

Superpower conflict dominates Mid-East

by Jim Herbert

Foreign policy expert John Rothmann explains the present political situation in the Middle East in terms of three "levels of conflict" the conflicts between the superpowers, between Israel and the Arab states and between Israel, the Palestinians, and P.L.O. Rothmann, a former advisor to U.S. President Richard M. Nixon, was speaking at a forum in the Tory building Wednesday afternoon.

Rothmann described the superpower "level of conflict" mainly from the point of view of the United States. He said that the U.S. had three primary objectives in its Middle East policy objectives.

The first and most important objective of U.S. policy is to "prevent Soviet encroachment." The Soviets may or may not be attempting to gain influence in the region; what is important, he said, is that "it has been the perception of every (American) policy maker since Harry Truman that there is a Soviet threat."

This perception has led the Americans to form alliances with five states in the region, which would help counter a possible Soviet encroachment. This "fist" of allies includes Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Sudan, he said.

Second, the United States wants to ensure the supply of oil from the Middle East.

The strong American support of the pro-western leadership of Saudi Arabia has been an important part of this objective, especially since the fall of the Shah of Iran.

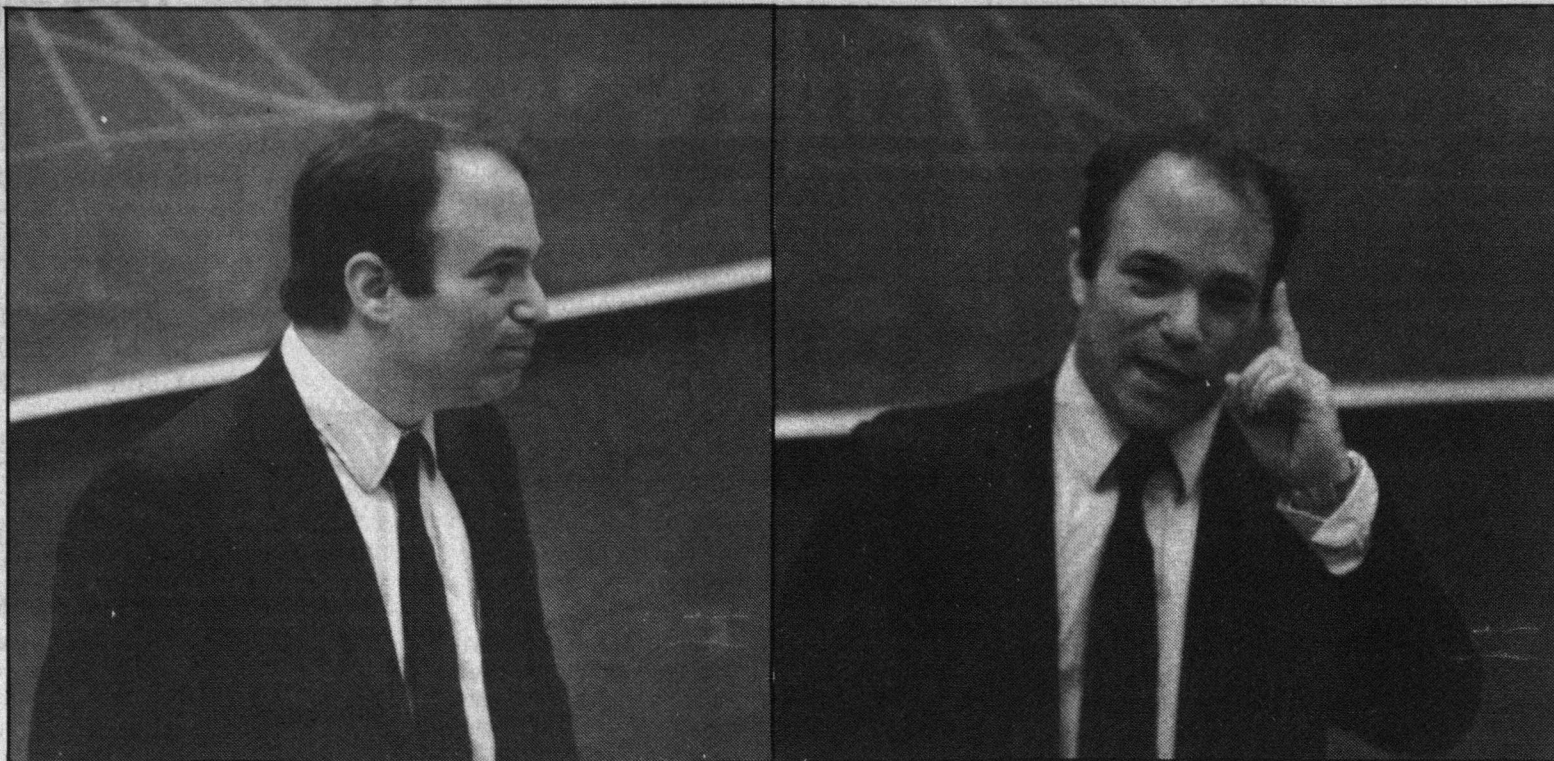
"The U.S. remains committed to the Saudi family because it represents for the U.S. a vital interest."

