

Mr. David Ignatius, foreign editor  
The Washington Post  
1150 15 St., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20071

10/27/91

Dear Mr. Ignatius,

Along with Graham Fuller's Outlook article that is more seriously flawed than I indicate in the enclosed letter to the editor today's Post carries a puff piece on Secretary Baker by David Hoffman.

It says, among other departures from fact and reality, that "Baker has not laid out a grand strategy for resolving the region's conflicts."

One-sided as the Post's stories of recent months have been they nonetheless make it clear that this is not the truth.

Moreover, President Bush has repeatedly stated that the peace conference must begin with unilateral concessions that normally are what are the issues the resolution of which is the purpose of such conferences.

With all of those, particularly in the Congress, who get what they know from the Post and thus have their opinions and decisions formed by the Post, this can have disastrous consequences.

If in the end the conference fails, as seems likely and as from what the Post alone has reported the administration has virtually assured, the Post and the administration have in effect combined to blame the state of Israel for it in advance.

It cannot hope to survive what Bush, our newest <sup>em</sup>gendarme of the world, has ordained.

In all the Post's reporting I do not recall a single story that in any realistic way addresses what is required for meaningful peace or those who have a record of seeing to it that there is no peace for Israel.

And in all of these recent articles, has the Post ever once mentioned the existing and unchanged language of the PLO's charter, calling for the end of the state of Israel?

Too often, I regret, what the Post has published is closer to propaganda than to traditional American journalism. The consequences can be terrible.

Sincerely,

  
Harold Weisberg

Letters to the editor  
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10/27/91

Pollyanna Graham Fuller's Outlook (10/27/91) article hopefully titled "Is Shamir Irrelevant?" presents an unjustifiably optimistic expectation of the Madrid Middle-East "peace" conference in which he has not a single word to say about how Israel can hope for peace and security from it.

He also says what is glaringly untrue: "The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) formally reconciled itself to Israel's existence several years ago." *It did not!*

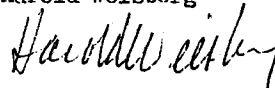
In fact, confronted with this decision, The PLO's national council refused to do precisely what Fuller says it did do.

Later, when Arafat was pressed on this, he characteristically gumbled out of all sides of his mouth and also refused to recognize the right of the state of Israel to exist. He made no reference at all to the state of Israel, although the Fuller-minded in the administration pretended that he did, thus fixing the fiction in the media and public mind.

*in the Post*  
I challenge Fuller to provide the precise language of the alleged recognition of the right of the state of Israel to exist and *for* Arafat's.

Fuller, former vice-chairman of the CIA's National Intelligence Council, exemplifies the CIA's history of supporting national policy instead of providing accurate and impartial intelligence that was so troubling in the Gates hearing.

Harold Weisberg





# Is Shamir Irrelevant?

*Both Sides Know That Land for Peace Is Inevitable*

By Graham F. Fuller

**A**MID THE drama of the unprecedented Arab-Israeli peace conference that opens this week in Madrid, one question stands out above all others: What is Israel doing there? Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and his Likud have said categorically that not one square inch of Eretz Israel is negotiable. Shamir even took away the leadership of the delegation from his more liberal Foreign Minister David Levy and will go there himself to ensure that nothing gets given away.

So why go to the conference at all? Surely there is no doubt in anyone's mind that the conference has one overarching theme: trading land for peace. Surely the ideologists in the Likud must recognize that Israel's mere presence at the conference

*Graham Fuller is former vice-chairman of the National Intelligence Council at CIA and author of "The Democracy Trap: Pitfalls of the Post-Cold War World," to be published by Dutton in January.*

suggests that some kind of compromise on land for peace is thinkable. If they were serious about holding onto the Occupied Territories, they should not have embarked even on step one of this process with Secretary of State James A. Baker III. They should have told him on his very first visit: "Mr. Secretary, thank you very much, but we seek no conference; we are comfortable with the status quo—one that is basically under our control."

But let's be blunter. The reality is that over the longer term, Shamir's Likud is now irrelevant to the peace process. An inexorable process towards settlement is now underway that will make Shamir's position untenable. Only if he is prepared to compromise his essential principles and relinquish most of the territories will he have a role in the process. Otherwise, if he clings to the territories as the heart of his vision of the future Israel, he is doomed to be swept aside—by an Israeli public that finds scant comfort for the future in the dry stones and bitter passions of the West Bank and Gaza. For in the end, Likud policy would not seem

See MIDEAST, C6, Col. 1

# Politesse

**E**VEN THE carnage in the Caucus Room over Columbus Day weekend, it is hard to imagine that a Senate hearing could be a civilized occasion. Yet this was the case with the inquiry into big, bad BCCI by the Senate subcommittee on terrorism, narcotics and international operations, chaired by Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.).

