INTEREST & CONSCIENCE IN MODERN DIPLOMACY

Abba Eban

Fourth Morgenthau Memorial Lecture
on
Morality & Foreign Policy

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Introduction

Over six years ago the Council on Religion and International Affairs initiated a lecture series on Ethics and Foreign Policy; Professor Hans J. Morgenthau delivered the first lecture. This was the springboard not only for the present lecture series that honors his memory but for other programs on the same subject that CRIA sponsors at colleges and universities around the country.

Professor Morgenthau was convinced, as is evidenced by his writings, that ethics is a vital concern in the formulation and implementation of American foreign policy, that it is the most likely road to international peace with justice. Foreign policy, to be sure, is based on many considerations—political, economic, strategic, cultural, and ethic and moral. It is not unusual, however, to hear it said that ethics has nothing to do with foreign policy, that nations will interpret their own interest any way it suits their purpose. Nuremberg was an important step in disabusing people of that notion in its purest form.

It is in fact self-evident that a nation which ignores its own ethics—its own hierarchy of traditional values—in pursuing its foreign policy is likely to have a policy with little credibility abroad and little support at home. There are definite moral limits that the statesman ignores at his own and his nation's peril.

An ethical foreign policy should not, however, be confused with a moralistic foreign policy, which can lead to crusades of appalling violence. That tendency was one which Professor Morgenthau saw as the most dangerous a nation could follow. It was the antithesis of what he had in mind in urging a realistic foreign policy—a policy based on a careful definition of a nation's interests, with due regard for the security requirements of other nations, and faithful to the best of its culture and traditions.

This is not an easy prescription to follow. The man whose memory we honor with this lecture series was obviously not optimistic about conducting peaceful, constructive international

relations on the basis of simple certainties. As the leading member of the "realist" school of international relations (as opposed to the frequently maligned "idealists"), he often noted the areas of decline in world politics. This was for him the character of contemporary international politics. He wrote in 1948:

> Given the nature of the power relations between the United States and the Soviet Union and given the state of mind which these two superpowers bring to bear upon their mutual reations, diplomacy has nothing with which to operate and must of necessity become obsolete. Under such moral and political conditions, it is not the sensitive, flexible, and versatile mind of the diplomat, but the rigid, relentless, and one-track mind of the military which guides the destiny of nations. The military mind knows nothing of persuasion, of compromise, and of threats of force which are meant to make the actual use of force unnecessary. He knows only of victory and defeat. . . .

If this assessment of the prospects for diplomacy were not gloomy enough, there are others even bleaker. Professor Richard Pipes, in his new book *Survival Is Not Enough—Soviet Relations and America's Future*, strikes hard at the root of the diplomatic enterprise: "The belief that the State Department is the proper instrument of foreign policy derives from the fallacious view that foreign policy is synonymous with diplomacy. . . ." Although he grants that diplomacy has its uses in such minor issues as debt rescheduling, fishing and water rights, and so on, he maintains that on the large question of the day—the ideological struggle between the USSR and the U.S.—diplomacy is worthless.

The modern diplomat conducts himself like a lawyer, Pipes says, "safe in the knowledge that crises come and crises go, but lawyers stay on" forever. The important issues are not ideological and therefore not negotiable. For that reason, the National Security Council, not the Department of State, is the natural field for the president's men to carry on the struggle. Such a struggle between political philosophies may seem to occupy a higher moral ground, but the temptation is strong to take up the crusader's banner. In any case, so much for diplomacy.

In the last chapter of Hans Morgenthau's classic *Politics Among Nations* (a new edition, edited by Professor Morgenthau's long-time friend and collaborator Kenneth W. Thompson, has just been published), he suggests how diplomacy might be revived and reinvigorated to serve the needs of our day. Abba Eban, long known for the quality of his international leadership and for his dedication to country and to peace, will address just this issue in the Fourth Annual Morgenthau Memorial Lecture.

Robert J. Myers
President, CRIA

CRIA

Interest & Conscience in Modern Diplomacy

Abba Eban

Let me begin by defining my terms. By "diplomacy" I mean the entire process whereby foreign policy is determined, formulated, and executed. I reject the validity of the traditional distinction between ministers who decide policy and ambassadors who negotiate on instructions that they receive from ministers. The professional diplomat is often a potent force in the making of policy, and his superiors are often active in the negotiation process.

The first thing to observe is that diplomats pretend to have a very low opinion of themselves. Back in 1777 we find a French writer, Le Thrôsne, describing diplomacy in these terms: "An obscure art, which hides itself in the folds of deceit, which fears to let itself be seen, and believes that it can exist only in the darkness of mystery."

If we move two centuries onward, we find a distinguished British diplomat, Sir William Hayter, remarking: "Sometimes oppressed with the futility of much of diplomatic life, the fatiguing social round, the conferences that agree on nothing, the dispatches that nobody reads, you begin to think that diplomacy is meaningless, but it seems that states will always need to organize their relationships with each other."

The diplomats are sometimes even heard wondering whether their vocation is really necessary. Thus, a distinguished Italian ambassador, leaving London at the end of his career in 1980, wrote an imaginative scenario in *The Times* of London in which electronic devices situated in empty buildings will one day beep out their communications to heads of state and prime ministers from one capital to another, without any ambassadorial intervention at all.

A similar sense of futility can be discerned in a modern example. In 1977 an American official who had served his country in many responsible posts was approached by his president with the offer of a choice of diplomatic posts in major capitals. In earlier times such a prospect would have been appreciatively accepted by anyone who wished to influence his country's destiny. But here is what this official, George W. Ball, said: "I quietly declined. I refrained from saying what I really felt, that jet planes and the bad habits of presidents, national security assistants, and secretaries of state, have now largely restricted ambassadors to ritual and public relations. I did not wish to end my days as an innkeeper for itinerant congressmen."

When diplomats are not complaining of their impotence, they are reduced to listening to reflections on the moral defects of their profession. These come from every part of the ideological spectrum. It was Stalin, after all, who once said: "To speak of honest diplomacy is like speaking of dry water."

