians and the Americana knew it. Any impulse in that direction or use of such impulse in that direction for purposes of threat was simply bluff.

For the purposes of pointing up the differences in behavior towards a combatant when he has won a war or when it is unclear whether he has won let us examine a little more closely the Western Attitude after the lightning Israeli Victory at the time of the Six-Day War. At that time, of course, the International Situation was somewhat different. Lyndon Johnson was President of the United States. The United States was embroiled in a war in the Far East, the Viet Nam War, which for the most part was one of its own making and choosing. Lyndon Johnson, regardless of the opinion of the American public, had gone into Viet Nam because he wanted to. Perhaps the reasons are still not altogether clear but, nevertheless, they were reasons of his own choosing.

To a certain extent, it might even be true to say that there could have been no real and lasting Israeli Victory at the time of the Six-Day War and its aftermath without this intense American involvement in the Far East. An interesting symbol of this connection was Moshe Dayan's trip to Viet Nam just a year prior to his appointment as Israel Defense Minister in the Crisis Days proceeding the outbreak of the Six-Day War. He had gone ostensibly as a journalist and observer — to observe, as it was said at the time, the counter-insurgency techniques being used by the United States in that lamentable involvement. But whatever his real reasons were for going or whatever he learned there, relations between the two countries, the United States and Israel, could not have been more cordial at that moment. He was treated everywhere as a friend. His visit received world-wide coverage and he was even allowed

to go out on operations as an observer-participant, if press reports are to be believed.

Of course these relations were very different from the ones enjoyed under the Nixon Presidency despite the seeming, but superficial, cordiality. Nixon was involved in trying to "wind-down" (this was the jargon of the time) the operation in Viet Nam. His Secretary-of-State, originally his National Security Advisor (i.e., Head of all Intelligence-gathering Operations and other unspecified activities) was Henry Kissinger. As roving Ambassador Plenipotentiary the latter's task was to improvise and carry out some grandiose scheme for East-West Harmony and balance of military forces – widely referred to as "Detente".

The scope of these activities involved separate trips to Peking and Russia, often on several occasions, not only to raise Nixon's prestige in the eyes of the Country and the World and ensure a land-slide victory in The 1972 Election, but also to pin down the rudiments of these rough overall goals. No less a personage than Itzhak Rabin, the present Prime Minister of Israel and former Israeli Ambassador to Washington, has attested to the alacrity with which all requests for military and economic aid were granted. This, no doubt, led him to make the controversial blunder of throwing his weight publically behind the Nixon Re-election Campaign – something usually considered taboo in International Diplomacy, but then Rabin was a former successful general not a diplomat.

But still there was something different about the way aid was forthcoming during the Nixon Years than during the Johnson Years. Perhaps it was more generous, as some have contended, but even this was somewhat suspicious. Is this hindsight? Probably not. All during the Nixon Years at the White House whimperings

were constantly emanating out of Washington — first under the guise of The Roger's Plan — concerning a "more even-handed attitude" towards the Middle East. The extent to which this policy has finally gone has become clear during Kissinger's tenure as Secretary-of-State.

Never during the whole of the Johnson Administration — even in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, not to mention the sinking of an American Intelligence Ship during that War — did any such sounds ever emanate out of Washington, not even by innuendo. The attitude of the Johnson Administration towards Israeli actions in the Middle East was rather one of stony silence. The chief concern was the Far East and any circumstances which inhibited Russian intentions there — including the closing of the Suez Canal, regardless of the inconvenience to Western Europe — were considered a factor for the good. On the other hand, the final extravaganza of Nixon's disastrous Second Term in Office was his trip to Cairo — the first American Head-of-State in modern memory to visit this City — and he quite clearly wallowed in the adulation of the mobs, however manufactured; there was obviously no such adulation to be expected on the Home-front.

Even if it can be proved that penny-for-penny Johnson was more tight-fisted towards Israel than Nixon — and the present writer doubts it — still it must be remembered that it was Johnson and no other president, and this was in the aftermath of the Six-Day War and not before it, who made the crucial decision to allow Israel to buy American-made armaments of substantial quantity and effectiveness: namely, Phantom and Skyhawk Jets, Patton Tanks, and Hawk Missiles. To be sure, Kennedy had started the ball rolling with limited sales of the latter but it was Johnson who stepped in to fill the gap and allowed heavy sales of first-rate military hardware. This was a, if not the, crucial breakthrough for Israel

and it came in the wake of the Six-Day War not before it.