In any contest for the politest man in the Senate, Kerry would be a pretty overwhelming contender. Although he is a former prosecutor, his manners are a tribute to his parents and his teachers. He does not browbeat or bully witnesses. He is mindful of others. When he noticed that Clark Clifford's wife, sitting in the front row while her husband was testifying, was uncomfortable on a wooden seat, Kerry directed that a leather armchair be brought for her.

"I am much obliged," commented Clark Clifford in one of the few spontaneous things he said during a long morning of programmed replies.

Maybe the fact that BCCI is truly a bipartisan problem helps with the civility. Big-name Democrats—notably Clifford, for 40 years a

See MCGORRY, C6, Col. 3

*Mary McGorry is a Washington Post columnist.*

By Eugene H. Methwin

**O**NE OF America's best-kept secrets is that our huge investment in building prisons—an estimated \$30 billion in the last decade to double capacity—has produced a tremendous payoff: Americans are safer and, as the Justice Department reported last week, crime has fallen steadily.

Moreover, some pioneering research a police field testing suggest that if we aggregate the present federal and state prison population—to somewhere between 1 million and 1.5 million—and leave our city a county jail population at the present 400,000, we will break the back of America's 30-year crime wave.

Liberal opponents will howl, of course. They have convinced many Americans that imprisonment is a failed policy and do want to hear otherwise. The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation bombards influential media, declaring: "Our prison population has gone up by more than 200 percent the last 15 years with no resulting decrease in crime." The director of the American Civil Liberties Union's National Prison Project, Alvin Bronstein, writes that "no jurisdiction has ever . . . had an impact on crime rates by an expanded incarceration policy."

Washington Post columnist Colman McCarthy insists that prisons don't succeed in "work-release or community-service programs, structured therapy, in-prison training, restitution, house arrests with electric monitoring and halfway houses and other pundits and experts will point c

*Eugene Methwin, a Reader's Digest senior editor, has reported on the U.S. criminal justice system for more than 40 years. He served on the 1983-86 President's Commission on Organized Crime.*

to reflect the yearnings of an Israeli public that seeks peace and security. Shamir cannot offer them peace, and his vision of security is deeply flawed.

A series of polls conducted in Israel by the Wislenski Institute at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles reports that, fairly consistently, one third of the Israeli electorate favors hard for peace if security can be maintained, one third opposes and an extraordinary one third is undecided. This massive swing vote must be the target of Baker—and indeed of those Arabs who wish to make things happen at the conference table.

But Shamir cannot be swept aside until a practical vision for a peace settlement can be put on the table that will entice an Israeli public that is basically to the left of Shamir. Such a proposal must embrace a comprehensive peaceful settlement between Israel and its neighbors—a functional peace that will open the way to genuine, open intraregional contacts and a creative flowering of the regional economy. In return, Israel must give up nearly all of the territories and accept that there must be the foundations of a future independent Palestinian state. Such a deal is ultimately irresistible because it gives both the Arabs and Israelis what each has long craved. That kind of a deal will spell an end to Shamir's stunted vision of the future.

But it is not logic alone that suggests this conference is headed in the right direction. After all, this kind of deal could theoretically have been cobbled together decades ago. But in the world of those days, it wasn't possible. Today what matters is the stunning change that has taken place in the ideological and structural character of the conflict. For the first time, the wherewithal for a comprehensive peace may now be at hand. And any optimism on the prospects for peace rest primarily on Syria. The old truism is still true: Without Syria there can be no peace—even today. In the past, Syria's Hafez Assad styled most initiatives at a peace process. His rationale was simple: He preferred the benefits that came from leadership of the rejectionist camp—military, financial, ideological. But over the last year a sea change in Syria's policies may have come about, a process that began when the Soviet Union under President Mikhail Gorbachev stormed bankrollings

the relatively stable armed standoff. Regional events encourage the belief that rejectionism has little future in the Arab world today—except perhaps in Baghdad. The old slogans have taken on a tiny sound in the Arab politics of the last decade: Even Saddam could not genuinely stir a crowd. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) formally reconciled itself with Israel's existence several years ago.