These bleak utterances give the impression that diplomacy is not very important, or very honorable, or even very necessary. But if such lamentations were well founded, it would be very hard to understand why diplomacy continues to attract the devotion of its practitioners and the constant attention of the mass media. One can hardly open a newspaper or switch on a television or radio program without encountering a headline or an opening story concerned with a diplomatic process. The spectacle of a dignitary from one country emerging from a limousine in another country is deemed to symbolize a hope or anxiety worthy of prominent record.

So perhaps we should not take the rhetoric of self-depreciation too seriously. It may be nothing more than a defensive shield beneath which there lurks a guilty crime. After all, the avoidance of war and the development of a world community should not logically rank among the least worthy of human pursuits. If peace is a higher goal than war, then perhaps there is no reason why generals should be so complacent or diplomats so dejected.

The tendency for diplomats to depreciate their own function is not justified in terms of their achievements. One of the sources of their discontent is that they are assumed to have no moral quality.

This brings us to the patron saint of the "realistic school" in diplomatic method, Hans Morgenthau, in whose name this lecture series has been held. My three predecessors in the series left a few problems unsolved, to which I will address myself—especially the exact place of the ethical function in the conduct of international relations. There might be something paradoxical in the appearance of Hans Morgenthau in this lineage, for he brought with him from Europe a very stark sense of realism. He taught an American academic community, which was largely plunged in puritanical memories and in ethical illusions, that politics was fundamentally about power. Power is to politics what wealth is to economics; it is the central theme and purpose of the entire exercise. Those who are afraid of power, with its temptations and moral dangers, should steer clear of the diplomatic process.

He also taught us that nation-states are the only relevant actors of the international system: It is true today, as it was true then. States do not behave like individuals. The international community does not evoke the solidarities that are aroused by national societies. And statesmen and representatives speaking and acting for their countries allow themselves deviations from ethical standards such as they would never practice in their conduct or discourse as citizens of states.

Diplomacy is not famous for an exaggerated attachment to veracity. Many of us, in representing our countries, have offered versions of events that we do not necessarily believe. Our criterion is not what is true but what it is useful or convenient to say. Diplomatic morality does not condemn such conduct in the international domain, as it would in a national context.

This gap between the ethics of a society and the ethics of the international system weighs very heavily on the conscience of diplomats—it may even have a deterrent effect on young men and women who would prefer to devote their lives to an enterprise in which there is a more clear-cut sense of ethical purpose.

Hans Morgenthau constantly exhorted us not to be sentimental beyond the call of necessity.

Fundamentally, of course, he was right. The atmosphere of our individual societies is consensual, but the atmosphere of the

international community is conflictual. Citizens join together in their own nation-states, bound together by common values and a sense of common destiny. There is no similar sense of common destiny among the members of a world community of 161 nation-states. Governments make decisions in the name of interest and then justify those decisions in terms of morality. This conflict between the aspiration to morality and the necessities of diplomatic expediency has had a confusing effect on American diplomacy—and not on American diplomacy alone.

In domestic politics many of us face this same dilemma. Let me quote a famous statesman of the previous century, David Lloyd George, who was once supposed to have said: "I am a man of principle, but one of my principles is expediency." It is in the diplomatic context that this aphorism has its most poignant resonance.

American diplomacy came late on the scene, when the prevailing diplomatic tradition had already been fashioned by the concert of European powers. American thought has been vitally affected by the puritanical, moralistic, biblical rhetoric of the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. There is a constant attempt to reconcile national interest with universal morality. Europeans, scarred by their tragic experience, battered by wars and invasions which America never experienced, looked with supercilious condescension on the tendency of American statesmen and diplomats to describe their interest in moralistic terms.

This tendency goes back far beyond our own time. It was a statesman of the 1940s, Henry Stimson, who, on being asked whether he had received any intelligence from what was being said in foreign embassies, gave the memorable answer: "Gentlemen do not read each other's letters." It is not likely that a flourishing intelligence service would ever arise on the foundation of this principle.

The jurisprudence of the United States enshrines the great example of one of your presidents, McKinley, who went down on his knees and prayed for many hours for divine guidance about whether or not he should invade the Philippines. That, of course, was a moving spectacle. My own view is that McKinley would not have accepted a negative answer. His supplications

would have continued far into the night, until the divine will was worn down by attrition.

The tendency of statesmen and diplomats to invoke moral justifications for their policies has often evoked skeptical reaction. In parliamentary history there is the complaint of Disraeli about Gladstone: "I do not object to the right honorable gentleman playing cards with five aces, but I resent his assertion that the Almighty put them there."

We must now ask ourselves whether in the new diplomacy which has emerged since the Second World War there is any greater possibility of modifying devotion to interest by the restraints of morality.

What are the features of modern diplomacy which distinguish it from previous traditions?

First, there is the most momentous transformation of all: the invasion of diplomacy by the mass media. What used to be a compact and reticent exercise cut off from public knowledge is now breached in almost every sector. The media will not accept any compromise; they insist on being present, even at primary and intermediate states of negotiation. They assert that the right to know belongs to the public in every phase of the tactical negotiation process. Every tentative idea, every trial balloon, every proposal presented for the sake of evoking a response, has to be made known to the public immediately. This is a vast change, and it makes agreements very hard to achieve.

Agreements require compromise. What do we mean by compromise? Compromise means that you accept today that which you swore the day before yesterday that you would always refuse to accept. In order to achieve compromise it is necessary to make concessions. To your adversary you say that the concession you offer him is so painful that it is almost beyond endurance. In the meantime, you whisper to your domestic constituency that your concession is really quite trivial, and only your own skill and your neighbor's gullibility have given it a certain importance. The trouble is that the wind carries your words in each direction; your adversary and your constituency each hears what you intend for the other.