Hitherto Israel had been almost solely dependent on French arms sales and the French weapons' industry, an outgrowth and relic of the French situation in North Africa when the French in their typical egocentric manner saw it as being useful to keep a Country like Israel well-supplied on the Arab flank during the Algerian conflict and Suez fracas. The fragility of this *entente cordiale* and supply source was quickly revealed when De Gaulle imposed his one-sided arms embargo on the Israelis at the outbreak of the Six-Day War. This did not come after the results of the War had already been ascertained but while it was still going on. As a policy decision, therefore, it was something that was already under consideration and had nothing to do with winning or losing of the War *per se*. It is hardly surprising that De Gaulle greeted Nixon, even in his lowly days as nothing but a Presidential aspirant, as someone of comradely stature; while Nixon, for his part, liked to think he was patterning himself on De Gaulle. Johnson, De Gaulle viewed with a venom far beyond what could be considered normal and the two were hardly on speaking terms.

It was Johnson's decision in 1968 to sell Israel Phantom Jet Aircraft that, not only rescued Israel from the paralysis created by De Gaulle's pique, it also remade the character of the Israeli Air Force and cast it in an American mold. It was also this decision which solidified the Israeli gains whether expansionistic or not — all questions of whether they were rightly or wrongly come by aside — after the Six Day War. This situation was not seriously called into question again, despite the inchoate noises that were a continuous concomitant of the UN charade, until after The *Yom Kippur* War during the waning days of the Second Nixon Administration.

What is the old adage, "Nothing succeeds like success"? Perhaps we are just

dealing here with a particular quirk in Johnson's character (some would call it his "Anti-Communism") which was then later carried on as an already established element of American Foreign Policy in the Nixon Years; but whatever his reasons or character may have been, the point is that Johnson did it. It was Johnson who enabled Israel to hang on to her Territorial gains after the Six-Day War even in the face of World, particularly Third-World, opinion, which was drummed up by the Soviet Propaganda Machine and linked to American Imperialism in South Viet Nam. Without the wherewithal in 1968 and 1969 to re-equip her Air Force and to reconstitute her Armed Forces in a manner consonant with the supplies the Russians were pouring into the Arab Countries, particularly Egypt and Syria, Israel would have been forced to give up the newly-Occupied Territories much as she had been forced to do in the aftermath of the Sinai Campaign in 1956 during the Eisenhower Administration.

We are not here considering, once again, the morality or immorality of holding on to such gains. It is assumed without debate and without wish to enter into discussion that the prime reason Israel had in holding on to any of these Territories was that of Security; and this must be considered to have been proved, i.e., their necessity in terms of Security, by the events of The 1973 War. Security, too, with regard to these Territories, rather than any expansionist urge to hold on to Territories for the sake of holding on to Territories, is the most often stated concern of the Rabin Government in its Foreign Policy Statements and the present writer sees no reason to doubt the sincerity of these contentions whether real or imagined on the part of those contending them.

The situation described above is the precise opposite of the present situation and the round of charge and counter-charge which is presently sweeping the Middle East. The pressure has mounted on Israel clearly almost to unbearable proportions. The new

President of the United States, Ford, whose continuance of the policy of the Nixon Presidency is evidenced by the fact of the survival of Henry Kissinger as both Secretary-of-State and National Security Advisor, is not willing to supply the aid and weaponry Israel contends she needs without concessions similar to those forced out of Israel during the Eisenhower Years (another instance where Israel was forced to stop before a clear decision in a Campaign was arrived at).

The key to the Period 1968-1972 was just that Johnson had already allowed Israel to hang on to her gains, ill-gotten or otherwise, by his decision to allow her to re-arm herself substantially with American weapons without any *quid pro quo* Agreements. This policy, once committed to, was carried out during the Nixon Administration without any serious objections until The *Yom Kippur* War debacle of 1973. To be sure, there was a continual undercurrent of disapproval from people like William Rogers and William Fulbright – persons not altogether antithetical to Henry Kissinger.

