

**FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE**

their New Left counterparts that America built a postwar empire of sorts, though chiefly in self-defense and at its allies' request.

Does it all matter? Yes, says Gaddis. What historians write today "will affect [Americans'] historical consciousness in the future, and that in turn can . . . affect history itself."

*Taking the UN  
Seriously*

"Western Strategy in a Third World Forum" by Kenneth Adelman and Marc Plattner, in *Atlantic Quarterly* (Spring 1983), Longman Group Limited, Subscriptions Dept., Fourth Ave., Harlow, Essex CM19 5AA England.

To many Americans, the glass-walled United Nations headquarters in New York is both a symbol of hope for international cooperation and a source of chronic irritation.

Simple arithmetic makes a certain amount of U.S. frustration inevitable, note Adelman and Plattner, former member of the U.S. delegation at the UN (now director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency) and delegation staff member, respectively.

Western nations now comprise a distinct minority of the UN's 157 members. Delegates from the Third World—organized into the Group of 77 (now comprised of 123 members) on economic issues and, on political and military questions, the slightly smaller Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)—fix the General Assembly's agenda and vote together, often against the West, their chief source of economic aid. (In the 15-member Security Council, the United States has veto power, but usually needs some Third World support to pass resolutions.)

Yet the Western powers sometimes make matters worse, the authors



*In a 1982 Gallup survey, half of those polled said that the UN does a "poor" job, but only 12 percent favored giving up U.S. membership.*

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argue, by failing to work together. In 1981, for example, America's NATO allies sided with the United States in only 75 percent of the votes in the General Assembly. Most of the NAM's members, by contrast, voted for the group's official position more than 90 percent of the time.

Western disunity, the authors argue, stems from the cynical view in some Western European capitals that what the UN does matters very little. Europeans cast General Assembly votes with an eye to winning the Third World's goodwill "on the cheap." Yet UN resolutions—condemning Israel, urging a Law of the Sea Treaty, deploring Moscow's downing of a South Korean airliner—*do* influence world opinion, the authors contend.

A united Western bloc in the UN would not often prevail. But by standing together to demand changes in noxious resolutions and voting on principle, the West could arrest what the authors believe is the UN's "dreary downward spiral" into an anti-Western forum.

*Israel's Value*

"Israel as a Strategic Asset" by Steven L. Spiegel, in *Commentary* (June 1983), 156 East 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

In Congress, the State Department, and the news media, the complaint is often heard that Israel gives the United States nothing but trouble in return for massive aid. U.S. interests in the oil-rich Middle East, it is said, require an arm's-length relationship with the Jewish state, closer ties to the Arabs.

Yet "prodigious and generous efforts" to recruit reliable Arab allies have left Washington empty-handed, contends Spiegel, a UCLA political scientist. Despite receiving advanced U.S. F-15 fighters and AWACs aircraft, Saudi Arabia has refused to accept U.S. Rapid Deployment Force bases and has discouraged its smaller Persian Gulf neighbors, Oman and Bahrain, from cooperating with Washington in their own defense. Egypt is reluctant to risk its ties to the Arab world by working too closely with the United States. Jordan's King Hussein is too preoccupied with his own political survival to be a factor in the region. An (unlikely) U.S. partnership with Iraq would bar any restoration of American ties to Iraq's current battlefield antagonist, Iran, a country of far greater strategic value.

Israel, meanwhile, has proved itself the staunchest of allies. Its army helps deter Soviet military moves in the Middle East, and its leaders would gladly provide logistical support for U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf. Jerusalem has even helped some of its traditional foes in the interest of regional stability—also a plus for the United States. In 1970, for example, an Israeli army mobilization, requested by Washington, deterred a Syrian invasion of neighboring Jordan.

Israel is also an asset in more mundane military matters, Spiegel contends. During their 1982 sweep into Lebanon, the Israelis downed advanced Soviet-built Mig-23 and Mig-25 fighters, inspected them, and passed the information along to Washington. Israeli fliers also learned