

The Middle East: dangers and prospects

GEORGE TOUBI

Political and social developments in the Middle East are tightly linked with the struggle in the world between the progressive forces of peace and socialism and the forces of war and imperialism. Any attempt to detach the Israeli-Arab conflict from the framework of the worldwide confrontation of the forces of progress and reaction, socialism and imperialism and simply present it as a mere local clash between Israelis and Arabs is unrealistic, untrue and unscientific. The aim behind this would be to distort the real nature of the conflict in order to whitewash the aggressive designs of imperialism and Zionism in this tumultuous corner of the world.

The Document adopted by the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties defining the tasks at the present stage of the struggle against imperialism includes a correct and principled stand on this question.

"The Arab liberation movement," it says, "is playing an outstanding role in the battle waged against world imperialism. It is exerting a positive influence on the entire movement against imperialism and neo-colonialism in the Middle East and Africa. The struggle of the Arab peoples against imperialism and the Israeli aggression is a part of the general struggle between the forces of freedom and socialism throughout the world, on the one hand, and world imperialism, on the other."

This is the key to the Marxist-Leninist approach to the events and developments in the Middle East.

In the historic struggle between imperialism and the national liberation movement,

the imperialists try to draw conclusions from their own experience and change their tactics, but not their strategy. They adjust their methods in an attempt to face the new realities in the world and to cope with the constant change in the balance of forces in favor of peace and socialism.

The Zionist ruling circles in Israel had played and are still playing an important role in the imperialist strategy and in its attempts to carry out its treacherous designs in the Middle East.

From their bitter experience in Vietnam, the U.S. imperialists have reached the conclusion that it would be better for them—if possible—if the sons of other nations shed their blood in order to achieve their imperialist aims and preserve their positions and regain what has been lost. This objective was formulated in what is known as the "MacNamara Doctrine."

A short time before the June 1967 aggression MacNamara defined this doctrine as follows:

"It is the policy of the USA to encourage and achieve partnership with those nations that are capable of and obliged to participate in our responsibilities in the world." Some time later the *New York Times* published an item from its Jerusalem correspondent in which he says that, "Israel feels that it suits this definition."

This "doctrine" was applied in June 1967 when the Zionist ruling circles in Israel in coordination with the U.S. imperialists launched an aggressive war against the neighboring Arab countries in a bid to undermine the national liberation movement and the progressive anti-imperialist

regimes in the Arab countries, preserve the imperialist oil monopolies in the Arab world and break off the Arab peoples' friendly relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Moreover, the Zionist circles hoped that through this aggressive war they would be able to realize their aims and achieve territorial gains.

Despite the military success of the aggressors, the June war was a political fiasco, since it failed to achieve its main aims and this thanks to the tremendous and all-round help of the Soviet Union which backed the Arab countries, victims of the aggression.

Under pressure of world opinion and due to the energetic and tireless efforts of the Soviet Union, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution on November 22, 1967, calling for the withdrawal of the Israeli troops from the occupied Arab territories, for the termination of the state of war, for the recognition of the right to sovereign existence of all states in the region, for a just solution of the problem of the Arab Palestinian refugees and for freedom of navigation in international waters for all the states of the region.

It was hoped that in the course of time the implementation of the resolution would drain off many of the sources poisoning relations and guide events towards a just peaceful settlement of the Middle East crisis.

The UAR and other Arab countries have more than once officially declared their readiness to carry out the Security Council resolution in full.

In contrast, the Israeli government, guided by its Zionist ideology and aspirations for territorial expansion and backed by the rulers of the USA and other imperialist countries, refused to fulfil the Security Council resolution.

Regrettably, certain armed Palestinian organizations and some Arab countries rejected the Security Council resolution. This position was unrealistic and, in our view, has caused harm to the anti-imperialist struggle in the Middle East, to the fight against Zionism, for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories and the achievement of the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine. Objectively such a stand has helped the Zionist circles ruling Israel and their imperialist patrons in their attempts to perpetuate the occupation and to deprive the Arab refugees of their just right to return to their homeland.

