

## Editorial

### *Break up the superpower condominium*

As the smoke clears after the Reagan-Gorbachov Memorial Day summit, the political landscape reveals a series of global deals, which would ostensibly divide the world into Soviet and U.S. spheres of influence. This "New Yalta" arrangement is beginning to create pockets of resistance, and in the Middle East there are some signs of realignment, which could create fissures in the proposed imperial world map.

This may well be behind the move by the Jordanians to withdraw from the West Bank, leaving the administration of that area to the Palestinians themselves. The fact that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has resisted pressure from within Israel to annex the West Bank, suggests the possibility of a deal already in place to give the Palestinians autonomy.

Such a prearranged agreement among the Palestinians, Israel, and Egypt could transform the presently ugly, no-win conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. If such an accord is in the works, then there is new hope for the region as a whole. Certainly, the Israelis must fear the newly virulent anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, which is allowed to flourish unchecked in this tightly controlled police state.

For Israel, a resolution of the Palestinian problem could be a true lifeline, providing a chance to form a viable broader coalition which could include the non-Arab Muslim states such as Pakistan and Turkey. Such a grouping would have the capability to transform the Mideast, by introducing high technology and advanced agriculture, providing the economic underpinnings of a peace settlement.

This would be a reversal of Israeli's traditional divide-and-conquer policy toward the Arabs, which has also led Israel to fear Arab industrial development. The most dramatic outcome of that fear was Israeli destruction of an Iraqi nuclear plant, which might have produced weapons-grade plutonium. Yet without nuclear energy, the scale of energy investment needed to bring the region out of the dark ages, will not be possible. A case in point, is the disaster facing the Aswan Dam,

which under present drought conditions is becoming virtually dysfunctional.

Israel has been the victim of false friends such as Henry Kissinger, who saw the Middle East as a playground for superpower politics, and even worse, an area ultimately to be conceded to Soviet hegemony. The Democrats have been no better, as the example of Jimmy Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, makes clear. It was he who dismissed the region as an "arc of crisis," a pawn in the geopolitical "great game" between the superpowers. The Democrats and the Republicans have since continued essentially the same policy.

The destabilization of the Shah of Iran, a good friend to both the United States and Israel, was a case in point. As the Irangate revelations have made abundantly clear, neither the United States nor Israel learned the appropriate lesson from that debacle. Both were more than willing to play the "Islamic fundamentalist" card, heedless of the disastrous effects of unleashing such irrationalism throughout the region.

The Israelis have also been playing their own highly dangerous game with Moscow. But with the newly emerging superpower condominium, such options are being rapidly closed out. No doubt there are circles in Israel who would hope to play the "Dukakis card," because of Kitty Dukakis's connections to the Anti-Defamation League, especially since those Israelis who are closest to the U.S. "military-industrial complex" are currently feeling the heat in the present attacks on the Pentagon, while Mossad operations are being sharply reined in. For Israel to place its hope in a Dukakis victory in the U.S. presidential election, would be a blunder of truly tragic proportions.

What is urgently needed, is the kind of new policy options demanded by the creation of an autonomous Palestinian state. What is needed is an independent policy for the region, which would not only prevent it from being played as a pawn in the New Yalta "great game," but would in fact, turn over the chess board.