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NEAR EAST REPORT

WASHINGTON WEEKLY ON AMERICAN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

VOL. XXXI, NO. 6 FEBRUARY 9, 1987

EDITORIAL

Making Sense of Arms Sales

Last month Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.) and Rep. Mel Levine (D-Calif.) reintroduced a bill to amend the Arms Export Control Act. The measure—cosponsored by Sens. Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), Rudy Boschwitz (R-Minn.), Wendell Ford (D-Ky.) and Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), and by Reps. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) and Larry Smith (D-Fla.)—was proposed late last year, but the session ended before it could be acted upon. It deserves to be approved, and quickly, by the 100th Congress.

Known on Capitol Hill as the Biden-Levine bill, it would restore the Congressional intent regarding controversial U.S. arms sales which was overturned in a 1983 Supreme Court decision. That ruling, in a case which had nothing to do with weapons transfers, invalidated the legislative veto. Previously, Congress had been able to reject proposed arms sale by passing a concurrent resolution with simple majorities.

Now, in order for Congress to halt an Administration-proposed sale, Congress must first pass a joint resolution and then be able to override a Presidential veto with two-thirds majorities in both chambers. Last year's missile sale to Saudi Arabia illustrated the problem the decision created.

The Democratic-controlled House rejected the sale of several hundred million dollars worth of missiles to Saudi Arabia by a 365-62 margin; the Republican-led Senate turned it down 73-22. The President then vetoed the resolution of disapproval and, with eight Senators shifting their votes, the veto was sustained and the sale went through.

As Biden noted, a large, controversial arms sale was allowed to proceed "on the basis of support of one-sixth of the House of Representatives and one-third-plus-one in the Senate." The Biden-Levine bill is intended to make sure that any major sale of advanced American arms to countries not closely allied with the United States has majority backing in both houses of Congress, not a one-third-plus-one minority in one chamber. Exempted from the measure would be NATO nations, Australia and New Zealand, and signatories to the Camp David Accords—at this point Israel and Egypt.

The Administration opposes the Biden-Levine bill, arguing that arms sales to "moderate" Arab countries can help encourage the Arab-Israeli peace process. Unfortunately, there is little evidence so far to support that view.

A second argument for such sales in the Middle East—to help "pro-Western" Arab states resist aggression—has other flaws. A number of such countries are leery of military cooperation with the United States. One such nation is Kuwait. But now that the Iranian offensive in Iraq threatens it, America helps defend Kuwait without such sales—by sending U.S. ships just offshore in the Persian Gulf.

Instead of winning friends and promoting peace, such sales have helped fuel regional arms races, burdened already fragile regimes, and endangered our real friends. Passage of the Biden-Levine legislation—no doubt spurred by the investigations of the secret Iranian arms shipments—will restore needed Congressional oversight to major American weapons sales. □

VIEWING THE NEWS

Palestinians Blamed

Israel Radio reports that Palestinian Arabs, not Shi'ites, are behind the abduction of four Beirut University College professors. The Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine, a heretofore unknown group, has claimed responsibility for abducting three Americans and an Indian citizen in Beirut recently and is demanding that Israel free 400 convicted terrorists in exchange for their release.

According to the report, the captors are Palestinians who "want to get part of the booty which may result from the wave of kidnappings" (Kol Yisrael, Feb. 2). Meanwhile, Abu Iyad, (Salah Khalaf), the number-two man in Yasir Arafat's Fatah

faction of the PLO, told a Paris newspaper that the price for an American hostage is now \$3 million.

Israeli Probe

A Knesset committee has begun an investigation into Israel's role in the sale of U.S. arms to Iran. A six-member subcommittee of the Knesset Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee is conducting closed hearings with Israelis implicated in the affair (Associated Press, Feb. 2).

AP also reported that Israel is prepared to offer Congressional investigators written statements from top officials regarding the case.

Israel-U.S.S.R. Agreement

Israel and the U.S.S.R. have agreed to renew high-level political discussions toward a resumption of relations, according to an Israeli newspaper.

The agreement was reportedly worked out in meetings between Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Meir Rosenne and his Soviet counterpart in Washington.

The Hebrew daily reports that contacts will continue between the two countries to pave the way for a meeting to discuss the establishment of consular relations. A similar meeting last year in Helsinki, Finland broke up after 90 minutes (Davar, Feb. 3).

BACKGROUND

Economic Recovery: Round Two

Israel is poised to take the next step in healing its economy: a program of budget cuts, tax reform, and capital reform intended to stimulate industrial development. After weeks of discussions with the Histadrut labor federation and the Manufacturer's Association, the Cabinet approved a compromise plan acceptable to the major sectors of the economy.

- Under the plan the government will reduce its \$20.7-billion budget by more than \$224 million. The reductions would come from cuts in the general fund, higher user fees on some health and education services, and lower subsidies on basic food items. Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin did not receive a requested increase in the defense budget but was spared a cut for the first time in almost ten years.

- To make Israeli products more competitive on the world market and to increase the cost of imports, the government has devalued the shekel by 10%.

- The government hopes to increase spendable income by reducing the maximum tax rate from 60% to 48%.

- To stimulate industrial growth, the Cabinet will increase the amount of investment capital in private hands. The government will reduce its borrowings; reduce the amount which savings banks are required to redeposit with the government, and extend tax breaks given to non-government-issued securities. Commercial banks will have more freedom in making corporate loans; portions of pensions and other funds will be available for non-government securities; foreign capital controls will be liber-

alized.

The plan is intended to advance the recovery begun two years ago when the government undertook to stabilize the economy. Last year, inflation was 19.7%—higher than in many industrialized countries but well below Israel's record triple-digit rates. It is the lowest rate since 1972, when inflation was 14%.

Stabilization achieved, Finance Minister Moshe Nissim hopes to lower inflation further and spur growth through a comprehensive program first introduced two months ago. From its inception that reform faced vocal opposition from the Histadrut labor federation, the Manufacturer's Association and various political figures. The final plan approved by the Cabinet takes steps in the direction of Nissim's plan, but falls short of the sweeping reforms originally envisioned; a second reform package may be introduced later this year. "The government is taking one slice of the salami at a time," said one observer.

The government predicts that as a result of the plan, the gross domestic product should rise by 3.2%, business sector production by 4%, the standard of living by 2.8% and prices by 20%.

Top Israeli officials involved in economic planning recently presented the Cabinet-approved program to the U.S.—Israel Joint Economic Development Group (JEDG), the intergovernmental committee established two years ago to review Israel's economic progress. In its original form, the economic reform plan closely reflected JEDG recommendations.

U.S. officials on the panel were reportedly disappointed that the Cabinet-approved version fell short of the original proposal, but recognized the political constraints which shaped the final plan. A U.S. official told *NER* that since the government budget cut will be achieved, in part, by decreasing subsidies, it will not truly reduce the size of the government or release additional capital for investment in the private sector. He added that while the original tax reform plan would have been revenue neutral, the current plan reduces government income and may increase Israel's deficit. But, he noted, changes in the capital market will probably be a boon to the economy.

Nissim recently predicted that the plan may cause a short period of price increases which would then be followed by lower inflation. It was also feared that a cost-of-living adjustment to be given to workers in March might fuel inflation. To prevent this, the Manufacturers Association and the Histadrut have an agreement calling for a price freeze on most subsidized goods and services until March 1988. In exchange, workers have agreed to a reduced cost-of-living allowance.

This is just the latest round in the fight for a more productive economy, said one U.S. official. "Israel must bear its defense burden while providing a standard of living high enough to attract new immigrants," he commented. "To do this and to reduce the size of the government is just incredibly difficult. . . . Harder for Israel than any place else." —J.R. □

HEARD IN WASHINGTON

Campaign for Foreign Aid

Secretary of State George Shultz has wasted no time in presenting the 1988 foreign affairs budget to the American people. Shultz launched his campaign for a \$19.1-billion budget in early January, appearing at a State Department press conference with an undersized shirt labeled "The 1987 Budget." From there, it was on to Capitol Hill to appear before the Budget and Foreign Affairs committees of the House. His message: "I consider this budget to be the most important foreign affairs problem we have right now."

The Secretary explained that the foreign assistance program promotes U.S. inter-

ests by providing for national security, increases trade and thereby promotes domestic prosperity, fosters democratic values, combats narcotics trafficking and helps thwart terrorism. He emphasized that foreign assistance cuts over the past two years have hampered these efforts; allocations have dropped from a 1985 high of \$22.9 billion to \$17.3 in 1987. As a result, the U.S. was unable to provide what Shultz considered adequate support for emerging democracies; reduced aid to development banks by 20%; closed seven consulates around the world, and may consider closing more; and has been unable to meet obli-

gations to nations with U.S. military bases. He complained that by earmarking \$10 billion in foreign assistance funds for specific countries—including \$3 billion for Israel—Congress has put additional pressure on the rest of the foreign assistance budget. Shultz added, however, that aid to Israel and Egypt is essential for securing peace in the region and should continue at current levels.

The Secretary contends that even with the requested foreign assistance increase, the 1988 federal budget still falls within the limits imposed by the Gramm-Rudman-

(Continued)

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ANALYSIS

Islamic Summit: Speaking Harshly

The welcome the Islamic Conference Organization (ICO) gave Egypt at its recent summit meeting in Kuwait did not imply acceptance of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, according to several Washington-based analysts. In fact, bringing Egypt back into active ICO participation may have led participants to maintain, or even increase, anti-Israel bombast.

Forty-six countries—the 20 members of the Arab League, plus Egypt, and largely Islamic but non-Arab states stretching from central Africa to the Far East—belong to the organization. The PLO also is an ICO member. Twenty-one heads-of-state and representatives of 23 other countries attended the late-January summit, despite a boycott by Iran—which warned beforehand that Kuwait was not a safe site since it supports Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war—and despite threats against participants from terrorist groups in Lebanon.

Appearances of Arab unity gained headlines, including a handshake between Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak and Syrian President Hafez Assad, a bitter critic of the Camp David Accords. It was Syria's first joint participation with Egypt in a pan-Arab or pan-Islamic summit since the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli treaty. In addition, Jordan's King Hussein met with PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat for the first time since Hussein halted diplomatic cooperation with the PLO last February.

However, the analysts agreed that the substance of unity proved harder to achieve. For example, apparently there was no progress on scheduling a new Arab League summit.

Among the conference's resolutions on the "Palestine issue" was a statement that all Moslems have a duty to wage "jihad" (holy war) for the liberation of Jerusalem and Palestine. The conference also "firmly rejected all separate agreements and initiatives" between members and Israel. It asserted that U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 "does not constitute an adequate basis for solution of the Palestine and Middle East question," and "championed the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and establish their independent state on their national soil with Jerusalem as its capital, under the leadership of the PLO."

Other resolutions condemned U.S. support for Israel and strategic cooperation between the United States and Israel, condemned as "aggression" the U.S. bombing of Libya, and "denounced the attempts to equate terrorism with legitimate struggle of peoples for liberation."

One observer said that the ICO's embrace of Egypt and simultaneous rejection of its peace with Israel allowed the organization to recognize Egypt's "special place in the Arab world" while maintaining that "this doesn't mean we're going to follow your line." In fact, some ICO members may argue that since expelling Egypt did not force it to break relations with Israel, "getting it back [into the organization] may be the way to change its behavior." In addition, some Arab states, under pressure from Iran and Islamic fundamentalism, apparently believe that renewed Egyptian participation in the ICO, if not in the Arab League, helps "get Egypt beside them."

Of the Assad-Mubarak handshake and the Arafat-Hussein meeting, the analyst said that since most recent Arab League summits illustrated division rather than unity, Arab leaders at the ICO meeting strove "not to rock the boat. . . . But when they go back to their own capitals, things will quickly go back to normal, which means division." On the Arab-Israeli "peace process," he added that Syria's insistence on playing a major role prohibits Jordan and the PLO or other Palestinian Arabs from taking major steps.

An Israeli observer said Jerusalem was "concerned" by Hussein's hardline rhetoric on Israel, especially after nearly two years of Israeli-Jordanian "engagement" on restarting the peace process and indirect tacit cooperation on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. He added that the King's meeting with Arafat could signal the beginning of renewed Jordanian-PLO efforts, at least concerning the territories.

A third analyst argued that the acceptance of Egypt "fulfilled Sadat's prediction": Egypt would get along without other Arab states but they would not be able to do without it. He added that "ritual reconciliations" like those seen at Kuwait, "are very much a part of Arab-Islamic culture" and not purely political statements.

Politically more important for Arab countries would be the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Egypt, which could be regarded as implicit endorsement of Egyptian policies, including peace with Israel. And that "is something which they still don't want to do."

HEARD . . . Continued

Hollings Act. "It's a very modest request," Shultz said. "All we're asking for is our two cents [of the federal dollar]."

But at a time when Washington strains under the effects of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings, even two cents is hard to come by. Budget Committee Chairman William Gray (D-Pa.) asked the Secretary, "How are we going to fund these increases while substantially cutting education, agriculture, and health care here at home, when we are not able to discuss in any depth the means to pay for these increases?" Shultz responded that the increases were justified and should be judged on their own merits. "I would like to think that when you examine these numbers, and the reasons for them, you would feel that these requests deserve to have priority, because of the interests of the United States involved."

Shultz sees his Capitol Hill testimony as an important first skirmish in his battle for

the budget. "The [budget-approval] train is moving down the track hard and I'm working at it hard . . ." he told the Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs, a coalition of groups committed to a strong U.S. foreign assistance program. He told the group that the atmosphere for foreign assistance is positive. "I find more and more as I go around and talk to members of Congress and Senators that they say, 'Well, I'm not arguing with you about the necessity for these funds, but . . .'"

As a former Secretary of the Treasury and Secretary of Labor, Shultz is quite familiar with the domestic side of the budget equation. He remains convinced that foreign assistance not only benefits U.S. allies, but is good for the American people: "I believe it is right, that it is important and these funds are justified—even in a tight budget environment."

Sala Burton

Congresswoman Sala Burton (D-Calif.)—who left Poland with her family to attend a wedding in San Francisco in the spring of 1939—and who, after defeating 10 rivals in a special election in 1983, was elected to succeed her husband, Philip Burton, died of cancer on Feb. 1. The San Francisco-area Representative easily won reelection in 1984 and 1986. A Jewish member of Congress, she was an ardent supporter of Israel and human rights issues.

Burton, 61, a long-time liberal activist, traced her interest in politics to her experiences fleeing from Europe. "I saw what happened in Europe when the Nazis were moving," she once said. "You learn that politics is everybody's business."

BACK PAGE

Built Under Fire

A funny thing happened last month at a conference on "Sustaining Democracies in Regions of Crisis: The Israeli Experience." Approximately 30 Israelis—including government leaders—were attempting to explain to an American delegation how Israel had managed—through nearly four decades of war, terrorism, large-scale immigration and economic difficulties—to build a thriving democracy.

But at the opening session the Israelis were not doing too well. They focused much more on their country's problems than its successes.

Finally, according to Kenneth Wollack, executive vice president of the sponsoring National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), Costa Rica's Benjamin Nunez, a former ambassador to the U.N. and to Israel, took the microphone. "He basically said, 'You folks don't know what you have here. You're always looking to the future. Take a moment to look where you've come from.'"

Where Israel has come from became clear in the following sessions of the three-day conference at Sedom on the Dead Sea. The Jewish state, former U.S. Vice President Walter Mondale pointed out, did not sacrifice internal democracy to meet external military threats, as has happened elsewhere. In fact, the institutions Israel established helped strengthen its democracy.

Rep. Bill Green (R-N.Y.), another American delegate, noted that the process was under way even before independence in 1948. "The Israelis had a long experience in democratic institutions—the World Zionist Organization, the Histadrut trade union federation and others.

Conferees examined the relationship between civil authorities and a strong, respected military which itself manifests some democratic traits. Ben-Gurion's incorporation, at an early date, of the various Jewish self-defense organizations into the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and placement of the IDF under civilian control was seen as crucial by Mondale, who is president of NDI, and by Green and Rep. Howard Berman (D-Calif.).

Universal service, the absence of military academies, the existence of a strong civic education program within the military, the provision that officers can take two years off to study anything which interests them, and mandatory retirement for most senior officers while still in their 40's also were seen as important to preventing the growth of an anti-democratic military elite.

Conference participants noted that although Israel has no written constitution, it developed a strong, independent judiciary.

The country also has a tradition of economic pacts or "social contracts" between manufacturers, unions and government. These regulate potentially damaging class competition. And Israel's free press and strong political parties contribute to the state's overall democratic health.

The majority of Israelis are immigrants or children of immigrants from the non-democratic countries of North Africa or the Middle East. But most Israeli participants agreed that while some problems remain, much of the "social gap" between Ashkenasim (Jews of European background) and Sephardim (Jews of Middle Eastern background) has been ameliorated in the past 10 or 15 years.

What Israelis find frustrating now is the split between the Jewish religious and secular communities. Some participants argued against trying to write a constitution now because of the split; others urged that a constitution be put on paper specifically to help resolve the issue.

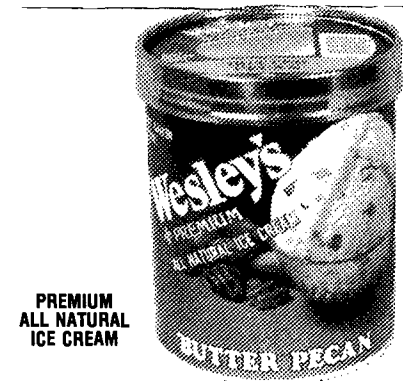
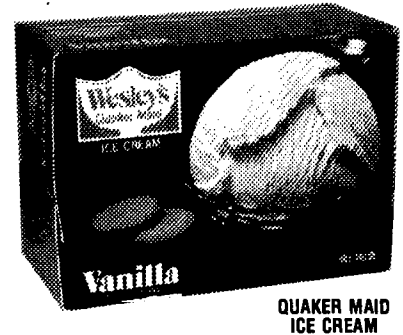
Over all, the NDI program was "tremendous. I've been to many conferences in 14 years in office, and this was the best—in terms of the quality of discussion and the broad cross-section of Israeli society," Berman said.

NDI, loosely affiliated with the Democratic Party, is one of four main organizations funded by the National Endowment for Democracy. The others are linked to the Republican Party, the AFL-CIO and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

"The Israelis questioned whether what worked for them would work elsewhere," Wollack noted. But NDI believes the Israeli example can be a tool if not an exact model for other emerging democracies.

—E.R.

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EDITORIAL

Compounding the Mistake

To "rebuild credibility" with numerous Arab states—credibility damaged by its arms deal with Iran—the Reagan Administration may be about to make another mistake: pushing a new round of weapons sales.

Some sales, ranging from \$5 million-plus of laser-guided artillery shells for Jordan, to hundreds of millions of dollars worth of advanced fighter-bombers and armored personnel carriers for Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, to billion-dollar shipments for Egypt and perhaps other countries already are being hinted at (see story inside). One rumor even has it that a major deal is being considered for Iraq, which moderated its anti-Western rhetoric—but not its radical Ba'athist ideology—under pressure from the war with Iran.

The leaders of some comparatively Western-oriented Arab states have told Washington that by sending anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles and desperately needed spare parts to Iran, the United States has jeopardized their interests. Success by the extremist Khomeini regime against Iraq could increase fundamentalist pressure on their own governments, from within and without.

But hastily advanced arms sales to some Arab states seem no more likely to rebuild American credibility than ill-conceived weapons shipments were able to induce moderation in Iran. The Iran arms deal and its connection to U.S. hostages in Lebanon seems to have contributed—directly and indirectly—to escalation in the overt war around Basra and a covert war in Beirut, in which pro-Iranian terrorists

have snatched more victims.

Major sales of sophisticated weapons systems would not likely bolster the recipients in the face of an immediate Iranian threat. Such systems require considerable lead time for delivery, training and assimilation by the armies which receive them. They would not guard against dangers to relatively conservative Arab regimes from radical subversion; F-16's were not designed to fight assassins.

And they most assuredly would not advance the Arab-Israeli peace process. The \$100 billion worth of arms purchased by Arab countries since the 1973 Yom Kippur War has helped *obstruct*, not promote, that peace process. The purchases have allowed some Arab countries to continue planning for a "military option." At the Islamic summit in Kuwait, Jordan's King Hussein called for an end to the Iran-Iraq war and Arab unification because "only then shall we be in a position to save Jerusalem and the holy places." This illustrates once more the difference between being pro-Western and being ready to negotiate an Arab-Israeli peace.

Moving a U.S. naval task force north in the Persian Gulf was one step toward repairing U.S. credibility. Sharing some intelligence data on Iranian military preparations with Baghdad was another. But using the Iran arms deal as an excuse for a wave of sales to Arab states would seriously compound the original mistake.

□

VIEWING THE NEWS

Islamic Summit

The Kuwaiti summit of the Islamic Conference Organization (ICO) was described by some as a "disguised Arab summit" masquerading in Islamic garb. . . ." (*Washington Post*, Jan. 26). Twenty-one heads of state and other representatives from another 23 ICO member nations attended the opening session. A summit of the 21-member Arab League has not been held since 1982.

Syrian President Hafez Assad, reportedly "paid handsomely" by Kuwait, participated in a top-level meeting along with Egypt for the first time since the Egyptian-

Israeli peace treaty of 1979. The paper also said that King Hussein of Jordan met with Chairman Yasir Arafat for the first time since suspending diplomatic cooperation with the PLO last February and after Saudi Arabia offered \$9 million to the joint committee previously run by Jordan and the PLO for West Bank and Gaza Strip projects.

Egypt Objects

An Israeli daily reported that "Jordanian-Israeli meetings did indeed take place last year between figures at different levels. Egypt, however, objects to these direct

meetings and has voiced its opposition to Jordan's King Hussein" (*Ma'ariv*, Jan. 22).

At the latest meetings in Aqaba and Cairo between Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, the latter "expressed apprehension about these secret, direct meetings. Egypt, which had reached agreement with Jordan on coordinating political activity to solve the Middle East conflict, claims the . . . meetings could harm the PLO's standing in the world." Jordan seemed to downplay the significance of the contacts with Israel, making it clear that "it is part of the very old Hashemite policy to occasionally hold clarification meetings" with Israelis. □

ANALYSIS

Conference as Bargaining Chip

Jordan and—to a lesser extent—Egypt made it clear recently both to Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy and to visiting Congressional delegations that they still see an international conference as the indispensable mechanism for the Arab-Israeli peace process. Jordanians pressed the issue, in essence telling Americans in Amman that “you owe us one” in the wake of the U.S.-Iran arms deal, according to one Capitol Hill source.

“They hit us over the head with those views,” the source added, even though Jordanians are well aware of American, not to mention Israeli, opposition to a conference which the Arabs say must include the Soviet Union and the PLO. Washington and Jerusalem fear that such a gathering would degenerate into a propaganda show, that it would give a veto to the most radical participants, and that it would hobble or even overrule direct negotiations between Israel and individual Arab states.

Further, the United States and Israel would like Moscow to demonstrate some constructive intent by renewing diplomatic relations with Jerusalem and by unlocking the gates of emigration for Soviet Jews. As for the PLO, Washington requires it to accept U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, recognize Israel and halt terrorism before it joins any talks.

In reiterating their calls for a conference, neither Jordan nor Egypt said that the Russians or the PLO were about to meet those qualifications. Instead, they insisted that the United States endorse a conference “to restore American credibility” with the Arab countries which back Iraq against Iran.

Jordan's King Hussein and Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak believe their interests, and perhaps their survival, are linked to Iraq. Because Washington ignored those interests in its covert dealings with Iran, several analysts said Amman and Cairo expect Washington to do something in return. “It is the bazaar mentality,” one observer explained.

In fact, Jordan has de facto peace with Israel now. It knows that its demands—Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and east Jerusalem, in favor of a Palestinian entity “confederated” with Jordan—cannot be met. A conference leading to a compromise “would give them great problems,” the Capitol Hill source noted.

But Amman continues to talk about a

conference, partly to maintain the appearance of Arab solidarity and partly because it sees such diplomatic pronouncements as a safety valve for local tensions. Besides, the demand could serve as a bargaining chip.

Jordan has elicited “enthusiasm” from West Germany and France but so far no commitments for large investments to help fund the King's ambitious \$1.5 billion five-year development plan for the West Bank and Gaza. Washington has pledged about \$15 million to support Jordanian activity in the territories. However, Hussein would like much more from the United States.

Egypt hopes to use its support of a conference including the PLO to ease its official return to Arab ranks, a foreign policy priority ever since its expulsion from the Arab League after it signed the 1979 peace treaty with Israel.

There is another established device for expanding the peace process, although it often seems forgotten. “You can look at the Camp David Accords and see what Israel committed itself to. In fact, there is some pretty bold language on the Palestinians,” one source said.

But Jordan will not act unilaterally for the Palestinian Arabs. Both Amman and Jerusalem hope that economic development in the territories eventually may foster the emergence of a Palestinian leader-

ship able to join in negotiations with Israel.

Meanwhile, Egypt, “which is talking about this in terms of Camp David,” wants to bridge the gap between Hussein and PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat. “Why they think that is possible I don't know, but it seems to me they are putting it in the Camp David context,” the Capitol Hill source said. [Hussein and Arafat met, reportedly through Saudi Arabian intervention, at the Islamic Conference Organization summit in Kuwait last week.]

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir recently has sounded more flexible regarding the Palestinian Arabs, sources said. One analyst cautioned that since other Arab countries blasted Camp David as a separate Egyptian-Israeli peace, their rejection of it might not be overcome. But he questioned whether U.S. diplomacy, represented by Murphy's shuttle trips, promised more. “You have to have some basis for believing you'll get anywhere. We might say to the Arabs . . . ‘If you're so desperate to have a conference, you'll have to make some concessions.’”

He noted that as far as the Administration is concerned, the 1982 Reagan Plan, which Israel and, later, Jordan rejected—although it overlapped much of Amman's prerequisites—is still on the table. “And if that wasn't enough to tempt the Arab side, it's hard to imagine what would.” □

New Arms Sales Are Planned

The Reagan Administration reportedly is planning arms sales to Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Bahrain. Although the Administration so far has notified Congress only of the sale of 100 Copperhead laser-guided artillery shells—worth \$5.2 million—to Jordan, Congressional sources indicated that they expect formal notification soon on the sale of 12 F-16 fighters worth \$400 million to Bahrain and 200 Bradley Fighting Vehicles worth \$500 million to Saudi Arabia.

Sales of defense articles costing less than \$14 million, such as the Copperhead shells for Jordan, are not subject to Congressional review.

In addition, the Administration also reportedly is contemplating selling electronic counter-measure equipment for Saudi F-15's and sophisticated air defense systems to Jordan. The *Wall Street Journal* reported on Jan. 28 that the Pentagon also plans to sell Egypt “its third batch of 40 F-16's, along with radar and improved avionics. . . .” The sale is valued at \$1.3 billion.

Congressional observers have expressed uneasiness over these projected arms sales, especially in light of the Iran controversy and the passage—by a narrow margin—of a Saudi missile sale last year. Several members of Congress have indicated that they will scrutinize closely the new proposed arms transfers. They will question whether they would be approved in the absence of a comprehensive U.S. arms sale policy, and, if they are, how the sales would affect the possibility of progress in the Arab-Israeli peace process.

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PERSPECTIVE

Qaddafi on the Run

Things have not been going well for Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi in recent weeks. Libyan occupation forces in northern Chad have been routed from several important outposts by Chadian soldiers assisted by French warplanes and backed by \$15 million in emergency military aid from the United States. Qaddafi also is trying to prevent a possible repeat of last April's U.S. bombing of Tripoli by relocating Libya's civilian and military capitals 300 miles inland. After years of saber rattling and braggadocio, Qaddafi now appears to be on the defensive.

The Libyan leader's most recent problems began last October when Chadian rebel leader Goukouni Oueddi visited Tripoli to announce that his forces were abandoning their 20-year-old rebellion and discontinuing their joint effort with Libya to oust Chadian President Hissene Habre. A fracas reportedly broke out between the Libyan military and bodyguards traveling with Oueddi in Tripoli. Oueddi, the former Chadian president, has been under house arrest in the Libyan capital ever since. Libyan troops attacked positions held by Oueddi's men in northern Chad one month later.

Chad is a poor, land-locked country on Libya's southern border, encompassing vast stretches of the Sahara desert. The country is a power vacuum, said one U.S. official, a territory coveted by the "megalomaniacal" Qaddafi. Others suggest that Libya's interest in Chad stems from a de-

sire to capture uranium deposits believed to lie beneath northern Chad, although the presence of the mineral has never been confirmed. Libya also shares historic and ethnic ties with Chad, said one analyst.

Libya began its support for the Chadian rebels in 1973, and annexed a strip of Chadian territory two years later. Since 1983, France has enforced a dividing line at the 16th parallel which has separated Libyan troops and rebels in the northern third of the country from government positions in the south. It is estimated that Libya has stationed 7,000 to 9,000 troops north of the line, while France has sent over 1,000 military personnel to its former colony to serve in defensive positions. Chad maintains a 25,000-man army.

When the poorly-equipped forces of Habre recaptured a key Libyan-held outpost, Libya retaliated with an airstrike below the 16th parallel. France broke its self-imposed restraint and ordered warplanes north of the line. Current reports from the area indicate that fighting has stopped as both sides strengthen their positions for a new campaign. One U.S. official told *NER* that the Chadian government has extended its control from the 16th to the 17th parallel. He pointed out that since only 1,000 men remain committed to rebellion, Chad's civil war has essentially ended and the conflict has become one between two nations.

Chadian victories in the north came as a surprise to Western analysts and Chadians alike. "There is no comparison in terms of

materiel between Chad and Libya. They are 100 times stronger than we are," Hassan Djamous, commander of Chad's armed forces, was quoted as saying. "But they lack conviction, as they don't want to die away from their countries like mercenaries."

Lisa Anderson, assistant professor of political science at Columbia University, agreed: "The reason the Libyan army is doing so badly is that they really have morale problems which reflect popular dissatisfaction with Qaddafi." Anderson explained that Qaddafi has squandered the economic benefits of oil exports and has continued to enforce a rigid dictatorship. "The people are tired of it," she said.

Will further defeats in Chad spell Qaddafi's end? According to Anderson, Libyans support the invasion of Chad, but would retreat from that support if their country sustained heavy casualties.

But autocrats cannot be voted out of office, Anderson added. "The fact that there is one coup attempt or attempt on Qaddafi's life every two or three months means that there is popular dissatisfaction. Someone will get him one of these days. It's just a question of when." In the meantime, Qaddafi waits in his new desert capital, surrounded by East German bodyguards, comforted by the knowledge that many army personnel he considers disloyal are far off to the south fighting his war in Chad.

□
—J.R.

HEARD AT THE U.N.

Resolution A 'Travesty'

The United Nations General Assembly has circulated a copy of a U.S. Congressional joint resolution which repudiates the 1975 U.N. Zionism-equals-racism declaration, condemning it as a "permanent smear upon the reputation of the United Nations."

In a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Javier Peres de Cuellar which accompanied the Congressional resolution, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Vernon Walters wrote, "General Assembly resolution 3379 is an absurdity which serves only to encourage the ancient evil of anti-Semitism and seeks to deny the legitimacy of a Member State in good standing, Israel. . . . This resolution is a travesty of the avowed principles of the United Nations and brings only shame to that Organization."

The letter noted that the Zionism-equals-racism resolution has "contributed to the

apparent decline in support for the United Nations among Americans and their elected officials." It reminded the Secretary General that every U.S. Administration since 1975 has condemned the resolution.

The original Congressional resolution was sponsored by Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.), who then encouraged the U.S. delegation to the U.N. to introduce it as a General Assembly document. An Israeli official at the U.N. credited D'Amato with spearheading this latest drive to refute the resolution and added, "The atmosphere may be right during the next General Assembly to try to revoke the resolution once and for all." But another source at the U.N. indicated that such an effort would meet with substantial opposition: "Things have improved here, but not that much."

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs Alan

Keyes recently told *NER* that the U.S. resolve to stand behind Israel in the United Nations has had a "sobering effect" on the organization: "I think that the result has been a definitely greater sensitivity to the consequences for the organization of unbridled political vendettas." He added that although "marginal improvements" have been made, "there's still a lot of work to be done."

Bernice Tannenbaum, chairman of the American Section of the World Zionist Organization, is leading a campaign asking governors of all 50 states to call for the revocation of Resolution 3379. So far, 44 governors have issued decrees calling for the resolution's repeal; only Mississippi, Oregon, Wyoming, North Dakota, New Hampshire and Georgia have yet to do so.

□

BACK PAGE

Reaffirming A Policy

In his State of the Union speech last week, President Reagan announced that the United States will not "yield to terrorist blackmail." This reaffirmation of the Administration's *original* anti-terrorism policy met with silence from the President's audience of House and Senate members, an indication of how deeply the Iran arms deal undercut the very anti-terrorism policy for which the White House had built support. Nevertheless, the reaffirmation of that policy should be welcomed, especially if backed by action.

Certainly recent events make clear the futility of trying to satisfy terrorists' claims—in reality political ransom demands. In mid-January West German police arrested Mohammed Ali Hamadei, a Lebanese Shi'ite suspected of involvement in the June 1985 hijacking of TWA flight 847 and subsequent murder of U.S. Navy diver Robert Stethem. Hamadei allegedly was trying to smuggle explosives through Frankfurt airport.

