

along the Chinese border. To counter this threat effectively the cooperation of China is essential. And to achieve this cooperation a *modus vivendi* between Japan and China over Taiwan is the crucial issue, not a *modus vivendi* between the U.S. and China. The U.S. will of necessity have to agree to what Japan agrees or threaten the basic links we now have with Japan.

The last factor is that both China and the U.S. have a need for trade. China's oil resources, on the mainland and in the Senkaku Islands, its huge market for industrial and defense goods, and China's own desperate need for technology suggest a natural alliance.

To effect this alliance it is essential that Taiwan be seen not as an American problem but as an Asian problem to be worked out among Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and China. The U.S. should solidify rapidly its strategic position by normalizing its relations with China proper and thereby contribute an overall strategic normalization for all of Asia. The greater good outweighs the lesser evil of abrogation of a treaty made in different strategic circumstances years ago. The worst policy would be to hold on to commitments we honestly do not have the means to keep. By facing up to this now we can avoid heartache later.

For the people of Northeast Asia, including the Taiwanese, it is essential that the new realities, in the form of the Soviet buildup, be recognized and that new relationships be forged. Strategically, Japan is the pivotal power relative to China, and Japan must assume the burden of creating the ground rules for this new relationship with China.

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Jewish-Christian Relations

To the Editors: As a founder of an interreligious group, the Delaware Association of Christians and Jews, I have come to realize that Jewish-Christian dialogue usually falters upon the issues of a Middle East settlement. Many of the theological questions of interfaith pale in comparison to such problems as Israeli acceptance of a Palestinian state. I have learned that the churches are quick to criticize Israel and quick to defend the Palestinian against an Israel

characterized by horrible comparisons to the Nazis.

I make these observations in commenting upon the essay by the Reverend Charles Angell, "Difficult Days Ahead for Jewish-Christian Relations" (Excursus, *Worldview*, December), which is a reasoned prognosis of what is likely to happen should the Begin government continue its current policy. Indeed, Judeo-Christian relations may suffer because Father Angell wants his way, which insists that the American Jew must understand Christian compassion for the "disinherited Palestinian." Already Father Angell reduces the Holocaust in scope and meaning as he describes the Christian response as "inadequate." Father Angell dismisses those who sincerely comprehend Christian complicity in that nightmare as "guilt-ridden mouthpieces" who are functionaries of the Israeli information service. From my experience in dialogue, Father Angell's attitude is precisely the most painful example of the crisis in Judeo-Christian understanding.

The essential point in the Arab-Israeli conflict is that up until now the Arabs refused to recognize the legitimacy of Israel, the Arab states threatened a war of annihilation while the PLO carried out terror and murder raids on Jewish civilians (never did the PLO strike at bases of the Israel Defense Forces!). The position of American Jewry is justifiably one of cooperation and support vis-à-vis the Israeli Government. Is this so difficult to comprehend and to sympathize with? I am afraid that for many Christians the answer is Yes. For two thousand years the Jews suffered at the hand of the Christian and few voices were heard in defense of the Jew. For thirty years the Jews have demonstrated their ability to defend themselves and even go over to the offensive, if necessary; and this new reality disturbs Christian conscience. I suggest that the real problem is not that of "Palestinian Zionism," as some would like to phrase it. The real dilemma for the Church is Jewish potency and viability.

Begin is not acting in any sort of illegitimate or amoral way. The original League of Nations Mandate granted the entire territory of Palestine to the Jews. The 1948 and 1967 wars were Arab-initiated (not to mention 1973). History is replete with the sad circumstances of peoples being evicted because of inter-

national conflicts. No one is demanding the legitimate rights of the Latvians or the Slovaks. Population exchanges were historically acceptable. All Begin is saying (indeed, Begin does not have to say it) is that the 1947 Partition dividing Palestine into an Arab state and a Jewish state resulted in the rape of the Palestinian Arabs by their Arab brothers. Yet, according to Father Angell, it is incumbent upon Israel to rectify this tragedy. In a way Father Angell hands Israel and Jewry a backhanded compliment. Perhaps he is implying that it is fitting that Israel go out of its way to correct the wrongs that were committed. Perhaps he sees in Israel the same quality of perfection he sees in Jesus of Nazareth, also a "biblical irridentist," according to some Christians. Whatever he perceives, I am afraid, it is dissonant with Jewish perceptions and needs.

Throughout my years as a participant in Jewish-Christian dialogue I have tried to make it clear that the one transcendent Jewish concern is the establishment of a secure and independent Israel so that the welfare of the Jewish people need never again be contingent upon the tolerance of others, no matter how benevolent they may appear. Any resolution to the Palestinian issue must first demonstrate the incontrovertibility of the foregoing assumption.

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A Correction

The November issue stated that the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) had been instrumental in putting together a national Association for Voluntary Sterilization that held a meeting of church and civil rights groups in Washington, D.C. IFCO informs us that it is "totally separate from" and has "a purpose and philosophy quite different from" the sterilization group in question, although the group did have a representative at the Washington meeting called by IFCO. Also, IFCO wants it known that the conference did address pressures brought upon women, especially poor and Third World women, to have sterilizations. We are glad to print this additional and clarifying information.