For three long years the Israeli government, with the help of U.S. imperialists, has been doing everything in its power to prevent the implementation of the Security Council resolution and to bring about a dangerous escalation of the aggression against the Arab countries and especially against the UAR in the hope of achieving what was impossible to achieve in 1967—to undermine the anti-imperialist regimes in the Arab countries, impose terms of surrender upon them, and annex Arab territories.

For three years the Israeli government has been deliberately foiling every prospect and every initiative towards a peace settlement.

But three years of war, of destruction, of attacks deep into the UAR and daily raids beyond the Canal have fully proved that it is impossible to compel the Arab peoples to renounce their rights and to surrender. The adventurous policy of force, occupation and annexation has failed completely. The monstrous hope of the Israeli government to bring about an American-Soviet confrontation, and intervention in the conflict by NATO has proved to be false.

The failure of imperialist and Zionist plans in the Middle East was mainly due to the following factors.

The balance of forces in the world has changed in favor of peace and socialism. The might of the Soviet Union has grown economically, politically, scientifically and militarily. The development and consolidation of the socialist countries increasingly influences the international scene. The general crisis of capitalism is on the upgrade.

Heavy blows are being dealt to the U.S. imperialists in Vietnam and Cambodia. The treaty signed between the Soviet Union and the FRG is also a sign of the times. The FRG had to reconcile itself to the results of the Second World War and to agree to the present boundaries in Europe.

In the Middle East the attack of the imperialists and their Zionist agents against the Arab national liberation movement has failed completely. Owing to the help of the Soviet Union this movement has not only withstood imperialist attacks and plots, but has gained new momentum. Since the June war two new Arab states — Sudan and Libya — have succeeded in breaking the imperialist chain and embarking on the road of national independence and social progress.

The aggressive war and other military

actions of the Zionist circles ruling Israel failed to crush the anti-imperialist regime in the UAR, stop the deep social changes that are being carried out, or force the UAR to break off its friendly relations with the Soviet Union. On the contrary, despite the barbarous military attacks, despite the fact that parts of its territory are occupied, the UAR with the help of the Soviet Union has scored important successes in the political, economic, and military fields.

The realistic and wise policy of the UAR under the leadership of the late President Nasser, particularly during the recent years, has aroused the deep sympathy and support of ever wider sections of world opinion, and has contributed to the further isolation of the aggressors, unmasking the expansionist plans of the Israeli government.

In the economic field the UAR, far from collapsing, has scored important achievements. In this period the Aswan High Dam has been completed, and this added 850,000 new feddans to the cultivated area of the UAR; electricity production climbed to 10 billion kwh. Industrial production (despite the loss of the oil wells in the Sinai Desert and the industrial projects in the Canal zone), which in 1966-67 amounted to E£1,077.6 million, increased in 1968-69 and reached the sum of E£1,332.7 million. The military power of the UAR has been rebuilt, strengthened and consolidated.

In Israel the internal situation has been deteriorating. Many Israelis are deeply discouraged by a seemingly endless war which takes a steady toll of the Israeli youth and is a severe burden on the Israeli economy.

In August this year the Knesset (Israeli parliament) had to hold a special session in order to approve an additional I£1,750,000,000 (500,000,000 dollars) for war expenditures, bringing the total war expenditures to about 60 per cent of the 1970-71 budget.

Israeli Finance Minister Saphir declared in the Knesset that "the coming generations too will have to pay the costs of this war."

Recently new taxes amounting to I£440 million were imposed upon the masses in Israel. Broad sectors of the working class have awakened to the fact that they are being cheated and robbed, and respond to the assault on their daily interests by intensified struggle.