The Administration, which has emphasized using existing legal means, when possible, to combat terrorism, quickly asked Bonn to extradite the suspect. The United States and West Germany were discussing extradition—Hamadei would face the death penalty in the United States if convicted and Germany does not have capital punishment—when apparently the suspect's friends and relatives in Lebanon began kidnapping West Germans off Beirut streets.

Suddenly, Bonn had second thoughts. As it did the idea of using the law against terrorists receded. So did the vision of multi-national anti-terrorist cooperation.

Simultaneously, the "humanitarian" approach to dealing with terrorists received a Beirut setback. Terry Waite, the representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury, appeared to be on the verge of negotiating the release of two long-held American prisoners, reporter Terry Anderson and university official Thomas Sutherland.

But West Germans were not the only human currency in demand in Lebanese "politics"; a Shi'ite Moslem terrorist group calling itself "The Organization of the Oppressed on Earth" grabbed three more Americans, faculty members at Beirut University, and an Indian professor with American residency. Then Waite himself disappeared and, according to some reports, was being held under "house arrest."

The utility of "humanitarian" contacts with such groups, and the wisdom of exempting their members from the death penalty, can be evaluated against the behavior of gangs like "The Organization of the Oppressed on Earth," which, just before Hamadei's arrest in Germany, claimed to

have "executed" an 80-year-old Lebanese Jew, kidnapped earlier. Yehuda Benesti was killed, his murderers announced, because he had been a Mossad agent and in retaliation for Israeli action "in southern Lebanon, the Golan Heights and Palestine." Two weeks earlier it claimed to have killed two of Benesti's sons and another Lebanese Jew, and it may hold five others.

"The Oppressed of the Earth" and their colleagues in Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, and similar outfits believe that terrorism is really "armed struggle" or even "holy war." For them, it is like conventional warfare, politics by other means, means which disdain concepts such as "innocent bystander" or non-combatant and which include kidnapping and murder.

Washington knew and enunciated this before it undermined its own policy, first by alternately criticizing and then seeking to placate Syria, then by sending arms to Iran partly in exchange for American hostages.

America has dealt with state sponsorship of terrorism in the case of Libya by diplomatic representations, economic sanctions and military action. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.) said last week that if the President can establish a link between the latest terrorist incidents "and Syria or Iran or any other government, I think he would be justified in going after that government pretty hard."

Everyone understands by now that many of the terrorist groups which operate in the anarchy of Lebanon get their inspiration and support—and sometimes their instructions—from Iran, from Syria and to a lesser extent from Libya. An American anti-terrorism policy does not need to be reinvented. It no longer needs to be reaffirmed; now it should quietly be put into practice.

—E.R. □

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NEAR EAST REPORT

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EDITORIAL

Trial By Leaks

First came the leaks from the unpublished, preliminary draft report of the Senate Intelligence Committee's investigation of the Iran arms deal. They alleged that Israel—not the United States—initiated the idea of a U.S. rapprochement with “moderate” elements of the Khomeini regime, that Israel pressured the United States to keep the shipments going even when hostages were not released, that Jerusalem came up with the scheme to overcharge Iran and divert some of the money to the Nicaraguan *contras*.

Finally, after the leaks had become a flood, the White House released the Jan. 17, 1986 Presidential finding which authorized resumption of the weapons shipments and also made public a supporting memo. The background memo, reportedly prepared by fired National Security Council staffer Lt. Col. Oliver North, was signed by former National Security Adviser Vice Adm. John Poindexter. In making them public, the White House could answer stories based on the Senate leaks and reiterate that the President did not know of the Nicaraguan connection.

Although the finding did not mention Israel, the memo did. It called the shipments to Iran an Israeli initiative.

Stories based on this virtual torrent of leaked, partial and, in some cases, false information made headlines in both the Israeli and the U.S. press. They seemed designed to shift the blame for whatever had gone wrong onto Israel. The Reagan Administration recognized the potential for damage to U.S.-Israel relations and last week sent a message, through Ambassador Thomas Pickering in Jerusalem, that “the United States has no intention either to blame Israel or to throw any responsibility onto Israel.” America was not trying “to make Israel a scapegoat for decisions made in Washington.” Israeli officials were quoted as saying that they had not asked

for Washington's reassurance, but welcomed it; they had begun to fear that they were being scapegoated in the affair.

Several other statements are worth noting, or repeating, in addition to Pickering's message. They include:

- The firm denial by David Kimche of claims by North—apparently echoed in the draft committee report—and, indirectly, in the Poindexter memo, that as Director General of Israel's Foreign Ministry in 1985, he suggested an arms-for-hostages exchange between Washington and Tehran. The Prime Minister's office again said, last week, that “as far as we are concerned, we acted at the request of the United States in order to help the U.S. after being asked to do so”;

- The official statement by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin that the Israeli government did not know of, let alone originate, the transfer of funds from the arms sales to the Nicaraguan rebels;

- Peres' statement to the Knesset last week that Israeli counter-terrorism adviser Amiran Nir warned his American contacts a year ago that the arms-for-hostages effort had only a 25% chance to succeed;

- Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman David Boren's (D-Okla.) recent observations that, although Israel played an important role in the arms shipments to Iran, “let's remember also that no other country could force the United States to make these policy decisions. We ultimately must bear responsibility in our own government, because our own government made the decision.”

Trial by leaks is often a popular joint venture between politicians and news media. But it should be recognized for the diversion it is and not allowed to undermine either the governments in Washington and Jerusalem or the close, mutually beneficial relations between the United States and Israel. □

VIEWING THE NEWS

Saudi Optimism

Saudi Arabia's new Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Hisham Nazer, “stressed that the optimism currently prevailing over the oil market was the outcome of the policy of the custodian of the two holy mosques [King Fahd]” (Riyadh Radio, Jan. 8). Nazer added that the King “is eager to see the oil market stabilized and fixed. . . .”

According to other reports, some U.S. grades have risen to \$19-a-barrel for the first time in almost a year in the wake of the

OPEC decision last month—spurred by Saudi Arabia—to reduce production and return to fixed prices. Since then, international spot market prices have increased approximately \$3-a-barrel to the \$18-a-barrel level.

PLO Pilots

A central committee member of Yasir Arafat's Fatah organization said that the PLO has “pilots who work with some Arab

air forces and who fly the aircraft these air forces possess.” Rafik Natshah added that “of course, there are numerous Palestinian pilots in most of the Arab air forces, if not all of them. But for the PLO to have its own pilots it needs to have its own airfields so it can acquire aircraft. . . .” (*Al-Hawadith*, Dec. 26).

Natshah also told the London-based Arabic publication that the PLO continues to “denounce the Camp David Accords. . . . We have agreed to cooperation

(Continued)

BACKGROUND

Murphy's Latest Shuttle

Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Richard Murphy, returned to the Middle East two weeks ago for his first trip to the region in four months. Although President Reagan sent him to assess the prospects for peace, Murphy could not escape the shadow of the U.S.-Iran arms deal. In Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, Murphy sought to repair American credibility.

The first high-level official to visit the region since the disclosure of the arms deal, Murphy discovered that he would have to answer difficult questions before he could begin to discuss peace. On the first leg of his mission, Murphy met with King Hussein, a supporter of Iraq and a leading proponent of the original U.S. arms embargo on Iran. Hussein reportedly called the arms deal "shocking." The King also reiterated his call for an international peace conference to involve the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and all parties concerned in the conflict, including the PLO.

Murphy then met with Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who reportedly rejected an international conference in favor of direct negotiations between Israel, Egypt and Jordan. Speaking to a conference sponsored by the U.S. Democratic Party in the Dead Sea town of Sodom, Shamir said "there is no substitute for direct negotiations" and offered to meet Hussein "anywhere to discuss peace between our two countries." The Israeli leader suggested that cooperation and informal

agreements with Jordan on tourism and natural resources could pave the way for "full peace."

Murphy returned to Amman briefly before flying to Cairo for talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Again, the U.S. official was called upon to reassure an Arab leader that the sale of arms to Iran was a "one-time exception" that will not be repeated. Murphy then left for a previously unscheduled trip to Saudi Arabia. He was expected to return to Israel before flying to Europe and then home.

Before Murphy's trip began, the State Department cautioned that it was not expecting any "breakthroughs." Not only did the Assistant Secretary have to restore America's credibility, he had to reconcile longstanding differences between Cairo, Amman and Jerusalem over formulas for negotiations. Representation for the Palestinians was one sticking point, with both Egypt and Jordan calling for a PLO presence at peace talks, which Israel and the United States reject.

Soon after meeting with Murphy, Prime Minister Shamir announced that he would seek to establish a representative body for Palestinians living in the territories. "Let's begin the first stage of establishing some kind of body which will represent these areas," said Yosef ben Aharon, Director General of the Prime Minister's office. "We'll talk . . . about achieving the first stage of true representation of these areas so that we can move the peace agreement forward with them and with Jordan."

Shamir also announced that he would meet with Palestinian leaders and mayors from the territories to discuss this proposal.

Meanwhile, Egypt's President Mubarak encouraged Hussein and the PLO to renew their dialogue and expressed his hope that the PLO would accept U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

Murphy's visit comes at a time when Islamic leaders are preparing for the first meeting in three years of the Islamic Conference Organization, the 45-member union of Arab and non-Arab Islamic countries. Middle East observers have speculated that the Murphy trip was intended, in part, to demonstrate U.S. support for its allies and to sound out their positions on the eve of the conference. Mubarak also hoped that the ICO meeting would cement Egypt's relations with other Islamic countries.

Although the ICO meeting was called to discuss the Iran-Iraq war and the continuing violence in Lebanon, Iran has threatened to boycott the meeting unless it is moved out of Kuwait, a country Tehran views as supporting Iraq. Syria has opposed Egyptian participation.

Israeli leaders are skeptical that the ICO conference will advance prospects for peace.

Murphy's trip may also help lay the groundwork for the visits of Shamir and Mubarak to Washington next month. Visits by Hussein and King Hassan II of Morocco are also expected later in the year. □

—J.R.

PERSPECTIVE

New Threat to Security Zone

As conditions in Lebanon continue to deteriorate and threaten the Israeli-backed southern security zone, Jerusalem has stepped up its operations across the northern border. Last week, Israeli warplanes struck Palestinian targets in the Syrian-controlled Beka valley in eastern Lebanon following attacks on Israeli soldiers and members of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA). The attack—the fourth Israeli airstrike in Lebanon in ten days—sent a message to Syria, which has not reined in its Lebanese clients.

Israel faces threats from two directions in Lebanon. According to Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Palestinian "commanders, organizers and leaders" continue to

slip back into the country with the assistance of some factions of Christian militias. The growing Palestinian terrorist presence made itself felt on Jan. 7, with a rocket attack on northern Israel. Israel responded by bombing Palestinian Arab strongholds in the Sidon area, including the Palestinian-held town of Magdousheh. Airstrikes conducted last week reportedly hit positions occupied by Fatah, the Progressive Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Abu Nidal group.

Palestinian Arabs joined with members of the Iranian-backed Lebanese Shi'ite Hezbollah group to attack Israeli soldiers and members of the SLA in and around the

10-mile-wide security zone adjoining Israel's northern border. More than a dozen SLA members have been killed in the past two weeks; three Israelis have been wounded by land mines. Jerusalem is concerned that the demoralization and attrition of SLA members may further weaken security on the northern border and necessitate greater direct Israeli involvement.

Rabin has pointed out that current arrangements in southern Lebanon have provided "reasonable security" for northern Israel in the year-and-a-half since the IDF left Lebanon. While preparing for any additional threat from across the border, Israel is not "deluded about totally eradicating terrorism." □

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EXCLUSIVE

Expert Looks at Assad

Hebrew University's Moshe Maoz is one of Israel's best-known Syria-watchers. In fact, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir once offered him the job of Israel's ambassador in Damascus—if and when the position comes into being. "I believe I'll have to wait at least a few years," Maoz smiled, recalling the proposal recently.

Author of a new biography of Syrian President Hafez Assad, to be published in English by Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, Maoz doubts that his subject would make peace with Israel in exchange for the Golan Heights. The 40-by-10 mile strategic area was taken by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War and retained in the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

Nevertheless, the psychological urge to retrieve the Heights may be strong, since Assad himself lost the territory, twice—the first time as Defense Minister, the second as President. Militarily, the region lies only a few dozen miles from Damascus.

"Assad is on record as willing to give Israel an agreement of non-belligerency in return for the Golan and a Palestinian state [in the West Bank and Gaza Strip] with east Jerusalem, which he would control," Maoz noted. Of course, "Israel is not going to do it." And Assad will not make full peace even in exchange "for a great chunk of the Golan."

The Syrian dictator has ambitions beyond the Golan, the professor pointed out. Assad has been trying to fill the post-Nasser pan-Arab leadership role. Claiming such leadership—first by heading the

struggle against Israel—helps legitimize Assad's minority Alawite Moslem regime, which came to and retains power by force.

Although Assad "is a strategist, a politician," Maoz thinks "he sees the conflict with Israel as a 'zero sum game,' " in which one side's gain must come at the other's expense. "He doesn't have an empathy with Israel's defense needs, like Jordan or Egypt. . . . He believes his own words, that Israel is expansionist, aggressive."

According to Maoz, Assad's doctrine of strategic balance has several layers, all based on a massive military buildup and related economic and social mobilization. First, Syria wants to be able to deter Israel militarily. Second, it would like to be able to impose solutions—from a position of military strength—on Lebanon, Israel and others in the region. Third, if the opportunity presented itself, it might launch a limited war with the hope of regaining the Golan, digging in and calling on Syria's ally in Moscow to negotiate a truce.

Syria's serious economic problems—caused in part by Assad's military expansion—are not likely to bring down the regime. "This is not exactly a democracy," Maoz noted. "You don't get strikes." If anything, they could be an inducement for war. "There is a huge standing army—half a million men. How long can they maintain it without disbanding or using it?" And by going to war, Syria probably would win increased subsidies from Arab oil states, as Egypt did in 1973, Maoz said.

Meanwhile, Assad aims, through a war

of attrition including terrorism, "which he calls guerrilla warfare . . . to weaken Israel morally, economically and politically." One reason for Damascus' involvement in Lebanon is to have a base for such anti-Israel terrorism safely off Syrian soil, Maoz added.

Commenting on the PLO's efforts to re-establish itself in Lebanon, Maoz said that Assad "hates Arafat—and in the Middle East personal hatreds are very important." Nevertheless, the Syrian President would resume relations with the PLO leader "on one condition—that Arafat obey him." Since the latter has maneuvered constantly to avoid control by Arab regimes, Maoz does not foresee an imminent rapprochement between the two.

Assad's health has deteriorated in recent years, but Maoz said that "as long as he's alive and kicking, he's in control." Attempts by potential successors, including brother Rifaat Assad, to strengthen their positions have been dealt with brutally.

Maoz believes that Assad's long rule—unprecedented among the country's previous, uniformly brief regimes—"has given Syria stability and strength beyond its potential." Whether that stability can continue after him depends on how well-entrenched the younger generation of Assad loyalists is—in the military, among the peasantry and the Ba'ath Party youth—compared to older forces represented by the Sunni Moslem Brotherhood, the modern professional class and the older middle class. □

VIEWING . . . Continued

[with Egypt] for the sake of the Palestinian people and Palestinian homeland." The PLO hopes to work with Egypt through "our initiative and strategy, not the Camp David Accords."

Rabin on Budget

Israel's Defense Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, said that peace with Egypt "has enabled us to cut \$600 million in the defense budget in recent years" (*Ma'ariv*, Jan. 8). Rabin noted that Israel is "the only Middle East country that has cut its defense budget. This fact has not influenced any of the other regional countries to follow in our footsteps.

"The size of the Arab countries' defense budget [combined] ranges today between \$40 billion and \$50 billion per year. This is the largest market for the sale of sophisticated weapons." □

Opening for Palestinians

Yossi Beilin, Director General for Foreign Affairs of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, was in Washington last week for biannual meetings with State Department and other American officials. Beilin reportedly discussed a more flexible approach to allowing Palestinian Arabs in the administered territories to organize politically. Political activity by the PLO would remain prohibited.

Sources said Beilin also talked about the need for more investment—by Jordan, the United States or other countries—in promoting West Bank economic development. Broadening economic opportunities in the territories—part of the tacit cooperation between Israel and Jordan—is meant to diminish unrest and perhaps promote the growth of more moderate non-PLO leadership.

In addition, sources said that Israel won American endorsement for a request that the various Congressional teams planning to visit Israel to investigate the Iranian arms deal—Nicaraguan *contra* affair be consolidated into one. Jerusalem apparently was concerned that it might get a parade of investigators when the House and Senate special committees begin their work.

Beilin met with the State Department's number three person Michael Armacost, Under Secretary for Political Affairs; with Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Richard Armitage; White House National Security Council officials, and several House and Senate leaders, sources said. He did not see the new National Security Adviser, Frank Carlucci. Sources said that Carlucci is not ready yet to meet with foreign officials.

BACK PAGE

Questioning the Premise

American foreign policy seeks Middle East stability and Israeli security. Officials believe that both objectives depend on movement toward a diplomatic settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The preferred means of reaching that settlement remains the 1982 Reagan plan, which called for an exchange of land for peace: Israel would give up most of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, to be ruled by Palestinian Arabs federated with Jordan. They, in turn—and presumably most of the rest of the Arab world—would live in peace with the Jewish state.

Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy visited Amman, Jerusalem, Cairo and Riyadh recently (see inside story) partly to see if the American-mediated peace process, based on that premise, can be revived. Coincidentally, a Jan. 12 *New York Times* article by Thomas Friedman detailed the sometimes murderous hostility of West Bank and Gazan Arabs under what they feel is a bitter Israeli occupation.

The attitudes expressed by some of the young, educated Palestinian Arabs quoted by Friedman suggest that the atmosphere in which a land-for-peace exchange might work does not exist. Said one young woman: "I would not go out and kill an Israeli civilian myself. But I also would not condemn someone who does."

A male engineering student observed: "For tomorrow we want the West Bank and Gaza, with the PLO in charge. For the day after tomorrow, we want a democratic, secular state in all of Palestine, so that the Palestinians from Haifa and Jaffa can go back home. I estimate 60 or 70 years before victory."

An Islamic fundamentalist student is not so patient: "I want an independent state in all of Palestine by armed struggle. Why not all tomorrow? They took it with armed struggle, so we'll get it back with armed struggle."

An Israeli official estimated that students like these represent an intensely pro-PLO core of perhaps 12,000 (out of the total West Bank and Gaza Arab population of 1.3 million). He asserted that they can never be satisfied, but doubted they could heavily influence future developments. However, his view may be short-sighted. Most political movements, let alone revolutions, have been led by comparative handfuls.

That does not mean Israel should implement immediately—unilaterally if necessary—a land-for-peace exchange to be rid of such extremists. A paradox is that while Palestinian Arabs chafe under Israeli control, Israeli withdrawal from the territories and an end to that control might well incite demands for more, not only from among Palestinians but from the larger Arab and Islamic worlds.

Irredentism existed long before Israel took Judea and Samaria (the Jordanian-annexed West Bank) in 1967, along with Gaza and the Golan Heights. The attitudes underlying the quotes cited above confute the assertion that the Arab world, except for extremists like Syria and Libya, has grown to accept Israel and seeks only a "Palestinian homeland" on the "occupied territories."

And even though the pan-Arab aspect of the conflict currently seems muted, the pan-Islamic one—perhaps complementary parts of the same whole—does not. Friedman notes that "these young Palestinians almost never refer to Israelis as Israelis. Instead, they call them the 'Jews.' In their eyes, this strips the Israelis of their national identity and therefore of their rights to the land.

Hence the second problem with America's overall approach: equating of Israeli security with Palestinian national aspirations. In fact, recognizing Israeli security needs is subordinate to acknowledging Israeli legitimacy. As Churchill noted more than half a century ago, the Jews are in Palestine by right. It was repeated Arab attempts to deny that right, and to dismiss as irrelevant the existence of an Arab state in Palestine—Jordan—which not only lost them most of the "occupied territories" but also led to the creation and self-perpetuation of the Palestinian Arab refugee problem.

If Palestinian and other Arabs could bring themselves to join Egypt in acknowledging Israel's rights, accepting Jewish rights, then questions of Israeli security—bound up in military need to control the heights of the West Bank and Jordan Rift—automatically would recede. At that point it might be realistic to talk about land for peace.

—E.R.

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EDITORIAL

The Cardinal's Tightrope

Controversy dogged the recent visit to Israel by New York's Cardinal John O'Connor. The Cardinal, reciprocating a stop at his offices last year by then-Prime Minister Shimon Peres, had planned to meet Peres—now Foreign Minister—Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and President Chaim Herzog in Jerusalem. But scheduled official meetings were scrubbed after the Vatican reiterated its prohibition against church representatives seeing Israeli leaders in their offices.

Numerous reports pointed out that the Holy See does not recognize Israel and that the Vatican long has asserted that Jerusalem, with sites holy to Judaism, Christianity and Islam, should be under international control. Commenting on the cancellations, a church spokesman also raised "the problem of the occupied territory and the Palestinian problem."

But these explanations do not bear scrutiny. The Vatican did not establish diplomatic relations with Israel from 1948 through 1967, *before* the latter gained control of the Old City and its shrines, before it took the West Bank (Judea and Samaria), the Gaza Strip and Golan Heights from Jordan, Egypt and Syria, respectively, in a successful war of self-defense. What stopped the Roman Catholic Church from recognizing Israel then, from putting its embassy in the new city of west Jerusalem or even Tel Aviv, and reserving judgment on biblical Jerusalem are the same issues which upset O'Connor's trip now.

First is the Vatican's problem with Jewish, as opposed to Israeli, administration in the holy land. For most of its 2,000 years the church has seen itself as superseding Judaism. The

revival of a Jewish state in the 20th century challenges that theology. Although positive steps have been made in Catholic-Jewish relations in the past two decades and the church now speaks of its Jewish roots, it still seems uncomfortable with Jewish sovereignty.

Second, the Vatican seeks to maintain good relations with Arab and other Moslem countries, many of which include significant Christian minorities. Unfortunately, like some other Western states with the same goal, it has done so at Israel's expense. Hence the background noise about "the occupied territory and the Palestinian problem." As a result, the Vatican—which recognizes and deals with communist regimes in Eastern Europe that oppress the church and sometimes imprison or even murder its priests, which attempts to mediate the Lebanese wars between Maronite Catholics and their Moslem enemies—insists it has a problem with Israel's irreproachable administration of Jerusalem's holy places.

Eventually, Cardinal O'Connor met privately with Peres and Herzog at their residences and salvaged some of his original itinerary while following the church's diplomatic guidelines.

Meanwhile, on Capitol Hill, Rep. Edward Feighan (D-Ohio) prepared to reintroduce a resolution "expressing the sense of the Congress that the Vatican should recognize the State of Israel and should establish diplomatic relations with that country." Feighan, a Catholic, got 35 co-sponsors on the resolution in the 99th Congress, but the measure died in the Foreign Affairs Committee. The 100th Congress should pass it . . . and the Vatican should heed it. □

VIEWING THE NEWS

Quite Ridiculous

The former number two person at Israel's Foreign Ministry, David Kimche, "categorically" denied a report that he originated the idea that the United States transfer funds from the Iran arms deal to the Nicaraguan contras (*Kol Yisrael*, Dec. 30). The Ministry's ex-Director General was responding to a *New York Times* story which cited an anonymous source to the effect that fired National Security Council staffer Lt. Col. Oliver North had told Attorney General Edwin Meese that Kimche proposed the diversion.

"It is really quite ridiculous. . . . If he did say this, then my only explanation is that he panicked somewhat, sought a way to rid himself of the affair, and chose to use

an Israeli whom he barely knew," Kimche said.

ICO Roadblocks

Many obstacles remain to be cleared before the Islamic Conference Organization can convene in Kuwait later this month. The summit would bring together the leaders of more than 40 Islamic countries.

Iran has accused Kuwait of supporting Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war and has formally requested that the meeting be held elsewhere (Reuters, Jan. 6). Syria refused to attend the conference due to the presence of Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak and Morocco's King Hassan, both of whom have met with former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

Also, Kuwaiti radio reported that intensive contacts are being made to convene a

meeting between Mubarak, Jordan's King Hussein and PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat during the summit (Kuwait News Agency, Jan. 4).

Murphy Rejected

State-run Damascus radio has rejected in the harshest terms U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy's current trip to the Middle East.

The commentary condemned bilateral peace agreements between Israel and Arab nations, saying, "The U.S. Administration is intent on resisting genuine peace efforts and pressuring Arab sides to be dragged into the pitfall of direct capitulationist negotiations. . . . This approach . . . failed in the past and will not succeed in the future" (Radio Damascus, Jan. 3). □

HEARD AT THE U.N.

Israel's New Africa Strategy

(Second of two parts)

With Middle East diplomacy in a freeze, Israeli officials have turned much of their attention to the question of Africa, black and white.

This focus is a response to the international agenda which has been taken up in the past year as never before with the question of aid to black Africa and opposition to the racist apartheid regime of South Africa.

It also reflects the understanding that over the past decade the Arab states have abused these legitimate African concerns in the effort to undermine Israel. Beginning with the infamous "Zionism is racism" resolution, Israel's enemies have portrayed the Jewish state as the enemy of Africa and a staunch ally of apartheid.

Israel-Egypt peace and the subsequent return of the Sinai peninsula to Egypt undercut the original Organization of African Unity's reason for cutting off diplomatic ties with Jerusalem in 1973; OAU charged that Israel had "conquered African territory." Subsequently, Israel has reestablished ties with several African states and forged trade and other links with an even greater number.

Several of these states—including Zaire, Cameroon, Liberia and the Ivory Coast—now routinely side with Israel and the United States in the U.N. on anti-Israel resolutions. No longer afraid to be seen together in the open, black African diplomats meet their Israeli counterparts in the U.N. delegates' lounge.

There is also a growing awareness of the real and potential Israeli contribution to the solution of Africa's agricultural and developmental problems. David Kimche, while still the Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, met with 20 black African foreign ministers at the U.N. to discuss areas of mutual cooperation.

The Israeli mission to the U.N. co-sponsored with Ben Gurion University a seminar on "Semi-arid Agriculture"—an area in which Israel's researchers and farmers have considerable expertise. The seminar triggered cooperation between U.N. bodies concerned with Africa and Israel. Officials from these agencies have gone to Israel to examine ways in which Israeli agricultural technology can help in the struggle to solve some of Africa's problems.

The anti-Israel campaign aimed at Africa is also based on the mythos of an Israeli-South African tie. Given the African con-

sensus on ending apartheid, Israel must counter this mythos if it is to take the African and Asian states away from the communist and Arab anti-Israeli coalition.

Attempts to link Israel to South Africa are part of a campaign to influence third world political elites who take U.N. resolutions seriously. South Africa provided Arabs with a perfect model for how they wanted Israel to be perceived. Arabs wanted to delegitimize Israel through a process of "Nazification."

Arab Violations

Jerusalem's struggle against "Nazification," therefore, is a fight to break out of the Arab-imposed model of Israel as an isolated pariah state, and an "illegal entity." The best weapon in the Israeli arsenal against this campaign has been the truth. Not only is Israel a very minor trading partner for South Africa—less than one-half of one percent of South Africa's exports and less than one percent of its imports—but Arab states are supplying Pretoria with a "lifeline" of \$2 billion of oil annually. It is difficult to imagine how the apartheid regime would manage without the uninterrupted flow of Persian Gulf oil. A study by the Amsterdam-based Shipping Research Bureau, an independent European authority created by Dutch anti-apartheid forces, was able to trace 167 oil tankers which sailed from the Persian Gulf to South Africa from 1980 to 1984.

Not only are Arabs in violation of U.N. resolutions against South Africa that they themselves voted for but, in the words of

Israeli U.N. Ambassador Benjamin Netanyahu, "They have the audacity to single out Israel for special trade links with Africa!"

These revelations have begun to have an impact. Israel fully documented the charge, identifying the names, tonnage and sailing dates of the ships involved.

African journalists covering the U.N. have reported widely on the Arab oil link to South Africa as well. Finally, on-the-record inquiries by African delegates to Arabs, asking for a denial, were met with embarrassed silence.

Israel has also been charged with nuclear cooperation with South Africa. On May 15, 1986 the U.N. distributed a report by a team of experts from Nigeria, Sweden, the U.S.S.R., Venezuela and France who had investigated South Africa's nuclear weapons' capabilities. The 44-page document was presented at a U.N. conference on sanctions against South Africa. Certain countries are mentioned in the context of nuclear cooperation with South Africa—but Israel is not among them.

Israel aims at lowering the volume and intensity of anti-Israel rhetoric at the U.N., as well as at changing the numbers in the lopsided anti-Israel votes. The new atmosphere at the U.N. is the result of the triumph of truth over an oft-repeated "big lie." But it is also the result of diplomatic weakness among radical Arabs, some signs of Arab moderation toward Israel, and the firm pro-Israel stand of the United States.

—David Twersky

Tricky Business

The Reagan Administration is requesting that Israel receive \$3 billion in military and economic assistance in fiscal 1988, the same level allocated in 1986 and 1987. The recommendation was included in President Reagan's proposed new budget.

If Congress approves the budget, Israel will once again receive \$1.2 billion in economic and \$1.8 billion in military aid. Egypt will also receive the same level of assistance as last year, \$2.29 billion. The budget also includes \$71 million for Jordan and \$131 million for Morocco. An additional \$12.5 million has been included for the use of private American voluntary organizations on the West Bank and in Gaza.

Secretary of State George Shultz said that he would not rule out using funds earmarked by Congress for Israel, Egypt, Greece, Turkey and Pakistan for other purposes during fiscal 1987, but added, "Breaking earmarks is very difficult and tricky. They represent a very strong statement of the Congress and, if we do any, it will be after very close consultation."

A Congressional source expressed doubt that Shultz would actually resort to "breaking" the earmarked amounts. The source added that Shultz's statement did not represent a new State Department position on aid.

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ANALYSIS

Threat from the East

Sluggish performance by the Iraqi military in its six-and-a-half year-long war with Iran does not mean that Baghdad presents no long-range threat to Israel. One analyst familiar with the Israeli view noted that if Iraqi troops have not done well in the field, they nevertheless "are getting a lot of military experience. . . . They are better than they were before."

Iraqi troops joined the invasion of Israel in 1948, its air force attempted to bomb Tel Aviv in 1967, and it sent soldiers to fight on the Golan Heights in 1973. Israel "considers Iraq as an enemy," the analyst noted, despite a drop in Baghdad's anti-Western rhetoric after it renewed relations with Washington in 1984. Jerusalem still sees the Ba'ath Arab Socialist regime of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein as radical.

In addition to its gain in combat experience, several other war-time developments have kept Iraq on Israel's list of potential eastern front adversaries. These include:

- A dramatic increase in overall military strength. When Iraq invaded Iran in September 1980, its army totaled approximately 450,000, in 13 divisions. Now it has nearly 1 million men under arms, in roughly 40 divisions;

- The upgrading of weapons and other materiel. "Iraq started the war with old equipment. When they buy today, they are buying new," the analyst noted. Another source said that Iraq has purchased ap-

proximately \$20 billion worth of weapons, ammunition and other military items since the start of the war, with much of the money coming from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Arab oil states.

The war has led to increased cooperation between Iraq and more moderate, pro-Western states such as Jordan and Egypt. Cut off by the Iranians from direct access to the Persian Gulf, Iraq now gets some of its supplies overland from Jordan's Red Sea port of Aqaba.

To expedite the flow, "the highway between Amman and Baghdad has been upgraded," the analyst said. Meanwhile, to fight Iran, the Iraqis have acquired many new tanks and tank transporters. Theoretically, the transporters could use the improved 450-mile road to move the tanks close to Israeli territory in 24 to 48 hours. "This is a good example of the lessons they learned from the war against Iran. Today they transfer forces from one position to another . . . better than they did in the beginning."

The expert noted that currently Iraq and Ba'athist rival Syria are bitter enemies. In addition, although Jordan remains formally at war with Israel, relations between the two have been marked by tacit cooperation in recent years. Nevertheless, "things can change quickly." Israel "must look at the eastern front as something that is unified" and could include armies not only from

Syria but also from Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the possibility of "some forces coming from Iran."

Right now that scenario is a nightmare, not reality. "Syria today is the main threat," the analyst said. President Hafez Assad—committed to the vision of a "greater Syria" including not only Lebanon but also most of Israel and Jordan—"is trying to build his forces as much as he can and get to the situation where he will have some strategic advantage over Israel."

The analyst could not confirm that Syria has received Soviet SS-23 surface-to-surface missiles and new MiG-29 fighter-bombers, in addition to SS-21 short-range missiles and MiG-27's already delivered. Another source said that MiG-29's first appeared outside the Soviet Union last month in India. Syrian pilots reportedly trained in them in Russia last year and delivery of the plane—of the same generation as the U.S. F-16 flown by Israel—is expected this year.

Damascus has already begun manufacturing chemical weapons. The IDF has started training and equipping troops to operate in chemically contaminated environments and to safeguard the civilian population. But, alluding to preemptive strikes or massive retaliation, the analyst said: "It will be a mistake for Syria to think that this [defensive preparations] alone will be Israel's answer." □

HEARD ON CAPITOL HILL

Lavi Passes Test

The Lavi successfully completed its first test flight on the path to becoming Israel's next-generation fighter-bomber. Meanwhile, two U.S. government studies on the aircraft have reportedly been completed. The Lavi is intended to provide Israel with a protective umbrella against hostile Arab states well-armed with Soviet, West European and even U.S. planes and defended by advanced Soviet ground-to-air missiles.