It is perhaps too simplistic to contend that "All the World loves a Winner" but, to a certain extent, this maxim seems to characterize the two Periods, we have just been analyzing, 1967-73 and 1973-75. For numerous reasons, perhaps many of them not sufficiently delineated in this discussion, Israel could not afford to lose The 1973 War yet, as we have already suggested, lose it she did – at least in so far as not winning it is a loss. The crucial decision not to win the war was quite clearly taken in the heat of the battlefield situation, like most of the others we have been citing, not by the present Government of Prime Minister Rabin – so he at least cannot be blamed for the fiasco – but by his predecessor Mrs. Meir and her advisors, including Sapir, Eban, and Dayan.

If reports of a similar nature can also be credited, and the present writer is in

no position to verify or deny them, then the same quartet can be blamed for an earlier Foreign Policy-oriented decision – also in 1973 – to allow Israel to take the first blow. That such a decision could have even been contemplated in view of the terrible damage wrought by the first blow is difficult to conceive and yet recent information emanating out of the Intelligence Community in Washington does seem to imply that some persons there were aware of the significance of the Egyptian build-up though it is also clear that people like Henry Kissinger did not wish to be informed of it for whatever the reason. In any event, the second of the two decisions is not worth quibbling over since no firm conclusion can be demonstrated but the first is.

The decision not to win the *Yom Kippur* War was taken, no doubt, under intense American pressure at the time when the Israelis had already successfully crossed the Suez Canal and just about encircled two Egyptian Armies trapped on the Eastern Side as a result. It was further compounded by the decision, taken not long after also no doubt under intense pressure, to resupply the trapped Egyptian Armies which had by that time been completely encircled and cut off. This was a deliberate no-win decision somewhat similar to the one so often debated in the United States in relation to the Viet Nam War; but of course the stakes were different and for Israel, at least, much higher. It is interesting to note, however, that both these no-win decisions were taken in similar contexts so one can enjoy the sport of speculating what or which forces were behind them.

From that point, as was noted in the early part of this discussion, all that is presently occurring can be traced – the resupply effort, the Disengagement Pacts, the Israeli pull-backs, and the present pressures for further wide concessions without any similar demonstrations from the Arab Side. This was the crucial point of The *Yom Kippur* War. It might even turn out to be the crucial moment in Israeli history –

one hopes not. But, for whatever the reasons evinced, from that point on it has all been backwards and it is difficult to see where it will all stop.

But what would have happened if the Israelis had chosen rather to go on at that moment in the face of all pressures? What would have happened if they had chosen rather to ignore all American threats, which after all were really only threats and nothing more? The Israelis already had the arms to do what they needed to do. What would have happened after a clear-cut decision in the War in favor of the Israelis would have had to have been determined afterwards. The actual introduction of Russian fighting troops into the Area at that juncture was really quite inconceivable. Suppose the Israelis had become the Winner they could easily have become — and by "Winner" here is simply meant the total annihilation of the Egyptian and Syrian Armies facing them, not necessarily the permanent acquisition of any further Territory. After such a climactic blow, there could even have been the evacuations presently being carried on.

It is the contention of the present writer that nothing that has subsequently followed would have followed, probably not even the widely feared Arab Oil Embargo; and if it had, certainly not for the same superficial reasons. There is no way of proving these contentions. These are the incalculables of History but, whatever else might be said, there can be little doubt both from the evidence of recent and past History that weakness invites the appetite for further blows and further aggressions — not the reverse. If you permit your neighbor the taste of your blood, this does not assuage his thirst — as has been speciously recently contended — but rather inflames and increases his appetite for it. This is a lesson that is fairly well-documented both as regards human and animal behavior; and in particular as regards the Arab character traits, enumerated to a certain

extent at the beginning of this article, there can be little doubt of it.

Arab demands have not decreased with each successive concession but, rather, they have increased until they have reached the proportions of an almost deafening roar. They did not decrease after the Israeli indecisiveness shown prior to, during, and after The *Yom Kippur* War. They only increased and they will go on increasing and increasing with each new step backward, with each new agreement until Israel ceases any longer to be a viable factor in the Middle East or some turning-point is reached. Better probably would it have been for the Israelis if that turning point had been reached at the beginning when the crisis of nerve began in the waning days of The *Yom Kippur* War.

The Arab Oil Embargo can be taken as a good case in point. It really did not get going until the Winter of 1974 but this was after the Israelis had already been forced to make the first and most important concession in what was obviously going to be a long stream of concessions. It is at just this point that any reasonable man would have thought the Arabs had gained quite a substantial amount, having been given in effect a victory or at least a draw in a War they did not win at all, and would have been satisfied.

