

with its own military build-up. It is of vital importance that the U.S. as well as the U.S.S.R. remain able to control the use of such military power.

Arab consolidation

Many observers have raised the spectre of such regimes — Syrian or Saudi — being overthrown and their sophisticated armament falling into the hands of some fanatical Ayatollah. One could argue that the same could happen in Egypt, to whom the Americans are selling as many modern weapons as to the Saudis. More important and more worrisome is the possibility that the arms in the hands of Arab states are suddenly consolidated. There has not been any war in the Middle East in which Syria and Saudi Arabia — not to mention Iraq and Jordan — were not united.

With regard to this tremendous military build-up, it seems essential to stop, while still possible, the search for nuclear weaponry currently underway in Libya and Iraq. The Europeans, especially France and Italy, bear much responsibility for this. France, which is particularly dependent on oil from the Gulf region,

has offered almost any weapon Iraq has asked for. Says an old Israeli — “blood smells less than oil!” However, the Western countries, which are so concerned with stability and peace in a region so important for their supply of oil, should realize that a military build-up does not contribute to political stability.

If the Western countries do not make the necessary efforts to bring together Israel and the Arab states, then the rejection front will have what it wants most, namely, proof that the Camp David Accord did not constitute “a framework for peace in the Middle East”.

Is it possible that the Reagan administration has decided to opt for the military solution by letting Egypt take over Libya (in the eventuality that a full-scale war erupts between the two antagonists) and encouraging Israel to takeover Syria — leaving Saudi Arabia to serve as the watchdog of the Persian Gulf? Could this be the Reagan-Haig way of responding to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan? Have the Soviets known this all along? If so, this may be why they moved first — and so quickly — into Lebanon.

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