The courageous struggle of the Communist Party of Israel against the aggressive policy of the ruling circles, and the experience of the masses have opened the eyes of many who now see that the Israeli

government is interested in territory, not peace. Many young people, workers, students and intellectuals for the first time have started to question official Israeli policy. They have the bitter feeling that they are being asked to shed their blood not for the defense of their country but for the interests of the imperialist powers and the expansionist Zionist policy.

The question worrying the great majority of people in Israel was and still is—when, at last, will this endless bloodshed stop? Is there really no alternative? Many new sections have reached the conclusion that there is an alternative, a perspective for peace, depending on a radical change in the pro-imperialist expansionist policy of the Israeli government, which is obstinately barring the road to peace.

The repeated warnings of the Israeli Communists that the Zionist ruling circles are deliberately foiling every peace initiative in the Middle East have not fallen on deaf ears.

A movement without precedent has developed inside Israel opposing government policy. More voices have joined the Communist Party demand for the downfall of the "national unity" government, which is leading towards national disaster, and for the establishment of a new government, a government of peace and national independence which would help implement the Security Council resolution and achieve peace without annexations.

In the middle of 1970, mass demonstrations swept Israel in protest against the official policy that stubbornly bars the road to a just peace.

All these developments, the change in the balance of forces in the world and the Middle East, the changes inside Israel, have forced the U.S. imperialists to reconsider their tactics and compelled them to take steps for the implementation of the Security Council resolution.

That is how the American initiative known as the "Rogers Plan," came into being. This plan is actually based on the acceptance of the Security Council resolution, and reflects the failure of the American policy in the Middle East. The ceasefire based on this plan was possible because of the efforts of the Soviet Union which placed its immense weight on the scales in order to achieve a just and stable peace settlement in the national interest of all nations in the Middle East and the interest of world peace.

The UAR took the initiative in the cease-

fire, seeing it as a possibility for the political solution that would ensure the evacuation of Israeli forces and a just settlement of the long-standing problem of the Palestinian Arab refugees.

The Israeli government did not find it possible to reject this plan. Its refusal to accept it would have caused its absolute international isolation and greater opposition to the government inside Israel. Israel accepted this plan with clenched teeth following a stormy discussion within the government which resulted in a decision of the Right-wing "Gahal" bloc to quit the Cabinet.

The consent of the UAR, Jordan and Israel to the plan made it possible to reach an agreement upon a ceasefire and to start negotiations under the auspices of Gunnar Jarring, UN mediator.

It should be noted that the Israeli consent to the plan was not without many reservations regarding the withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and the just solution of the refugee problem. Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir declared even after the ceasefire agreement went into effect: "We shall not return back to the boundaries of the 4th of June 1967. . . ."

Guided by these motives, various provocations have been put into play by the Israeli government. The Israeli charges about alleged moves by the UAR armed forces were nothing but an excuse to interfere with the Jarring talks and prevent a withdrawal. Then came the Israeli decision (adopted under the pressure of the hawks led by War Minister Dayan) to suspend participation in the Middle East talks.

These provocations and especially the decision to suspend participation in the talks aroused international indignation against the rulers of Israel. Circles well known for their support of official Israeli policy could not but criticize the Israeli government for its irrational behavior. The Israeli government actually found itself in a very difficult and critical situation. But it received unexpected help from an unexpected source — the opposition to the ceasefire agreement and the opening of the talks by the armed Palestinian organizations and other Arab forces. Such a position endangered the unity of the anti-imperialist forces in the Arab world and harmed the cause of the Arab people of Palestine; to this was added the airliner hijacking by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which evoked general criticism in the world (the Arab world

included) and even inside the Organization for the Liberation of Palestine.

The coincidence of the hijackings and the provocative Israeli maneuvers was astonishing. As a drowning man grasps at a straw the Israeli government seized on these adventurous acts in order to evade complete isolation, foil the peace talks and bar the road towards the implementation of the Security Council resolution.