Capitol Hill sources indicated that a General Accounting Office (GAO) report due out last week would conclude that the final cost of producing the Lavi would fall between the \$15 million estimated by Israel and the \$22 million estimated by the U.S. Defense Department. The report, already several months overdue, had not been issued by press time.

One observer noted that the GAO report would come closer to Israel's original cost projections than those of the Defense Department and would support Israel's meth-

ods for reaching those estimates.

Dov Zakheim, U.S. Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and Resources, was in Israel last week to present the Defense Department's report on Lavi alternatives.

An Israeli official who attended the Zakheim meeting told an Israeli daily that the "most serious" alternative offered by the Americans is the production of F-16's in Israel—a proposal originally made by Israel in the late 1970's but twice rejected by the Carter Administration. Production may mean "marrying the shell of an F-16 with Israeli avionics" according to a Capitol Hill source. Other alternatives reportedly include purchasing F-16's, F-15's, F-18's or the AV-8B Harrier from the U.S.

The Zakheim report affirms that none of these alternatives provides the level of performance or mission capability of the Lavi, but could be cheaper to acquire. However, F-16's recently sold to Israel cost \$40 mil-

lion each—\$18 million more than the Pentagon's estimate for the Lavi. And Zakheim's study projects that an Israeli-built F-16 would cost \$17 million—\$2 million more than Israeli estimates for the Lavi. Observers also point out that building F-16's in Israel may be problematic since approval first must be obtained from the aircraft's four European co-producers.

Israel's Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin has imposed a \$550 million annual cap on Lavi production. Last year Congress made available for the Lavi project \$450 million of Israel's \$1.8 billion in U.S. military assistance.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres recently expressed support for the Lavi project as a boon to Israel's industrial and technological capability. The Israelis are setting up a working group to study Zakheim's recommendations. □

—J.R.

BACK PAGE

Quicksand, Lebanese Style

An Israeli doctor—called up for active military duty during the campaign to oust the PLO from Lebanon in 1982—later recalled an odd discovery the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) made in Beirut: “We found Lebanese Jews fighting on different sides, some with the Christians, some with the Moslems.” Jews living in Christian east Beirut joined their neighbors in battle—as did a few in the Moslem west, neutrality in such a situation being suspect.

The anecdote illustrates the circumstantial nature of alliances in Lebanon. So do some more recent events, which could imperil the past year and a half of relative calm along the Lebanese-Israeli border.

On Jan. 2 and 3 the Israeli Navy stopped passenger ferries from Cyprus to Jounieh, concerned that the PLO was using the route to reinfiltrate its terrorists into Lebanon. The port town of Jounieh, 10 miles north of Beirut, is a Maronite Christian stronghold.

Once enemies of the PLO and its Moslem leftist allies when Lebanon's civil wars erupted in 1975, some Maronites now reportedly are assisting—at \$1,000 to \$2,000 per head—the return of Yasir Arafat's loyalists. One reason is that various PLO factions have been fighting gunmen from Nabi Berri's Shi'ite Amal militia for most of the last three months. In this latest installment of “the camps war” the Syrian-backed Amal has besieged Palestinian Arab districts in and near Beirut and in southern Lebanon. Hundreds have died and thousands have been wounded.

The largely Maronite Catholic Lebanese Forces, allied with Israel in 1982, later lost territory—and therefore political influence—to Amal and its Druze allies led by Walid Jumblatt. By conniving in the return of the PLO to Beirut and the south, the Christians hope to weaken the Shi'ites and undermine Syrian President Hafez Assad's efforts to rearrange Lebanon to his liking.

Meanwhile, Berri and Jumblatt—another erstwhile ally of Arafat's—have vowed to prevent the PLO's return to a “state-within-a-state.” They remember the PLO's earlier depredations, fear intensified Israeli strikes against Palestinian terror bases in Lebanon, and reflect the hostility of their Syrian godfather toward Arafat. But Jumblatt's Druze have not joined Amal in the latest fighting, and without them—and without Syrian intervention—Amal appears unable to crush the PLO. This is partly because even pro-Syrian PLO groups have joined gunmen loyal to Arafat in fighting Amal.

Assad has been reluctant to commit the estimated 25,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon directly to battle against the PLO, probably fearing the resultant damage to his claims

of pan-Arab leadership. The failure of his Lebanese surrogates and the cooperation under fire of pro- and anti-Arafat PLO groups may induce Assad to take a new look at both Amin Gemayel, Lebanon's Christian President, and Arafat and either improve relations or “settle scores.”

With Berri's Amal bombarding Palestinian camps, the more radical, pro-Iran Shi'ite Hezbollah—presently sympathetic to the PLO—have staged new attacks on the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA), a largely Christian militia in the security zone just above the border. Six SLA men were reported killed in a Hezbollah assault on Jan. 2, after which Israeli helicopters attacked two Shi'ite villages in southern Lebanon. On Jan. 5, four more SLA men were killed by a roadside bomb one mile north of the border.

After withdrawing nearly all its forces from Lebanon in 1985, Israel has concentrated its attention on southern Lebanon, not on developments in Beirut or the northern part of the country. But Israeli sources say anything which might threaten the security of northern Israel will be answered by whatever means necessary.

Beneath Lebanon's shifting political alliances are four constants:

- The PLO's desire to use Lebanon as a base of attack against Israel;
- Syria's divide-and-conquer intervention;
- Refusal of Lebanese factions to rise above sectarianism to national responsibility, and
- Failure of the West to help restore even a semblance of order.

Together, they leave Israel with the threat or use of military force as the chief means to protect its northern border. □

—E.R.

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NEAR EAST REPORT

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EDITORIAL

Clarification Needed

Last month's stream of stories about U.S. shipments of arms to Iran and the diversion of funds to Nicaraguan rebels has become this month's flood. Investigations by special committees in the House and Senate to begin in January—and one by the special counsel—eventually will uncover most if not all of the story. But one detail, which has the potential to cloud U.S.-Israel relations, should be cleared up now.

Late in November, Attorney General Edwin Meese revealed that Swiss bank accounts had been established by representatives of the anti-Sandinista *contras*: "And this information was provided to representatives of the Israeli government—or representatives of Israel, I should say—and then these funds were put into the accounts." President Ronald Reagan then told *Time* Magazine that "another country" was involved in diverting the funds. He asserted that "they were overcharging and were apparently putting the money into bank accounts of the leaders of the *contras*."

However, as *NER* reported last week, Israel stood by the official statement issued by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The three said that payment for the U.S. weapons sent to Iran, by way of Israel, was made by Iranian agents directly to the Swiss accounts. They stressed that the money did not go through Israel and that Israeli leaders had no knowledge of the *contra* connection.

Later, as the Israeli daily *Davar* noted, "initial disclosures that have leaked from the Senate Intelligence Committee's hearings were favorable to Israel." The Swiss accounts apparently were controlled not by *contra* leaders but by the CIA, and held not just the \$10 million to \$35 million first mentioned in connection with the Iranian arms deal but "over \$500 million." The accounts "served as enormous clearing channels for many of the Administration's secret operations supporting pro-Western rebels, not only in Nicaragua. . . ."

In addition, more recent revelations by Saudi Arabian arms dealer and financier Adnan Khashoggi seem to indicate that he and Iranian arms dealer and middleman Manucher Ghorbanifar were in on the deal from the beginning and that Khashoggi arranged for the transfer of money from Iran to Switzerland. The Saudi Arabian government has insisted that it was not involved. However, many in Washington doubt that Khashoggi would have acted without official Saudi approval.

It may be that the President and the Attorney General spoke on the basis of incomplete or incorrect information. It is almost certain that the full story will be revealed eventually. But rather than let a cloud form needlessly over U.S.-Israel ties, the Administration would do well to clarify those early pronouncements.

□

VIEWING THE NEWS

New Peace Call

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir renewed Jerusalem's call for a political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Shamir said, "There is only one path: the path of peace, of negotiations. By this path it is possible to attain many solutions, even with those who are considered to be tough and fanatic" (*Kol Yisrael*, Dec. 11).

Shamir expressed regret that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak "had abandoned the spirit of the Camp David Accords and that King Hussein was not a partner in those accords." He called on them "to return immediately to the negotiating table." Noting that Mubarak had told the French magazine *Le Monde* that everything now depends on Shamir, the Prime Minister said, "How I wish this is so! . . . If every-

thing really depends on Shamir, then everything will be all right."

No Breakthrough

Despite recent reports of contacts between Israel and the Peoples Republic of China, Israel's Consul General in Hong Kong said that his country "should not harbor any expectations or entertain any illusions about the chances of establishing official relations with China" (*Davar*, Dec. 12). Reuven Merhav said that "despite the rapprochement and slight change in ties between the two countries, one should not expect a breakthrough."

The Consul General noted that Chinese officials are interested in Israel's scientific and agricultural achievements, but official Chinese policy still bars the purchase of Israeli goods. Merhav predicted it will take

at least five years before Peking begins to establish official relations with Jerusalem.

Waldheim Dinners

A Vienna newspaper reported that "the Arab ambassadors accredited to Austria will give a gala dinner for President [Kurt] Waldheim next week. Political circles consider the invitation a demonstrative diplomatic signal, which is to continue the good relations of the Arabs with Waldheim that were established during his tenure as U.N. Secretary General" (*Neue Kronen-Zeitung*, Dec. 3).

The Austrian Embassy in Washington confirmed that the dinner was held and that the Saudi ambassador, on behalf of the other Arab diplomats, gave a speech in support of Waldheim. A similar dinner was held previously by Latin American envoys at which the Mexican ambassador spoke in support of the Austrian President.

□

N.E.R. INTERVIEW

Zakheim on Qualitative Edge

"I don't think we are on the threshold of a Middle East arms race in which Israel cannot keep up. . . . I don't see why it should lose its qualitative edge," U.S. Deputy Undersecretary of Defense Dov Zakheim told *NER* recently.

Zakheim, in charge of Planning and Resources at the Pentagon, is known for his view that Israel has underestimated the costs of its Lavi fighter-bomber project. But he said he was "not out to kill the Lavi." Israel's Defense Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, has imposed a "cap" on the amount of U.S. aid to be used for the project—no more than \$550 million out of the \$1.8 billion in annual military assistance. That "has changed the nature of the discussion," Zakheim noted.

Although he questioned whether Israel can build the "next generation" fighter-bomber on schedule and in the numbers it wants while staying within the spending cap, Zakheim stressed that "we are trying to be helpful. We're not telling them what to do."

The Pentagon planner visited Israel last fall. He pointed out that in addition to the Lavi, Jerusalem is focusing on three other "lesser but still important" military spend-

ing programs. These are upgrading the Merkava tank, naval modernization and the continued upgrading of American-built F-16 fighter-bombers with Israeli-designed additions. [Other sources said that Israel also wants to expand and modernize its helicopter fleet, a fourth "big ticket" item.]

Twin goals of the \$1-billion naval modernization are the replacement of six older surface ships with four new missile boats and construction of three new diesel-powered submarines to replace the present three-sub force early in the next decade. Zakheim called the new class of missile boats "very, very capable" and said they would be able to "strike at some of Israel's most distant potential Arab adversaries."

He noted that the Merkava had earned a "good reputation" but added that "any major military which relies as heavily on tanks as Israel . . . essentially is always looking to modernize—not necessarily the vehicle but what goes into it." Upgrading the Merkava could include improving its guns and fire control systems, Zakheim explained.

He believes that Israel can structure these major programs and stay within its own domestic military budget—now reportedly about \$2.5 billion annually—and

the \$1.8 billion supplied by the United States. "But that means that some projects will be stretched out or [otherwise] altered." He added that Israel must maintain "a high level of readiness and training" for the complex defense systems it needs, and that too is expensive.

Based on his most recent visit, he said Israeli officials recognize that in the atmosphere of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction legislation any increase in direct U.S. aid is unlikely. "In future years, keeping constant at \$1.8 billion—without an adjustment for inflation—will be hard enough."

One way Israel can keep its qualitative edge, according to Zakheim, is by "considering whether its management structure in the defense area has kept up with its 'phenomenal success' in developing new arms. He said that the Israeli Defense Ministry has "a very capable economics office, but it is very small."

He added that "a lot of Israeli economists are discussing whether the defense sector is as efficient as it could be." However, given the talents of the people, "I'm optimistic about Israel retaining its qualitative edge." □

HEARD ON CAPITOL HILL

Relief on Military Debt

A plan to restructure military loan repayment schedules affecting Egypt, Israel and other countries has been approved by the Reagan Administration. The plan, which would apply to all Foreign Military Sales (FMS) loan recipients, was prepared by Secretary of State George Shultz and Treasury Secretary James Baker at the urging of Sens. ROBERT KASTEN (R-Wis.) and DANIEL INOUE (D-Hawaii).

Kasten and Inouye had been advocating such a form of debt relief for more than a year. The loan repayment terms now in effect and which the plan will replace include interest rates set in the 1970's which were much higher than rates currently available. The high annual repayment requirements have diluted the effectiveness of other U.S. assistance programs and imposed a heavy burden on Israel, Egypt and other FMS loan recipients.

President Reagan has approved the two-tier plan. Under the first option, borrowers could repay all outstanding principal and

accumulated interest on their loans without penalty. The second option would reduce the rates on high-interest FMS loans to current market levels and capitalize the difference, to be repaid with interest after the original loan matures.

Israel probably would choose the second option since it does not have the cash to repay its high-interest debt of \$5.5 billion. If Israel decides to participate in the second option, it will mean a savings of over \$200 million for the remainder of fiscal 1987, and some \$300 million over each of the next three years if forecasts prove accurate. The savings will diminish as loans are paid off over the next two decades.

FMS borrowers like Israel will benefit from a temporary reduction in debt service cost and from the chance to restructure and improve their economies. The result will be a large "balloon" payment at the loans' maturity. For Israel, that will come due about the year 2009.

State Department officials were quick to

point out that the United States will recover the full value of each loan within the term of the contract. Neither option will require any new legislation or budget authority, nor does the plan violate any Gramm-Rudman-Hollings requirements.

Administration officials stressed that the debt refinancing program would lose its effectiveness if foreign aid to participating states were cut. They argue that it would not be in America's national security interest to offset the short-term financial benefit to FMS recipient states by reducing their foreign aid.

Egypt, which owes \$4.5 billion, and Israel have the largest FMS debt burdens, although the Administration proposals also are of interest to Turkey, South Korea, Spain, Pakistan, Morocco and Tunisia. President Hosni Mubarak reportedly has sent several high-level representatives to Washington to discuss debt relief for the troubled Egyptian economy. □

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"King Hussein's main concern is not solving the Arab-Israeli conflict," said Robert Satloff, a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "He is primarily interested in making sure that there is a Hashemite kingdom to pass on to his heirs."

These days Hussein has plenty to worry about. In his new book, *Troubles on the East Bank*, published by Praeger, Satloff explains that the threat of growing Islamic fundamentalism and a near-bankrupt economy are the most pressing issues confronting the King today.

Jordan's economic woes may be traced to the Persian Gulf, where over-production of oil and dropping prices have reduced the revenues of oil-producing nations. Arab countries owe Jordan more than \$3.6 billion in aid. In addition, Jordanian citizens have been laid off from their jobs in the Gulf and are returning home. This has reduced the amount of remittances received from Jordanians abroad and increased unemployment. Jordanians, who have become accustomed to economic growth and lucrative Gulf employment, now must tighten their belts.

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N.E.R. INTERVIEW

Zakheim on Qualitative Edge

"I don't think we are on the threshold of a Middle East arms race in which Israel cannot keep up. . . . I don't see why it should lose its qualitative edge," U.S. Deputy Undersecretary of Defense Dov Zakheim told *NER* recently.

Zakheim, in charge of Planning and Resources at the Pentagon, is known for his view that Israel has underestimated the costs of its Lavi fighter-bomber project. But he said he was "not out to kill the Lavi." Israel's Defense Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, has imposed a "cap" on the amount of U.S. aid to be used for the project—no more than \$550 million out of the \$1.8 billion in annual military assistance. That "has changed the nature of the discussion," Zakheim noted.

Although he questioned whether Israel can build the "next generation" fighter-bomber on schedule and in the numbers it wants while staying within the spending cap, Zakheim stressed that "we are trying to be helpful. We're not telling them what to do."

The Pentagon planner visited Israel last fall. He pointed out that in addition to the Lavi, Jerusalem is focusing on three other "lesser but still important" military spend-

ing programs. These are upgrading the Merkava tank, naval modernization and the continued upgrading of American-built F-16 fighter-bombers with Israeli-designed additions. [Other sources said that Israel also wants to expand and modernize its helicopter fleet, a fourth "big ticket" item.]

Twin goals of the \$1-billion naval modernization are the replacement of six older surface ships with four new missile boats and construction of three new diesel-powered submarines to replace the present three-sub force early in the next decade. Zakheim called the new class of missile boats "very, very capable" and said they would be able to "strike at some of Israel's most distant potential Arab adversaries."

He noted that the Merkava had earned a "good reputation" but added that "any major military which relies as heavily on tanks as Israel . . . essentially is always looking to modernize—not necessarily the vehicle but what goes into it." Upgrading the Merkava could include improving its guns and fire control systems, Zakheim explained.

He believes that Israel can structure these major programs and stay within its own domestic military budget—now reportedly about \$2.5 billion annually—and

the \$1.8 billion supplied by the United States. "But that means that some projects will be stretched out or [otherwise] altered." He added that Israel must maintain "a high level of readiness and training" for the complex defense systems it needs, and that too is expensive.

Based on his most recent visit, he said Israeli officials recognize that in the atmosphere of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction legislation any increase in direct U.S. aid is unlikely. "In future years, keeping constant at \$1.8 billion—without an adjustment for inflation—will be hard enough."

One way Israel can keep its qualitative edge, according to Zakheim, is by "considering whether its management structure in the defense area has kept up with its 'phenomenal success' in developing new arms. He said that the Israeli Defense Ministry has "a very capable economics office, but it is very small."

He added that "a lot of Israeli economists are discussing whether the defense sector is as efficient as it could be." However, given the talents of the people, "I'm optimistic about Israel retaining its qualitative edge." □

HEARD ON CAPITOL HILL

Relief on Military Debt

A plan to restructure military loan repayment schedules affecting Egypt, Israel and other countries has been approved by the Reagan Administration. The plan, which would apply to all Foreign Military Sales (FMS) loan recipients, was prepared by Secretary of State George Shultz and Treasury Secretary James Baker at the urging of Sens. ROBERT KASTEN (R-Wis.) and DANIEL INOUE (D-Hawaii).

Kasten and Inouye had been advocating such a form of debt relief for more than a year. The loan repayment terms now in effect and which the plan will replace include interest rates set in the 1970's which were much higher than rates currently available. The high annual repayment requirements have diluted the effectiveness of other U.S. assistance programs and imposed a heavy burden on Israel, Egypt and other FMS loan recipients.

President Reagan has approved the two-tier plan. Under the first option, borrowers could repay all outstanding principal and

accumulated interest on their loans without penalty. The second option would reduce the rates on high-interest FMS loans to current market levels and capitalize the difference, to be repaid with interest after the original loan matures.

Israel probably would choose the second option since it does not have the cash to repay its high-interest debt of \$5.5 billion. If Israel decides to participate in the second option, it will mean a savings of over \$200 million for the remainder of fiscal 1987, and some \$300 million over each of the next three years if forecasts prove accurate. The savings will diminish as loans are paid off over the next two decades.

FMS borrowers like Israel will benefit from a temporary reduction in debt service cost and from the chance to restructure and improve their economies. The result will be a large "balloon" payment at the loans' maturity. For Israel, that will come due about the year 2009.

State Department officials were quick to

point out that the United States will recover the full value of each loan within the term of the contract. Neither option will require any new legislation or budget authority, nor does the plan violate any Gramm-Rudman-Hollings requirements.

Administration officials stressed that the debt refinancing program would lose its effectiveness if foreign aid to participating states were cut. They argue that it would not be in America's national security interest to offset the short-term financial benefit to FMS recipient states by reducing their foreign aid.

Egypt, which owes \$4.5 billion, and Israel have the largest FMS debt burdens, although the Administration proposals also are of interest to Turkey, South Korea, Spain, Pakistan, Morocco and Tunisia. President Hosni Mubarak reportedly has sent several high-level representatives to Washington to discuss debt relief for the troubled Egyptian economy. □

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BACK PAGE

The Inconvenient Sharansky

(First of two parts.)

Seated at a dining room table, talking with a small group of journalists, Anatoly Shcharansky (Hebraicized to Natan Sharansky) speaks with unpretentious but undoubted authority. Physically, he is short but sturdy-looking. An engaging smile accompanies a playful sense of humor.

Nevertheless, Sharansky's words carry a sense of urgency. The plight of Soviet Jewry—which he himself epitomized during more than eight years of imprisonment—actually may be worsening under the supposedly “reformist” regime of Mikhail Gorbachev.

Sharansky fears the West is falling for Gorbachev's “very strong public relations campaign.” That helps explain its failure to react to a new, restrictive emigration law; the publicity given the release of refusenik David Goldfarb but only the passing mention of the death of dissident Anatoly Marchenko; the silence on deteriorating conditions in Russian prison camps; the absence of loud demands that Moscow open the gates to the 400,000 Soviet Jews who already have taken the first steps to emigrate.

Refuseniks view the Kremlin's new law “as the most serious step against emigration” since the 1972 education tax. That tax led Congress to pass the landmark Jackson-Vanik amendment linking U.S.-Soviet trade to Soviet Jewish emigration.

Sharansky said he hopes one of the first acts of the new Congress in January will be a measure reminding Moscow that progress on trade and arms control will be tied to its human rights practices, and it is here that he can be inconvenient. By insisting that the East-West agenda is linked to Soviet observance of human rights, he contradicts those who believe that no matter how heavily the Soviets oppress their own and other countries' citizens, weapons agreements *must* and therefore *can* be reached. And his is not the quiet approach.

“The West wants to be deceived” regarding the Soviets, Sharansky said, adding that he knew why. “I remember, especially in the first months in my isolation cell—and sometimes they are threatening to kill you—you start thinking. . . . ‘My God, these are the same kind of people I am. Maybe we can find some common ground.’ I had to remind myself, no, these people have absolutely different moral principles.”

The process is the same with Western public opinion, Sharansky maintains. Living under the nuclear threat, people are afraid. So they wonder, “Why shouldn't we try to find a common language with the

Soviets?” But in searching for common ground on nuclear weapons control they may overlook the nature of the society they want to deal with.

“Whether you link arms control and human rights, this linkage exists intrinsically,” Sharansky said. If East and West disarmed tomorrow, a new arms race would begin the day after, as open, democratic societies sought ways to defend themselves against “closed, secret, well-organized societies with the spirit of an aggressive ideology. . . . The best test of real change in this closed society can be the fate of the 400,000 Jews.”

Sharansky noted that Marchenko—a non-Jew who joined him and others in founding the Helsinki monitoring group—died about three-and-a-half months into a hunger strike in Chistopol prison. A similar fast of approximately the same duration once had brought him “close to death” in Chistopol. Sharansky said he informed President Reagan that “now Yosef Begun [another prominent refusenik] is in the same prison. It is the time when you should protest.”

Private citizens “must not be afraid to irritate the world” with the problem of Soviet Jewry. They should “make it a link to the cultural, political and economic interests of the Soviet Union.” Sharansky recommended that American Jews boycott companies trading with Russia and suggested a campaign against the Soviets' human rights violations similar to the anti-apartheid movement aimed at South Africa. Otherwise, Moscow “will never open the gates for mass emigration.” □

(Next: Sharansky on Israel.)

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NEAR EAST REPORT

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EDITORIAL

Saudis Target Israel

Saudi Arabia, that oft-described "moderate" American ally in the Middle East, is in the midst of a multi-billion dollar arms buildup, the *Washington Post* reported last week. That is not surprising, considering the external threat from Iran and the internal menace of subversion. The former grows each time Iran advances in its war with Iraq (which at times has also threatened Saudi Arabia); the latter builds as reduced oil income forces an economic retrenchment which could cause trouble for the ruling family.

Yet the target of the Saudi buildup is neither Iran nor domestic subversives, the *Post* reported. It is Israel. This, however, should surprise only those who slight the importance of Saudi belief and rhetoric and who forget Riyadh's participation in previous Arab-Israeli wars.

The ruling house of Saud wrested control of the country from the Hashemite family of Jordan's King Hussein in the 1920's. Its legitimacy rests on its constantly reiterated status of "custodian of the two holy places," that is, sovereignty over the cities of Mecca and Medina. But challenged by the Islamic Republic of Iran—which accepts neither monarchy nor Saudi claims to unblemished piety—and complying with its own strict Wahhabi school of Islam, Riyadh also stresses its concern for Jerusalem, which Islam claims as its third holy place.

Saudi Arabia is spending \$17 to \$18 billion a year on military expansion—a sum equal to about 75% of Israel's gross national product—to demonstrate that concern. Two examples highlight the anti-Israel nature of Riyadh's weapons buildup.

The kingdom is seeking bids from Western European countries on a fleet of six to eight attack submarines and two dozen armed anti-submarine aircraft. But the Persian Gulf with its crucial oil-shipping lanes is too shallow for effective submarine warfare. The Red Sea and the Mediterranean are not. And through them Israel, which operates three aging

British-made submarines, imports most of the raw materials and finished products on which it depends.

Saudi Arabia also recently purchased 72 British-built Tornado fighter-bombers. This came after Congressional resistance—caused by Saudi failures in the Middle East peace process—sidelined an Administration proposal to sell the Saudis 40 additional F-15's. The majority of the Tornados will be "configured" as bombers, greatly expanding Saudi Arabia's ground attack capabilities.

Despite its "moderate" label, Saudi Arabia consistently has advocated "jihad" or holy war to "liberate Jerusalem from the Jews." Its 1982 Fahd "peace plan" for the Middle East calls for a Palestinian Arab state with Jerusalem as its capital. While it speaks of peace for all countries in the region, the plan never mentions Israel and uses Arabic phrasing which suggests that a Jewish state would not be among those to be recognized.

Western experts sometimes belittle Israel's obsession with its military "qualitative edge" and worst-case planning which envisions a multi-lateral or even united Arab threat. Yet Israel has no choice, especially not when a country like Saudi Arabia, with real dangers to contend with, asserts that Israel is its number one enemy.

The United States and Western Europe have the means—including military forces—to protect their interests in the Persian Gulf and Arabian peninsula. Selling new submarines and fighter-bombers to a country bent on threatening Israel does not safeguard those interests—nor those of the smaller Gulf oil states with which the Saudis have disputed borders. Congress has expressed concern about several proposed arms sales to Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia. Obviously, the Administration needs to re-examine an approach which only escalates the already ominous Middle East arms race.

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VIEWING THE NEWS

Saudi Security

Austrian Interior Minister Karl Blecha became the first Western politician to tour Saudi Arabia's elaborate anti-terrorism/internal security training center. Austrian journalists were shown tank-mounted cannons which can spray gas or water to control demonstrations. Journalists also learned that Saudi citizens and pilgrims to Mecca are given computerized identity cards which list all pertinent information

about their families and travels—a vast source of information for Saudi intelligence. (*Neue Arbeiter Zeitung*, Feb. 9).

Jordan PLO Session

Eleven months after Jordan's King Hussein ejected him from the country, PLO second-in-command Khalil Wazir (Abu Jihad) returned to Jordan last week for discussions with Minister for Occupied Land

Affairs Marwan Doudine (Iraqi News Agency, Feb. 12). The meetings were initiated when Saudi Arabia contributed \$9.5 million to an Arab League fund for the Palestinians administered jointly by Jordan and the PLO.

Although the PLO executive committee had expressed hope for broader political ties with Jordan, Doudine emphasized that the meeting did not mean a resumption of cooperation between the two sides. □

PERSPECTIVE

The Fruits of Peace

Back in 1979, in the early days of Israeli-Egyptian peace, Congress approved a \$4.8-billion aid package to "support the process." Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) introduced an amendment to set aside money to promote scientific and technological cooperation between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The initial grant for the Waxman program was just \$50,000.

In the eight years since its creation, the program has brought Israeli and Egyptian scientists, academics and administrators together to work on common problems in health, agriculture and the environment. Cooperation has continued quietly beneath the din of political difficulties which have strained the peace. "We are not changing the major patterns," said one program participant. "We are trying to foster people-to-people interaction. The big changes will be made in the political arena."

The program has been administered from the outset by the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID). AID official Gerald Kamens explained that the fund is used to provide money for science-oriented projects initiated by non-governmental parties. Kamens said that "the program's real concern is to provide an opportunity for these people to interact with one another." Projects must have scientific and cooperation components and must be approved by the participant's government. Four multi-year projects have evolved as the principal recipients of Waxman program funds.

The Cooperation for Arid Land Agricultural Research (CALAR) program at San Diego State University coordinates a project which concentrates on how to coax pro-

ductive crops from the desert—a problem common to both Israel and Egypt. Researchers have already created strains of melon and tomato which may be grown using brackish desert groundwater.

A spinoff of the San Diego program is a New Jersey-based project which studies water pollution, lake management and seafood toxins. A project coordinated by the National Institutes of Health is conducting research in such animal- and insect-borne diseases as malaria and rift valley fever. The fourth project is coordinated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and studies cattle raising.

Although research is conducted independently in Israel and Egypt, steering committees from each country coordinate their work during small semi-annual meetings. In addition, researchers cooperate through consultations and replication of results and training.

The program began in 1979, but it was not until 1985 that Egyptian participants first traveled to Israel. Mohamed El-Assal, coordinator of the CALAR project, said that "the great majority" of Egyptians would not visit Israel until Israeli troops left south Lebanon and until the dispute over the Taba enclave in Sinai was resolved. The Egyptian government has occasionally approved cooperative projects but denied scientists passports to leave the country. Kamens explained that while these scientists tend to be "apolitical," they are subjected to political and economic pressures from fundamentalists and others opposed to Camp David.

AID has sought to limit publicity for the program to prevent a backlash against

Egyptian participants. "Too much publicity could kill the program," said Kamens. As a result, AID receives few requests to fund new projects.

Waxman and others believe that AID's passive approach must be changed to encourage the program's expansion. The Congressman has begun studying ways for the program to pursue new ideas more aggressively and which would be free from federal budget cuts. Although the program will receive a total of almost \$30 million by the end of 1987, funding levels have fluctuated over the years. AID officials have lowered their original 1988 request for \$3.8 million to \$5 million due to constraints on the federal budget.

Waxman told a recent conference sponsored by the Center for Social Policy in the Middle East of the Heller School of Brandeis University that the time has come for a new approach: "Now that regional cooperation has proven itself, we must become more ambitious. For the fact is that the present program is tiny. It has reached only a few hundred scientists. . . . Regional cooperation must begin to behave in a more activist way—not simply channeling money to the same projects year after year but reaching out to new participants in new fields."

El-Assal is not surprised that Egyptian and Israeli scientists have worked together despite the political maelstrom that so often swirled about them. "These scientists are looking forward to any excuse for cooperation and peace. Down deep everybody is sick of conflict and wars and looking for any way to begin a new chapter of peace." —J.R.

HEARD IN WASHINGTON

Senators: "Close PLO Offices"

Senators Robert Dole (R-Kan.) and Robert Kennedy (D-Mass.) have called on the U.S. government to close PLO offices in New York and Washington, D.C.

In a syndicated "Face Off" dialogue on Washington's WTOP radio broadcast earlier this month, Dole said, "It's outrageous that this terrorist organization—which is out to destroy the state of Israel—can operate freely here . . . the PLO stands for

things that all Americans abhor: terrorism, violence and hatred." Dole called for the closing of the PLO's office in New York, and for legislation, if needed, to close the terrorist organization's "propaganda office" in the capital.

Kennedy agreed and praised the work of Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) who has asked the Justice Department whether the Washington office may be closed. In re-

sponse to these inquiries by Lautenberg and former Sen. Jeremiah Denton (R-Ala.), the Justice Department recently told Congress that although a recent inspection of the office revealed "no significant violations," the department is requesting additional material to reveal the group's activities "more completely." □

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ANALYSIS

Experts Examine Peace Prospects

The years 1978 and 1979 were "the most creative period of [Middle East] peace-making we've ever been engaged in," former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis asserted at a recent discussion among past and present policymakers. Lewis, who served in Jerusalem from 1977 through 1985, said that the authority of Menachem Begin in Israel and Anwar Sadat in Egypt was not the only explanation for the U.S.-mediated peace between the two countries.

"In those years Begin stood astride the Israeli political process. . . . Whatever he could be led to accept, the nation could." ~~The same was true with Sadat and Egypt.~~ Even Jordan's King Hussein was stronger then than he is now, Lewis told participants at a forum sponsored by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

But in addition, "there was an inexplicable readiness for risk-taking in Washington at the time." That will not be the case for the next two years, the former ambassador, now a fellow at the Brookings Institution, added. Regardless, Middle East politics "are wrong for a breakthrough" in the last quarter of the Reagan Administration, and so the focus should be on manageable, incremental steps.

Instead of launching a top-level diplomatic initiative—for example with the Secretary of State or special emissaries shuttling between regional capitals—the Administration should continue to rely on its ambassadors in the area and on visits by

Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy. That will "keep the United States in the game," Lewis said. "Don't give up on the possibility of an unforeseen breakthrough, but don't count on it."