I doubt whether even the most successful summit meeting in history, that of my ancestor Moses on Mt. Sinai, would have been crowned with success if, after every one of the Ten Commandments, he had to come down to the anxious Israelis below and be interviewed by Walter Cronkite or Barbara Walters and were then to present his conclusions to the Knesset Committee on Foreign Affairs. I hope I do no injustice to my colleagues on that committee if I express doubt whether all of the Ten Commandments would have received a majority vote.

Today, however much professional diplomats might wish to rebel against the necessities of exposure, their protest is vain. They had better come to terms with reality; the days in which negotiation could be shrouded even in temporary silence are over. The tactical limitations imposed on the diplomats are painful and irksome, but they cannot be avoided.

We are left with the question whether the exposure of negotiation to public opinion has a positive or a negative effect. This depends very much on what you think of public opinion. The Enlightenment philosophers believed that the public was always virtuous and pure of heart, whereas leaders were open to error and corruption. Does history really vindicate that judgment? Is public opinion always right? Are the specialized insights and intuitions of statesmen always wrong?

The most astonishing comment on this comes from a man who was able to reconcile a contempt for public opinion with a reputation as a liberal. Walter Lippmann, in his book *Public Philosophy*, says that "Public opinion is always wrong, much too intransigent in war, much too yielding in peace, insufficiently informed, lacking the specialized knowledge upon which lucid judgments can be based."

We find the conflict of interest in full momentum in the dialogue between the media and the diplomats. Diplomats are entitled to feel that they celebrate a higher social ideal than journalists; the right to peace is more important than the right to know. If the right to know is carried to excess and peace is threatened, what has been gained?

A famous case history is the negotiation of the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty. An able journalist with *The New York Times*, William Beecher, discovered the American fallback po-

sitions before they had been divulged to the Soviet Union. Now, if your fallback positions are divulged, you have already fallen back to them. What would have happened if Mr. Beecher's scoop had prevented the SALT I Treaty from reaching signature? Journalism would have celebrated a professional triumph, but the danger of nuclear war might have been increased. Would the public have been consoled about the increase of the risk of nuclear war by the circumstance that the "right to know" had been vindicated, that journalism had achieved a professional success, and that the efforts of diplomats to suppress truth had been frustrated?

There is not a single successful agreement concluded in our generation which has not owed a great deal to the success of diplomats in concealing their negotiation at a certain stage. The Austrian State Treaty was protected by the fact that it was so technical that few people took an interest in it. The opening of the United States to China, one of the most dramatic processes of conciliation in our generation, would not have been conceivable if those who negotiated on the American side had not resorted to subterfuge and deceit. Kissinger made his first visits to Pakistan and Peking while pretending that he was at Camp David. The series of conspiratorial mendacities with which that process was surrounded was an indispensable element in the diplomatic success. The result was a fundamental and favorable change in the international balance. Suppose the conspiracy had been revealed in advance? Would anything substantive have been gained by the victory of "the right to know"?

In the Cuban missile crisis, we are told that President Kennedy dispatched a distinguished emissary, former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, in disguise (although those who know him wonder how Acheson could ever be disguised) to Paris, in order to elicit the solidarity of the governments of Western Europe, and especially of France. If the disguise had been pierced and if the effort to secure European support of the United States had failed, it would have been a great victory for the media; but would the hopes of countless millions have been enhanced by the possibility that the Cuban missile crisis, poised on the brink of peril,

might have exploded into irreversible disaster? If the USSR believed that the United States was not supported by its allies, its intransigence would have been intensified.

The conflict between diplomacy and journalism will continue. It is intrinsic to the nature and vision of the two professions. I must simply urge you not always to be on the side of the media and in opposition to the negotiators. The desire to isolate certain moments of tranquil remoteness from the media is not always ignoble. It is inspired by an honorable concern for their vocation.

In the Middle East, the most sensational breakthrough toward a conciliation and away from bellicosity is the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty concluded at Camp David and signed in March of 1979. Here secrecy was ensured by an exercise of presidential authority, under which journalists and television reporters were not allowed near the negotiation at all. They waited expectantly at the foot of the mountain until such time as revelation would take place. It is not always possible to safeguard negotiation from the penetrating eyes of the media.

On the other hand, there are occasions when concealment has worked against the public interest. Would it not have been better for the world if the Bay of Pigs adventure had been exposed, and therefore prevented? Would it not have been better if newspapers had been more alert to the disastrous expansion of the Southeast Asian war into Cambodia?

So we end with no uniform guiding principle. We can only make a meticulous study of each particular incident and not exclude the idea that a temporary secrecy for the negotiating process can sometimes serve a higher social interest than "the right to know."

"Open covenants openly arrived at"—the words of the late President Wilson. But, having said that, he convened a peace conference which was more secret and conspiratorial than any peace conference in previous history. He was able somehow to reconcile this with his professions of open diplomacy. President Wilson and his conscience lived so intimately with each other that any temporary discord between them could easily be arranged.

The necessity, therefore, for diplomats to take courses which are not consonant with a strict and rigid ethical purpose should

be acknowledged. If the aim is peace, it consecrates many compromises, even at the expense of freedom of information.

This applies particularly to our nuclear age. Nuclear weapons confront both scholars and practitioners of statecraft with a new intellectual dilemma. All experience of nonnuclear diplomacy has ceased to have any relevance. The nuclear age is not simply a new epoch; it is an interruption in the flow of history. It presents us with problems which are totally recalcitrant to comparative research and analogy. For here, the purpose of the nuclear weapons is not victory but deterrence. For the first time in history, weapons are created for the exact purpose of not being used.

The effort to invoke an ethical argument on one side of the nuclear discussion seems to me to be seriously flawed. I refer to the peace marchers who call upon Western countries for unilateral renunciation without any corresponding Soviet concession. The hard truth is that we have been kept away from nuclear war for more than thirty-seven years by the principles of balance and deterrence. There is a great deal of propaganda in favor of nuclear-free zones; but Hiroshima and Nagasaki were nuclear-free zones. The only country that has ever been attacked by nuclear weapons is a country that did not have any nuclear weapons of its own. Indeed, it was attacked by nuclear weapons largely *because* it did not have any of its own. Does anybody believe that there would have been a nuclear attack on Japan if Japan had possessed nuclear weapons? Unilateralism cannot draw any consolation from precedent or example.