The drama surrounding these acts diverted attention from the real Middle East problems and from the fact that Israel had actually blocked negotiations. Even in Jordan King Hussein, encouraged by U.S. imperialists, has tried to exploit the adventurous acts of the extremist Palestinian circles as an excuse to start a massacre of the civilian population and a war against the Palestinian organizations in order to curb the remarkable rise of national consciousness and militancy among the Palestinian Arab people who are waging a just struggle against imperialism and Zionism and for the recovery of their land occupied by the Israelis in June 1967.

The attempts of the U.S. imperialists and Israeli Zionist ruling circles to exploit the tragic events in Jordan in order to carry out a military intervention were frustrated due to the tireless efforts of the Soviet Union and the anti-imperialist forces in the Arab world, and especially to the efforts of the late President Nasser and the President of Sudan, Numeiri, who succeeded in putting an end to the tragic bloody events in Jordan.

We very much hope that the Palestinian resistance organizations as a result of deep analysis of the situation and a correct political program will find the best ways for serving the cause of anti-imperialist Arab unity and will make a forceful contribution to the struggle for the just cause of the Palestinian Arab people.

Though developments in the Middle East may again seem to be in a deadlock, it was nevertheless clear even at the beginning of the ceasefire agreement that the road to peace was still long and arduous.

The grim truth is that if the peace talks are not resumed and the initiative for a political solution of the crisis is foiled, the world may witness a serious and dangerous escalation of military operations in the Middle East.

No doubt conditions are still present for a political solution of the crisis, for ensuring evacuation of the Israeli forces from

the occupied Arab territories and establishing a just peace.

It is the urgent task of all anti-imperialist forces in the Middle East to rally strength and to cement their ranks in a resolute, comprehensive and principled struggle to force further setbacks upon the Israeli aggressors and their imperialist patrons.

The Communist Party of Israel will spare

no efforts in mobilizing the broadest possible forces in Israel for a resolute fight against the provocative policy of the Israeli government, against the Zionist policy of expansion and annexation, against the policy of depriving the Arab people of Palestine of their just national rights and for the implementation of the Security Council resolution.

Benefits of peaceful coexistence

LARS JUNTILA

Finnish-Soviet relations, based on the Friendship and Cooperation treaty, extended for another 20 years during President Kekkonen's July visit to the USSR, are clear proof that coexistence of states with differing systems is not only possible, but mutually advantageous.

And it has gained growing recognition throughout the world as the socialist states increase their economic strength and political influence. World public opinion, and realistically minded political personalities in capitalist countries, are coming to realize that coexistence is the only alternative to armed conflict which, in this nuclear age, is fraught with uncountable calamities. By building up public support for peaceful co-existence, the Communist and Workers' parties have done much to induce bourgeois governments to accept it.

Economic instability in many capitalist countries—market fluctuations, monopoly competition, restricted potentialities of the capitalist market — suggests that they would gain much from more trade and other relations with the socialist states. And experience shows that such relations, based on equality and mutual advantage, can be very beneficial.

Finland's experience is highly indicative. It shows that implementation of the proposals of the Warsaw Treaty states for broader trade, economic, scientific and technological links, based on equality,

would benefit all European states and would contribute to their political cooperation and help towards enduring peace and security on our continent.

Relations between Finland and the Soviet Union—between a small country and a large one — rest on complete equality, mutual respect of interests, sovereignty and independence, and non-interference in each other's affairs. That, in fact, is the very essence of the Soviet Union's Leninist policy of peaceful coexistence.

The Finnish-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, signed April 6, 1948, proved a success and was prolonged twice, in 1955 and 1970.

The Treaty set relations between the two countries on a course advantageous to both. Speaking at a reception in the Finnish Embassy on July 20, 1970, L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CC CPSU, described the Treaty as "a major landmark in the establishment of peaceful cooperation between peoples in postwar Europe. It was one of the crucial documents embodying the Leninist principles of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems," and its prolongation for another 20 years, L. I. Brezhnev emphasized, "is an act projected into the future. . . . Life itself indicates ever new ways for expanding mutually advantageous economic, scientific and technological contacts between the USSR and Finland. And