The Institute's executive director, Martin Indyk, argued that before the Iranian arms affair broke last November, the U.S. position in the Middle East was "pretty sound. The Soviets had made no new inroads—no Arab state turned to the Soviets out of disillusionment with the United States"—and Moscow's proxies, including Syria and South Yemen, faced growing problems of their own. An "informal strategic consensus" including Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt and Israel was emerging. At roughly the same time, Libya was losing ground in Chad.

"The effect of the Iran scandal [on these developments] is not very great," Indyk maintained. Pro-Western Arab countries still look to Washington—even if as "jilted lovers." He stressed that strengthening Egyptian-Israeli relations should be emphasized in the next two years.

Indyk cautioned against U.S. exploration of an international Middle East peace conference as demanded by King Hussein. "There is the danger of the slippery slope—once we start, can we step back and say no?" Exploring the possibility of such a conference could open the door to Soviet and PLO participation. Their participation might sabotage the conference itself and simultaneously undermine the other small-

er steps being taken toward peace.

Harold Saunders, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs in the late 1970's, said that policymakers should focus not on getting an Arab-Israeli peace process started again but on "defining the problem in a different way." He recommended that the United States help construct a situation in which the parties to the conflict can build relationships which then allow them to solve the problem.

In the 1970's, "negotiating breakthroughs only took place after political breakthroughs," Saunders, now also at Brookings, recalled. He argued that "we are dealing with fundamental political problems . . . not whether the PLO accepts U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 . . . but how to demonstrate to Israel [and its neighbors] that there is a way a peaceful relationship can be developed."

And Graeme Bannerman, former staff director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, reminded the audience that the chilly reception given the Administration's requested increase in the foreign affairs budget "shows how Congress brings other factors" into the Middle East equation.

Bannerman added: "I don't know anyone on the Hill who had his view on the Middle East changed one iota" by Israel's involvement in the Administration's arms dealings with Iran. "Congressional support for Israel is firm and has not eroded." □

OP-ED

Treaty Still Not Implemented

On Feb. 19, 1986—after 37 years of struggle—the U.S. Senate approved ratification of the international Genocide Convention. However, the decision will not be final until Congress passes implementing legislation and the President signs it.

Whether another extended period of time and prolonged debate will take place before implementing legislation is acted upon is not certain.

On the eve of the Senate vote last year, then-Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) declared: "We have waited long enough." Dole's declaration ought to guide Congressional action now. Technically, federal criminal laws must be amended, by adding a new crime of genocide, with appropriate definitions and penalties consistent with the Constitution.

Last summer the Reagan Administration, through the Department of Justice, took the first step; it prepared draft legislation for Congress.

But neither the Senate nor the House judiciary committees scheduled hearings, let alone acted on the measure. Organizations including the American Bar Association and B'nai B'rith will focus attention on these two committees, chaired respectively by Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.) and Rep. Peter Rodino (D-N.J.).

Ratification will enable the United States to champion human rights more effectively. All too often, the Soviet Union has challenged American credibility on the issue by citing Congress' failure to ratify the treaty. According to Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wis.)—who gave more than 3,000 speeches over 19 years on the Senate floor to urge ratification—the U.S. delay was "one of the most useful propaganda clubs the Soviet Union has ever had."

In addition, ratification would end the anomaly of placing official emphasis upon commemorating the Holocaust but not acting on the only treaty specifically making it

an international crime to engage in mass murder.

Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel put it succinctly: "I am not sure whether such treaties will prevent mass murder, but the absence of such treaties may give the enemies of mankind the wrong signal."

In fact, a dozen instances of genocide—including examples in Cambodia and East Timor, of the Christian Acholi tribe in Uganda and of Bengalis in what was East Pakistan—have occurred since the U.N. adopted the treaty in 1948. The inability to prevent specific instances of mass murder must not eliminate the determination to do so. Our moral posture must be, as Wiesel said, that "we cannot tolerate a world in which genocide is being perpetrated." □

—William Korey.

Korey is Director of International Policy Research for B'nai B'rith International.

BACK PAGE

Arab Arab-Baiting

Following the arrests in Los Angeles late last month of seven Palestinian Arabs—all Jordanian citizens—and the Kenyan-born wife of one of them, several Arab-American representatives renewed charges that their community has been singled out for harassment by the federal government. One alleged "an obvious racist effort to incite fear and violence" against Arab-Americans. He claimed the Los Angeles case was meant to "create a precedent to allow the rounding up, detention and expulsion of immigrants based solely on their ethnic and political beliefs. . . ."

Reality, or self-induced hysteria?

Seven of those picked up by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, following an FBI investigation, were described as members or associates of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The PFLP, led by the pro-Soviet George Habash, is one of the three core factions of the PLO, along with Yasir Arafat's Fatah and Naif Hawatmeh's Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). Habash's bloody brand of politics can be seen in the fact that he attacks Arafat for being too "moderate." His group was responsible for a number of aircraft hijackings—including the 1976 Entebbe piracy—and, reportedly, some of the attacks on U.S. Marines in Beirut in 1983.

The FBI found no evidence that California PFLP supporters planned to commit a violent act in the near future. Instead, INS decided to seek their deportation on grounds of immigration violations. One reason for the low-level approach, apparently, was to avoid publicity while Americans continue to be taken and held prisoner by Arab terrorist groups in Lebanon. Habash himself had urged the "liquidation of U.S. interests throughout the Arab world" after America's bombing of Libya last April.

INS denied the existence of any plan to round up and expel groups of Arabs in the United States. It did acknowledge contingency planning to deal with possible outbreaks of terrorism in this country. Nevertheless, an official of one Arab American group blasted away at "wholesale character assassination" based on ethnic background.

INS officials in Los Angeles said they were ready to go forward with the case. They should, not to discriminate against any particular group, but to prove, if they can, that acts punishable by deportation were committed.

But the larger issue—alleged anti-Arab or anti-Islamic harassment, deserves a separate discussion. The government must be in the business of investigating terrorist groups and their representatives on Ameri-

can soil. Support of a murderous group like the PSLP is a legitimate cause for concern.

Underlying the larger issue is the fact that a considerable amount of terrorism stems from the Middle East, is conducted by Arab Moslems and is often sponsored by Arab and Islamic states such as Syria, Libya and Iran. The Islamic Jihad terrorist group chose its name not as an advertising gimmick but as a statement of principle. So too with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Some pro-Arab spokesmen pretend that to recognize these points is to label all or most Arabs or Moslems as terrorists. What they really want to do is to make honest discussion of the problem impossible.

They may have additional reasons to cry wolf, to be Arab Arab-baiters. They may hope to increase the generally small memberships of their organizations by convincing Arab Americans of a bogus governmental threat to their status.

But real Arab Arab-baiting is going on today—in the Middle East. The siege of Palestinian Arab districts in Lebanon by the Amal militia—Shi'ite Arabs versus Sunni Arabs—has in recent months killed more than 500 people and reportedly reduced starving Palestinians to eating dogs and cats. One thing which makes the Shi'ites fight so brutally is the memory of PLO brutality before Israel ousted the PLO from Lebanon in 1982.

Those Arab American groups which insist on apologizing for the PLO, which invite the likes of Louis Farrakhan and Yasir Arafat to address their conventions, which deny the violent reality of much inter-Arab Middle Eastern politics, which campaign more actively against Israel than for Arab Americans do have a problem. And it is not U.S. government harassment.

—E.R.

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NEAR EAST REPORT

WASHINGTON WEEKLY ON AMERICAN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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EDITORIAL

Beyond the Difficulties

It was reported as *NER* went to press that Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres—leaders, respectively, of the Likud and Labor blocs in the national unity government—agreed that a two-member panel composed of former Supreme Court Chief Judge Moshe Landau and former Military Chief of Staff Zvi Izur should investigate Israel's handling of the Jonathan Pollard spy case.

In agreeing to the probe, Shamir reversed his original opposition. Knesset Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Abba Eban already had scheduled a parliamentary inquiry after calling for top-level "soul searching" and after former Mossad Chief Isser Harel labeled the case "the worst bungled affair in Israel's history." Harel said, "We must know how it happened so that something like this is not repeated."

Exactly. The case—in which a civilian U.S. Navy intelligence analyst confessed to spying for Israel and working with several Israeli officials in the process—seriously strained U.S.-Israel relations. Last week a top Justice Department official publicly doubted Israel's assertion that the case was an isolated result of a "rogue operation." A thorough investigation in Jerusalem can help correct the mistakes which led to the Pollard affair and help ease the strained relationship.

This is important because, despite buffeting from the spy

case and the Iran arms affair, strong ties between the United States and Israel remain vital for both countries. Neither case changes the fact that, given the structural problems of most Arab states, America has only one strong ally in the Middle East. That ally is Israel.

And neither alters the reality that for Israel, a small democracy almost isolated by hostile neighbors, its ties to the world's greatest democracy continue to be of paramount importance.

This time, the ball is in Israel's court. One result of its Pollard case investigation should be to make certain that the miscalculations which led to such a criminal adventure are not repeated. An accounting by policy-makers of Israel's role in the Iran arms shipments should examine whether Israel did not focus on Iraqi military might to the point of underestimating the danger of Iranian Islamic fundamentalism (*NER*, Nov. 17).

Meanwhile, supporters of strong U.S.-Israel relations need to remember that, regardless of the current difficulties, this is a long-term effort. It is not a campaign which can be won by sunshine soldiers. The agenda—foreign aid, strategic cooperation, joint anti-tactical ballistic missile research, arms sales, diplomatic cooperation, the Arab-Israeli peace process and more—remains largely unchanged. As for the current problems, it is not a matter of "putting them behind us"; it is a matter of learning from them so that we can move forward. □

VIEWING THE NEWS

Iranian Welcomed

"Thousands" of Lebanese Shi'ite Moslems welcomed the new Iranian ambassador to Beirut (Tehran Radio, Mar. 7). In Iran, President Ali Khamenei told Friday worshippers that his country has called on Syria to punish those responsible for killing 23 members of the pro-Iranian Hezbollah when Syrian troops took over west Beirut last month. Khamenei said Damascus' prestige could be "tarnished" by the murders.

Some observers have said that Syria—which unlike most other Arab states backs Persian Iran in the war against Iraq—may face a showdown with the Khoemeini regime. Damascus wants to dominate all factions in Lebanon, including Hezbollah and the estimated 2,000 Iranian Revolutionary Guards in the Bekaa Valley. Hezbollah, in

the meantime, may be forging closer ties with Yasir Arafat's PLO.

Assad's Vow

Syrian President Hafez Assad "re-affirmed his commitment to regaining the Golan Heights from Israel, stressing that Syria has 'a date' for liberating the Heights and telling the 'heroes of the resistance in the Golan' that Syria will not forfeit an inch of this territory" (Damascus Radio, Mar. 8). Some Israeli analysts have said that Assad may consider 1987—the 800th anniversary of Saladin's defeat of the Crusaders—an historic year in his struggle with Israel.

Meanwhile, hundreds of Druze students on the Golan participated in violent pro-Syrian demonstrations (Israel Defense Forces Radio, Mar. 8). Nine policemen were injured and five residents arrested.

Reconciliation

Khalil Wazir (also known as Abu Jihad), one of Arafat's top assistants, headed a Fatah delegation to Libya and discussed a reconciliation between the PLO mainstream and Libyan leader Col. Muammar Qaddafi (Voice of Palestine, Mar. 5). The station in North Yemen said Wazir's group heard Qaddafi deliver a speech "in which he stressed the importance of Palestinian national unity"

Previously, the Libyan dictator supported the comparatively more radical anti-Arafat, pro-Syrian PLO factions and now reportedly is trying to mediate between them. Arab sources said Qaddafi may think that Syria went too far with its large-scale military intervention in Beirut. □

EXCLUSIVE

Amnesty's Israel Problem

(First of three articles.)

Amnesty International (AI) Secretary General Ian Martin's January visit to Israel predictably triggered another round of charges of human rights violations and counter-charges of political bias.

On the face of it, Israel is an unlikely target for Amnesty's attention. The Jewish state has always prided itself on its human rights record, its democratic character and inherited liberal traditions of tolerance.

Justus Weiner, an Israeli Justice Ministry official who devotes much of his time to responding to AI letters, told *NER* that "human rights is a subject intertwined so thoroughly with Jewish history and the Jewish experience that a Jewish state would not be fair to itself if it did not take [Amnesty's] inquiries seriously."

A disproportionate amount of Amnesty's fire has been directed at Israeli treatment of West Bank Palestinians. But examination of the issues quiets the doubts about Israel's record. It does raise disquieting questions, however, about both AI's methods and its message.

Essentially, Israel is a victim of the flaws in Amnesty's world view, which makes little distinction between democratic and dictatorial regimes. In AI's view, the political world is composed of human rights-abusing states and lonely-but-courageous dissidents whose rights are abused.

There are several major problems with this, all of which work to Israel's disadvan-

tage. Few, if any, allowances are made for the differences between democratic states which respect legal norms and in which abuses may be—and frequently are—checked, and dictatorial states which rest on a foundation of abuse.

AI's published material, which often triggers thousands of protest letters from all over the world, draws an unfair share of attention to democratic and liberal states because of the greater ease with which information can be collected. Finally, given its anti-state bias, AI pays little or no attention to guerrilla and terrorist activities.

About the only thing that AI does not say against Israel is that its charges are ignored. A special unit within the Israeli Justice Ministry spends most of its time answering letters from thousands of AI members and branches around the world who have "adopted" Palestinian Arabs under house arrest or in Israeli prisons. Weiner says that "Israel is probably the only country in the world which comprehensively and as a matter of practice provides substantive answers to nearly every [Amnesty] inquiry."

But according to a senior AI figure, "the official [Israeli] replies . . . [merely] contribute to a fuller picture of the issues involved and the continuing efforts required to eliminate the reported abuses." No quarter is given: Israel's replies only *confirm* the existence of the alleged abuses.

And the charges against Israel are pub-

lished *before* Israel is asked to reply.

AI's methodology sets Israel up, and lets the PLO off. When Israel attempts to do what Amnesty prescribes, i.e. bring those responsible for [PLO] terrorism to justice, it gets into trouble with human rights advocates who see in the PLO a legitimate political vehicle for Palestinian Arab nationalism.

It is not even clear that AI sees PLO terrorism as a problem. In discussing British methods in Northern Ireland, Amnesty's 1984 report, *Torture in the Eighties*, speaks of "the classic dilemma of how far a society that regards itself as a liberal democracy is prepared to allow illegal methods in its resistance to 'terrorism'." (The original text places the quotation marks around the word terrorism; 'torture' does not receive similar treatment.)

But when it comes to Israel, not even that "classic dilemma" is allowed. In a book in which Poland receives two-and-a-half pages of attention; the U.S.S.R. two-and-a-half pages; Libya two pages; Syria two pages; Israel gets three. Iran—which a U.N. investigation has just charged with over seven thousand political murders last year—got two pages.

(Next: Skewed Concern.)

—David Twersky

Twersky writes widely on Israel-related topics. □

HEARD IN WASHINGTON

Slicing the Qualitative Edge

The Reagan Administration has notified Congress of plans to sell Saudi Arabia 13 Blackhawk troop transport helicopters and 15 Bell 406 choppers armed for ground attack with machineguns, rockets and anti-tank missiles. Also included are electronic countermeasures (ECM's) to enhance the offensive capability of more than 170 of the Saudi's U.S.-built F-5's and F-15 fighter planes. These new sales would be worth approximately \$600 million.

In addition, the Administration plans sales of high penetration anti-tank shells to Saudi Arabia as well as to Egypt and Jordan. The shipments of these super-hard shells, made from depleted uranium, would be worth less than \$14 million each and therefore would not require Congressional approval.

Nevertheless, Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) already has warned that this "state-of-the-art" ammunition has not been sold previously to any foreign country and could "jeopardize the deterrent abilities of our ally Israel . . ."

One Capitol Hill observer describes the sales as the "salami tactic" at work—a few hundred million here, a few tens of millions there. Repeated often enough, Arab states still at war with Israel may end up with most of the slices from a multi-billion dollar salami. For the Saudis the helicopter and ECM deals represent a \$600 million bite out of what Administration sources say could be a \$2.3 billion lunch for this year alone.

However, each "salami tactic" sale also slices away at Israel's military qualitative edge, according to some Capitol Hill

sources.

(See related story.) □

Edward Zorinsky

Sen. Edward Zorinsky (D-Neb.) died last week of a heart attack after performing in a benefit skit. Known as a political maverick, Zorinsky, 58, served as the Republican mayor of Omaha before being elected to the Senate as a Democrat. Prior to the elections last November Zorinsky, one of eight Jewish members in the Senate, hinted that another party switch was possible, but when the Democrats regained control of the upper chamber he stayed with the majority. He was a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

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BACKGROUNDER

Lebanon, Iran Major Drug Sources

Lebanon is the world's largest manufacturer of hashish, and Iran the second-largest producer of opium, according to the *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report* of the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics Matters. The report informs the President and Congress of foreign cooperation with United States efforts to halt drug production and trafficking. In accordance with the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, countries must demonstrate full cooperation with U.S. drug eradication programs or risk losing 50% of all non-humanitarian foreign assistance from the United States.

With hashish production topping 600 metric tons in 1986, Lebanon has become a major narcotics-producing, transit-and-refining country, according to the study. Most of the illicit trade is conducted in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley. "Syrian military officials are not making efforts to curb this production and trafficking," the study reports, adding that "there are indications that many Syrian officials and military officers profit from the narcotics trade." Middle East observers asserted

that Rifaat Assad, brother of Syrian President Hafez Assad, has been a kingpin in the Lebanese drug trade.

President Reagan has certified that Lebanon should receive its full \$975,000 aid in 1987, calling the assistance a matter of "national interest." A State Department official added that since the drug-producing area is under Syrian control, the central Lebanese government cannot be held responsible.

Opium production increased last year in the Moslem southwest Asian countries of Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, in spite of the fact that illicit drug use is a grave offense under Islamic law. The report noted that the cause of the increase was greater local demand for opiates such as heroin, not American consumption.

Pakistan is still the dominant refiner of opium into heroin intended for Western addicts, according to the State Department. Last year, opium production in Pakistan more than tripled over 1984 levels, a setback to government-sponsored eradication programs. The report called this "a direct result of the government of Pakistan's

failure to respond swiftly when faced with strong opposition by growers" and advocated tougher actions by Pakistan's civilian government. Despite the country's failure to control opium growers, it will receive its full \$638 million in aid this year.

Drug control efforts in Pakistan have fueled production in neighboring Afghanistan, a major producer of opium and hashish. The report condemns the Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan saying "there is no indication" that the government has the "political will" to address the problem.

Morocco will also receive its full \$106 million in 1987 even though it supplies a significant amount of hashish to Europe and provides 5% of the U.S. demand.

The report also found that Egypt has become an important drug consumer despite government efforts to stamp out the problem. It reported that Turkey, a significant center of drug trafficking, has cooperated fully with U.S. programs to stamp out narcotic manufacture and transport.

□
—J.R.

HEARD ON CAPITOL HILL

Backs Resettlement Funds

Rep. EDWARD FEIGHAN (D-Ohio) urged the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on International Operations to continue aiding Israeli programs to resettle and absorb refugees from the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Africa and other Middle Eastern countries.

Since 1948 Israel has absorbed 1.8 million refugees, and from 1973 on Congress has appropriated \$350 million in resettlement grants for Israel. Feighan told the subcommittee that "although the U.S. grant covers less than 10% of the total cost of resettlement, the contribution has been invaluable. By approving \$25 million for fiscal 1988 and \$25 million for fiscal 1989, Congress will not only assist Israel's overburdened economy and send a signal to the Soviet leadership, but will also provide sustenance and a future for thousands who now live in abject poverty or under cruel oppression."

No to PLO

Sen. ROBERT DOLE (R-Kans.) has asked the State Department to investigate the PLO United Nations observer mission and the PLO-sponsored Palestine Information Office (PIO) in Washington, D.C.

Declaring that he "... is not satisfied to simply throw my hands up and say that nothing can be done about the fact that a known terrorist organization can maintain

open and active offices in the United States," Dole, in a letter to Secretary of State George Shultz, wrote that he is seeking answers to the "question of whether new legal tools are needed to monitor, regulate and perhaps even close these PLO offices."

According to its own registration statements filed with the Department of Justice, the PIO receives \$280,000 a year from its parent body, the PLO. However the State Department replied that the PIO was not in violation of relevant federal regulations since it is staffed by Americans or legal resident aliens and regularly files with the Justice Department.

The Department of Justice concluded in its report to Congress that: "it appears that there is no significant violation of the act that would warrant instituting criminal or civil litigation against the PIO."

Sens. FRANK LAUTENBERG and ERNEST "FRITZ" HOLLINGS (D-S.C.) responded angrily to that report in a letter to Attorney General Edwin Meese. They said, "This report does not adequately respond to the request for information made by the Senate Appropriations Committee. We seek complete answers."

Arms Export Hearing

Rep. MEL LEVINE (D. Calif.), who along with Sen. JOE BIDEN (D.-Del.) has au-

thored legislation to reform U.S. arms export laws, testified on behalf of his initiative before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Arms Control, International Security and Science.

Levine called the current procedure for considering arms transfers a "skewed and unbalanced process," and pointed to last year's missile sale to Saudi Arabia as an example of the need for "greater consultation, not confrontation" between the executive and legislative branches on arms sales decisions. Both the House and Senate voted to block the Saudi sale, by votes of 356-62 and 73-22, respectively. But the Senate vote to override President Reagan's veto of the resolution of disapproval—34-66—fell one vote short of the required two-thirds.

The Biden-Levine bill shifts the burden by forcing an administration to seek Congressional approval of an arms sale rather than requiring Congress to pass a resolution of disapproval and muster two-thirds of each chamber to override a certain Presidential veto. Sales to NATO nations plus Australia and New Zealand, and Israel and Egypt as signatories to the Camp David Accords, would be exempt from this procedure.

□

BACK PAGE

Pollard Case Fallout

The life sentence for confessed spy Jonathan Pollard—and the nearly simultaneous Israeli promotion and U.S. indictment of one of his reported “handlers,” Aviem Sella—became the news peg for commentary on the U.S.-Israel relationship. As usual, the criticism ranged from constructive to destructive.

One example of the former was William Safire's Mar. 9 *New York Times* column. Alluding to the fact that Americans applauded policy and personnel changes resulting from the Iran-*contra* affair, Safire wrote that in the aftermath of the Pollard case an apology and a shrug from Israel would not be enough. Otherwise, the matter would not blow over; instead it might result in a foreign aid cut “pushed by the strangest bedfellowship Washington has seen in a long time.”

Safire wrote out of anguish and a desire that the Pollard aftermath not damage the crucial relationship between the American super-power and its small but vital Middle East ally, Israel. Taking the opposite perspective was David Nyhan, a *Boston Globe* columnist.

In a piece which appeared in the Mar. 10 *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Nyhan set up a straw man—an alleged silence by Congressional supporters of strong U.S.-Israel ties—over which he proceeded to throw mud at Israel. From Pollard he moved to condemn the Israelis for everything from the 1981 bombing of Iraq's nuclear reactor to their West Bank and Gaza Strip policies, which he completely misrepresented.

But where Nyhan's destructiveness was crude, Richard Cohen's was glib. In his Mar. 10 *Washington Post* effort, Cohen portrayed the Pollard case as “. . . just one example of Israeli contempt for American good will.”

Yet on closer examination, such an illegal, foolish gamble smacks not so much of what the columnist calls “arrogance” as of desperation. Israel lives in a volatile part of the world, among neighbors who, for the most part, are still at war with it. Its survival still depends on hair-trigger decisions about military mobilization, offensive strikes and defensive moves. Washington shares a great deal of intelligence with Israel, but not all.

Some Israelis, probably acting out of fear, *not contempt*, illegally sought more. That is not an excuse, but it is, more than Cohen or Nyhan's attempts, part of the explanation.

The *Post's* columnist also claimed that “friends do not spy on one another. . . .” Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), among others, suggested otherwise. It is widely assumed that America and its allies gather

intelligence information on each other. What they should not do, as Safire has written previously, is recruit each others' citizens to do it for them.

Finally, Cohen claims that in Pollard his Israeli handlers “created an anti-Semitic stereotype—an American Jew of confused loyalties who sold out his country.” The Israelis created no stereotype. With or without Pollard's confusion, the stereotype exists. It has for centuries, going under various flags of convenience—“dual loyalty,” “cosmopolitan,” “alien,” and so on.

Invoking it may be meant to put American Jewish supporters of Israel on the defensive, to shut them up by reminding them that the old canard still lives. The implicit message is, “Back off, quiet down. Don't attract attention by supporting Israel.” But Jews know the price of silence and will not pay it again.

And the Pollard affair notwithstanding, Israel has sent, and no doubt continues to send, intelligence information of incalculable value to the United States. Claims that Pollard's espionage gravely jeopardizes American security do not make sense. The U.S. secrets he sold Israel reportedly were meant to help it against Arab enemies. Unlike information sold to the Soviets or officially shared with the frequently-penetrated intelligence services of Western Europe, it is not likely to end up in the hands of America's enemies.

Those who, like Nyhan, wanted to use the Pollard case to smear Israel as an international outlaw let their hostility run away with them. And those who, like Cohen, use it to belittle Israel glibly betrayed their own motives. □

—E.R.

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NEAR EAST REPORT

WASHINGTON WEEKLY ON AMERICAN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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EDITORIAL

Just One Oasis

One party—or one family—rule. Press controlled by the government or the party. Police and military security forces exercising wide powers, regardless of written constitutional provisions. Rights of women often restricted by civil statutes based on Islamic law. Such, in general, is the description of most countries in the Middle East to be found in the newly-published State Department publication, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1986*.

Of Iraq, for example, the report notes that “political and individual rights are sharply limited. . . . Anti-regime activity is dealt with harshly, often by extralegal means employed by a large and feared internal security police force and the intelligence services.”

In Syria, regardless of the forms of representative democracy, “President Hafez Assad wields virtually absolute power and this government remains a repressive dictatorship.” When it perceives a challenge it resorts to “brutality and forcible repression to insure its survival.”

Saudi Arabia permits “no elected assemblies or political parties. Nonreligious public assembly and demonstrations are not permitted. Non-Muslim public worship is banned. . . . All Saudis must be Muslims.” The judicial system, founded upon Islamic law, conducts closed trials without counsel. “Criticism of Islam and the ruling family is not permitted. . . . Women do not enjoy equality with men.”

Jordan is a hereditary monarchy with a constitution granting the King broad powers,” no political parties and martial law since 1967. But “recent trends remain favorable,” including “the increased opportunities for women in all areas of life, the continued importance given to the rule of law and

an independent judiciary, and the gradual evolution of the Parliament. . . .”

Egypt, despite “increased security concerns resulting from its difficult economic situation and regional instability,” appears to be about the best of the Arab states. “A republic in which the President and his . . . National Democratic Party are the major political forces,” Egypt tolerates Islamic activists “pressing for political and social change”—largely through legitimate channels. It permits “opposition parties of the left and right” and their weekly newspapers. Nevertheless, “since Zaki Badr became Minister of Interior following the February police riots, the government has used its emergency powers against striking railroad conductors, Islamic militants, and a few Christian converts from Islam.”

There remains one Middle Eastern oasis of human rights. “Israel is a parliamentary democracy which guarantees by law and respects in practice the civil, political, and religious rights of its citizens. . . . Israeli society is characterized by its openness and by its wide-ranging and lively public debate of all issues of popular concern.”

The State Department study devotes a separate section to “The Occupied Territories.” The evidence shows that Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, even while under Israeli military government, exercise a much broader range of civil liberties than do most Arab residents of Arab countries.

It may be more than a coincidence that the only Arab-Israeli peace settlement existing now is with Egypt, perhaps the most liberal of the Arab states. Maybe if conditions improve *within* Arab countries, chances for peace among themselves, and between them and Israel, will improve. □

VIEWING THE NEWS

Harsh Statement

A conference of the General Federation of Palestinian Writers and Journalists, meeting in Algiers, specifically condemned Jordan's five-year plan for West Bank development (see story inside). The group called it a “joint Jordanian-Israeli power-sharing plan which is designed to weaken the PLO, to create an alternative and agent leadership which accepts liquidatory solutions of the Palestine question and to try to establish imaginary development projects. . . .” (Voice of the PLO, Feb. 12).

It also called attention “to all forms of

oppression and persecution” to which it claimed Palestinian Arabs are subjected in Arab countries.

PLO-Libya

PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat said recently that relations between his organization and Libya “opened a new chapter” after “successful” talks between Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi and PLO official Khalil Wazir (also known as Abu Jihad). According to a news report, Arafat “commended the principled and clear stand taken by Qaddafi” in favor of the Palestin-

ian Arabs against the Shi'ite Amal militia in Lebanon's “camps war” (Kuwait News Agency, Feb. 17).

“Criminal Reward”

Commenting on the delivery of the first three F-16C's to Israel by the United States, a Jordanian newspaper called them “rewards” for “crimes and intransigence,” including Israel's alleged “blocking [of] the peace process in the region” (*Al-Ray*, Feb. 10). The paper noted the planes' arrival “in occupied Palestine.” □

BACKGROUND

Jordanian Plan Lacks Funds

If it is too early to write an obituary for King Hussein's \$1-billion plus, five-year West Bank and Gaza Strip economic development plan, it is not premature to question its prognosis. Announced last year as the centerpiece of Jordan's effort to re-establish its influence in the territories and based on anticipated contributions from other Arab countries, Western Europe, Japan and the United States, the proposal remains seriously underfunded.

According to a State Department source, the United Kingdom has pledged the equivalent of a little more than \$1 million annually, half to the King's plan, half going directly to the territories through non-governmental organizations. The source counted \$12.5 million in U.S. funds from the past two fiscal years as intended for the plan, with another \$7 million tentatively set for fiscal 1988. And Israeli press accounts say Italy has allotted about \$15 million for an east Jerusalem hospital, to be disbursed through Jordan.

"The Jordanians themselves announced \$25 million of their own money" was being committed, half of that for economic development, the official said. However, he was not certain whether the \$25-million figure included funds from non-Jordanian sources.

"If you are talking about \$1.3 billion over five years, or the earlier projection of \$750 million, this is not quite what they [the Jordanians] hoped for," the source said. "But

it's too early to say that the King won't be able to spend significantly." The amounts reported so far "are not insignificant" for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the official pointed out.

Recent contributions of \$9.5 million by Saudi Arabia and \$5 million by Kuwait bypassed Hussein's plan. The Saudi money went to revive a joint Jordan-PLO committee for the territories; Kuwait's funds went directly to two West Bank universities. Potential Arab investors apparently want to avoid the appearance of supporting the King's initiative at the PLO's expense. The organization has criticized economic development planned without it and warned Palestinian Arabs in the territories against participating in the five-year plan.

The joint committee, sources said, spent as much as \$300 million to \$400 million over six years before the King suspended political cooperation with the PLO in February 1986. However, even some Arab sources have questioned where the money went.

Last month Hussein visited several Western European capitals to explain the plan. Earlier, Crown Prince Hassan previewed the initiative for a gathering of potential investors from several Arab states, but news reports then noted that no pledges were made. Some Jordanian officials suggested the picture would clear after the Islamic Conference Organization summit in Kuwait at the end of January—but that meeting too apparently did not stimulate

any solid investments.

An informed Arab source in Washington said that Jordan has heard "nothing" from other governments, including Arab governments, about large-scale investment.

An Israeli source said he did not see any chance for realization of the proposal at the \$1.3 billion, five-year level the King advocated. "In my opinion, it's not happening."

Nevertheless, Jordan apparently hopes that despite Congressional pressure to reduce foreign aid, Washington will make a significant contribution to the King's program beyond the relatively small sums earmarked for what Secretary of State George Shultz calls "quality-of-life" improvements. An additional \$30 million in U.S. aid has been discussed but not formally requested. Amman may believe this would serve as seed money, attracting more capital from other countries.

Officially, Jordan describes the five-year plan as an effort to assist West Bank and Gaza Arabs in the face of Israeli expansion in the territories. Unofficially, Amman, as well as Jerusalem—which administers the territories and must provide tacit cooperation for Hussein's plan to work—hope that economic growth might lead to political moderation. But Jordan's rule of the West Bank from 1949 to 1967 was not universally popular among residents, and to expand his influence the King will have to "buy his way back," the Israeli source said. □

ANALYSIS

Syrians Roll Into Beirut

A new chapter in Syrian intervention in Lebanese affairs opened last week as more than 6,000 Syrian troops rolled into Beirut as part of an agreement between warring Moslem militias. Lebanese President Amin Gemayel denounced the action as "unconstitutional" but was powerless against the Syrian forces. The Israeli Cabinet Defense Committee also condemned the Syrian move, stating that while Israel "has no intention of intervening in Lebanon's internal affairs, Israel will continue to follow closely every development on the ground and will see to ensuring its security needs. . . ."

The Syrians entered Beirut at the request

of various Moslem members of Parliament to enforce a truce between pro-Syrian militias who had fought a week-long battle in Moslem west Beirut. More than 300 were killed as members of the Shi'ite Amal group battled a coalition of the Druze Progressive Socialist Party, the Lebanese Communist Party and Sunni Moslems.

The Syrian intelligence chief in Lebanon warned combatants to turn over their positions, arms and hostages.

Meanwhile, Israel reportedly has doubled its forces in its security zone in southern Lebanon as Hezbollah increased its pressure on the Israeli-supported South Lebanese Army. □

Corrections

Last week *NER* incorrectly identified one of two Senators who appeared on the syndicated radio program "Face Off" calling for the closing of PLO offices in the United States. He was Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.).