Short of some new catrachsism that would rewrite the correlation of forces, radicalism would seem to be a weakening force. This improves chances that Syria is altering its strategic position in accord with the region's new realities. Syria's current rejection of the third phase of the conference—the regional issues—seems only tactical, pending resolution of Israel's own rejection of land for peace. (Indeed, if there is to be no true normalization of relations with Israel, Israel is absolutely right not to give back any part of the Golan to Damascus.)

Ironically, Shamir's presence has not been all negative. As a leading nay-sayer, he has impelled the Arabs ever further into the process of saying "yes." The Arabs have revealed in making Shamir look obtuse and themselves moderate, an exchange of images that Shamir's presence may also facilitated—the Bush administration's tough line toward him. The conference would thus seem to cost Likud ever more: Who, after all, does Shamir think he is negotiating with on the Palestinian problem if not with the PLO—albeit an evolving one?

And what of the PLO? Yasser Arafat seems to have recovered from his stunning lapse of judgment during the Gulf War to resume his more pragmatic policies—this time from a much weakened position. As Hanan Ashrawi, one of Baker's Palestinian interlocutors has pointed out, the time has come for a Palestinian national movement to yield to a new stage in Palestinian politics: establishment of a representative Palestinian government and Palestinian governing process in the territories. The PLO is therefore on the threshold of metamorphosis in the new political environment. However its politics evolve, the PLO cannot be eliminated as a symbol of unity to Palestinians. Despite partially divergent interests between Palestinians in diaspora and those in the territories, in the end the PLO in some

territories. Furthermore, any "autonomy" arrangement cannot be stable but ultimately and inexorably will lead to an independent state. But today there is at least a possibility that most of the West Bank and Gaza could revert directly and permanently to Jordan, without its inhabitants attaining genuine independence in the interim, precisely because today's Jordan—more democratic and more Palestinian—is not the old Jordan.

Is this good news or bad? For Israel, the calculus is uncertain. If there is only one Palestinian-Jordanian state, then Israel might have to give up slightly less of the West Bank to it. But ironically, an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza would be more "pro-Israeli" than a Jordanian-Palestinian state. This is because the West Bankers have lived with Israel, worked in Israel, and been deeply influenced by Israeli culture and life for 25 years. Tens of thousands speak Hebrew. They are well equipped to play a middle-man role in the gradual, ut-

that may be very unwisely excluded from the peace process, and thus a source of future trouble. Only an independent West Bank Palestinian buffer state—probably confederated with Jordan, and eventually with Israel as well—would arguably seem to be a more balanced configuration over the longer run.

In Madrid, for the first time since World War II, it is possible to analyze the prospects for Arab-Israeli peace entirely on the basis of the regional dynamic, and not as a function of outside Cold War forces. Indeed, the Cold War has liberated the United States position: The plain fact is that the strategic importance of Israel to Washington is diminished. A firm American call for a return to the classic land-for-peace formula—that has always dominated Israel's own concept of peace—is not to abandon Israel, but only to abandon its right-wing extremists. Washington will never overlook Israel's genuine security needs, but seems now determined to

## MARY MCGRODY

# BCCI: Politics and Pol

outstanding, because he obviously wanted to find out what happened. His fellow

Republicans, under orders to kill, outdid each other in slandering Anita Hill. Brown asked the weekend's best question. He asked Hill if she had ever discussed the case of *Roe v. Wade* with Clarence Thomas. The Supreme Court nominee had invited perjury charges by insisting that he had never discussed the abortion decision with anyone. Hill began to reply but was cut off by Chairman Joseph R. Biden (D-Del.), who seemed to fear bringing out anything relevant or actionable about Thomas.

In investigating BCCI, Brown has displayed the same serious curiosity, the same refreshing matter-of-factness. There were no cracks, no cheap shots. He was as polite and prepared as the chairman. He just asked Clifford, and his partner Robert Altman, about the strange circumstances of their relationship with the

McGRODY, From C1

staff to his party but now another cross to bear—gave BCCI standing in Washington. Jimmy Carter's OMB director, Bert Lance, introduced Clifford to Agha Hassan Abedi, BCCI's chief. But Republican regulators failed to notice that BCCI had, when nobody was looking, purchased First American, the bank that Clifford in his old age took up as a new interest.

There is, on Kerry's subcommittee, that rarest of all creatures, a Republican without an agenda. Sen. Hank Brown of Colorado, someone who honestly believes that the game is to elicit facts from witnesses. This is practically unheard of. Republicans enter high-profile hearings convinced that they are about to be robbed. They caucus, they fume.

In the Iran-contra hearings, for example, House Republican committee members seemed to have made a pact not