The third objective of American foreign policy in the Middle East is the support of Israel. This support is based on moral grounds as well as the strategic importance of Israel in the event of a war with the Soviets.

Rothmann briefly touched on the superpower conflict from the Soviet perspective. He said that their main objectives in the region are to gain influence and to secure the use of a warm water port. To accomplish these goals, they too have formed a "fist" of allies. These include Syria, South Yemen, Iraq, Libya, and Syria.

The second "level of conflict" in the Middle East is the struggle between Israel and the Arab states. Rothmann included in this group Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

Rothmann described the relationship between Egypt and Israel as "a cold peace." On the one hand, the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, (the David accord) was signed by Anwar Sadat, since assassinated.



Former presidential advisor John Rothmann says the primary objective of U.S. mid-East policy is to "prevent Soviet encroachment."

Photos Bill Doskoch

the willingness to compromise on the part of Egypt may have been the result of Sadat's personal beliefs rather than a widespread feeling among the Egyptian people.

It is thus possible that Egyptian leadership will be more hostile to Israel.

"Did Israel sign a peace treaty with Egypt or with Sadat? I'm not sure we have an answer."

On the other hand, both sides want the peace to last. For Egypt, this desire centers on the Sinai, which they reacquired as a result of the treaty and which they could lose again in the event of another war with Israel.

"Egypt views the return of the Sinai as a point of national pride and they will do nothing to jeopardize this."

Rothmann characterized the relationship between Israel and Jordan as one of "defacto peace." King Hussein, the Jordanian leader, wants only to keep his throne, Rothmann said. To do this, he must neither make a peace treaty with Israel, in which case he would be killed by radical factions within his own country, nor make war with Israel, since defeat and instability would be the probable results of such an action.

"If he makes peace with Israel, he is a dead man, if he makes war he may lose his throne."

Rothmann called the state of relations between Israel and Syria a "cold war" situation. Syrian President Assad is clearly not the "moderate" Arab leader that former U.S. president Jimmy Carter described.

He is, rather, a radical, who called a "national day of mourning when Sadat went to Israel" and a "national day of celebration when Sadat was killed."

Assad's reputation is greatly enhanced in the Arab world by his claims that he partially defeated Israel on the battlefield during the 1973 war, that he won back territory from Israel militarily, and that he has never been defeated by Israel on Syrian territory.

Yet Assad wants no military confrontation with Israel without the support of the other major Arab states. This accounts for the peaceful border between Syria and Israel.

Rothmann claims that there is a "defacto peace" between Israel and Lebanon. The Lebanese-Israeli border was quiet from 1948-1971; the violence began only after the P.L.O. moved into the South Lebanon. Presently, there is an open border, between Syria and Israel. Rothmann predicts that this arrangement will last.

The third "level of conflict" in the Middle East is the relationship between Israel, the Palestinians and the P.L.O. (Rothmann believes the P.L.O. does not speak for all Palestinians).

Rothmann lays the blame for the lack of negotiations between Israel

and the Palestinian firmly on the doorstep of the P.L.O.

Rothmann says that to the P.L.O., even talking with Israel is treasonous. He mentioned three moderate Palestinians who wanted to talk to Israel but were later killed for being traitors.

Rothmann feels that negotiations should take place between Israel and moderate Palestinians, whose rights "need to be addressed."

"The time has come for Israel and the Palestinians to talk. There is a need for compromise. With moderate Palestinians, Israel is prepared to talk."

President won't take it anymore

REGINA (CUP) — The University of Regina administration president has vowed to resign if the university is forced to close any more programs or colleges.

"I've indicated I'm a builder, not a buster," Lloyd Barber told a packed university faculty council meeting recently. "If the university is facing a major winding down, they will have to find someone else to do it because I'm not capable of doing it. I wasn't hired to do it."

Grappling with a \$3 million deficit, the university board of governors is searching for ways to make the cuts. A proposal drawn up in October calls for a 15 per cent tuition fee hike, closure of the university's extension program, athletic

program, sculpture studio and music conservatory in the event of a two per cent funding increase next year.

The Saskatchewan government, however, has hinted it will freeze university funding in the 1985-86 academic year.

Students are concerned the university will close its fine arts college, a source of worry since the government formed a committee last summer to investigate the province's deteriorating fine arts education. Students fear the committee may recommend the amalgamation of the province's two fine arts colleges at the U of R and the University of Saskatchewan.

"It's not like a steel mill where

you can shut down production for one month and then start it up the next," Barber said. If the university shut down the college "you couldn't start doing it until 1986 or 1987, and it would take six or seven years for a phase out."

Barber said the university would increase tuition fees or its deficit before recommending closure of the fine arts college.

Lori Latta, student council president, said Barber's decision to resign will not likely result in "one iota of good" and expressed regret at his stand. She says Barber should take responsibility for the university because he was president when the university became increasingly mired in financial difficulties.

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