The idea of peace through unilateral nuclear disarmament runs so sharply against international experience that we ought to question, not the moral fervor of the unilateralists but their capacity to learn something from history and human nature.

The Second World War, which is the greatest human tragedy in human history—and which comprises the particular tragedy of my own people—was not caused by an arms race; it was caused by unilateral disarmament. The democracies primly refused to join the race. The democratic side did all the disarming,

while the enemies of freedom acquired a virtual monopoly of power.

It can be proved empirically that every eruption of violence in recent history has resulted from the impression of one of the parties that it had a predominance that would give it victory. In other words, by a condition of imbalance. This was certainly the view of the North Koreans when they invaded South Korea. It was the view of the Arab states when they invaded Israel in 1948; all they had to do was to count up their weaponry, their tanks, their guns, and their planes against that of their projected victim to reach the conclusion that victory was a good prospect. India attacked Pakistan because it believed, justifiably, that it had a military preponderance. Turkey took over most of Cyprus because it had reason to believe that its arms were superior in quality and number to those of Greece. Wars have been caused not by arms but an imbalance of arms, in which deterrence has been eroded.

Therefore, while I look with organic sympathy on the motives of the peace marchers, I ask myself this: Why is the prevention of war by deterrence and balance less "moral" than the invitation of war by imbalance and by unilateral weakness? Has not the ethical function here been distorted? In nuclear war, are not the means and the end the same? The avoidance of war by whatever method is the supreme ethical dictate. The world has learned how to coexist with nuclear weapons only in an atmosphere of balance and of deterrence.

Therefore, Hans Morgenthau's plea that we should have some sense of reason and proportion, that we should understand that politics and diplomacy are enacted within the limits of human nature, resound backward and forward across the ages with a compelling force.

The second defect of modern diplomacy, in addition to openness and publicity, is summitry: the tendency to enact agreements on the highest level of political responsibility, sidetracking and sometimes humiliating the specialists and the ambassadors. The tendency of statesmen to negotiate at the highest level,

confident that foreign policy is a matter of amateur intuition and that wisdom is inherent in political rank, has caused great anguish in the diplomatic profession.

The days are long past when ambassadors could call themselves "extraordinary" and "plenipotentiary" without evoking a wry mockery.

It was not always so. In the days before the jet plane, the telex, and electronic devices, ambassadors did have a sense of autonomous judgment and action. They were less exposed than today to the pressures or the orders of their superiors.

In one of the national archives of the United States you will find a document worthy of attention. It is a message by President Thomas Jefferson to his secretary of state; it reads as follows: "We have not heard from our Ambassador in Spain for three years. If we do not hear from him this year, let us write him a letter." This sublime utterance reflects the manners and atmosphere of an age in which diplomats would go about their business relatively oblivious of what their superiors wanted. Their own judgment would often prevail.

An American diplomatic precedent of the same period leads us to the conclusion that things are very different today. A group of ambassadors, including Livingston and Monroe, were sent southward to negotiate the purchase of Louisiana. When they arrived on the scene, they found it possible for the sum of $2 million to purchase not only Louisiana but something like a third of the expanse of the continental United States. They took the plunge and carried out the purchase. Today, they would have had to put a telephone call through to their department, which would sternly reprimand them for violating their instructions and caution them not to indulge in extrabudgetary fantasies.

There is also the example of a British diplomat in Istanbul, Stratford Canning, who was asked to "guarantee" Turkey against possible attack by Russia or Austria-Hungary. He was a man of some indolence. He knew it would take about three weeks to receive instructions from his capital. He said: "All right, I agree." He thus guaranteed Turkey against war by Russia or Austria-Hungary without asking his government. Now, since, in the event, Austria-Hungary and Russia did not wage war upon Tur-

fore, sigh as ambassadors might for the precedents set by Jefferson, Livingston, Monroe, and Stratford Canning, they are not going to recur.

Does this mean that we must accept the decline of embassies with docility? No, the international system will suffer through failure to exploit the services of specialized people whose permanent location on the scene gives them a greater insight into subterranean rumblings which do not communicate themselves easily to the itinerant visitor and which can only be discerned by diplomats in the field. Two examples from two epochs:

In the early part of 1938, a French ambassador in Moscow called Coulondré predicted that the Soviet Union would reach an agreement with Nazi Germany. This was regarded as idiotic in view of the violent polemic between fascism and communism. The Quai d'Orsay dispatched him promptly to a Latin American capital.

In the last stages of the shah's regime, the American and the British ambassadors in Teheran were warning that the regime was not stable and that the repressive measures of the shah were encountering resistance. They did not predict his downfall, but they reported ominous weather. Both Sullivan in the American embassy and Parsons in the British embassy must have been astounded when President Carter, arriving with a vast retinue in Teheran, made an obsequious speech praising the shah as "an oasis of freedom. . .beloved by his people." In the then current mythology the regime of the shah was deemed to be the linchpin of the Western system of defense. The embassy reports were ignored, and the results are known. It was to the great credit

of the ambassadors that they understood what was happening: The general tendency of ambassadors is to be accredited to incumbent regimes, to show excessive deference to existing stabilities, and to ignore anything which might shake them.

But again, I must raise my hands in docility: Whatever we think of summitry, no country will go back to the practice of letting specialists on the spot, with a tradition of humility and anonymity, carry out their work immune from the visitation of presidents, prime ministers, and foreign ministers. The more efficient the communications system becomes, the more will the freedom of ambassadors become inhibited.

May I quote my own experience? In the nine years between 1950 and 1959, my prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, visited Washington once. A decade later one of his successors, Menachem Begin, visited Washington six times in a single year. The difference did not only lie in the temperament of the heads of government concerned. It also lay in the fact that what was once a tedious and wearying ordeal suddenly became possible and feasible even for the harrassed gentlemen who run governments. And what became possible became the practice.