Former U.N. Ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis was incorrectly identified as having been posted to Jerusalem. He served in the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv.

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HEARD IN WASHINGTON

Shamir Gets Warm Welcome

Despite shadows cast on the U.S.-Israel relationship in recent months, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was received warmly on his recent trip to Washington. "The relationship between our two countries has always been basically friendly," Shamir said. "We had our ups and downs but the foundation of mutual understanding and alliance remains steadfast." President Reagan added, "We have developed a warm friendship that encompasses close mutual and strategic cooperation. This relationship . . . strengthens us both."

Shamir's visit came in the wake of disclosures of Israel's participation in the U.S.-Iran arms deal and under the cloud of Jonathan Pollard's sentencing as an operative for a rogue Israeli spy unit. But the Prime Minister also arrived at a time of extensive cooperation between the two countries. President Reagan, Secretary of State Shultz and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger all noted Israel's participation in the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative, the placement of a Voice of America transmitter in Israel and Israel's new designation as a major non-NATO ally. Ultimately it was the positive side of the equation which dominated the Prime Minister's mission.

Shamir's visit got off to a false start when the Secretary of State yielded to pressure from Jordan and declared U.S. interest in an international conference on the Middle East. Shultz added, however, that "our objective is not an international conference. Our objective is direct negotiations."

The Prime Minister repeated his well-known opposition to an international conference and explained that "such an international forum is a transparent ruse to bypass direct negotiations and place us,

Israel, in the untenable position of facing an array of participants who support the most extreme Arab demands. . . ."

Shamir proposed a conference to include Israel, Egypt, Jordan and representatives of Palestinian Arabs in the area. He added, however, that Camp David provides a blueprint for direct negotiations and called upon Jordan and other nations to sit down with Israel. "Any country that is not willing to negotiate with us directly is not ready for peace," he said.

But in Jerusalem, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres continued to explore chances for an international conference and traveled to Egypt last week to try to lay the groundwork.

Shamir expressed his hope that this difference of opinion would be settled soon and "not by new elections." Meanwhile, the Foreign Ministers of the European Economic Community endorsed a U.N.-sponsored international conference on the Middle East.

The Prime Minister discussed the Iran arms sale "briefly" with President Reagan and Secretary of State Shultz, pointing out that Israel "acted in accordance with its obligation as a friend and ally of the United States." Shamir told U.S. officials that Israel would cooperate on a government-to-government basis with panels investigating the affair.

In an attempt to restore its credibility with Arab allies, the Administration expressed its desire to support "moderate Arabs" and assist them in meeting their "security needs." A senior official confirmed that the United States is planning to sell sophisticated electronic counter-measures for Saudi aircraft. The Administration used the occasion of Shamir's visit to

indicate that it will not support the mobilization of Jordan's I-Hawk anti-aircraft missiles. Shamir told the National Press Club that he opposes arms sales to any Arab nation unwilling to make peace with Israel.

The Prime Minister discussed the Israeli economy in meetings with the President and the Secretary of State. Shultz noted: "We agreed that a strong economy is no less important than a strong defense, and that Israel needs to redouble its efforts in this area to prosper and to ultimately reduce dependence on foreign aid."

The military-to-military relationship between Israel and the United States is "strong and a source of mutual pride," said a Department of Defense spokesman after a lengthy meeting between Weinberger and Shamir.

But in testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee the week of Shamir's visit, Weinberger called Israel's new Lavi aircraft "inferior" to the U.S. F-16. Weinberger and Shamir conducted an extensive discussion on cooperation in identifying terrorists and "in making the cost of terrorism to terrorists very high."

President Reagan and Prime Minister Shamir reiterated their commitment to Soviet Jews. Reagan said that the United States took note of the recent release of some Soviet Jews but is "waiting to see the gates truly opened." Shamir asked the President to deny Soviet Jews refugee status for the purpose of immigration to the U.S. He explained that since Soviet Jews are allowed to emigrate "on the basis of Israeli visas, they have to come to Israel and from there they will be able to travel wherever they wish." □

—J.R.

HEARD ON CAPITOL HILL

Lavi Report Released

A just-released Government Accounting Office (GAO) report challenges Department of Defense cost estimates of Israel's Lavi fighter aircraft. The GAO, Congress' investigating arm, disclosed that the actual cost per aircraft will be \$4.3 million below the Pentagon estimate of \$22.1 million per plane. The GAO disagreed with Defense's estimate in six of eight cost categories for the developmental phase and in all ten categories for the procurement phase. Israel underestimated the cost by \$2.3 million, according to the GAO.

Israel is developing the Lavi to replace

its domestically-produced Kfir and U.S.-supplied A-4 Skyhawk aircraft. The United States has allowed Israel to spend as much as \$450 million of Israel's \$1.8 billion in U.S. military aid in each of the last two years to develop the Lavi. Some Pentagon officials, while admitting the Lavi's technical capabilities, have criticized the program because of its cost, claiming it forces reductions in funds for other Israeli military needs.

Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, however, told the House Foreign Affairs Committee last week that "if the

Israelis wish to build an airplane that's inferior to the one they've already bought from us, that's entirely their business." The GAO report refutes Weinberger's assertion, describing the Lavi as a "technically advanced aircraft" comparable to the U.S.-built F-16.

During his visit to Washington last week, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir told U.S. officials that the Lavi program was important to Israel economically as well as militarily. □

BACK PAGE

Opportunism and Opportunities

Current Soviet policy toward dissidents, including Jews, shows two faces. Simultaneously, Moscow hints at changes in its posture—if not its policies—toward Israel and toward an international peace conference on the Middle East. These moves, seen in the context of Mikhail Gorbachev's reform campaign, include both Soviet opportunism and an opening wedge for the United States and Israel.

One of the best-known refuseniks—the oft-persecuted Hebrew teacher Yosef Begun—was released last week after serving four years of a twelve-year term. But the week before that, Inna Meiman, like her better-known husband Naum, a long-time refusenik, died in Washington. Soviet authorities had permitted her to seek cancer treatment abroad—after unconscionable delays—early in January. Naum Meiman was denied permission to attend her funeral; he remains in Russia.

Meanwhile, a number of other prominent dissidents and refuseniks, Jews and non-Jews, have been freed, and Kremlin officials say others soon will be. But the announcements to this effect were followed quickly by publication of a list of eight Russian Jews prohibited from emigrating, including prominent refuseniks Aleksandr Lerner, Vladimir Slepak and Valery Soifer. And Gorbachev's changes include a new law likely to restrict even further Soviet legal grounds for emigration.

On the diplomatic front, the Israeli press carried accounts that 10,000 to 12,000 Russian Jews might be allowed to leave for Israel—in exchange for Jerusalem's acceptance of Soviet participation in an international conference on the Middle East. An all-parties conference, originally a Kremlin idea, has long been advocated by both radical and moderate Arab states.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the figure of 10,000 to 12,000 approximates the 11,000 Russian Jews listed by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL) as those who, more than once, have been refused permission to emigrate to Israel. Writing in the *Jerusalem Post*, Ayre Naor asserted that neither in return for Soviet participation in an international conference nor improved relations with Israel—"which may help the Soviets with the United States"—are those numbers enough.

Despite the "glasnost" or openness of the Gorbachev regime, Jewish emigration continues at a trickle. Last year less than 1,000 Russian Jews were allowed to emigrate, compared to the high of 51,000-plus in 1979. In addition to the 11,000 refuseniks listed by ADL, approximately 400,000 of the roughly two million Soviet Jews have received formal invitations to immigrate to Israel.

A connection between Moscow's treatment of them and its participation in Middle East peace-making arises because both Israel and the United States have set improved treatment of Soviet Jewry—including liberalized emigration practices—and the reestablishment of diplomatic ties with Jerusalem, severed after the 1967 Six-Day War, as prerequisites.

But even before Israel wants reestablished diplomatic relations, it wants the Soviet Union to let its people go. Not by the hundreds each year, not even by the thousands—welcomed as that would be—but by the tens and hundreds of thousands. A new exodus may sound like a dream. But so did the idea of rescuing Ethiopian Jewry, until it happened.

As others have observed, the Soviet Union is an empire of more than 100 nationalities, with a second-rate economy but a superpower's military. Gorbachev's changes are meant to make the empire and its army more efficient without dismantling the communist police state which simultaneously holds things together and cripples them.

Russian Jews, inspired by Israel's victory in 1967 and convinced by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the renewal of official anti-Semitism under the guise of anti-Zionism that real reform was impossible, began seeking a way out. Slepak first applied to emigrate in 1969, Lerner and Begun in 1971.

Gorbachev needs Western help for his reforms to succeed. Yosef Begun enunciated what should be a price for that help: "To be with my friends, to be with my people in Israel, to do everything for the success of Jewish culture in this country, the right to study our language, to be Jews in a real way and have the right to go to Israel." —E.R. □

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EDITORIAL

Inciting to Riot

The latest wave of violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip actually began with the stabbing death of yeshiva student Eliahu Amedi by PLO supporters in Jerusalem's Old City in late November. Anti-Arab demonstrations by Jews followed. Tension grew—no doubt as intended by those who ordered the killing.

Then, this month Israeli soldiers shot and killed two university students during a riot in Bir Zeit, a Palestinian Arab town in the West Bank. At least two other Arabs were killed, more wounded and scores arrested. More than a dozen Israeli Jews and foreigners were injured by rock-throwing Arab demonstrators.

Underlying the violence was PLO concern that tacit cooperation between Israel and Jordan on economic development in the territories may weaken its standing among the Arab residents. Jordan's announced five-year plan for the West Bank and Gaza, Israel's appointment—over PLO warnings—of Arab mayors in the local municipalities, concurrence between Jerusalem and Amman in the long-awaited reopening of Cairo-Amman Bank branches in the territories—all no doubt contributed to the organization's unease.

Meanwhile, a successful PLO counter-offensive against Shi'ite Amal militiamen in Lebanon reinvigorated hardcore followers in the West Bank and Gaza. Loyalists of Yasir Arafat—distributing pamphlets urging that “all Palestine is yours, go there with your blood”—mobilized supporters at the local universities including Bir Zeit.

What happened next was no spontaneous protest, the Israelis say. Instead, students on their way to campus

crowded around a relatively lightly-manned Israeli checkpoint and began harassing the soldiers. A faculty member known for extremist views refused to move a car he drove into the checkpoint and began inciting the students. Rocks were thrown and tear gas fired.

Using pre-positioned junked cars, abandoned refrigerators and boulders, rioters then set up roadblocks of their own. The troops called in reinforcements. According to Israeli officials, the soldiers at Bir Zeit did not fire in panic or in haste, but only after tear gas, rubber bullets and live rounds in the air failed to control rioters throwing stones and iron bars.

The U.N. Security Council, mute on the deaths of nearly five hundred people in Palestinian-Shi'ite fighting in Lebanon, voted 14-0—with the United States abstaining—to “deplore” Israel's actions. The resolution was offered by Zimbabwe on behalf of none other than the PLO. Israel said it “very much regretted” the U.S. abstention, which Arab countries interpreted as appeasement.

The episode typifies PLO “leadership” of the Palestinian Arabs. It invariably tries to sabotage efforts at Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian accommodation not on its own extremist terms. It was probably not coincidental that the PLO recently decided to drop two “moderates,” journalist Hannah Siniora and lawyer Fayez Abu Rahmah, from its proposed joint negotiating delegation with Jordan.

The latest rioting was aimed primarily at Washington—hence the shouts of “Reagan, we support the PLO”—and at Amman to discourage King Hussein. It is the PLO's response to the small but encouraging steps taken recently by Jordan and Israel. □

VIEWING THE NEWS

No Kidnappings Now

In an interview with the German magazine *Der Stern*, Hussein Al-Musawi, leader of the radical pro-Iranian Islamic Amal militia in Lebanon, warned the West German government not to take part in “dirty U.S. intrigues against Arabs and Muslims.” He said, “Take care: I know that Muslims know how to conduct themselves if a nation adopts a negative and openly anti-Islamic stance.”

Musawi, identified with recent kidnappings in Lebanon, complained about sentences imposed on two convicted terrorists in Germany and about German sanctions against Syria. He assured Germans that they would not be the targets of kidnappings

“at present” (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, Dec. 9).

Coup Foiled

Egyptian officials have just made public the arrest of 33 men accused of plotting to overthrow the Mubarak regime—four months after they were apprehended.

The Egyptian Prosecutor General charged that the group stole firearms, explosives and ammunition from the military in order to launch “jihad (holy war) to overthrow the ruling system.” The defendants include four military officers and several individuals linked to the fundamentalist Muslim group implicated in the assassination of Anwar Sadat (Associated Press, Dec. 4).

Syrian Chemical Arms

Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin has confirmed that Syria is producing chemical weapons and arming surface-to-surface missiles with nerve gas warheads (*Washington Times*, Dec. 2).

Earlier reports indicated that Libya provided Syria with Soviet-built nerve gas warheads for Scud-B missiles. The Israeli High Command believes that the Syrians would launch chemically-armed missiles at Israeli urban centers and military airfields in the early stages of a war to hinder mobilization of reservists. It is reported that the Israel Defense Forces have developed new measures to counteract the effects of chemical weapons among civilian populations and on the battlefield. □

ANALYSIS

Israel Restates Position

The Israeli government last week reasserted its denials of involvement in the diversion of funds from the U.S.-sanctioned Iran arms deals to the Nicaraguan *contras*. Top Israeli officials—and what appeared to be a semi-official account in one of the country's major newspapers—stressed that American, not Israeli, officials originally suggested approaching Iran.

Last Monday the Associated Press reported that Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir told two visiting U.S. Senators, Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.), that his government had questioned all Israelis involved in the Iranian arms deal. None of them, Shamir told the Senators, knew about transfers of funds to the rebels fighting the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

Two weeks before that Shamir, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres confirmed for the first time that Israel had shipped arms to Iran. In a statement the three disclosed that payment for the weapons was conveyed by an Iranian agent to a bank in Switzerland, on orders of American representatives. The statement said that the money did not go through Israel and that Israeli leaders had no knowledge of the *contra* connection.

Speaking to the Knesset, Peres added that the Israeli government "did not gain a single cent. . . . Israel was asked to help and it willingly did so. It was asked to provide covert assistance, and this is what it

did, just as we have received secret assistance without the whole world knowing."

The U.S. opening to Iran, via Israel, apparently began in early 1985. A former high level U.S. official told *NER* last week that Washington had approached Israel a year before, informally sounding it out on more than one occasion about aiding the Nicaraguan resistance. This was during the period that Congress prohibited American money from going to the *contras*. Israel declined those requests, the ex-official said.

According to the daily *Ha'aretz*, in March 1985 a top American official asked then-Prime Minister Peres for Israel's help in freeing William Buckley. The CIA station chief, now presumed dead, had been kidnapped by the pro-Iranian Shi'ite Hezbollah in Lebanon. The article, by Yoel Marcus, said the identity of the American who first asked Peres for help was not clear.

"What is known is that the Americans made the first move. In that first appeal, two questions were posed to us: Do we know anything about possible changes in Iran, and could we help free the hostages?"

At this point, according to other published press accounts, David Kimche, former director-general of Israel's Foreign Ministry, and former U.S. National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane, discussed how Israel could assist the United States in sending arms to Iran. McFarlane reportedly has told investigators that President Reagan approved the Israeli shipments before

they were sent.

Meanwhile, more information emerged last week about U.S.-Saudi Arabian involvement in providing aid to the *contras*. The *Washington Times* reported that the Saudis began funneling assistance to anti-communist fighters in Nicaragua, Afghanistan and Angola after Congress approved the 1981 \$8.5 billion sale of Airborne Warning and Control Systems planes and other equipment to Riyadh. A Congressional condition for delivery of the planes—which began last June—was that the Saudis support the Middle East peace process.

Since they would not do that regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict, they had to prove themselves "by being anti-communist," the paper said.

The United States used a number of countries "to solicit Iran's help in gaining the release of American hostages held in Lebanon," the *New York Times* added on Dec. 7. In addition, the Sultan of Brunei, an oil-rich mini-state, reportedly contributed funds to the *contras* at American urging.

In Jerusalem, Shamir set up a group to probe Israel's involvement in the Iran arms sales. According to the daily *Yediot Aharonot*, the panel has found several Swiss bank accounts into which profits went, with different sums of money corresponding to the 1985 and 1986 phases of the deals.

HEARD IN WASHINGTON

Risky Business in Saudi Arabia

Scott Nelson, an American engineer at the King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Center, had his knees broken by interrogators while imprisoned in Saudi Arabia. While working for the Arab American Oil Company (Aramco) Alvin L. Levine was taken from his home, thrown into a Saudi prison and tortured. Nelson and Levine assert that their problems began when they reported life-threatening hazards on their jobs to the authorities. Sam Bamieh, head of the Industrial Development Group of California, was detained for 130 days in Saudi Arabia because he sued a member of the royal court. Herbert Millard recruited workers for the Saudi Industrial Supply and Construction Corp. only to see these employees beaten and harassed by Saudi officials.

These men met in Washington recently to tell their stories to the press and to denounce U.S. government inaction on Saudi mistreatment of U.S. citizens. "High [U.S.] government officials believe global relations with Saudi Arabia would be strained if this issue came out—that it is not important enough to raise the issue," charged Bamieh. "I believe our personal freedom is a lot more important."

The State Department admits that it has received reports of the mistreatment of U.S. citizens in Saudi prisons and has brought this to the attention of the authorities. It has also complained to the Saudis about the unusual practice of detaining U.S. citizens who are engaged in civil suits against Saudi nationals.

But none of the four businessmen were

assisted in any way by U.S. officials in Saudi Arabia. Nelson was set free when Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) called Saudi King Fahd. Levine and Bamieh were released after signing documents against their will.

Nelson and Levine also charge that their employers were unwilling to intercede on their behalf for fear of sacrificing business relations. According to Levine, "they are afraid to jeopardize the dollar. The United States did nothing. My employer did nothing."

The State Department recently informed several members of Congress that 26 laborers and businessmen have been detained in Saudi Arabia in the past year.

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HEARD IN WASHINGTON

Syria Accused of Kidnappings

The President of Lebanon's Phalange Party, George Saadeh, declared that "there will be no end to terrorism against Americans and U.S. interests while terrorists are free to use Lebanon as a base of operations." Speaking at the National Press Club recently, Saadeh added that "there will be no [Middle East] peace agreement while Lebanon's territory may be used freely by powerful forces opposed to such an agreement."

Saadeh and his aides made it plain they were speaking primarily about Syrian and PLO forces in their country. Syria has an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 troops stationed mainly in northern and eastern Lebanon. The PLO has at least several thousand gunmen based in Palestinian Arab quarters in Beirut, Sidon, Tyre and other cities.

In addition, several hundred Israeli personnel assist the approximately 1,500-man South Lebanon Army (SLA), a mostly Christian militia. The SLA patrols a three-to-twelve mile wide security zone in the southernmost part of the country. Israel established the zone when it withdrew the bulk of its troops from Lebanon in 1985.

Alfred Mady, a top aide to Saadeh, accused Syria of planning the most recent

kidnappings of three Americans in Beirut. Mady, a member of the Phalange political bureau, served as Saadeh's translator. Speaking for himself, he said that Syria acted "through splinter groups" to seize Americans Joseph Cicippio and Frank Reid in September and Tracy Austin in October.

Mady discounted the idea that the kidnappers may have been renegades or mercenaries. "There are no renegades. . . . Even splinter groups are associated with someone." He said that first the Iranians and then the Syrians realized that "to get into the [diplomatic] game now, you only need to kidnap an American or a Frenchman."

The Phalange—also known as the Kataeb—is a largely Maronite Christian party. According to Lebanon's national pact of 1943, the President always comes from the Maronite community, the Prime Minister from the Sunni Moslems, the Speaker of Parliament from the Shi'ites; a top military post is reserved for the Druze. The incumbent President, Amin Gemayel, is a son of Phalange Party founder Pierre Gemayel, as was his brother Bashir, the president-elect assassinated in 1982.

Renewed fighting in Lebanon between

the Syrian-backed Shi'ite Amal forces—at times joined by the pro-Iranian Hezbollah—and PLO forces loyal to Yasir Arafat—sometimes aided by Syrian-supported PLO dissidents—has nothing to do with his country, Saadeh maintained. Instead, it is to determine "who is going to hold the Palestinian card, Arafat or [Syrian President Hafez] Assad. . . . Ironically, we [Lebanese] always pay the price."

The Amal-PLO battles will decide whether Arafat will be able to reestablish an autonomous base in the south and "play an important role in Lebanon and regionally" as he did before Israel's 1982 invasion, or whether Assad will gain control of Palestinian politics and be able to disrupt any Arab-Israeli negotiations.

Asked what might help lead to a Syrian evacuation, Saadeh said that "there is no easy answer," but suggested deploying the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) all over the country, not just in their present location north of the security zone. Saadeh called UNIFIL "an international token of support for the Lebanese government and people" and said France's reduced commitment to the force is "a bad signal." □

PERSPECTIVE

Out of Service

In its continuing effort to combat Syrian-supported terrorism, the U.S. has announced that it will no longer issue visas to those holding Syrian service passports. According to the State Department, service passports often imply government employment and official travel. State Department spokesman Charles Redman explained that Syria has issued this type of passport to non-Syrians who have conducted terrorist attacks in Europe: "There is convincing evidence that the bearer of a Syrian service passport, Nizar Hindawi, was working directly under the orders of Syrian officials in planning and carrying out terrorist attacks in both Berlin and London."

The U.S. imposed a series of sanctions on Syria last month after Hindawi was convicted in London for attempting to blow up an El Al airliner. The refusal to accept service passports follows the conviction of Hindawi's brother and another man in West Germany for bombing the Arab-German Friendship Society in West Berlin.

The German government issued a warrant for the arrest of Haithem Said—a man identified as the deputy chief of Syrian Air

Force intelligence—for allegedly giving the terrorists the explosive device in the Syrian Embassy in East Berlin.

Bonn responded to Syrian involvement in the German-Arab Friendship Society incident by leaving the post of ambassador to Syria vacant, reducing the number of Syrian diplomats in Germany, denying new development aid to Syria, and refusing to issue visas to those holding Syrian service passports. (Neither of the men convicted in the Berlin bombing travelled on a Syrian service passport.)

In an Oct. 20 interview with *Time* magazine, Syrian President Hafez Assad attempted to explain away Hindawi's Syrian passport. Assad said that Hindawi had been granted Syrian travel documents after his Jordanian papers expired. "An ordinary matter that often happens in Arab countries," Assad said.

When *NER* asked Redman if Syria had granted service passports to terrorists carelessly or deliberately, he responded: "We're not accusing them of carelessness."

Syrian abuse of diplomatic privileges has also been spotlighted in Turkey, where a

trial resumes this week in the murder of a Jordanian diplomat by a man carrying Syrian diplomatic credentials. Turkey issued an arrest warrant for a Syrian Embassy second secretary, who is accused of providing the murder weapon.

The U.S. recently expressed its support for a Council of Europe resolution on preventing terrorists from abusing diplomatic and consular immunities. Among other things, the resolution called for a closer scrutiny of diplomats suspected of having connections to terrorism. —J.R. □

Rate Increase

Due to higher production costs and operating expenses, we must raise *NER* subscription rates for the first time in five years. Effective Jan. 1, 1987, the new rates will be: \$30 for one year; \$55 for two years; \$45 for overseas.

Last week, *NER* experienced a computer failure which resulted in a several day mailing delay of the Dec. 8, 1986 issue. We apologize for the inconvenience this caused our readers.

BACK PAGE

Equal Footing

A case which may say as much about Jewish peoplehood as about Israeli law was decided early this month by Israel's Supreme Court.

The decision came on an appeal by Shoshana Miller, 43. Miller converted from the Baptist faith to Judaism under the supervision of a Reform rabbi in Colorado in 1982. Three years later she emigrated to Israel and claimed Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return. The law guarantees citizenship in the Jewish state to any Jew who requests it. But Miller ran into problems, problems which illustrate the long-simmering, occasionally boiling "who-is-a-Jew" controversy.

In Israel the Orthodox religious establishment has traditionally controlled personal matters such as marriage, conversion and divorce. Israel's tiny Reform and Conservative Jewish communities—backed by their much larger diaspora counterparts, many "secular" and some more liberal Orthodox Israelis—have struggled to attain equal status in determining such matters.

Periodically, one or more of the religious parties have introduced into the Knesset amendments to tighten the Law of Return. Some of these would exclude converts who were not supervised by Orthodox rabbis.

Halacha, Jewish religious law, has long recognized the children of Jewish mothers as Jews, regardless of the fathers' faith. Offspring of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers—increasingly numerous in an age of intermarriage—traditionally have not been so recognized, but children of mothers converted according to *halacha* are considered to be Jewish.

Israel's "who-is-a-Jew" debates echo in the United States, where, as the *New York Times* put it, "rabbis of the major Jewish divisions are caught up in the same tensions over law and identity." The Miller case, the paper added, was seen by Reform and Conservative leaders as an attempt by more extreme Orthodox elements to "invalidate the status of their movements." Historically, warnings have been sounded that changes in Israel's Law of Return—including disqualification of either Reform or Conservative converts—would split world Jewry.

In this atmosphere the Interior Ministry denied Shoshanna Miller's citizenship request. When she refused to undergo an Orthodox conversion, the Ministry insisted on stamping the word "convert" on her identity papers. Miller then challenged that move.

In his decision, High Court President Meir Shamgar wrote that "one may not see [that] the term convert, or converted, has anything to do with the description of nationality as described by the law." Accord-

ing to a *Los Angeles Times* report, Shamgar observed that "there are not two nations—one Jewish and one converted to Judaism." Israel, Shamgar explained, was not created to divide Jews: "The nation with which we deal is the Jewish people, which is one."

Miller added her own gloss. Describing herself as "ecstatic" at the "end of a nightmare," she emphasized that "the Law of Return was upheld and that's the important thing for Jews the world over."

Gratifying as the decision is for all who see Jewish solidarity as a first principle, the court's ruling probably will not end the matter. At issue was an administrative action by the Interior Ministry, not a law. Israelis who argue that religious law must take precedence even over political calls for Jewish unity may again ask the Knesset to amend the Law of Return, narrowing the conversion qualification to cover only persons converted according to *halacha*.

That is their right. And it is much better that this "synagogue-state" struggle be waged in the Knesset and through the courts than in the streets. That is where it was last summer, symbolized by bus shelter burnings, allegedly by ultra-religious Jews offended by suggestive advertising posters, and subsequent vandalism of religious institutions, allegedly by secular Israelis. On Simchat Torah last fall the quarrel even went inside a synagogue itself, as an Orthodox rabbi and some followers scuffled with a Reform rabbi and some congregants during the latter's services.

Shall Israel be a Jewish state, or a state of the Jews? Can Israeli Jews and their diaspora brethren agree on what those terms mean? Shamgar's ruling, that "the Jewish people is one," should be the foundation on which the debate continues. □

—E.R.

Miller

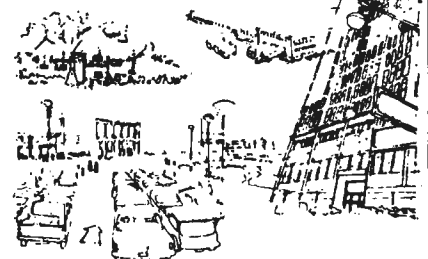
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NEAR EAST REPORT

WASHINGTON WEEKLY ON AMERICAN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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EDITORIAL

Syrian Hype

With the recent release of Rev. Lawrence Jenco from 19 months of captivity in Lebanon—some of them spent chained to a wall in a badly ventilated cell—Western thank-you's, private and official, again freshened Syrian President Assad's makeup. The pattern, set when Assad released a downed U.S. Navy flyer to candidate Rev. Jesse Jackson just before the 1984 primaries, has continued with only minor variations. Damascus "aided" in the escape of former hostage Jeremy Levin. It successfully "interceded" with the Lebanese Shi'ite Moslem hijackers of TWA flight 847 last summer and a few months later helped "arrange" the freedom of hostage Rev. Benjamin Weir.

The Moslem radicals holding American and other Western hostages in Lebanon—and their Syrian overlords—understand how to advance their interests by timely manipulation of the hostage issue. Those actually holding the captives, apparently the pro-Iranian Islamic Jihad, reportedly felt Western interest waning. Their chief demand—release from Kuwaiti jails of 17 colleagues and relatives convicted of the fatal bomb attacks on U.S. and French embassies in Kuwait—has not been met. So they agreed to Syrian pressure to release Jenco, demonstrating their "goodwill" while renewing the threat to their remaining prisoners.

In the search for public relations victories to obscure its terrorism connection, Damascus occasionally manages to spring a Westerner. But the ploy doesn't work. Syria is still tied to the assassination of Lebanese President-elect Bashir

Gemayel in 1982, to the U.S. Marine barracks bombing in Lebanon in 1983, to the effort this spring to blow up an El Al plane in London—with hundreds of Americans aboard—and to a similar attempt in Madrid last month. By securing Jenco's release when it did, with Vice President Bush traveling in the Middle East but *not* to Syria, Hafez Assad's regime hoped to show itself as the Middle East's indispensable protagonist.

Most Americans recognize this for what it is—political theater. But a few Americans do not. Peggy Say, sister of one of the Americans still prisoner—UPI reporter Terry Anderson—demanded that the Administration "stop tap-dancing" and negotiate with the kidnappers. Say said that after meetings with Syrian officials in Damascus she "felt their great humanitarian sympathy," a feeling "I never felt even in my country."

"Humanitarianism" is hardly the word for Syria's long-standing divide-and-conquer campaign in Lebanon. It has led to the anarchy of which the latest Beirut car-bombings and Western hostage-taking are a part.

Neither Syria's "great humanitarian sympathy" nor the "goodwill" of its Lebanese surrogates needs to be tested or satisfied by hostage negotiations. The release of people whose freedom should never have been denied is a non-negotiable U.S. demand. Damascus deserves not thanks but censure, and not only censure but the kind of counter-measures which raise the costs of its violent politics higher than Assad will want to pay. □

VIEWING THE NEWS

Quash Subpoenas

Israel will cooperate with the U.S. investigation into allegations it improperly tried to obtain American cluster bomb technology, "but insists on the cancellation of the subpoenas to appear before a jury which were issued to eight members of the Israeli Defense Ministry mission in New York" (*Kol Yisrael*, July 24). Israeli officials have stressed that such subpoenas are unusual in international cases and unprecedented between allies.

In a related matter, "officials in the State and Defense Departments in Washington, as well as the U.S. ambassador to Israel, Thomas Pickering, have apologized to Israel" for the publicity given the allegations (*Hadashot*, July 23). "An examination car-

ried out by the Defense Ministry showed that not only was Israel not involved in stealing technology, but it even gave Washington information on the new technology that the military industries had."

Autonomy Risk

Israel's Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir told the monthly magazine *Monitin*, that he "certainly" favored autonomy for Palestinian Arabs living on the West Bank and Gaza Strip (*Jerusalem Post*, July 28). Asked if autonomy might result in establishment of a sovereign country, Shamir said, "One must be careful that autonomy does not lead to the setting up of a Palestinian state, but that's a risk one has to take. The international and regional realities necessitate it."

Soviet Appreciation

The Soviet Union's Ambassador to Syria, Felix Fedotov, told a Damascus news conference that relations between the two countries "are continuously being developed and strengthened" (Damascus Radio, July 24). Fedotov "noted that Syria stands at the forefront of the Arab states fighting all imperialist and Zionist plots which reject the Camp David agreements and all the . . . capitulationist solutions of the Middle East problem."

The ambassador said that Syria's position was "the reason for the U.S. imperialist grudges" against it. Fedotov added that "Syria's principled, firm policy is greatly appreciated in the Soviet Union. . . ." □

PERSPECTIVE

Vice President in Israel

Vice President George Bush's three-day visit to Israel—first stop on his Middle East tour which also was to include Jordan and Egypt—was the first visit to Israel by a top-level Administration official with foreign policy responsibilities in two years. It also was Bush's first trip to Israel as Vice President; President Reagan has not visited the Middle East since assuming office and no Presidential trip is being planned.

An Administration official said that Bush knows Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir (scheduled to change places with Peres on Oct. 7), Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Jordan's King Hussein. But "he hasn't seen them in some time; this is a chance to renew contacts." The source told *NER* after Bush arrived in Israel that the Vice President was carrying greetings from President Reagan but no new U.S. proposals on the peace process. According to the Administration, the 1982 Reagan plan remains "a sound basis for advancing the search for peace."

The official explained that "in the absence of a formula for direct negotiations"—a formula that "seemed to be emerging last year"—the Vice President would be looking for ways to keep the peace process alive. Washington is concerned because the "perception of stagnation" could lead to tension and even conflict.

Israel's efforts to improve the "quality of life" for Palestinian Arabs on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while not a substitute for negotiations, could give Palestinian Arabs a greater stake in moderation and stability. This, in turn, could lead to the evolution of a [non-PLO] political leadership which could join Israel and Jordan in negotiations, the official said.

Israel rejects PLO participation, and Hussein is "fed up" with Chairman Yasir Arafat's political paralysis, the official said. However, Egypt "still thinks Arafat and his gang can be reformed. . . ."