The concessions the Israelis were going to be called upon to make had in effect already been made. The Egyptian Armies had been freed; the war had not been won. The Disengagement Agreements were well on their way towards being signed. The Israelis were already pulling back across the Suez Canal from where they had come and even further back. It was at this time the Arabs chose to impose their Oil Embargo. The author cannot prove it, but it is doubtful if it would have hit with the same force or the same concerted effort if the Israelis had won The 1973 war. And so it goes on.

All is conjecture and yet is it? After the victorious 1967 War, Israel's image emerged somewhat tarnished and, especially in Liberal and "New Left" Circles, this tarnishing increased as the years of intransigence went on. But nothing of any substance occurred to make the Israelis withdraw. The Arabs were just as capable then during the 1967 War and afterwards of organizing a successful Oil Embargo as they were after The 1973 War. Why then did they not do it? For the present writer, the answer is simple. It took the tremendous lift given their morale by Sadat's successful Suez Crossing and Israel's subsequent caving-in under International Pressure to galvanize their spirit and solidify their unity. They were then able to embark on such a joint venture even though the ends it sought to achieve had to a large extent already been gained.

For their part, the Countries of Europe have been much more vicious in their attacks on Israel and this includes all the Countries of Western Europe from the Italians, to the French, to the Swedes, to the British, and the Germans, than they were after the 1967 War. Yet we are told that Israel's image in Europe and America has improved since The 1973 War. The contentions regarding the improvement in Israel's image are probably, to a certain extent, true but the reasons for it are obvious. The facts, so often enunciated by Israel after the 1967 War as reasons for holding on to the Occupied Territories were born out by the events of The 1973 War.

But even if Israel's seemingly stiff-necked position did become more comprehensible in the light of The 1973 War, what was the use of it? Israel's image abroad has no doubt improved from 1973 to 1975 over what it was from 1967 to 1969 to take a similar past-war time span. One does not hear the same criticisms of her militarism and expansionism to the extent these were formerly heard. The issue of her intransigence is still, though, very much in the news. Yet on the Political Front the pressures on

all sides in Europe just as well as in America are increasing so as almost to be overwhelming. The two processes even seem to go in inverse proportion to each other, that is, excellence of image as compared with lack of pressure.

Once again, a comparison from the Turkish Position on Cyprus is illustrative. The Turks may not have a very positive image as regards their Cyprus incursion and yet there is hardly any attention paid to it in the World's Press and hardly the slightest pressure is being brought to bear on them, at least in International Forums like the UN, to relent in their unilaterally-imposed solution. It seems the Turks are not expected to have as good an image as the Israelis. On the contrary, Henry Kissinger's policy and even that of Congress is more and more to seek to relax the pressures being brought to bear on Turkey to relinquish her militarily-won gains. As well, the countries making up NATO's Command in Europe have recently voiced concern that the pressure brought to bear on Turkey was counter-productive and the Eastern Flank of NATO had been grievously weakened as a result.

As far as the Americans are concerned, in the matter of public opinion they can be compared with the Europeans. Though the extent of adverse criticism of Israel after the 1967 War was never as intense in America as it was in Europe, the political gains achieved and retained by Israel after that War were never questioned. The situation now after a losing War, that of 1973, is just the opposite of what it was after a winning one, 1967; and, as far as Israel's image is concerned, unlike in Europe, there even seems to be some diminution there too. After all, the Israelis are a less substantial force in people's minds now than they were after the lightning Victory in 1967.

When conceived of as possible or even useful allies as some, though by no means

all, sometimes view the problem; there, too, their viability has obviously been called into question. Though Americans, as a matter of course, think very differently than Europeans — for anyone who has lived in and experienced both cultural ambiances, there can be little doubt of this proposition -- from whichever direction one comes, whatever the conclusions one ends up with; it is difficult to escape the proposition that: "The Whole World Loves a Winner". As far as future behavior is concerned, it Israel is indeed to get a future chance, there is the other equally venerable old adage that: "Opportunity only knocks but once."

She, Israel, had better consider very seriously the implications of such a proposition before showing any further apparent signs — albeit only outward and sometimes even feigned — of weakness.