It must surely be possible to reestablish the credit and the prestige of the ambassadorial system without daring to hope that it will ever achieve its former independence.

I remember attending the funeral of the late German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in 1967 and encountering a diplomat in Bonn with whom I had very close acquaintance at the U.N. He was now the ambassador of France in the Federal Republic of Germany. I said: "It's a very important job you have here—ambassador of France in the Federal Republic of Germany." He said: "What do you mean, an important job? I spend all my time studying airline timetables; whenever a question arises between the French foreign minister and the German foreign minister, the German minister calls up his colleague in Paris, the telephone begins to rattle, there is a long exchange of remarks, such as, '*Ne quittez pas*,' and eventually they give up the exercise and say, 'I'll get on a plane and I'll be over in half an hour.' " He said: "Now, if I was in Bangkok or in Tokyo, my work would have some significance."

We have noted two changes. First is the collapse of reticence,

under the misapprehension that reticence and conspiracy are the same thing. That is certainly the atmosphere since Watergate and since Vietnam: The current ethic is that whatever is honest ought to be capable of immediate exposure. If there is a desire to prevent exposure, something very illicit must be underway. The second change is the collapse of the specialized structure upon which diplomacy has built so many of its achievements.

The third change, of course, is what we call multilateralism, the idea that agreements are not to be reached by nation-states compactly, individually, but in vast international concourses. To assemble 161 states with divergent interests is deemed to be the most intelligent way to solve an international problem. Conference diplomacy also has pretensions of greater morality. The trouble is that no international problem has ever been solved by public speeches. Hans Morgenthau pointed out that, if anybody wanted to transact the sale of a house in such a way, he would be regarded as totally lacking in logic. The myth of multilateralism prevailed for the first two decades after the Second World War and is only now falling into decline.

This is what Morgenthau wrote:

> It is for these reasons that in the free market no seller will carry on public negotiations with a buyer, no landlord with a tenant, no institution of higher learning with its staff. No candidate for public office will negotiate in public with his backer, no public official with his colleagues, no politician with his fellow politicians, in this way. How, then, are we to expect that nations are willing to do what no private individual would ever think of doing?

The relative failure of international organization is one of the greatest sources of dejection in this generation. The disappointment arises from the illusion that international organization is not merely an instrument but an idea; it is regarded as a movement designed for the condemnation and replacement of conventional diplomacy, with its emphasis on balance of power and spheres of influence.

If international organization had been realistically conceived

as an addition to the existing repertoire of diplomatic methods, it would not have led to disillusion. But it was claimed by its protagonists to be an effective and ethically superior form of diplomatic discourse, worthy to replace balance of power, spheres of influence, and alliances.

One of your statesmen, Cordell Hull, said: "No balance of power, no spheres of influence, no alliances, none of the traditional forms of diplomacy will be necessary now that there is an international organization." This is a sure competitor in any contest for the title of the most absurd utterance ever made since the invention of language; yet this was the atmosphere of the middle and late 1940s.

There was, it is true, a period of grace, in which international organization seemed to be fulfilling its purpose. Some conflicts were brought under control. Both major nuclear powers seemed to agree that the U.N. would be the central arena in which to carry on their discourse and to resolve their conflicts. Foreign ministers used to spend three-and-a-half weeks at the United Nations listening to each other's speeches and transacting business behind the scenes. Indeed, activity behind the scenes was said then to be the main source of benefit from the exercise. For Dag Hammarskjöld the only reason for having scenes was to do something behind them.

Today, it is quite possible to arrive in New York in mid-October and not know whether there is a session of the General Assembly or not. What seemed to be central for five years in international life has now become marginal.

During the years of centrality, there were substantial achievements. There was a successful attempt to end the Soviet occupation of Iran. There was the solution of the Indonesian problem. There was the United Nations decision on the partition of Palestine; whatever emotion this action evokes on one side or the other, it must be regarded as an act of daring innovation. There was the acceptance of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights; it is very easy to be cynical about this, but the codification of a model toward which states and peoples should move represented an ideological victory for this generation. It was a signal that respect for sovereignty ended at the point at which brutality offends the universal conscience.

Following the Korean War of 1950, the international structure became fragmented and the U.N. arena lost its centrality. The United States and the West seek their security not in the United Nations but in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The Soviet Union seeks its security not in the United Nations but in the Warsaw Pact. Europe seeks its security and its prosperity not in the United Nations but in the European Community. Africa seeks its security and solidarity in the Organization of African Unity. American conflicts, insofar as they have been resolved, have been resolved within the Pan-American system and the Organization of American States. National interest has proved to be a more potent force than the idea of international organization.

A sense of desolation now hovers over what was once a utopian scene. Perhaps the original hopes deserved to be disappointed because they were initially excessive. The world needs a unitary framework of international relations; abolition is not a viable option. But to believe that in one fell swoop nations would progress from a sense of national pride to a sense of international identity was in total contradiction to the evolutionary process that dominates the progress of communities.

Social history tells of the gradual expansion of the sense of community, from family to tribe, from tribe to village, from village to city, from city to province, from province to nation-state. Each of these transitions was difficult. The idea that men would give their allegiance to the larger unit was often derided. No less lucid and perceptive an observer than De Tocqueville, visiting your shores in the eighteenth century, deduced that the federal government in Washington had no meaning: The real loyalties were to Virginia, to Maryland, and to the other states. I have not recently heard any American complain of a lack of centralized authority in the federal capital.

The sense of community, having expanded from tribe to village to province to nation-state, has somehow got stuck. The idea of expanding loyalties from the nation-state to the universal community seems to have eluded us. Why has this happened? This is the central theme that ought to be investigated both by scholars and practitioners of international systems. Why has the expansion of a sense of community become bogged down at

the national level at a time when, in theory, the nation-state has ceased to be a viable unit of security or of economics? But it is still the only unit which attracts the fervor and the sense of identification of peoples across the world. International law and international community evoke no solidarities of similar potency.