"There is another way," the official said. "In the absence of a radically different PLO leadership," Arafat and company might "step aside" and permit non-PLO Palestinians loyal to them to negotiate. Such representatives, however, would have to do what the PLO refuses—show their sincerity by endorsing U.N. Security Council Resolu-

tions 242 and 338, recognizing Israel and disavowing violence. The positive reaction by some Palestinian Arabs to the Peres-Hassan meeting in Morocco could be part of this "theoretical option." [In Jerusalem, Bush told a group of Palestinian Arabs that the United States will not meet with the PLO until it recognizes Israel. He also said that Washington would like to see Hussein hold direct negotiations with Israel.]

Administration officials called the Moroccan meeting a "striking development which changed the atmosphere" and urged all leaders in the region "to do what Peres and Hassan have done . . . meet, sit down together and talk."

As Bush's visit unfolded, the prospects of a stop in Morocco to support King Hassan II or the chance of presiding over an Israeli-Egyptian agreement on Taba arbitration (and a subsequent Mubarak-Peres summit) dimmed. Nevertheless, the Vice President had bilateral matters on his agenda as well. The official said that in Israel he would discuss the country's economic stabilization program and the "critical" need "to find a way to grow again," and negotiations over construction of a Voice of America transmitter in the Negev.

While in Israel, Bush toured Jerusalem's

old city, accompanied by Mayor Teddy Kollek and others. Some Israelis expressed pleasure at the openness of the visit to an area often shunned in the past by Administration officials on formal visits. Despite Israel's annexation, the U.S. still considers east Jerusalem and the Old City as "occupied territory." Asked before the trip if the concentration of Bush's activities in Jerusalem had political significance, a senior Administration official said that "he will visit the leadership where the leadership is, which is in Jerusalem. I think it's as simple as that."

In Amman his agenda called for talks on Jordan's plan to increase economic development in the West Bank and Gaza, "the need for both Israel and Jordan to invest funds" in the territories, and the strain on Jordan's economy caused by the return of workers from the Gulf oil states. In Cairo the Vice President was expected to discuss the Egyptian economy and Egyptian requests for more favorable debt repayment terms and for aid increases. "Egypt's problems—population growth, the economy, the bureaucratic weight of government on the economy—are vastly greater than Jordan's," the official said. □

—E.R.

Grain for Syria

The United States subsidizes exports of grain and other commodities to Syria—which is on the list of states sponsoring terrorism—as well as to other Arab countries. Syria recently qualified for 700,000 tons of American grain exports under the Export Enhancement Program (EEP) of the Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

Under the EEP, American companies export commodities to eligible countries. For each shipment sent, exporters receive a free bonus of surplus commodity from the Department of Agriculture, originally bought to reduce over-supply in the American market. Other Arab countries which have recently been authorized include Iraq, Morocco, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, which has already taken delivery of 200,000 tons of barley since May, according to the FAS.

The EEP benefits apply only to foreign markets where the commodity in question already has been sold by European countries at artificially lower world market rates. Many European commodities are heavily subsidized and American exporters cannot always compete without similar incentives, according to a senior FAS official. In Syria's case, it has been importing subsidized grain from other countries. Although Syrian participation in the EEP has been approved, it has yet to find credit guarantees from foreign banks and has not bought any of the grain. Syria gains no financial benefit in buying American grain, but would be able to purchase it at subsidized rates.

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ANALYSIS

What Peres Told Hassan

Israeli press reports and the Prime Minister's July 28 Knesset speech make possible a more detailed report of what Israel proposed during the summit between Shimon Peres and King Hassan II in Morocco on July 22-23. According to Israel Television, "Peres brought the King two position papers: The first paper contained an offer for the King to join him in proclaiming the coming year a year of negotiations, in the course of which all hostilities in the region would be suspended and a conference would be held in Morocco on the basis of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

"Peres promised that Israel would not annex the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the course of the negotiations. He added that the question of sovereignty would be determined through these negotiations."

The Prime Minister also presented a 10-point plan—prepared by his aides in Israel with the help of Abba Eban, Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Chairman. The daily newspaper *Yedi'ot Aharonot* listed the following points:

The future of the territories will be determined in negotiations; Israel will not annex the territories; Israel is not prepared to withdraw completely from the territories; Israel does not accept establishment of a Palestinian state; the Palestinian problem will be solved through peaceful means.

In addition, the document stated that an "international forum" to accompany the peace negotiations will be set up with the

agreement of both sides; Israel is not prepared to negotiate with the PLO, rather, it is prepared to negotiate with Palestinians from the territories and elsewhere who are not avowed members of the PLO . . . [but] who seek peace and oppose terrorism; the negotiations to solve the Palestinian problem will be conducted with the help of Jordan; Israel accepts the principle of freedom of religious practice for the three religions in Jerusalem; free access to the holy sites will be given, but Jerusalem will remain under Israeli sovereignty; King Hassan will provide his good offices in organizing a meeting in Morocco between the parties for the purpose of conducting negotiations . . .

Peres told the Knesset that his meeting with Hassan opened the way to a broader Arab-Israeli dialogue and that the King wanted it held in Morocco to demonstrate his country's independent decision-making and to stress that this was a direct dialogue, not the result of outside pressure. Hassan informed Peres in advance that he intended to present the Arab summit's Fez plan but that there was no intention to impose a *diktat*. The King understood that the Prime Minister would present Israel's stands.

The Prime Minister said that the major innovation in the meeting was Hassan's great contribution in telling the Arab world that the boycott on dialogue with Israel had to end, that Arab League resolutions do not bar such dialogue and without it "the conflict will remain stuck in the living flesh of the

inhabitants of the region eternally." Precisely because the gap between the sides is so deep.

Asked by Israel Defense Forces Radio if the Morocco-Israel summit boosted Peres politically and caused tension between the Labor and Likud parties, Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir said, "I do not want to decrease the value of the meeting. At the same time, it is our duty not to exaggerate the importance and weight of meetings of this type" if only to let Arab countries know that they are not entitled to recompense simply for meeting with Israel.

Shamir said that the Fez plan, "almost without mentioning the name Israel," calls for Israeli withdrawal from all territories gained in 1967, including east Jerusalem. It demands that a Palestinian Arab state, with its capital in Jerusalem, be established and that all settlements started after the Six-Day War be disbanded. Shamir said that Fez does not call for Israel's destruction; however, carrying out the Fez demands would weaken the Jewish state "to the point of making it impossible for Israel to exist."

Israel Television reported Moroccan claims that premature publicity about Peres' visit "put limitations on the King from the start, forcing him to adhere closely to the Fez plan." Nonetheless, the Moroccans reportedly found the Israeli 10-point plan "interesting" and promised to relay it to other Arab leaders. □

HEARD ON CAPITOL HILL

Aid Advances

The House Appropriations Foreign Operations Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. DAVID OBEY (D-Wis.), reported out the fiscal 1987 foreign aid bill containing \$3 billion in all-grant military and economic assistance for Israel. The \$12.9 billion bill represents a 10.6% cut from last year's appropriations.

Obey told the panel that his decision to fund Israel, Egypt, Pakistan and Ireland aid programs at the Administration's request reflected "a consensus in the Administration and Congress." The \$3 billion figure for Israel represents last year's level prior to the 4.3% cuts mandated by the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings measure.

Obey pointed to the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction measure and the Administration's refusal to support a tax increase as the main reasons why all other foreign aid spending would have to be se-

verely reduced.

The bill also contains important provisions concerning funding for Israel's Lavi fighter plane, prohibitions against dealing with the PLO, early disbursement of Israel's economic support fund (ESF) payments, and \$25 million for refugee resettlement programs in Israel.

Action on Lavi

Five contracts associated with the development of Israel's Lavi fighter aircraft have been released provisionally after eight Representatives and six Senators wrote to Administration officials protesting the delay. The contracts, charged the legislators, were being withheld to "pressure" Israel into looking at other planes.

Reps. MEL LEVINE (D-Calif.), LES ASPIN (D-Wis.), JACK KEMP (R-N.Y.), DANTE FASCELL (D-Fla.), BEN GILMAN (R-N.Y.), LARRY SMITH (D-Fla.), JIM COURTER (R-

N.J.) and ROBERT TORRICELLI (D-N.J.) along with SENS. ROBERT KASTEN (R-Wis.), DANIEL INOUE (D-Hawaii), J. BENNETT JOHNSTON (D-La.), ALFONSE D'AMATO (R-N.Y.), DENNIS DECONCINI (D-Ariz.) and ARLEN SPECTER (R-Pa.) sent the letters to Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger.

Kemp gave a major address at the roll-out ceremony, which was attended by Smith, Torricelli, Levine, CHARLES WILSON (D-Tex.) and GARY ACKERMAN (D-N.Y.). He said that Israel and the United States share the same moral values and pointed out that acquisition of a new fighter plane was necessary to help Israel defend itself and its values. He also emphasized Israel's role as a major U.S. ally. He said that supporting Israel's defense capability meant supporting America's own defense and cited the strategic cooperation between the two countries, including intelligence-sharing and joint exercises. □

BACK PAGE

New Desert Miracles

Midday heat and the nearly inescapable dust can give visitors a less-than-hospitable greeting at the Blaustein International Center for Desert Studies. Nevertheless, the center, located in the Negev Desert near Ben-Gurion's old kibbutz of Sde Boker, draws a steady stream of visitors. Recent guests included British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher earlier this summer and, last week, Vice President George Bush. At the small campus they were shown the desert as the more than 100 researchers see it—as laboratory and resource.

"There was a time when it was hard to get people to come here [to work]," Prof. Louis Berkofsky, the center's director, told *NER* recently. "But now we don't have enough housing" for the center's international staff.

Projects include research in solar and wind energy and the agricultural potential of the brackish water beneath the Negev and Sinai deserts. The water, plentiful but too saline to drink, may help grow cotton, asparagus, pistachio trees and other plants. Already the center has developed a process—in commercial use by several Israeli firms—using the water, plus high solar radiation, to grow algae. The algae are then turned into protein pills, some sold in American health food stores. Other brackish water experiments aim at more efficient fish farming.

"We have a group which works in closed-system agriculture," Berkofsky said. "They have developed a very sophisticated greenhouse for the desert." The greenhouse walls and roof are made of two layers of plastic. Between the layers a liquid circulates, acting as an optical filter. During the day it absorbs some of the sun's intense radiation; the plants then require only one-tenth the water they would otherwise.

Later, the heat absorbed during the day is released to protect the plants against cool desert nights. In addition, carbon dioxide is pumped in, accelerating plant growth. "This is very high technology. We can't export it to the third world," Berkofsky noted. "So we are starting to work on a simplified version."

Another project seeks to reproduce the ancient water collection method which allowed the Nabateans to farm the Negev desert without irrigation. The architectural unit has designed and built an adobe solar house to handle the extremes of the desert, day and night, summer and winter.

An animal physiology group studies the adaptation of camels, Arabian horses, Dorper sheep, ostriches and other animals to the desert environment. One immediate if prosaic benefit was the discovery that porcupines which eat the potato crop at Sde

Boker venture out only on nights when there is no moon. "The kibbutzniks are now lighting the fields," Berkofsky said.

From the kibbutz to the U.S. Air Force, the center's inquiring minds have something to offer. The Air Force approved a \$500,000-a-year study of how meteorological factors affect radar transmission in naturally dusty environments. "Then Congress passed the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings law and the funds stopped," Berkofsky said.

A social research unit studies not only the nomadic life of the Negev's Bedouin but seeks to help isolated towns like Yerocham capitalize on the assets they do have. Another group examines the effect of desert life on humans. One staffer explained that the guiding principle was "not to change the Negev but to adapt ourselves, not to destroy the environment but use it on a scale that makes sense."

Joint projects have been conducted with many American and European universities. Berkofsky would like to work with colleagues in the largely desert lands of neighboring Arab states and has suggested joint programs to Jordanians, Saudis, Sudanese and others at international conferences. Unfortunately, "they don't want to have contact with us."

The Blaustein Center operates on a \$2.5 million annual budget, supplied by the government, grants and the Blaustein endowment.

Berkofsky, who retired as a meteorological researcher with the U.S. Air Force in 1974 and made *aliyah*, remembers when the center was "three of us in a room in Beersheva." But now the center is internationally known. "There is a sense of excitement," Berkofsky said. "And there is tremendous potential. For 12 years, that's not bad." —E.R. □

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NEAR EAST REPORT

WASHINGTON WEEKLY ON AMERICAN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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EDITORIALS

The Lavi Rolls Out

Last week Israel rolled out its first Lavi fighter-bomber. The Lavi promises to become the state-of-the-art combat aircraft for the 1990's and beyond. It is designed not only to survive but to excel in combat. The Lavi should help Israel continue to deter its enemies and, should deterrence fail, to carry the fighting to them.

Israel remains one of a handful of countries which build aircraft. It is a heavy burden for such a small country but, in Israel's case, unavoidable. No Israeli planner can forget the experience of 1967 when France's DeGaulle, to improve relations with Arab states, impounded 50 Mirage jets built to Israeli specifications and already paid for. (The planes eventually went to Egypt and Libya.)

But the decision to construct the Lavi represented more than bleak necessity for Israel. The United States sells Israel F-15's and F-16's, now the backbone of the Israeli Air Force. Washington is more than an arms supplier; linked to Jerusalem by political and moral as well as strategic bonds, it is an infinitely more reliable ally than Paris ever could have been. And with some major Lavi components being purchased in the United States—and more than 100 American subcontractors working on the project—America benefits as well.

The Lavi project will be the largest industrial undertaking in Israel's history. It has been compared, because of its possible technological spin-offs and economic stimulus, to the Apollo space program in this country.

Nevertheless, there is controversy. Pentagon officials have argued that the Lavi, partially funded by U.S. aid, will be more expensive than Israel estimates. Israel disputes the Pentagon figures, explaining that some of the numbers are based on American, not Israeli, production costs. Some Israelis worry that spending on the new plane could limit funds for the Army and Navy.

But there is no doubt that Israel must have a "next-

generation" fighter-bomber in the 1990's. The costs are high but the rewards potentially much higher. The Lavi is getting close scrutiny; it also has earned the backing of Prime Minister Shimon Peres, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the national unity government. It should be evaluated on its own merits, by those whose security it will defend. □

Moroccan Connection

Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres' surprise public visit to Morocco's King Hassan II last week both raised expectations that the Arab-Israeli peace process might be renewed and drew predictable outrage from the enemies of peace. Syria called the meeting "black treason" and broke relations with Morocco. The Soviet Union denounced Peres' trip as part of a "fresh attempt by Israel and the United States" to force Arab countries to capitulate. Several PLO splinter groups threatened Hassan with assassination.

But unlike the generally negative Arab reaction when Sadat visited Jerusalem in 1977, some Palestinian Arabs voiced cautious endorsement of the Peres-Hassan meeting. In Egypt, President Hosni Mubarak said that the Peres-Hassan meeting "can help give an impetus to the peace process."

By hosting secret meetings with Israelis and Egyptians, Hassan helped prepare the way for Sadat's journey to Jerusalem. Now, meeting openly with Peres, he makes it a little more difficult for other Arab and Moslem leaders to go on denying the legitimacy of Israel. Perhaps he can serve as a bridge to King Hussein of Jordan.

Peres' aides cautioned against great expectations. Morocco, after all, is on the periphery—geographically and politically—of the Arab conflict with Israel. Nevertheless, when an Israeli Prime Minister makes only the second official visit to an Arab state in modern Israel's history, it is definitely a cause for optimism. □

VIEWING THE NEWS

Accepting 242

Rashad al-Shawwa, former mayor of Gaza, said in an interview that while the PLO is the representative of the Palestinians, it has failed to realize what "representation" must mean (Amman Television, July 15). "The PLO imposed its will over the occupied territory's inhabitants instead of taking into consideration their opinions." If the PLO has a solution to the problem, he said, the people will support it, but in the absence of concrete options he be-

lieved "that following Resolution 242 is at least an attempt through which we can recruit world opinion."

Fahd Urges Jihad

King Fahd of Saudi Arabia commemorated the recent 40th anniversary of a Saudi magazine by calling for greater media responsibility in serving "the Islamic issue" (Saudi Press Agency, July 15). He argued that the media "must urge the Muslims to launch jihad . . . and to restore Moslem Palestine from the Zionist usurpers and ag-

gressors. . . . The Muslims must be united in the confrontations with the Jews and those who support them."

Border Watch

Government agencies which patrol the Mexican border have increased efforts to control terrorists' entry into the United States (Reuters, July 21). The Border Patrol's special emergency team has detained over two dozen suspects since January, and the Mexican city of Matamoros has doubled the police guarding the U.S. consular office there. □

HEARD IN TEL AVIV

The Threat From the North

Israelis, including military commanders, academic analysts, and civilians back from reserve duty on the Golan Heights, all tell disturbing stories about Syria. Some fear that war between the two countries may be a question of when, not whether.

There are accounts of Syrian troops, disguised as shepherds, probing Israeli lines. "Potemkin village" agricultural settlements have been constructed close to the narrow, U.N.-monitored zone separating Israeli and Syrian forces. In the event of a surprise attack by Damascus, these could serve as forward military positions. A growing tank deployment on the Golan and increased Syrian emphasis on airborne commandos highlight concerns.

One Israeli official with a bleak view of Syrian President Hafez Assad's intentions believes that Syria's tactical goal is to launch a successful surprise attack to win an imposed settlement requiring Israeli withdrawal from the Golan, West Bank and Gaza Strip. Assad's long-range goal, the official said, is to rule "Greater Syria"—including his own country, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel.

Assad plays with symbols the way Sadat played with religion, the expert said. And the Syrian dictator has some potent symbols to manipulate. Next year marks the 800th anniversary of the Battle of Hittin, where Moslems under Saladin defeated a Crusader army on a hill near Lake Kinneret. The defeat ultimately led to the end of Crusader rule in Palestine. Assad compares Israel to the Crusader kingdom—a foreign, temporary entity in the Arab world. According to the

official, only one picture hangs in Assad's office—Saladin's.

Shai Feldman, senior research associate at Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, does not need to invoke symbols to be "one of those quite worried" about Syria's military buildup and Assad's intentions. "The Syrians have, to my mind, developed a whole national security policy aimed directly at negating Israel's deterrence vis-a-vis Syria," Feldman told *NER*. Israel attempts to deter any enemy from launching a war—but if deterrence fails, Israel seeks to move quickly to the offensive, to decide the battle on enemy territory, forcing its adversary to seek a ceasefire.

Syria's massive, Soviet-supplied buildup seems designed to frustrate that strategy. One component is a strong defensive capability, illustrated by intensive military construction and deployment between the U.N. zone and Damascus, 25 miles away.

Damascus' 3:1 edge in artillery and the acquisition of Soviet SS-21 short-range ground-to-ground missiles—perhaps with chemical warheads—increases its potential to inflict damage on Israel proper. Delivery of longer-range SS-23's has been rumored. And a growing disparity in standing forces—approximately 400,000 for Syria, 130,000 for Israel—increases Assad's incentive to open a surprise attack.

Feldman believes Syria has not moved yet for three basic reasons. It wants to improve its air defenses. It means to upgrade overall military management, evidenced by recent maneuvers at the three-division and general staff levels, something not seen previously.

And Damascus may be getting caution signals from Moscow to keep things quiet until the fate of a second Reagan-Gorbachev summit is decided.

War with Israel would involve a high price for Syria. Feldman believes that Assad has a "declining scale of costs" he will pay for his objectives. He wants freedom of action in Lebanon and could achieve it at comparatively low cost. He wants the return of the Golan and eventually might be ready to pay a high price for it. And he would like to see Israel destroyed—but is not willing to pay the very high price to try to bring it about.

While Syria has been expanding its military, nearly bankrupting the economy in the process—gross national product is down an estimated 18% in three years—Israel has been cutting back on defense expenditures. A Hebrew University analyst noted that Israel can reach an agreement on boundaries only with Syria. Without Syria, Israel can make only temporary arrangements. But he, like the government official, doubted that any arrangement will be reached with the Syria of Assad.

Syria's ruler is more ideologically committed, more tied to the idea of Syrian grandeur, and so cannot be expected to make an about-face toward Israel as Sadat did. Assad's health—the Israelis count heart problems, diabetes, a blood disorder and high blood pressure—may introduce a sense of urgency in the Syrian leader's calculations. The Hebrew University analyst speculated that a little Sadat may be sitting in Assad's shadow. Until he emerges, Damascus is not likely to make peace with Jerusalem.—E.R. □

HEARD ON CAPITOL HILL

Bryant Skeptical

At a recent hearing on "ethnically-motivated" violence, Rep. JOHN BRYANT (D-Texas) questioned Arab-American representatives David Sadd and James Abourezk on why their organizations had not condemned extremists such as Louis Farrakhan.

Rep. PAT SWINDALL (R-Ga.) stressed that if any Jewish organizations are involved in anti-Arab terror, it is clearly a very small fringe element. Bryant pointed out that

American-Jewish organizations have repudiated militants like Meir Kahane and the Jewish Defense League (JDL), while Abourezk's Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)—far from disavowing racist figures—invited both Farrakhan and PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat to address its annual convention.

Anti-Boycott Measures

The House Appropriations Commerce, Justice, State and Judiciary Subcommittee approved an amendment to tighten up key provisions of U.S. anti-boycott legislation.

The amendment offered by Rep. BOB CARR (D-Mich.) forbids relevant government agencies from entering into contracts with foreign firms which participate in the Arab boycott of Israel. □

George O'Brien

Rep. GEORGE O'BRIEN, 69, passed away recently after a long illness. During his seven terms, O'Brien, a Republican from the suburbs of Chicago, championed the cause of political prisoners and supported close U.S.-Israel ties.

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PERSPECTIVE

On the Streets of Beirut

For the first time since the 1982 Lebanon war, Syrian troops have returned to West Beirut. On the surface, the deployment appears to be an attempt to pacify the Moslem sector of the city and bring its warring militias under greater control.

Since leaving Beirut as part of a U.S.-brokered agreement four years ago, the Syrians have consolidated their 25,000-strong military presence over much of the country; one of the principal exceptions is Israel's 80-square-mile security zone in the south.

An attempt earlier this year by Damascus to impose a peace agreement on Lebanon's three major religious communities and their militias backfired. The main component of the plan was a realignment of the Lebanese political system, in which the Shi'ite Moslem and Druze communities would gain added power. President Amin Gemayel and an insurgent group within the predominantly Maronite Lebanese Forces militia, fearing the plan would significantly reduce Christian political clout, refused to go along. As a result, Gemayel, who had previously been known for his close ties to Damascus, wound up in the Syrian doghouse. And Lebanon's pro-Syrian Shi'ite and Druze leaders, who had acceded to the pact, began to call for his ouster.

The latest Syrian ploy is less grandiose. Three weeks ago 1,000 Lebanese Army troops and internal security police started to patrol the streets of West Beirut. Militias were ordered to shutter their offices and keep gunmen out of sight. Days later, some 300 Syrian commandos, 150 plainclothesmen and 80 "military observers" entered the city to reinforce the Lebanese.

Some observers predict the Syrian presence may ultimately total 5,000 troops, the same number deployed in West Beirut at the time of Israel's entry into Lebanon.

Christian reaction to the Syrian moves has been mixed. Gemayel's office initially called the deployment "illegitimate" and in violation of the U.S.-sponsored agreement, and there were complaints that the Presidential palace was kept in the dark about the plan prior to its implementation.

Other Christian leaders, including former President Camille Chamoun—who had been openly critical of Syria's Lebanon policy—and new Phalange party leader George Saade, at first cautiously welcomed the deployment on the ground that it would return order to the city. But later a statement by the Lebanese Front, of which Chamoun, Saade and the Lebanese Forces are members, criticized Damascus.

The Syrian moves caused a flurry of

speculation. Some observers see the reassertion of Syrian control as a response to the growing presence in the city of PLO fighters loyal to Yasir Arafat. The Sabra, Shatila and Burj al-Barajneh camps were the site two months ago of bloody fighting between pro-Syrian Shi'ite Amal forces and Palestinians who are Arafat's followers. President Hafez Assad's regime backs an anti-Arafat coalition, the Palestine National Salvation Front, which is based in Damascus.

Others see the Syrian moves as a reaction to the issue of international terrorism. The Vienna and Rome airport shootouts last December, the Achille Lauro hijacking, the U.S. military action against Libya (with which Damascus maintains close ties), and charges that Syria was behind the attempted bombing of El Al airliners in London and Madrid have focused on Syrian involvement in the terrorist international. Some speculated that U.S. air strikes were being considered against Syrian targets.

One means of shaking these accusations is for Syria to at least give the appearance of being helpful in obtaining the release of American and French hostages currently

held—most likely in Beirut and its environs—by pro-Iranian militias. Early reports suggest that Syrian troops have been posted in those neighborhoods believed to be under the control of such groups as Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad, which have claimed credit for the kidnappings. Damascus has been playing a cat-and-mouse game with Washington on the hostage issue [recently welcoming the sister of one, journalist Terry Anderson], and will surely try to extract whatever concessions it can in exchange for its "delivery" of the hostages.

An additional factor—the Lebanese economy—has undoubtedly contributed to the ease with which the Syrians carried out their return to Beirut. Skyrocketing inflation and general economic stagnation have affected most sectors of Lebanese society, Moslem and Christian. Regardless, Syrian troops back in Beirut mean that Damascus' control of Lebanon is growing tighter, perhaps feeding Assad's appetite for "Greater Syria." □

—Dan Mariaschin
Mariaschin, who visited Lebanon in 1982, is Director of the Political Affairs Department of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

No Thanks

The State Department has shown no enthusiasm for a Soviet proposal to hold a meeting of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council to prepare for a Middle East peace conference. Soviet officials reportedly made the suggestion during French President Francois Mitterrand's visit to Moscow early this month.

State Department Spokesman Bernard Kalb said on July 10 that "the United States has always had reservations" about either a preliminary session or a full international conference to pursue Middle East peace. "The U.S. experience . . . has been that such conferences lead to posturing and rhetorical excesses instead of real, hard negotiations."

Israel opposes an international conference for the same reasons, as well as because Arab delegations, operating as a bloc, would be dominated by the most radical states and would not negotiate directly with it. In recent weeks Jordan's King Hussein has reiterated his call for such a conference; Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has repeated his acceptance if not active support of the idea. Syrian President Hafez Assad has consistently called for a conference with the participation of his Soviet patrons. PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat—the target of Assad's anti-PLO moves in Lebanon—also wants such a conference. Inclusion of the PLO would, Arafat hopes, bolster his campaign for international legitimacy.

If the Russians really want to demonstrate "a willingness to play a constructive role in the search for a Middle East peace, there is a long list of things" they can do to prove their intentions, Kalb added. Heading the list is a Soviet "resumption of diplomatic relations with the state of Israel." In the past, Administration officials have mentioned other steps the Soviets could take: ending the stranglehold on Soviet Jewish emigration, easing anti-Jewish policies within the Soviet Union, and restraining their radical Arab allies and clients.

BACK PAGE

Flunking at Stanford

Political propaganda can come disguised as scholarly reflection. A rather breathtaking example surfaced recently in a most unlikely place, *The Stanford Magazine*. The glossy quarterly, published by the Stanford University alumni association, carried an innocuously titled two-part series—"Making Sense of the Middle East"—in its spring and summer issues.

The source, Joel Beinin, is an assistant professor described—incompletely—as the university's "principal expert on the Middle East." Both the spring and summer articles were based on interviews the editors conducted with Beinin.

The first installment claims that in addition to Israel, Turkey and Egypt, such Middle Eastern states as Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia stand "in the American camp." How Iraq's anti-Western radicalism—suppressed now only by its war with Iran—or Kuwait's effort to bribe Oman into refusing U.S. base privileges, or Saudi Arabia's obstruction of American peace efforts in the region put them in "the American camp" the piece fails to explain.

Part two, in the current summer issue, contains more incredible claims. Among them:

The "essence of the ongoing dispute in the Middle East" is not between Israel and the Arab states, "not about Palestinian terrorists bothering the peaceful Jews" and "certainly not about religious issues."

The article obsessively focuses on the Arab-Israeli conflict as *the* Middle East dispute. More numerous and bloodier inter-Arab clashes slip from view. The ironic phrase "terrorists bothering the peaceful Jews" glosses over the hallmark of PLO politics—the murder of innocent men, women and children. And denying the underlying religious nature of Moslem-Arab enmity is intellectual dishonesty.

Beinin and the magazine's editors dismiss the reality that Israel's very existence was threatened on the eve of the 1967 Six-Day War. Their version has it that the image of Israel as the weaker party in the Arab-Israeli conflict "has never actually been the case." In Beinin's view, Israelis were "concerned also that negotiations with Egypt might raise broader questions that Israel preferred not to discuss, such as the rights of Palestinian refugees Israelis therefore decided that it was advantageous for them to deal with the issue on the battlefield. . . ."

By now it should be obvious that this "expert's" attempt to "make sense" of the Middle East is a primer of historical revisionism.

As part of the basic anti-Israel line, readers learn—without any qualification—that many Palestinians "were driven out or fled" in 1947-48 and 1967 and "remain in refugee

camps today. . . ." In fact, the majority of Arabs fled to get out of the way of five invading Arab armies sent to crush the new Jewish state. Conspicuously omitted here is any mention of the larger number of Jewish refugees who fled persecution and dispossession in the Arab states and went to Israel. One finds no acknowledgement that the vast majority of Palestinian Arabs *do not* live in camps.

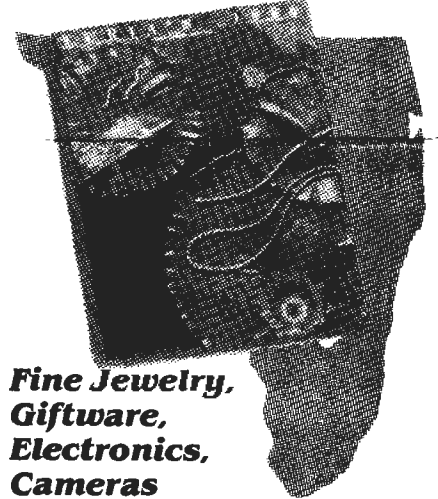
Part two consistently inverts cause and effect, as with the assertion that trouble between Syria and Israel stemmed not from Syria's implacable hostility toward a Jewish state but from Israel's decision early in the 1950's to press its right to Lake Kinneret (the Sea of Galilee).

Straining credulity to the utmost, Beinin asserts that "there is little doubt that the mainstream of the PLO is prepared to recognize Israel's right to exist" and claims this "is well supported by the diplomatic record." Amazing . . . Stanford's "expert" knows—perhaps telepathically—that PLO leaders do not mean what they have been saying and continue to say—that all of Israel is "occupied Palestinian territory."

Joel Beinin also is a member of the editorial committee which publishes the bi-monthly *Middle East Report*. Its May-June issue editorializes that "the barbarism that afflicts the Middle East and U.S. policy there has already taken an enormous toll of lives, most recently in Libya." It finds that Western hostages in Lebanon and "Palestinians, are martyrs ultimately to the desperate and ignorant efforts of the United States and its local allies, especially Israel, to impose their interests on the peoples of the region, no matter what the cost in blood."

It is only in this anti-American, anti-Israel, radical left world-view that Beinin's disinformation "makes sense." *Stanford Magazine* failed its readers. —E.R. □

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EDITORIAL

Achille Lauro Trial

Odd things happened in the trial of the Achille Lauro pirates before the case went to a jury in Genoa, Italy last week. A defense lawyer claimed that the Palestinian Arab terrorist accused of killing the wheel-chair bound American passenger Leon Klinghoffer was "not a monster, but a fighter." The defense attorney argued that Klinghoffer was not a murder victim but a casualty in the "Palestinian struggle for a homeland."

This is a blatant invocation of the cliché that "one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter." If terrorists are freedom fighters, then civilians are soldiers and innocent bystanders are legitimate targets. Of course, those who accept this Orwellian language surrender to terrorists, allowing them to redefine reality. It then becomes morally impossible to oppose terrorist killings.

Stranger still was the effort by prosecutors to portray the Achille Lauro affair as part of an internal PLO power struggle. According to this theory, mastermind Mohammed Abbas sought to increase the prestige of his splinter of the Palestine Liberation Front, one of the factions which make up the PLO, at the expense of the larger organization and Chairman Yasir Arafat. Abbas supposedly meant to discredit Arafat, who had drifted toward "moderation" and diplomacy and away from "armed struggle."

But just before the jury got the case, a top official in SISDE, the Italian intelligence agency, issued a report suggesting that Abbas' group was too small, too primitive, to have planned and carried out the hijacking by itself. According to the *New York Times*, the report pointed to the involvement of governments—unnamed—with a sophisticated plan

aimed at reducing U.S. and Western European influence in the Middle East. "From this angle," the report went on, "the Achille Lauro operation assumes a completely different and more threatening aspect."

SISDE also asserted that advancing Palestinian Arab nationalism no longer is the main goal of groups like Abbas' PLF and Abu Nidal. Instead, they have become tools of Syria and Libya in intrigues against other Arab states and against Israel and Western states involved in the Middle East.

Questions about the purported split between Abbas and Arafat remain. Arafat, himself, named Abbas to the PLO's inner circle of executive committee members and Abbas remained on the committee after the hijack attempt. One of the four defendants in the court room—ten others, including Abbas, were being tried *in absentia*, an eleventh will be tried later—ended his final statement with a shout of "Long live Arafat!"

Whether or not Abbas and Arafat were at odds over the Achille Lauro piracy is irrelevant. Any disagreements concerned tactics, not strategy.