The task of practitioners and of theorists in international relations still lies before them. That, of course, leads us to a matter which often preoccupied Hans Morgenthau: the necessity for the theoreticians and the practitioners to come into closer collaboration.

There is more cooperation between the theorists and the practitioners today than in previous ages. The academic and intellectual professions are more highly regarded than in previous eras. I can testify that, even for a working politician, a discreet measure of literacy is no longer an insuperable handicap; it can, with time and patience, be overcome.

But, in stating that research workers and theoreticians and universities do have a role in the promotion of international peace, I have a very formidable adversary in the greatest of all Arab writers, the fourteenth-century historian Ibn Khaldun. Let us recall what he says in his great "Introduction" to his "History":

> Scholars of all people are those least familiar with the ways of politics. The reason is that scholars are used to mental speculation and researching study of ideas. They tend to compare things with others that are similar to or like them, with the help of analogical reasoning. But conditions existing in civilization and society should not be compared with each other. The intelligent and alert segment of civilized people falls into the same category as scholars: they keep looking for analogies and comparisions. The average person of healthy disposition and mediocre intelligence judges every situation by its particular circumstance.

His judgment, therefore, was that the person of mediocre intelligence is the right person for political leadership. Now, if Ibn Khaldun considered mediocre intelligence to be the best qualification for statecraft, it is a great pity that he's not alive today to draw consolation from the specter of the contemporary international scene.

You would not expect me to endorse this verdict about academic theorists. Governments and foreign ministries do use the services of academic experts. Yet few faculties of international relations understand the need to have a working ambassador in their midst. Ideal and fanciful notions about how the diplomatic process works re-echo across many campuses on the basis of theoretical models, without ever being subjected to comparison with that which is illogical but real.

I have never met a professor of surgery who never performed an operation, but I keep meeting professors of international relations who have never negotiated an agreement or argued a case in an international tribunal. (I last said that at Harvard three years ago, and I haven't been invited back there since.)

A more cooperative relationship between the university campus and the foreign ministry, or other places where government is concentrated, should certainly be the aim of such organizations as CRIA. After all, CRIA is descended from Andrew Carnegie who, in authorizing his first donation, said to the members of the foundation: "You have three years: First of all, solve the problems of war, peace, and conflict resolution. When you solve that, move on to something else."

I would not like to conclude a general discussion without a reference to my own country—not only for the sake of natural egotism, but because our region has been the great laboratory in which the diplomatic processes of this generation have been enacted.

There is not a single method or system of approach that has not been tried in this political laboratory. We are like a patient on whom every single medicine and injection known to the human race has been tried at one time or the other: mediation and conciliation, international judgments, multilateral discussion, four-power discussions, three-power discussion, two-power discussions, one-power mediations, armistices, cease-fires, proximity talks, disengagement. Everything has been tried.

The question is whether anything has come of all of this. Although it is very easy to show impatience, my general conclusion is that diplomacy in the Middle East has not been a story

of failure. An attritional process has eroded hostility, and realism has taken root.

After all, what was the central illusion at the heart of the Middle Eastern conflict? It was that Israel's emergence as a sovereign nation was either illegitimate or fragile or temporary. This idea is not entertained seriously by anybody today. By the passage of time, by attritional obduracy—which also has its place in conciliation—and also by the maintenance of a balance of power in favor of Israel's sovereignty, the conflict has lost some of its intensity.

When the major Arab country—Egypt—reconciled itself to that which it had vigorously opposed, it illustrated the paradox of diplomacy: You must work both by resistance and by persuasion; one without the other isn't sufficient.

I asked President Sadat in my last talk with him why he had taken the revolutionary course of making peace with Israel. He said: "Quite simply, because you had exhausted all other alternatives. I needed my territories back. I would have liked to get them back without the peace treaty with Israel, involving my ruptured relations with the rest of the neighboring world, but I had tried everything. I tried war, I tried three-power pressures, I tried international pressures, I tried U.N. condemnation, I tried European proclamations. Nothing worked. It then appeared that the only way to get my territories back was to make peace. Once I was convinced by elimination that this was the only way, I took that course."

Now, this does show us that persuasion itself, without a measure of obduracy, does not usually have an effect on changing established attitudes. The hard fact is, as the realist school acknowledged, that peace is much more often assured by fear than by hope. The atomic dread has induced such international equilibrium as we enjoy. And peace has usually dawned only when belligerence has failed to have its effect. I, therefore, give you the lesson of my own experience: that men and nations do behave wisely once they have exhausted all the other alternatives.

What does this mean for the Middle East today? The first thing it means is that there should be a greater preoccupation with regional conflicts. I am astonished by the paradox

in which international discourse today is entirely monopolized by the arms control issue. Arms control is the central theme in the American-Soviet dialogue. It is the issue which dominates in electoral campaigns. It is the problem in contention between Europe and the United States. It is an issue of controversy within the Western Alliance system itself. The assumption is that, if only there were an arms control agreement, a sense of salvation would dominate the international scene.

In the monopolistic concentration of arms control there is no serious attempt to deal with regional conflicts, which in my view are at the heart of all other problems. Men do not fight because they have arms. They have arms because they are afraid they might have to fight.

In the discussion of whether an arms race is the consequence of tensions or whether tensions are the consequence of the arms race, I must give my own verdict for the former: The accumulation of arms is a consequence and a symptom, it is a primary cause. Sometimes the abandonment of a vigilant armament leads to war, as it did in 1939.

If any one of the diverse proposals now on the agenda of arms control were accepted—those of the United States, or those of the Soviet Union, or those of well-meaning mediators—the result would be that, instead of each of the nuclear powers being able to destroy the planet 500 times over, they would be able to destroy the planet 450 times over. There is not a single proposal on any table which envisages abolition or even substantial reduction. Suppose, by a miracle, it was possible that the 50,000 nuclear missiles of the world became 40,000. Whoever negotiated this would get all the Nobel Prizes in the world. But I ask you whether anything would have substantively changed.

What ought to be changed are the competitions in different regions that have led to the invasion of Afghanistan, to the conquest of Poland, to the continuing reluctance of some Middle Eastern states to acknowledge the international law determining Israel's inviolability, to regional disputes, to the East-West tension, to the growing disunity of what was once the most promising example of integration, the European Community. It is astonishing how little attention modern diplomacy devotes to these themes and how much to the issue of whether the 50,000

missiles should become 40,000, of which there is little prospect. The intellectual resources at work in the international arena seem to me to be wrongly distributed.

Of these current regional disputes, one of the most dramatic is the Israeli-Arab dispute.

The period since the end of 1974 has been marked by two epochs: an era of activism from 1974 to 1979, during which five agreements were concluded between Israel and an Arab state, including disengagement agreements, interim agreements, Camp David agreements, and a peace treaty. This was a triumphant era for diplomacy, and not least for the United States, which mediated each of these agreements. This was followed by an epoch of inactivity for the five years since the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.

Some people wonder whether we shouldn't leave the present condition alone. My feeling is that if leaving it alone meant that things would stay where they are, we ought not to reconcile ourselves to that condition.

The Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty may now have a weakened resonance, but I would resent the implication that it is an empty treaty. The oil flows, the flags fly at embassies, the planes land, the boundary is open to anyone who wants to cross it from either side. Above all, the prospect of war has been totally eliminated, not only by the treaty text but by the military balances that have been achieved on the ground.

Will it remain like this if there is no progress in other fields? It seems to me that any bad situation is capable of becoming worse. Prolonged deadlock is more likely to explode in war than to merge into peace.

The illusions that deadlock might lead to stability prevailed before the 1967 war. I have reread the international journals and newspapers of that time. At the end of May, 1967, the world press was writing: "Never has there been such a prospect of stability in the Middle East as now. Nasser, the leader of Egypt, is bogged down in Yemen. There are no two Arab states which are on speaking terms with each other." Three weeks later the Egyptian leader had taken measures which he knew must inevitably lead to war.

The scene shifts to 1973. The newspapers in Israel on the

Jewish New Year in September wrote: "Never has the New Year begun with such a promise of long-term stability, buttressed by balance of power and by internal divisions in the Middle Eastern nations. The prospect of war can be ruled out." In 1973, Yom Kippur came ten days after the New Year, which has happened for a very long time. Within those ten days we suffered a vast shock.

There should not be a philosophy of quiescence today, just as there should not be a reckless rush into uninvited mediation. We should first utilize the fact that there is a general consensus in Israel for disengagement in the Lebanese war. Moreover, Egypt and Israel, both having close relations with the United States, might be able, through good offices, to improve their relationship and infuse it with greater warmth.

If peace between Egypt and Israel lacks its former rhapsodical quality, if Israelis do not believe that peace is something worth cherishing, why should they be expected to sacrifice tangible interests for a dubious advantage? If the Egyptian leader allows himself to deflate the value of peace, he establishes obstacles on the road to future compromises. In such circumstance, peace will not have the kind of leverage that invites concessions.

I would, therefore, urge potential mediators to take an active role—without coercion or self-assertion—in the Middle East. My advice to them is: Mediate only if you are invited, stay only as long as you are wanted, and do not believe that your power gives you a great coercive force. The United States, as a free country, must surely have learned in this and in other disputes that its carrots are not very enticing and its sticks are not very painful. There is no real alternative to quiet and friendly use of good offices.

The availability of the United States to mediate in the Middle East is of compelling international interest because, whether you like it or not, there is nobody else to take your place. The Soviet Union has ruled itself out by its flagrant bias and its refusal to maintain relations with one of the parties. It has ignored the classic precept of diplomacy, which urged "a policy of presence": If you want to have an influence anywhere, you must be present

everywhere. I remember saying this to the last Soviet ambassador in Israel, when he came to announce the break of our relations. This he did with a very fulminatory discourse, stating that because there was a sharp conflict between us, he had to break relations. Not knowing exactly how to behave when a nuclear power breaks relations, I could only rely on empirical intuition. I said: "Your Excellency, if our conflicts are so deep, we ought to *increase* our diplomatic relations, have *more* people at work, put more officers in your embassy and in ours, meet more frequently. We really need diplomacy when there is conflict. Where there is harmony, it's just a question of cocktail parties." I shall never forget his reply. He said: "What you are saying is very logical, but I haven't come here to be logical, I have come here to break relations."

Since that event, the Soviet Union has virtually excluded itself from a mediatory role and given the United States a diplomatic monopoly. Europe is not available because it is more economically vulnerable to one side than to the other and, therefore, unable to reach balanced judgments. The United Nations voting system is at the mercy of the Arab and Soviet blocs. That leaves only the United States in the field. If America is not available, there will be no mediator at all.

We end as we began, with the problem of ethics. It all comes down to a conflict between conscience and interest. But if we look deeply enough, we might find that this is more a semantic than a real distinction.

Let us look at the term "interest." There is no single static model of a nation's interest. There is usually more than one way for a nation to define its interests. Its conscience tells it which model it should prefer.

In the Middle East, for example, it is theoretically possible to formulate a picture of American interests which is based on a total disregard of Israel. Anybody in a classroom could draw up such a balance sheet. It is also possible to make a model of American interests in which Israel's sovereignty and security are a central pillar. Which of those two models you prefer is a matter in which conscience can be the guide of your interest.

We need not assume the tension between conscience and interest to be permanent. And we can end with a positive verdict about the record and potentiality of diplomacy. Diplomats would be well advised to inhabit a middle emotional ground between excessive skepticism and exaggerated hope.

Once we come to terms with the fact that international politics are different from any other kind of politics, we shall be in the shelter of realism. The central fact about international politics is that power is not controlled, since there is no authority capable of controlling it. If there is an evolution, however slow, in the direction of world community, it will probably owe a great deal to the presence of thousands of trained people in every part of the globe whose calling as diplomats requires them to look over their own fence in an effort to understand how other people's minds and consciences work.