Arafat's involvement in the murders of such combatants as school children and bus riders, airplane passengers, Olympic athletes and diplomats—Israeli, American and others—extends back 25 years. "Palestinian rights," which supposedly justify all the killing, slip further from reach each time Arafat, Abbas or their colleagues send deluded young men and women on a new terrorist outrage. This is the real verdict of the Achille Lauro case.

□

VIEWING THE NEWS

Fatah Closures

As part of an escalating struggle for influence among the Palestinian Arab residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, King Hussein's government ordered the closing of all 25 Fatah offices in Jordan (*New York Times*, July 8). Fatah is headed by Yasir Arafat and is the largest constituent group of the PLO.

Jordan has increased efforts to regain influence among West Bankers since King Hussein's February cancellation of a diplomatic "joint initiative" with Arafat. Despite the closing of Fatah offices, Jordan has allowed some non-Fatah PLO offices to

remain open. Israel's Defense Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, said that Jordan's action will help reduce terrorism in the Israeli-administered territories (*Washington Post*, July 8).

Israeli Denial

Israel sharply denied allegations that it had been involved in the illegal export of U.S. technology to manufacture cluster bombs (first reported by CBS Television, July 8). Later news reports said that federal subpoenas and search warrants had been issued for several employees of Israel's

Military Purchasing Mission in New York and for three U.S. firms.

A statement by Israel's embassy on July 9 said that a Defense Ministry check "has made it clear that the allegations published by the media are unfounded." It added that the affair related to equipment for production of gun shells developed independently by Israel and asserted that "the Ministry Mission has, according to procedure, applied for export licenses from the U.S. Department of State . . . And no item, small or big, relating to this subject, is exported from the U.S. to Israel without a lawful permit."

□

EXCLUSIVE

Soweto: Learning From Israel

Three senior black South African activists recently returned to South Africa convinced that "the majority of the people in Israel support us in our struggle."

The three—a founding member of the Soweto Committee of Ten, an executive director of South Africa's Ebony Foundation, and the national president of the Black Housewives League—were part of a group of 20 senior black South African activists who recently concluded a month of intensive study as guests of the Histadrut labor federation's International Institute for Development Cooperation and Labor Studies, popularly known as the Afro-Asian Institute. They studied the Israeli model in organizing trade unions, cooperatives, women, youth and the elderly as tools for nation-building as well as for advancing the struggle for freedom.

The South Africans were here as the direct result of efforts begun last summer by Dr. Shimshon Zelniker (*Near East Report*, Aug. 12, 1985) and funded by a liberal American Jewish group interested in improving relations between Israel and black South Africa. Zelniker spent a month in South Africa meeting with various leaders, including Bishop Desmond Tutu. This winter, Zelniker returned to South Africa, along with Yehuda Paz, the Institute director.

Paz described the recent study mission as a "breakthrough" but emphasized that the real test is only beginning. "We want to make more substantial contact with trade unions, women's groups and youth" Paz told *NER*. "This is the first time that a group of South African leaders has been

prepared to see in the Histadrut and the Institute—in the labor movement of Israel—a source for study and cooperation in their struggle. This gives Israel a new standing altogether." Paz felt that their stay in Israel had succeeded in "weakening" the generally anti-Israel feeling with which the black activists had arrived. Their problem with Israel concerned their view of its relationship with the white South African government and did not reflect a position on the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Deborah Mabiletsa is an executive director of the Ebony Foundations and president of the South Africa-United States Leadership Exchange Program. She is involved in women and church groups. "The Holy Land has a special attraction for me," she said. Mabiletsa was interested in visiting Israel because "of the history of the Jewish people. Out of suffering they have been able to build for themselves a strong Western nation," she explained. Like her fellow activists, she "needed to be clear about the relationship between Israel and South Africa. . . . I was interested in hearing the views of the Israeli people. A good percentage of them support us in our struggle. This is encouraging."

Sally Motlana, National President of the Black Housewives League and Vice President of the South African Council of Churches, was interested in the Israeli youth movements. "I like the way they organize the youth at a very early age. They organize creative projects for these youths and teach them dignity of labor." This is relevant to the South African situation. "Our youth are leaderless because as soon

as a leader comes up the government takes that leader and puts the leader in jail."

She also "likes the way women have played an important part in the struggle for liberation" in Israel. "Here in Israel, the women are right in front, not only in the labor movement."

Lekgau Mathabathe, a founder of the Soweto Civic Association, was interested in the Israeli experience because "long before they got independence they were involved in projects—building them and getting closer to each other. And therefore when they did get their independence they were in a position to develop this way of life."

Back in South Africa the activists intend to help the Israeli labor movement widen its contacts. "We approve that we have been brought here by the Histadrut," Mabiletsa said.

Mathabathe is pleased that he was able to "hear the side of the Arabs [in Israel]. When you see an Arab in Israel he is an Israeli Arab—he is a citizen of Israel. Not like in South Africa."

Motlana "learned a lot here about mobilization of people in the struggle. Israel has been able to pool all the Jewish people coming from all over the world. They were speaking different languages and now they learn Hebrew and the people are being united. I also learned again that our freedom is not going to come from outside. The freedom of the black man lies in the black man himself." □

—David Twersky

Twersky is NER's Israel correspondent.

HEARD IN WASHINGTON

Latest on Embassy

The State Department opposes a provision of the Senate-passed Embassy Security Act of 1986 which calls for construction of a new American embassy in Israel on a site within five miles of the Knesset, excluding any location in east Jerusalem. Robert Lamb, director of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security, told reporters last week "there is no chance" the Reagan Administration will budget funds for a Jerusalem embassy. Lamb said that "we very much need a [new] embassy in Tel Aviv. We're worried about the safety of the people there."

He added that State is discussing the Israeli embassy provision of the legislation with members of Congress. The section, originally sponsored by Sens. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), Rudy Boschwitz (R-Minn.), Paula Hawkins (R-Fla.), and Chic Hecht (R-Nev.), prohibits the spending of any funds on construction of a new embassy not in west Jerusalem within the truce lines as they existed before June 1967. It does not require new construction "if the Secretary of State determines and reports to the Congress that the physical security of personnel to be employed at that facility cannot be

adequately guaranteed."

State considers the present embassy, located along the Tel Aviv beachfront, close to other buildings and among narrow, busy streets, to be vulnerable to attack. Lamb asserted that a new embassy in Tel Aviv was necessary for security reasons.

The Israeli embassy provision adopted by the Senate is not part of the House version of the embassy security legislation. A conference committee will consider differences in the two bills, probably before the end of the month. □

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HEARD IN JERUSALEM

Behind the Economic Upturn

Economics may be the "dismal science," but a researcher at the Bank of Israel recently gave *Near East Report* a generally optimistic assessment of the Israeli economy. Under the national unity government's year-old recovery program inflation is down, large amounts of cash are not being reinjected into the economy, and unemployment—although high for Israel at 7%—remains stable.

Negotiations between the government and the Histadrut trade unions confederation pose the next major test for the government's program. The talks focus on wage agreements to cover large sectors of the economy for the next two years. "The Histadrut itself says its demands will contribute to stability. This is an unusual position for the unions," the economist said.

"It's not easy" for union leadership since "their members might not be so obedient." Pressure from the nurses union—now on strike at the country's hospitals—illustrates the problem.

Average Israeli wages—eroded by as much as 20%–25% in the first months of the program—have recovered "to close to the level of last July." The researcher said he believed that wage agreements could be worked out which would contribute to continuing economic recovery.

Other indicators which reinforced the economist's optimism include elimination of the government's budget deficit, an increase in tax collections after a fall in 1984, and an apparent shrinkage of the "underground economy" as Israelis regain confidence in the country's monetary stability.

In addition, "the level of government expenditure was lower last year than for the two or three years before, about 3% to 4% lower in real terms." Income tax revenue increased as a result of more efficient collection. Lower inflation—down from an annual rate of more than 440% to approximately 18% to 20%—also meant that tax revenue was worth more.

As for Israel's previously worrisome balance of payments problems, the plunge in international oil prices saved the country between \$300 million and \$400 million and helped reduce the deficit, the economist noted. Also, foreign reserves are up, partly because of the one-time package of \$1.5 billion in supplemental U.S. economic aid.

One part of the recovery program which did not take place was the planned cut in government employment. "There was no real structural change. About 30% of the workers are still in the public sector. But public sector employment did not rise for several years and that's quite an achieve-

ment—in all Western countries it has been going up."

Another part of the recovery plan, a law freeing the Bank of Israel from the requirement that it print currency to cover any government deficit, may not be as effective as its authors intended. But the Bank's new governor, Prof. Michael Bruno, "is in a strong position. He may influence the government."

A lingering cloud over Israel's economy is an internal debt 1.5 times greater than the country's gross national product. "This is a large amount, not typical for any country, even in South America," the researcher stated. And part of the debt is "quite liquid"; in a pinch "people can sell their reserves for foreign currency." This depletes the pool of savings necessary to finance long-term growth. "You can deal with this only in the long run, to convince people to keep their financial assets in the country."

Israel can achieve long-term growth, at 3%–4% annually if there is no major war and if its political leadership continues to focus on fiscal stability and eschews programs which might be popular in the short run but would risk reigniting inflation. "I'm always optimistic," the economist said.

—E.R.

PERSPECTIVE

The Egypt, U.S., Israel Triangle

In recent weeks an Egyptian economic delegation visited Washington to meet with Administration officials, and State Department legal adviser Judge Abraham Sofaer returned once more to the Middle East to pave the way for arbitration on the question of Taba. It is not the first time that Egypt has committed itself to resolving its long-term economic dilemma, nor is Judge Sofaer a newcomer to the Cairo-Jerusalem circuit.

With the recent drop in world oil prices, three of Egypt's four major sources of foreign currency—remittances from workers abroad, oil exports, and ship tariffs from the Suez Canal—have decreased. The fourth revenue source—tourism—also has dropped as terrorists succeeded in intimidating vacationers.

The 1977 bread riots remind officials that any austerity measures must be implemented gradually, not as drastically as when President Anwar Sadat radically lowered bread subsidies.

According to one Egyptian diplomat, "drastic measures" must be taken now to ensure that foreign loans are repaid on

time, but any plan must be tempered by providing "a decent life" for all Egyptians. Joyce Starr, director of the Near East program at Georgetown's Center for Strategic and International Studies, says it "isn't as if they haven't made any reforms"; they simply have not been made fast enough.

Egyptian officials welcome American advice in their effort to decrease their country's foreign debt, but also demand a new framework for debt repayment and foreign aid if they hope to remedy domestic shortages. The U.S. might also lower the interest rate on Egypt's military debt or allow a more flexible time schedule for repayment. In this area, however, even Egyptians recognize that any modification must be part of an overall policy for all Third World countries.

Islamic fundamentalists have become prominent in the increasingly vocal opposition, making use of President Hosni Mubarak's democratic reforms. But Egyptians distinguish between fundamentalism—strict adherence to one's beliefs—and fanaticism—the forced imposition of those beliefs on others, the diplomat said. Egyptians

consider themselves moderate people, he added, and the minority of fanatics don't represent a major threat. Nevertheless, this spring's police riots highlighted the potential for unrest.

Taba is currently the symbol of the impasse in Egypt-Israeli relations and has been for some time. Israel has accepted Egypt's request to submit the question of the narrow beach south of Eilat to arbitration, but the two sides do not agree on the specific wording of the question.

Egypt feels that if Taba is settled, no obstacle will remain to returning its ambassador, as it sees Israeli movement regarding Lebanon and the West Bank. In any case, though, Egypt insists its relations with Israel are normal no matter where its envoy is.

According to Israeli diplomats, Taba is not a real issue. Israel, they argue, has already made considerable concessions, and Egypt is "not really making a decision" on whether it agrees to the Israeli-proposed question.

—Shai Franklin

BACK PAGE

Jack Bingham Remembered

I recall thinking that I would never get the job. Jonathan Bingham was one of the most respected and influential members of the House of Representatives. I was in my mid-twenties, with no Capitol Hill experience, and—worst of all—I was neither a Yale graduate nor a lawyer. I had to screw up all my courage for my interview with the Connecticut-raised Bronx representative who was looking for someone to fill the position of chief legislative assistant (L.A.).

Bingham's top aide, Gordon Kerr, ushered me into the Congressman's presence. I was well-prepared for any legislative query he might throw at me. He looked intimidating. Almost six-and-a-half feet tall, slim, with snow white hair. He could have been elected on his looks alone! He told me about his political views. He was a liberal Democrat, a battler for equal opportunity for blacks and women. He was an outspoken opponent of the Vietnam war.

But his real love was foreign policy and his special passion was Israel.

Part of the reason for that was political. He had many Jewish constituents. But he and his wife, June, had been ardent Zionists in the pre-state era. They had first visited the country in 1950.

Bingham recognized that as a Mayflower-descended Protestant he could be especially helpful to the Jewish state on the Foreign Affairs Committee. He had unique credibility when he worked to put the foreign aid bill over. His Jewish colleagues—and especially his friend Rep. Ben Rosenthal—recognized that and wisely let the Connecticut Yankee take the lead. In his time, Bingham helped enact aid bills worth billions of dollars in assistance to Israel.

He asked me about my Jewish and Zionist background and said that the letter of recommendation he had received from AIPAC's founder, I.L. Kenen, carried a great deal of weight with him. After ensuring that I was knowledgeable about—and shared his views of—the environment, affirmative action, and government programs to help the poor, he offered me a job. He said that I, like his previous L.A.s, would serve for just one year. "In a year's time you can learn a great deal up here. You may even have an impact, in a small way."

After six months, Bingham asked me to stay another year. I stayed another seven and, if he hadn't been unfairly gerrymandered out of his seat, I would never have left.

Bingham, himself, was a civics textbook image of a Congressman. He worked long hours. He studied committee reports. He regularly disregarded the advice of staff members who urged a vote for an ill-con-

ceived bill because it would score a few points back home. Personally, he was wonderful to work for—even-tempered, fair, generous. His staff was loyal to him and to each other. He was thoughtful. On a half-dozen occasions, he took this awe-struck aide to the White House. I'll never forget how he introduced me to President Ford. "Mr. President, you know my L.A. Mike Rosenberg?" Later he used the same approach with President Carter—and with Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat. On the way back to the Hill, he would tease me about my "uncharacteristic shyness today."

But my favorite memory of Jonathan Bingham, who died last week, concerns my older son Nicky. Bingham adored him—and Nicky loved Bingham—and one night he insisted on taking the five-year-old onto the House floor. Aides were not routinely permitted there—although the children and grandchildren of Representatives were. My wife, Mindy, and I ran up to the tourist gallery in time to see Bingham introducing Nicky to Mo Udall, Liz Holtzman, and Speaker Tip O'Neill.

Then Bingham left Nicky sitting in one of those hallowed seats (with Silvio Conte, I believe) while he successfully urged his colleagues to support his amendment to cut off aid to Syria. The amendment passed and Bingham led Nicky back to us. Now 11, Nick still proudly recalls the day he "helped Bingham pass a bill." So do we.

Today, as I leave *Near East Report* for my new position as Washington representative of the American Jewish Committee, I think of the man who won't be there to share in my excitement. But, in a very real sense, he will be. I'll certainly never forget the Congressman who took a chance on an inexperienced kid and changed his life. The

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TO

Middle East PEACE

R.R.M.
&
C.G.M.

tenants in the Bronx won't forget the statesman who walked out of high-level meetings to call a landlord and tell him that he had better not raise rents again. The Soviet Jews in Israel—absorbed under the "Bingham resettlement program"—won't forget their benefactor, and especially not the old Jews living in the Jonathan Bingham Home in Ashkelon. He'll be remembered, quite simply, because, for many of us, he is irreplaceable.

Boss, I miss you already. ☐

—M.J.R.

N.E.R.

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NEAR EAST REPORT

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VOL. XXX, NO. 26 JUNE 30, 1986

EDITORIAL

The AWACS Commitment

On June 18, President Reagan informed Congress that the United States will transfer to Saudi Arabia by early July the first of five AWACS radar planes which the Saudis purchased in 1981. The 1981 sale was approved by the Senate (the House rejected it) after a bruising battle with opponents. It was approved only after President Reagan promised that delivery of the AWACS would only commence if Saudi Arabia offered "substantial assistance" to the Arab-Israeli peace process. That promise was later codified and made law.

In his June 18 notice to Congress, President Reagan said that his 1981 conditions "have now been met." He wrote: "I believe that significant progress toward peaceful resolution of disputes in the region [the Middle East] has been accomplished with the substantial assistance of Saudi Arabia."

It is hard to understand what the President is referring to. In the first place, there has been no "significant progress" toward a "peaceful resolution" of the Middle East conflict in the years since Egypt and Israel signed the Camp David peace treaty. Jordan has not joined the Camp David process. The PLO continues its sponsorship of terrorist acts against Israelis and others. Lebanon first signed and then abrogated its 1983 pact with Israel. And Syria—promising to incorporate the Golan Heights into its territory—keeps issuing

threats of war. So where is "significant progress?" And where is the "peaceful resolution?"

The answer is simple. Neither exists. They don't exist, to no small extent, because Saudi Arabia rather than backing the peace process has helped derail it. The Saudis have pressured King Hussein toward abandoning his peace initiative by threatening economic sanctions if Jordan should enter negotiations with Israel. They continue to subsidize the PLO and refuse to condemn its terrorism—or Libya's either. They pressured the Lebanese to abrogate their pact with Israel and have refused to use their leverage on Syria to persuade it to pull out of Lebanese territory. They continue to bankroll massive Soviet arms purchases by Syria.

In short, the Saudis have not promoted Middle East peace. They have provided obstacles to it.

Nevertheless, the President is determined to deliver the AWACS. It is now up to Congress to seek firm assurances from the Administration that the AWACS technology remains secure and that these aircraft will be used only in the best interests of the United States and that they will not be used in any manner hostile to Israel. Continuing Congressional oversight is essential. □

VIEWING THE NEWS

Spain Ties

Following the establishment of diplomatic ties between Israel and Spain earlier this year, Industry and Trade Minister Ariel Sharon met recently in Israel with a high-ranking Spanish trade delegation, and both sides agreed to increased economic cooperation (Government Press Office, June 18). The delegation noted that the current volume of trade could be doubled, that agricultural exchange could increase, and that the two countries expected to sign an agreement under which a more permanent dialogue would continue.

Opinion Polls

A recent poll finds that Prime Minister Shimon Peres' Alignment coalition would receive 51 Knesset seats if elections were held now, as opposed to its National Unity partner, Likud, which would only win 31 (*Ma'ariv*, June 20).

Although both major parties have remained stable, the right-wing Tehiya is now in third place with nine seats, and Meir Kahane's Kach has dropped back to two after a September 1985 high of seven. The new Liberal Center Party barely scored one seat.

Emigration Fight Continues

Elana Fridman, sister of 15-year refusenik Ida Nudel, is sick of waiting. She is sick of hearing the insulting lies of the Soviet authorities. But mostly, she is concerned that time is running out on her sister. Elana visited Washington last week on behalf of her sister as a guest of the National Coalition on Soviet Jewry and Congressional Wives for Soviet Jews.

"Ida has been a symbol of a woman who fights for freedom," Fridman said. "But

behind this symbol is a person—who after 15 years of struggle is now very tired." Nudel, known as the "Guardian Angel" and "Mother of Prisoners of Conscience" because of her activities on behalf of other Soviet refuseniks first applied to emigrate to Israel in 1971. Her application was rejected in early 1972 and for the next seven years she was continually harassed and interrogated by the KGB.

In June 1978, after her arrest for "malicious hooliganism" (displaying a banner outside her apartment window which stated "KGB, Give Me a Visa to Israel"), she was sentenced to four years of internal exile. An all too familiar scenario ensued; subjected to harsh living conditions and minimal medical facilities, Ida's health deteriorated.

Since her release in 1982 she has lived in Bendery, in virtual isolation. Ostracized by her fellow townspeople who were told she

(Continued)

FOR THE RECORD

The Rights of Jewish Refugees

One reason the PLO gives for refusing to accept U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 is that it claims the measure only refers to the Palestinian Arabs as refugees—it does not mention their “national rights.” In fact, Mordechai Ben-Porat points out, 242 does not mention Palestinians at all; it calls, among other things, “for achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem.” To Ben-Porat, chairman of the World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries (WOJAC), that includes Jewish refugees as well.

Ben-Porat, a former Knesset member and one of the organizers of the mass emigration of Iraqi Jews to Israel in the early years of the state, said recently that the PLO understands only too well the double-edged nature of 242's reference to the Middle East's refugee problem. “In March one of [PLO Chairman Yasir] Arafat's deputies announced why they are against the resolution—because it includes Jews from Arab countries.” Additionally, if the PLO were to permit practical, attainable steps to resettle the minority of Palestinian Arab refugees still in camps, it would lose one of its most potent symbols, Ben-Porat added. During the period leading to and including the 1948 War of Independence, approximately 590,000 Palestinian Arabs fled, Ben-Porat said. But from then through the early 1950's, about 800,000 Jews emigrated from Arab states and more than 600,000 were absorbed as refugees by Israel. They left behind property worth several billion dollars—much more than that lost by Palestinian Arab refugees—and priceless spiritual legacies going back in some cases for 2,500 years, well before the rise of Islam.

Ben-Porat would like to see them compensated. He suspects the PLO fears they

could be—under 242's refugee clause. Even if the likelihood of restitution from Arab states is nil, WOJAC plans to file several international suits in the coming year to establish the principle—and to clarify the concept of “refugee rights.”

Remembering the suffering of Jewish refugees “living in tents and wooden huts” in the first years of Israel statehood, Ben-Porat was sensitive too to the plight of Palestinian Arabs in camps. A ministerial committee he chaired several years ago proposed a solution for the 250,000 still in camps in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. “The first year at least 5% would go to better accommodations around the camps, the next year 10% and so on until the camps would be emptied.”

But the response of Arab leaders, including Jordan's King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, “was very negative.” Ben-Porat believes this is because his plan would have “abolished the symbol of the Palestinian people: the camps and their miserable accommodations.”

Reality is more complex than that. To a large extent it contradicts the symbol. Ben-Porat estimated that of the world's 3.8 million Palestinian Arabs, 2 million are under Israeli jurisdiction—700,000 as citizens, 1.3 million as residents of the administered territories. Most of the rest live in Jordan, where they comprise a majority of the population. Ben-Porat said that “altogether there are about 400,000 in camps in Arab countries. But today in Jordan and Syria you cannot recognize all of them as camps—in Amman three of the camps have now become neighborhoods or suburbs.”

One obstacle to resettlement and closure of the camps is the very organization supposedly looking after the welfare of the Pal-

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—E.R.

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Assad's Grand Plan

Jerusalem—The recent U.S. decision to restrict the export of certain chemicals to Syria stemmed more from Administration fears that Damascus might use chemical weapons (CW) against Israel than from Washington's announced concern that Syria is helping Iran build a CW counter to Iraq. That is the view of one well-informed Israeli analyst, who believes that Syria sees chemical weapons as one way to help neutralize the deterrent power of Israel's air force.

Asked about reports that Syria may get ~~Soviet SS-23 surface-to-surface missiles~~ accurate and with a range of approximately 300 miles—in addition to the shorter-range SS-21's and less accurate SCUDs it already has, the analyst said, "Don't rush with the S-23's. Pay closer attention to chemical warfare. The 21's and SCUDs could be used (with chemical warheads) against Israeli targets including airfields, troop concentrations and population centers."

Syria's President Hafez Assad may hope that such preemptive attacks could "bypass Israel's air force, the one area in which he recognizes Israel's military superiority," the analyst said. Assad's strategy may be to launch a sudden offensive to regain as

much of the Golan Heights as possible in 24 or 48 hours of fighting, "then stop the war and go to an international conference." Syria's battlefield gains would force other Arab states to rally behind it and lead the Soviet Union, bound to Syria by a "friendship treaty," to promote Assad's version of a settlement and to offset any U.S. pressure.

The Syrian dictator would count on Israel's sensitivity to military and civilian casualties to help him realize his aims. "He thinks he can afford the destruction of Damascus to get his initial military success."

An independent Palestinian Arab state would not be permitted in territory from which Israel was forced to withdraw. Instead, Assad wants an "entity similar to Lebanon," over which Syria would attempt to exercise de facto control.

Assad has made no secret of his objectives, which include the restoration of the Golan to Syria and Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and east Jerusalem. In exchange, he would grant not peace but "non-belligerency." Such an imposed settlement "is not Assad's grand plan, but a closer-range objective. The grand plan is to become Caliph of Greater Syria, including

Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and 'Palestine.'"

Although Assad moved toward the brink by positioning anti-aircraft missiles in Lebanon last fall (subsequently pulled back just across the Syrian border) and by making bellicose speeches this spring, he then signaled that he did not want war with Israel now, the analyst said. After the U.S. bombed Libya in April and evidence linked Syria to the attempted sabotage of an El Al jet and to terrorist attacks in Berlin as well as in the Rome and Vienna airports, "the Syrians thought they were next." The international climate did not favor an attack against Israel.

The analyst asserted that Gen. Vernon Walters, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., has made several secret trips to Syria in recent months. Assad, meanwhile, undertook an unpublicized journey to Moscow in March. At home, Assad's position has been complicated by crippling economic problems and new anti-regime terrorism.

It will take a few weeks or months for the example of the U.S. attack on Libya to fade, the analyst said. Meanwhile, Assad has chosen to exercise patience, not to change his goals. □

—E.R.

THE ISRAELI ECONOMY

Growing In Stages

Israel's economy has stabilized in the year since the government introduced a ~~new program to deal with the triple-digit~~ inflation caused by a sky-rocketing budget deficit and national debt. Last month's inflation rate was 1.6%, down from a high of 27.5% for July 1985. Herbert Stein, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, says the country is now much more aware of the economic problems it faces and is determined to deal with them.

In an article this past February for the *Wall Street Journal*, Stein and Stanley Fisher—an economics professor at MIT—described the measures responsible for the program's success so far and the challenges which remain. The key destabilizing factor which led to the deficits—an average of 15% of Israel's gross national product—was Israel's defense budget. Israel's expenditure for defense is 25% of its GNP, dwarfing the 7% spent by the United States.

The plan to deal with the deficit offered three steps to bring inflation to a standstill: a radical cut in subsidies; a large one-time

evaluation to set a realistic exchange rate; and a wage and price freeze which would ~~end quarterly indexing.~~

An Israeli government spokesman acknowledges that external factors played a decisive role in the plan's success—among them the adoption of a Free Trade Area agreement last year, lower world oil prices, the drop in the dollar in the foreign market, and the supplemental \$1.5 billion U.S. economic aid package.

In their February article, Stein and Fisher concluded that decisions in the following few weeks would "show whether the coalition government can bring itself to implement the measures now needed to protect the gains achieved by its decisive action of last July." Stein now says it will require a continuous effort to build a solid base for long-term growth which could include much-needed tax reform and a developed market economy—priorities in a "very early stage" of discussion.

For the moment, however, negotiations with labor over wage increases and budget

constraints are vital. If wages cannot be held down, neither can prices, and the vicious inflation cycle could begin again.

As debate continues in Israel over how to lessen the impact and yet maintain the plan's effectiveness, Stein and the Israelis are confident that Israel can overcome the difficulties ahead, such as a possible Gramm-Rudman-inspired drop in U.S. economic aid and the turnover following the Bejski Commission report. Stein says the heightened awareness and renewed commitment will go far in lessening any negative impact from the Bejski Commission—charged with investigating the 1983 bank shares crisis—which demanded the removal of every major Israeli bank director. The people taking over are "a plus." Men like Michael Bruno—the Bank of Israel's new governor—are "responsible, well-informed, and non-political," and can only enhance the atmosphere for economic change and growth. □

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BACK PAGE

Extremists, Here and There

The current wave of religious strife in Israel is a major story—and a depressing one. In recent years Israel's ultra-Orthodox minority has become more strident in its rhetoric, more violent in its tactics, and more effective in its attempts to achieve political control of the state.

The latest attacks on Jerusalem's bus stops—because they display photographs of male and female models—demonstrate just how far the fanaticism has gone. Even worse has been the response. Synagogues have been attacked. Swastikas painted. Violent threats issued.

Israel has a big problem. Ironically, some of the very ultra-Orthodox groups which have launched their anti-secular campaign are also fierce opponents of the Jewish state itself. Groups like the Naturei Karta and the Szatmar Hassidim do not believe that a Jewish state should exist at all. They believe that Jews should have waited for the coming of the Messiah before establishing their state.

Accordingly, they have no reason to be disturbed that their current attack against their fellow Jews is undermining Israel's position worldwide. They have no use for the state anyway. Even some of the more moderate ultra-Orthodox (and moderate is a very relative term in this context) are barely Israelis at all. They live within the country's borders but avoid most of the responsibilities of citizenship. Most significant of all, they do not serve in the army nor in any way participate in the defense of the state. Unfortunately, they *do* vote and use their electoral clout to intimidate Israel's major parties into submission to their demands.

These ultra-Orthodox must be distinguished from most of Israel's Orthodox population who do consider themselves Israelis, do participate in Israeli life including the army, and do not express their views by hurling rocks and curses at "infidels."

Not Unique

Israel's problem with religious fanaticism hardly makes it a unique case in the Middle East. It is small comfort that the black-garbed extremists of Jerusalem have their counterparts throughout the region. Saudi Arabia and Iran are both run by Moslem fundamentalists and religious dogma has the force of law in both societies. Virtually every other Moslem country is home to strong fundamentalist movements which are making bids for power.

But Israel shouldn't be compared to its neighbors. It is a Western country, more similar to the United States than to Lebanon. And even in the United States religious extremists are continuing their

effort to Christianize America. Advocates of prayer in school have organized politically to put "God back in the classroom." Other activists are demanding—and successfully in some jurisdictions—that science text books offer "creationism" (i.e. Adam and Eve) as an alternative to more reasoned theories of how the world was created. Some school libraries have been purged of books like *The Catcher in the Rye* and *The Diary of Anne Frank* because some extremists consider them "godless." Terrorist elements within the radical right have even bombed abortion clinics.

Perhaps worst of all is that major politicians feel the need to court the votes of the intolerant minority. Its conventions and prayer sessions are well attended by politicians, who—like their Israeli counterparts—are intimidated by zealots with ballots. Too few office seekers appear to possess enough courage to say no, that there are limits, that religion is a private and not a political matter. That is why in 1988 we will likely see even more political involvement by *America's* ultra-Orthodox. The tradition is not new. From the Salem witch trials right down to the Ku Klux Klan, America's religious (and racial) extremists have done everything they could do to make the rest of us feel that we are unwelcome guests. They are still doing it today. Israel's current problem with religious zealotry is just another item on the long list of characteristics which the two democracies have in common. This is one, however, that they could both live without.

—M.J.R.

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NEAR EAST REPORT

WASHINGTON WEEKLY ON AMERICAN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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EDITORIAL

Nineteen Years

It is hard to believe that it's been 19 years since the Six-Day War. Nevertheless, June 13, 1986, marked the nineteenth anniversary of the end of that war. It also marked the day on which Israel could claim possession of east Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip for a period equal to the one during which they were claimed by Jordan and Egypt, respectively.

In the euphoric days following the 1967 victory, Israeli leaders made clear that they were awaiting a "phone call" from their Arab counterparts. Egypt, Jordan, and Syria had been thoroughly vanquished—thwarted in their attempt to, in Egyptian President Nasser's words, "totally exterminate the State of Israel for all time." It was logical to assume that they would sue for peace, especially since Israel's position was—in Foreign Minister Abba Eban's words—that "everything is negotiable." Eban and other Israeli leaders promised to "be unbelievably generous in working out peace terms."

But the Arabs weren't listening. Or, if they were, they decided not to explore Israel's offer. Instead, in August 1967, the leaders of 13 Arab states gathered in the Sudan to set forth the famous "three noes" of Khartoum. No negotiations with Israel. No recognition of Israel. No peace with Israel.

At the time, the "three noes" seemed to be mere bluster, a rhetorical demonstration (however hollow) that complete military defeat by Israel had not dampened the Arabs' anti-Israel ardor. But today, 19 years later, it is clear that the Khartoum declaration remains operative even though most of the leaders who issued it have passed from the scene.

There is one major Khartoum dropout. The most important Arab nation of all, Egypt, has changed its three noes to three yesses. Its relations with Israel are icy but, nevertheless, are predicated on Egypt's acceptance of negotiations, recognition, and peace. In return for its reversal, Egypt eliminated the most serious consequence of its attack on Israel in 1967. Israel returned the Sinai peninsula, agreeing even to dismantle Israeli civilian settlements there as well as military bases.

Jordan also seems to be moving away from the rejection of Israel demonstrated at Khartoum—albeit very slowly. King Hussein clearly would like to negotiate with Israel. He is stymied, however, by an Arab world which still threatens to destroy any Arab leader who accepts Israel. The leader of that pack is Syria, which remains unreconciled to Israel's existence and which backs and supplies the terrorists who wage war against Israeli (and American and other) civilians in its effort to make "Palestine" the southernmost part of a Greater Syria.

It can only be hoped that King Hussein will find some way to defy the anti-Israel consensus or to change it. If he can't—if Syria, Iraq, the PLO and the rest continue in their rejection of Israel and peace—then the status quo of the last 19 years will become fixed in concrete, literally and figuratively. That will benefit no one. Not Israel. Not the Arab states. And, least of all, not the Palestinian Arabs themselves. That is why King Hussein should add one more stop to the list of Middle East capitals to which he has been shuttling lately. After all, the road to peace does not run through Baghdad and Damascus. It runs through Jerusalem. □

VIEWING THE NEWS

Israeli Reaction

After Jonathan Pollard and his wife pleaded guilty to espionage charges last week and U.S. Attorney Joseph DiGenova disclosed the names of four additional Israeli suspects, reports continued to leak accusing Israeli authorities of not cooperating fully with American investigators. Israeli sources claimed that some American officials had exaggerated the scale of the spy affair (*Ma'ariv*, June 8).