In a world of more than 160 nation-states, the number of potential armed conflicts is far greater than the number of those that have actually broken out. Diplomacy must be judged by what it prevents, and not only by what it achieves. Much of it is a holding action designed to avoid explosion until the unifying forces of history take us all into their embrace.

Exchange With Ambassador Eban

QUESTION: What are your thoughts on terrorism and its impact on diplomacy in general, and how do you assess terrorism as an impediment to peace efforts in the Middle East?

AMBASSADOR EBAN: One of the consequences should be to induce a greater respect for the diplomatic profession. So often charged with leading a sheltered existence, immune from all the perils and vicissitudes of life, they are now in the very front line. The diplomats of at least nineteen countries have lost their lives, and another fifteen have suffered maiming or injury in pursuit of their calling. Therefore, it does not become anybody now to utter the usual sneers about "striped pants and cocktails." It is a very hazardous occupation. The representation of governments in this anarchic world has now become a profession that requires courage and risk.

Terrorism can be attacked on two levels: prevention and solution.

Prevention is a question of vigilance. Normally, after every successful terrorist attack, it is possible to note and to diagnose a lack of vigilance. Free countries, by their nature, by their lack of suspicion, by their tendency to attribute their own demeanor of tranquillity to others, are not always the best guardians of the peace against terrorism.

As foreign minister, I made a visit to a totalitarian country—a Communist country—surrounded by many guards, whom I had brought from Israel. My hosts laughed and said: "What did you bring them here for? In this country nothing happens that the government doesn't want to happen." All I could say was that I didn't quite know what the government wanted to happen.

But the freer the country, the greater the likelihood of terrorist acts. For example, on the Middle Eastern scene, if Syria does not want terrorism to happen, it will not happen. Where the Lebanese Government is concerned, on the other hand, it is

quite irrelevant whether it wants terrorism or not; there is no connection between the intention and the consequence. It is in the European countries in which there is free entry for students and very little surveillance that many of the great terrorist successes have been carried out—in the Federal Republic of Germany, in Scandinavian countries, in the United Kingdom, and in others.

The solution of the problem of terrorism does not exist except within a political framework. In other words, you can restrain, you can discipline, you can evade by your military superiority, but, as has recently been shown, you do not solve, because it is the curse of terrorism that it transcends and evades military superiority. For example, what is the use of nuclear power, or missiles and tanks and sophisticated aircraft, against two people in a jungle with a few mortars?

Take Israel. Nobody could doubt its superiority in every one of the components whereby military strength is measured. But a few purveyors of violence connected with a terrorist organization of one kind or the other can neutralize a sophisticated superiority of armaments and inflict damage which cannot be corrected by F-16s and by submarines and missiles.

Therefore, vigilance. The *solution* is really dependent in the long run on political agreements. But even with political agreements there will be a measure of terrorism. The main defense is prevention. I think some countries have already shown that, while terrorism cannot be abolished, by vigilant measures of prevention and by alertness terrorism can be prevented from taking on those proportions in which it has major political influence.

QUESTION: Would you care, as an outsider, a non-American, to comment on the diplomatic and other policies that the United States Government has taken in Central America?

AMBASSADOR EBAN: I'm invited to deprive myself of that discretion which is the better part of valor. Nevertheless, I must tell you that there is an international interest in what you do in Latin America, and I would like to enunciate it from an individual point of view.

You have to decide what your interests are, in which measure you will assert them, and to what limit you will defend them. It's quite possible for critics to find fault with this or that method of defending your interests. But it seems to me that any country which has an interest in alliance with the United States should have an interest in the U.S. presenting a spectacle of clarity, lucidity, and sometimes assertiveness. Many of us would say: "If the United States will not defend its interests at its own backyard, why should we believe its assertions that it will help us defend our interests thousands of miles away?"

Therefore, I do not fully understand the contentiousness of some of your, and our, European allies who state to the United States: "If it comes to the defense of Europe, please be assertive, please be very clear, and please maintain your presence. Don't stand for any nonsense. But when it comes to defending your interests in your own backyard, don't be so assertive and don't be so obdurate."

That, I'm afraid, is the tendency of international discourse. One's sense of vulnerability is dictated by geography. I remember one of your presidents saying to me in the early 1960s: "I'm less worried than you are, Mr. Ambassador, about Soviet missiles in Egypt." I said: "I'm less worried than you are, Mr. President, about Soviet missiles in Cuba." Everything depends on the proximity of danger; everything depends on perspective.

But without judging whether this or that method is or is not valid, I would say that all countries which depend to some extent upon the deterrent and intimidatory power of the United States would not welcome any spectacle of weakness anywhere, least of all in those areas where you have a right under the doctrine of spheres of influence.

Now, nobody complains if the Soviet Union says that it has a special influence in Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and that it is not going to allow forces hostile to the Soviet Union to triumph there. You all say, "Well, that's part of the realistic international scene."

Why not demand reciprocity? If a sphere of influence doctrine is valid for one nuclear power, why should it not be valid for the other, especially when on the Western side it is not expansionism that is at work?

Therefore—again, without a detailed knowledge, which is sometimes a great handicap—I must say that we, and most free democracies, have an interest in the United States being very vigilant and sometimes assertive in trying to influence its immediate environment in favor of stability and against subversion.

QUESTION: In view of your negative comments on international organizations, and especially in view of the fact that Israel has been vilified over the last several decades, why do you think Israel should continue its membership in the United Nations?

AMBASSADOR EBAN: What I said about the United Nations is that claims of its being a panacea for the world's ills were exaggerated and that the organization has fallen victim to unnecessary disillusion. But let there be no misunderstanding. One of its virtues, or qualities, is that it does define the international system. It does by membership award the identity of a nation, and membership in the United Nations is still the only valid and widely accepted credential for nationhood. Therefore, for a country to surrender those credentials—especially for us, the only country that has fought for them—because we hear some harsh words, I think would be folly.

I would even recommend to a great power such as the United States not to carry its rancor sometimes to the point of wanting to leave. It is possible to hear unpleasant things about oneself without tearing up one's own identity card. That is what I recommend for us and for others.

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