FBI Director William Webster said that Israeli cooperation has so far been "selective," but Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin called the level of Israeli help "unprecedented even in relations between friendly countries."

State Department and White House assurances that joint projects with Israel

would not be harmed were confirmed, as the Pentagon announced the sale of \$38 million in electronic-jamming units to Israel (Associated Press, June 10).

Whose Jerusalem?

In Jerusalem last week, as 12,000 marchers celebrated "Jerusalem Day"—the 19th anniversary of the city's reunification—a small group broke away and tried to storm two Moslem shrines where worshippers were gathered for morning prayers. Police restrained the demonstrators, who represented a fringe element of the nationalist Gush Emunim.

In another observance of the Israeli victory of 1967, millions of Iranians across the country gathered to chant anti-Israeli and anti-American slogans. Parliamentary Speaker Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani de-

nounced Israel before a Tehran crowd of several hundred thousand: "We should not accept the existence of this occupationist regime because whenever it gets a chance it occupies part of an Islamic country." Posters showed Iranian soldiers viewing Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock mosque through binoculars. (Reuter, June 6) □

Syrian Explosion

Early news of an explosion at a Damascus restaurant blamed a faulty fuel gas cylinder for the many deaths and injuries (Voice of Lebanon, June 5). But later reports the same day suggested that a car bomb parked nearby was responsible. This apparently was the latest in a series of attacks which Syrian sources acknowledged as a new wave of terrorism in Syria's cities. □

ANALYSIS

The PLO In Distress

Early this month a top PLO official—Khalil Wazir, alias Abu Jihad—claimed that his organization now had more men in Lebanon than the 14,000-plus evacuated from Beirut under Israeli pressure in August 1982. But an Israeli government source told *NER* last week that he estimated PLO strength in Beirut at no more than 1,500, with perhaps up to 1,000 more in south Lebanon. Not in dispute is the fact that Shi'ite Amal militiamen, using Syrian-supplied tanks, mortars and machine guns, continued to attack PLO gunmen in Beirut's Palestinian Arab quarters for the third straight week.

Yasir Arafat and his wing of the PLO face some diplomatic and perhaps financial pressure as well. PLO and other Arab sources last week kept up their criticism of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's suggestion on her recent Israel trip that it might be time for the Palestinian Arabs to find alternative leadership. Meanwhile, Secretary of State George Shultz notified Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole (R-Kan.) that should Arafat request a visa to attend a U.N. debate later this month, "his application will receive my most severe scrutiny. . . . Like you, I have no desire to see Arafat in the United States."

On the financial front, the picture of the PLO as a wealthy, Mafia-style organization with holdings in real estate, banks, hotels, factories, an airline in the Maldive Islands and U.S. and European securities may have been exaggerated. The description came from stories last fall in the West German weekly *Der Spiegel* and the *Jerusalem Post* which estimated the organization's holdings at from \$4 billion to \$6 billion.

But in the June 2 issue of *Forbes*, writer

Hesh Kestin concluded that "the Palestine Liberation Organization is going broke." Kestin wrote that Arafat's "military budget," plus "surprisingly extensive health care and education programs, diplomatic missions and widows' and orphans' benefits" cost hundreds of millions of dollars annually. However, income—including payments from Arab oil states, the yield on \$1 billion in investments, and collections from Palestinians in the Middle East—is down.

Some of Kestin's numbers, including Saudi Arabian support for the PLO, appear to be too low. In any case, the Israeli source does not take Kestin's conclusions too seriously. He believes the PLO faces financial trouble "like everyone" in the Arab world, "but no more than anyone else."

More important, he argues, is the struggle between Palestinian Arab gunmen loyal to Arafat—mainly Shi'ite Moslems—and Nabi Berri's Amal. Arafat's opponents in Lebanon, even while matching his anti-Israel rhetoric, insist that the PLO will not be allowed to reestablish itself as a state-within-a-state in Lebanon, the status it held before the Israeli invasion.

Some American analysts agree that the PLO has been trickling back into Lebanon. The State Department had no comment on whether this violated any agreements worked out by U.S. mediator Philip Habib in 1982, which saw the PLO removed by a convoy of ships to more distant Arab states. A Department statement referred not to the PLO but to "Palestinian fighters," and said in general that "the return to Lebanon of armed elements of any affiliation cannot end the fighting. . . ."

Regardless, Arafat's influence still rests

on two pillars—backing from Arab states and support from Palestinians as perceived by diplomats, the news media and other opinion-makers. Breakaway elements from his own Fatah faction within the PLO—numbering about 4,000 gunmen led by Abu Musa and backed by Syria—apparently have not gained stature over Arafat among residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. A revolt in Amman by another former loyalist, Abu Zaim, has taken several hundred more men out of Arafat's camp, but at this stage it seems to be mostly a Jordanian-encouraged irritant.

Arafat blasted the head of Syrian military intelligence in Lebanon, Col. Ghazi Cana'an, accusing him last week of directing the attacks on the Palestinian quarters. He again attempted to distinguish between the PLO's fight against Israel—which he termed "legitimate resistance"—and terrorism, which he blamed on "the Zionists" and the Reagan Administration. Arafat claimed that "what will liberate Palestine is the holy war and struggle against the occupation and Israeli terrorism. . . ."

While Fatah and the small Palestinian Communist Party reportedly agreed to increase cooperation and coordination, prospects for a more general PLO reconciliation seem unlikely. Syria reiterated its call for a replacement of the "Palestinian right-wing," by which it meant Arafat. And the Kuwaiti News Agency reported that on a recent Moscow visit, Syrian Vice President Abdal Halim Khaddam found, for the first time, no Soviet reservations concerning Syria's demand for the removal of Arafat and his lieutenants.

—E.R.



HEARD ON CAPITOL HILL

Waldheim Ban

Demonstrators gathered at the Justice Department recently to demand that Kurt Waldheim be banned from entering the United States because of his status as a suspected Nazi war criminal. At the rally sponsored by the North American Jewish Students Network, Reps. CHARLES SCHUMER (D-N.Y.) and STEPHEN SOLARZ (D-N.Y.) called for immediate U.S. action.

Rev. William Harter, Secretary-Treasurer of the National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel, noted that the

United Nations, which Waldheim served as Secretary-General, has "credibility problems enough" without the recent disclosures of Waldheim's Nazi past. Denial of responsibility for the Holocaust "is a central moral question for the Christian community which we must be determined to face."

Freezing Arafat

PLO Chief Yasir Arafat will not be welcomed if he tries to attend a possible U.N.

Security Council debate later this month. Responding to letters from a host of U.S. Senators and Representatives urging refusal of a visa for Arafat, Secretary of State George Shultz wrote that "Arafat should not come to the United States."

Similarly, Rep. BEN GILMAN (R-N.Y.) criticized the Council of Ministers of the European Community for agreeing to meet with Arafat. Gilman charged that such a meeting would "serve only to give comfort to terrorists." The Council is scheduled to meet with Arafat in late June.



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HEARD IN WASHINGTON

Hussein Makes Low-Key Visit

Jordan's King Hussein made his third trip to the White House in 16 months last week, but in contrast with the expectations raised during his May and October visits last year, this trip generated mostly cautious comment from Reagan Administration officials. Speaking to reporters after the President and Hussein met for one hour on June 9, a senior Administration official acknowledged that earlier hopes for progress on talks between Israel and a Jordanian-Palestinian Arab delegation had "foundered" on PLO refusal to accept U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, to halt terrorism and to recognize Israel. Advancing the peace-process through that route now "seems closed."

Hussein "has never felt that he could go alone" to the bargaining table with Israel and believes that representation of Palestinian Arabs is "fundamental." The official added that Jordan and the United States wrestled with the problem last year and are still pursuing it. He said that the King made a number of suggestions about reviving diplomatic efforts and expressed concern that if Middle East peace efforts do not make progress the region will slide toward increased tension and war.

In a June 11 interview with the *Washington Post*, Hussein indicated that his efforts to mediate a reconciliation between Syria and Iraq could lay the ground work for

progress on Arab-Israeli talks in a U.N.-sponsored conference. The United States and Israel have insisted that any conference lead quickly to direct talks between Israel and individual Arab delegations.

The Administration official took note of Jordan's recently enlarged inter-Arab diplomacy, which also has included a Jordanian rapprochement with Syria. He did not comment on a possible warming of relations between Damascus and Baghdad, except to say that to the extent such a development would lower tensions in the region, "we would support it."

An Israeli diplomat suggested that Hussein's Washington visit—which also included meetings with Vice President George Bush and Secretary of State George Shultz—was intended in part "to cash in on the hands he's played," including improving relations with Syria and Iraq. But the diplomat said neither Syria nor Iraq is interested in seeing Jordan and Palestinian Arabs negotiate with Israel. Damascus, Baghdad and Amman "each has a different agenda."

He added that Syria's patron, the Soviet Union, may have agreed to withdraw its support from PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat. But this would not necessarily make Hussein's path to negotiations with Israel easier. He said that "whoever follows Arafat probably would be worse" in terms of ter-

rorism and diplomatic intransigence in order to prove his Palestinian and pan-Arab credentials.

Several Israeli officials agreed that the King would probably ask for more American diplomatic activity in the region but questioned what he was able to offer to induce the Americans to take a more visible and vulnerable role. They doubted that Jordan could arrange a lasting rapprochement between Syria and Iraq so long as both Syrian leader Hafez Assad and Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein—long bitter rivals—remained in power.

According to the official, the President and Hussein held a "brief, general" discussion of possible sales of U.S. arms to Jordan. The Administration reaffirmed its commitment to Jordan's security—as well as its promise to notify Congress before proceeding with any deal.

[Arab press reports noted that Hussein would stop in London on his return and that a sale of British Tornado fighter-bombers was possible; others said that the Soviet Union would supply Amman with air defense systems and other weapons. The Administration shelved a \$1.9 billion package of planes and anti-aircraft weapons for Jordan early this year in the face of Congressional unhappiness over Jordan's refusal to enter direct negotiations with Israel.]

—E.R. □

NEWS ANALYSIS

Syria Linked to Chemical Weapons

American—Syrian relations again turned contradictory in the past two weeks as the Reagan Administration imposed export controls on the sale to Syria of chemicals which could be used to make chemical weapons, then exchanged greetings with President Hafez Assad in honor of the Moslem feast of Id al-Fitr.

On June 5 the State Department announced that controls on the export of eight chemicals considered "precursors" in the manufacture of chemical weapons (CW) were being extended to Syria. Validated licenses from the Commerce Department already were required for the export of the compounds to Iraq and Iran. The United States has accused Iraq of using chemical weapons in its war with Iran and the statement noted that "for several years both Iran and Iraq have had active, ongoing programs to develop chemical weapons." (Sales of weapons and weapons technology to Syria, Iraq and Iran already are banned.)

The statement added that Washington "is concerned that Syria may have a chemical weapons capability and has assisted Iran in

the Iranian war effort. . . . The U.S. export policy is designed to impede the use of chemical weapons by either belligerent."

The State Department said that it does not favor Iranian development of a CW capacity as a deterrent to Iraq. Instead, State added, the United States remains neutral, sells no weapons of any sort to either side and seeks a mediated end to the fighting. "Additionally, we are deeply concerned about the dangerous spread of chemical weapons. . . ."

The Soviet Union—Syria's chief military backer—has trained Syrian troops in "routine protective measures for armed forces to take in a contaminated environment," the Department said. Training to fight in chemically contaminated battlefields is part of the Russians' "conventional military tactics and operations." After the use of chemical weapons by Iraq against Iran, press reports from Israel noted that the Israel Defense Forces would have to prepare for possible CW attacks.

One Israeli observer called the chemical export ban Washington's third warning to

Syria—the first two being President Reagan's statement after the raid on Libya that Syria or Iran could be hit if evidence tied them to terrorist attacks, and repeated suggestions that Syria expel Abu Nidal. But he noted that the Administration still hopes Syria will help free the American hostages in Lebanon.

Three days after the chemicals ban, Damascus Radio announced that President Reagan had sent congratulations to President Assad and the Syrian people on the occasion of the feast of Id al-Fitr. Reagan's one-paragraph letter noted that "these blessed days make all of us recall the importance of the cherished values of peace, justice, and love for mankind."

Assad responded with a cable thanking Reagan and sharing the hope that the values the American President mentions "will be the basis for developing relations between our two countries." The exchange came in the midst of Syria's media campaign against threats of "terrorism" from the United States and Israel.

□

BACK PAGE

Soviet Switch

Perhaps the only good thing to come out of Kurt Waldheim's election to the Austrian presidency was that it forced the Soviet Union to abandon all pretense of revulsion over the Nazi legacy. There has not been much good to say about the Soviets since they seized power in 1917, but there was one thing. They fought the Nazis valiantly—losing almost 20 million people in the process—and were at the forefront of those dedicated to seeing that Nazi crimes against humanity not be forgotten.

To a large extent, that has changed in recent years. Moscow's East German puppet state routinely placed ex-Nazis in high positions. Unlike its democratic neighbor, the Federal Republic of Germany, it neither went through a process of "denazification" nor made any attempt to offer amends to the Jewish people. (West Germany paid Jewish survivors of the Holocaust and the State of Israel several billion dollars in so-called reparations and proclaimed its need for a "special relationship" with Israel.)

East Germany also followed Moscow's lead in utilizing Nazi-like rhetoric against Zionists, Jews, and Israelis. The Soviets were probably the first to equate Zionism with fascism and racism, often going so far as to make analogies between Israel and Nazi Germany. At the same time, Moscow tried to maintain its historic anti-Nazi credentials. Its anti-Jewish, anti-Israel rhetoric was obscene but Moscow attempted to balance it with blasts of anti-Nazi oratory second to none. It had little choice. There was hardly a Russian family which had been left untouched by the German onslaught of the 1940's. The average Russian was in no mood to forgive and forget.

That all appeared to end on the day that Kurt Waldheim won the Austrian election. One might have expected the Soviets to oppose Waldheim even without the allegations about his war criminal past. Waldheim was the candidate of a right-wing party while his opponent was a socialist. Of course, Moscow tends to despise social democrats even more than it does conservatives. Beyond party labels, however, was (or should have been) Waldheim's record during World War II. Throughout the Austrian campaign, the Soviet press ignored reports that Waldheim may have committed war crimes. It ignored them even though some of Waldheim's alleged victims were pro-Soviet, anti-Nazi fighters in southern Europe. (At this point, one hardly expects Moscow to expend any concern over the Nazis' Jewish victims.)

Moscow only broke its silence after the election. *Tass* (June 8) dismissed evidence of Waldheim's Nazi past as concocted by the "U.S. Administration and Zionist circles" to discredit Waldheim because of his

anti-Israel record while at the United Nations. It called the revelations about him "personal hostile attacks" which were "unjust and slanderous" and "in no way confirmed by the documentary evidence."

Instead of examining that evidence, *Tass* praised the Austrian for his "active role" in securing the passage of U.N. resolutions adopted "after Israel's aggression against Arab countries in 1967." According to the *New York Times* (June 9), *Tass* "placed Moscow unambivalently behind the new President."

It is an interesting development. The Soviets, who often remind Americans of the anti-Nazi alliance between our two countries between 1941 and 1945, are now so anti-American and anti-Semitic that they would rather embrace alleged Nazis than stand on the same side with the United States and Israel. This, in a sense, represents the real end of the post-war era. Moscow has applied its famous revisionism to World War II and, in this instance, switched sides. It's not terribly sad. Gorbachev and Waldheim deserve each other. But it is evidence of the lengths to which "anti-Zionism" can push people and nations. Moscow (like the voters of Austria) should be ashamed. You can be certain that they are not.

—M.J.R. □

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POLLARD p. 89

WASHINGTON WEEKLY ON AMERICAN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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EDITORIAL

Jordan's Direction

King Hussein's visit to Damascus during the last week of May was evidence that he is continuing his effort to improve relations between his government and that of Hafez Assad. The strategy seems to be working. Hussein's standing in Damascus appears high enough to allow him to play the role of mediator between Syria and Iraq. His goal is to wean Syria away from its support for Iran and toward joining the pan-Arab consensus that backs Iraq in the endless Iran-Iraq war. For Hussein—the Arab world's ultimate outsider—to be playing this role represents something of a coup. Perhaps it's just his longevity (he's been King for more than 30 years), but Hussein's influence in the Arab world is growing.

The evolution in Hussein's position is a mixed blessing. It is good that Hussein—one of the few Arab leaders who seems to have come to terms with Israel's existence—is no longer the Arab world's pariah. If he is telling the Syrians, Iraqis, and others that it is time to end the war with Israel, he is performing an important function indeed. However, there is not much indication that that is what he is doing. Part of the Jordanian-Syrian rapprochement seems to be built around finding a joint strategy for dealing with Israel. And it appears that Syria just might be moving Amman closer to its position rather than the other way around. At this point, we do not know for sure and can only hope that is not the case. An "eastern front" consisting of a reconciled Jordan, Iraq, and Syria represents any Israeli military planner's worst nightmare. If that is what is in the works, one can only hope that this rapprochement goes down the tubes, and fast.

But there are good signs emanating from Amman as well.

On May 29, Crown Prince Hassan (King Hussein's brother) told the BBC that there could be no PLO role in the peace process until and unless that organization endorsed United Nations Resolution 242. Asked if there was any way that Jordan would resume relations with the PLO if it did not accept 242, he said: "We have made it quite clear that the PLO does not mean what it says and, until it means what it says in terms of acceptance of United Nations resolutions, we simply cannot proceed." Hassan also refused to say that the Jordan-Israel peace process would halt in October after Yitzhak Shamir replaces Shimon Peres as Prime Minister. "Our only hope," he said, "is that whichever" is in power "will have the will and the political courage" to pursue the process by which "Israel can once again become part of the region and can contribute to the cooperative effort to develop the region."

Hassan also deplored the growing radicalism in the Middle East, condemning the "extreme Jewish right on the one side" and the "Islamic fanatic right" on the other. He said that the "fragmentation of the whole area" into a "mosaic of minorities lacking the will to share the vision of peace and regional stability . . . will reduce the Middle East to a zone of everlasting confrontation."

Hassan's remarks are unusual for a major Arab leader. In a long interview, he made no anti-Israel statements and sought to find areas of consensus rather than division. Meanwhile, his brother was in Syria pursuing a new relationship with the radicals in Damascus. As the King of Siam said in *The King and I*: "It's a puzzlement." It is that. But it is also the Middle East. Within that context, the signs look almost hopeful. For that, Crown Prince Hassan deserves credit. □

VIEWING THE NEWS

Shin Bet Affair

Judge Yosef Harish will replace Attorney General Yitzhak Zamir this week, in the midst of serious questions concerning the investigation of the 'Shin Bet Affair.' Following the 1984 hijacking of an inter-city bus, then-Defense Minister Moshe Arens appointed a commission to examine reports that two of the terrorists involved were killed under suspicious circumstances. Armed with evidence of a possible cover-up and false testimony by Shin Bet, Zamir ordered an investigation of Shin Bet Director Avraham Shalom. Prime Minister Peres said that the attorney general's resignation has been expected for a few months and is unrelated to the investigation (*Kol Yisrael*, June 1).

Sources revealed that the two gunmen died while in Shin Bet custody, but that this information was withheld from the original investigation after agency chief Avraham Shalom convinced Yitzhak Shamir (then Prime Minister) that any publicity "would seriously harm the Shin Bet's ability to function secretly and would result in Shin Bet men refusing to take risks in the future" (*Yediot Aharonot*, June 1).

In another development, the American government has demanded the trial of an Israeli Air Force officer suspected of heading an Israeli spy ring that included alleged spy Jonathan Pollard (*Hadashot*, June 2). Israel's Foreign Ministry denied the possibility of such a large-scale operation. "The Pollard affair was an unacceptable deviation

from Israel's clear policy to abstain from any espionage activity in the United States," the Ministry stated.

EEC Promises

Following a controversial meeting between Yasir Arafat and the outgoing president of the European Economic Community (EEC), it was announced that the British successor to the post, Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe, would not confer with the PLO chief during his one-year term (*Kol Yisrael*, May 26). The statement came during Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's visit to Jerusalem.

Howe will replace current EEC president, Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van den

(Continued)

NEWS ANALYSIS

Iraq's 'Defensive Aggression'

Iraq's Ambassador to the United States, Nizar Hamdoun, believes his country's six-year-old war with Iran will continue, prolonged "by [Ayatollah] Khomeini's determination." To pressure Iran, Iraq will shift its military strategy from purely defensive to "aggressive defense." And Washington, Hamdoun told a recent news conference, should step up its political support of Iraq, since Iraq is the party willing to negotiate.

Acknowledging that Iraq's 700-mile-plus border with Iran is too long to guard completely, the Ambassador defined "aggressive defense" as not merely reacting to Iranian attacks. Instead, Iraq will try to take and hold more Iranian territory to increase pressure on Tehran. He downplayed the Iranian success in seizing Iraq's Fao peninsula near Kuwait, claiming that the Iranians are essentially trapped by the bad terrain they occupy and are vulnerable to Iraqi planes and artillery.

In a low-key presentation, Hamdoun said that Iraq's renewal of diplomatic relations with the United States in 1984 was not a result of the war but had been planned beforehand. He said that Baghdad's ties with the Soviet Union—its major arms supplier—were good and Iraq "does not feel anti-Western or anti-Eastern." He asserted that after the war his country—not so long ago described by many in the United States and Israel as radical and expansionist—would continue to emphasize stability among the Persian Gulf countries. And he

added that it was premature to discuss efforts by Jordan's King Hussein to arrange a rapprochement between his country and arch-rival Syria. [A Kuwaiti publication reported last week that the pumping of Iraqi oil through pipelines across Syrian territory was expected to begin soon.]

However, U.S. and Israeli analysts expressed skepticism at Hamdoun's remarks. "There has been some evidence" of a more aggressive Iraqi military strategy in recent months, said one. "But if they want to get serious, get the Iranians off Fao." This, he added, Iraq "hasn't been able to do."

Even if the area is not strategically vital, "this is a game of nerves. . . . The best thing the Iraqis could do is get them out." Repeatedly, Iraqi forces have shown either incompetence or unwillingness to take casualties. Politics by strongman Saddam Hussein in selection of commanders, and disgrace or death for those who lose too many men, cripple military performance.

Although Iraq's air force is much larger than its decimated Iranian counterpart, it may not have a sufficient number of good pilots. "They are still going after [easier] economic targets"; they have not damaged military bridges crossing the Shatt al-Arab or attacked a concentration of 200,000 Iranian troops near the Majnoon Islands.

An Israeli observer believes both belligerents are holding back, partly from fear of high casualties in a war that already has taken an estimated 500,000 lives, and partly from incompetence. Iraq's lackluster

battlefield performance does not alter Jerusalem's calculations, which always included the large Iraqi army in a possible multi-state threat on Israel's eastern front.

While the Soviets continue to supply Iraq militarily, they look for channels to Iran. Because of its location, oil reserves and large population, Iran remains the strategic prize in the region. Moscow knows that in a war of attrition, Iraq—with a population one-third of Iran's 39 million—faces dim prospects.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's increased production of oil has undercut the ability of both Iraq and Iran to continue the war at previous levels. Iraq reportedly has asked the Soviets to convert its loans for weapons purchases to grants.

Washington wants the war to end with a neutral balance between Iraq and Iran, said a second American analyst. Israel views the war as a struggle between two evils, neither one less than the other. The combat has kept the Khomeini regime from spreading its brand of Islamic fundamentalism as much as it might have otherwise and has kept Iraqi troops bogged down far away from the Jordan River. But Jerusalem retains an interest in future relations with non-Arab Iran and overtures by Israel also could ease the way for eventual Washington-Tehran contacts. Moreover, an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 Jews remain in Iran.

—E.R.

VIEWING . . . Continued

Broek, this month. At a time when Arafat's influence is "on the decline," the broadcast said, this refusal to deal with the PLO will "discourage terrorism and PLO extremists."

Attacking Hussein

Palestinian Arab student groups and trade unions—both left and right wing—on the West Bank called for the overthrow of King Hussein and of "traitorous regimes" (*Al Hamishmar*, May 26). In the wake of a Jordanian crackdown on dissident leaders, left-wing organizations (including some affiliates of Yasir Arafat's Fatah) stated that the "regime in Amman. . . is the enemy of the people and an ally of U.S. imperialism."

Plastic Gun Ban

~~Reps. BOB MRAZEK (D.N.Y.), TED WEISS (D.N.Y.), and CHARLES SCHUMER (D.N.Y.) have introduced a bill entitled "Terrorist Firearms Prevention Act of 1986." The bill has 95 cosponsors.~~

By prohibiting the import or manufacture of any firearm that cannot be detected by airport security equipment, the bill would add a legal barrier to the defense against terrorism. Advances in plastic and fiber make it possible to manufacture a handgun virtually invisible to current x-ray technology.

A study by the Office of Technology Assessment finds that "the technology does exist to manufacture certain firearms which would be completely or almost completely non-metallic." A Florida company estimates that such a weapon will be in production within two years.

This gun is not to be confused with the recently publicized Austrian Glock 17 handgun which has a number of metal parts and can be detected by a skilled x-ray machine operator. A plastic handgun with only a few metal springs would easily escape detection from the x-ray machines and metal detectors currently in use at airports and other high-security sites.

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PERSPECTIVE

From Taba to Base Rights

American mediated efforts to reach agreement between Israel and Egypt on the wording of the Taba dispute to be submitted to arbitration collapsed at the end of May. State Department legal adviser Judge Abraham Sofaer, shuttling between Cairo and Jerusalem, attempted to finesse the problem. Had he succeeded, a trip to the region by Secretary of State George Shultz would have been likely.

Egypt wanted the *arbitral compromis*—the document to be considered by the arbitrators—to refer to the *exact* location of border markers in the Sinai at Taba, a small resort site just south of Eilat. Israel dropped its demand that the *correct* location of the markers—based on the 1906 border, not the position of the markers before the 1967 war—be determined. Instead, it suggested that each side submit an appendix to the *compromis* in support of its own position. Egypt turned this down.

President Hosni Mubarak said on May 31 that “we have nothing to give the Israelis. Taba is Egyptian and I hope that the Israelis will understand this so that we may agree on formulating the question that will be put to the arbitrators and, thereby, complete the process of a comprehensive peace.”

Before the Egyptian decision, contradic-

tory stories had been coming out of the Administration on whether or not Shultz was planning an imminent trip to the region. “Taba was the one thing they thought they would make progress on,” a Capitol Hill source noted. Substantively insignificant, Taba has become symbolically important.

Mubarak “doesn’t want any chance for Israel’s argument” to be taken seriously by the as yet unchosen arbitrators. And Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres needs “at least an indication it could go Israel’s way,” the source said.

Parallel to the Taba impasse, Israel suggested a new look at increased self-rule by Palestinian Arabs in the Gaza Strip in conjunction with Egypt. The “Gaza first” autonomy idea is not new, but this time it was seen as a way to revive Arab-Israeli contacts in the face of Jordanian-Palestinian paralysis. However, after former Gaza Mayor Rashad al-Shawwa discussed the idea with Egyptian officials, Mubarak said that he could not “separate this topic from the West Bank issue.” He added that he could not act unilaterally without the Palestinian Arabs or Jordan’s King Hussein.

About the same time, reports surfaced in the U.S. newsletter *Defense & Foreign Affairs Weekly* and in the Beirut publication

Al-Safir that Egypt and the United States have been discussing the establishment of American bases on Egyptian soil. For years Egyptian officials have denied the possibility of such facilities, partly for fear of criticism by domestic opponents and by radical Arab regimes.

But willingness to consider American bases now “is a sign of desperation,” the Capitol Hill source asserted. Egypt’s debts to the United States for military aid run at \$700 million to \$900 million annually. Cairo reportedly wants an increase in U.S. military aid from the \$1.3 billion it now receives to the \$1.8 billion allotted to Israel. This is unlikely under the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings budget reduction legislation.

With income from traditional sources—Suez Canal tolls, oil, tourism and remittances by Egyptians working abroad—all down, leasing bases to the United States could help offset Cairo’s debt. Among the bases mentioned are two modern airfields built by Israel—and vacated as part of the treaty with Egypt—in the Sinai. An agreement on base leases might also counter Administration or Congressional criticism of Egypt if the Taba problem drags on, hindering the return of the Egyptian ambassador to Israel and other actions normalizing relations. □

HEARD IN JERUSALEM

Shamir On Israel’s Foreign Policy

Meetings by visiting leaders or by Israeli officials with Palestinian Arab representatives will not bring peace by themselves, Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir said recently. In an interview with *Yedi’ot Aharonot*, Shamir said that “despite attempts to distort the picture, the conflict is between Israel and the Arab countries—the Palestinians are merely an excuse, only one facet of the conflict. With the Palestinians alone, without the Arab countries, we would have found a common language long ago.”

Shamir is scheduled to return to the Prime Minister’s office in October, rotating positions with Shimon Peres under the national unity government agreement. Asked if he would call on the Arab residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to negotiate, the Foreign Minister asserted that “experience shows that they will not dare to do anything that has not been decided on by the Arab countries; this has been the dominant theme in all contacts with them.” He added that the threat of terrorist attack deters both Palestinian Arabs and Arab heads of

state from making peace with Israel.

Shamir recalled that he had proposed to the Egyptian Foreign Minister last fall that the two countries resume talks on autonomy for the Palestinian Arabs as called for in the Camp David Accords. Shamir said he had suggested participation “of Jordan and the Arabs of *Eretz Yisrael*.” His Egyptian counterpart replied that the Arafat-Hussein agreement of February 1985 took precedent over the Camp David formula.

But in his newspaper interview Shamir stressed that the breakdown of Hussein’s pact with Arafat shows “the futility of any agreement as compared to the Camp David Accords.” These prove that Israel “is prepared to make far-reaching moves toward peace. What is needed is to have the Arabs come to terms with the independent existence of Israel.”

His Likud Party platform supports a more intense settlement program than that of Peres’ Labor Party, but Shamir said that there probably would be no new settlement drive after the rotation. Under the unity government only a handful of new villages

and towns have been established in the territories.

The Foreign Minister called Syria “our main defense problem. The extreme positions of its President and of the Ba’ath [Arab Socialist] Party, the strong ties between it and the Soviet Union, the large army in relation to its size and the ceaseless indoctrination with a view to military confrontation with Israel—all these present a problem.” He called on all countries interested in stability in the region to help prevent “belligerent adventures” and said that “we should look for the proper solutions but we should not always publicize them.”

Resumption of diplomatic links between Israel and Poland are “moving in the right direction,” but Shamir refused to elaborate. He charged that whoever was leaking information on the story “is sabotaging and threatening everything. . . . The establishment of relations with Spain and the Ivory Coast was put off for a long time because of leaks.” □

BACK PAGE

Thatcher's Visit

Margaret Thatcher's visit to Israel—the first ever by a British Prime Minister—produced a howl of outrage from the government-controlled Saudi press. The newspaper *Ukaz* (May 26) strongly attacked her for setting foot in the "Zionist entity." It reminded her that "Peres and Begin were the ones who blew up the King David Hotel when it was the headquarters of the British Mandate authorities." (Peres?) It argued that instead of greeting Israeli leaders she should be "seeking the apprehension of all these people . . . as political leaders of an entity historically and falsely known to have been erected despite the British Mandate authorities."

The *Ukaz* editorial is another demonstration that Saudi Arabia remains—as ever—unreconciled to Israel's existence. That "Zionist entity" garbage should have been thrown out years ago, if only out of consideration for the way that type of rhetoric plays abroad. But the Saudis can't drop it—political considerations aside—because the quaint little phrase expresses the way they feel. There is no Israel. Just an entity. As far as they are concerned, Jews can create entities but not states.

There is one piece of truth in the editorial. It argues that Israel—the entity—was "erected despite the British Mandate authorities." That is correct. The British did everything they could to thwart the establishment of the Jewish state. In their infamous White Paper of 1939, they banned Jewish immigration to Palestine at the very moment when European Jews most needed a refuge. Throughout the 1940's—as Jews were killed by the millions—Britain kept the gates of Palestine barred tight, in effect signing the death sentences of those who might have escaped if there was a place to go.

The Saudi assertion that the Jews defied the British in creating Israel contradicts the more traditional—and false—Arab view that Israel was created by British and other colonialists as a gift for the Jews. On the very day that *Ukaz* was telling Thatcher that the Jews defied Britain in creating their state, Damascus Radio was putting out the other line. It reminded Thatcher that "during its occupation of Palestine from 1917 to 1948" Britain "brought in Zionist terrorists, facilitated their emigration to Palestine, and enabled them to take up arms against the Arabs . . . in order to wrest Palestine from its rightful owners." It warned that "the Palestinian people will continue to hold Britain greatly responsible for the disasters that befell them." They had hoped that Britain would "atone for its crime" by supporting a Palestinian state, "not side with the usurpers to prevent the restoration of this homeland."

In fact, the Palestinian Arabs have no reason to expect atonement from Britain for its role during the Mandate. It did what it could to prevent Jewish immigration and statehood. It backed some of the most extreme Palestinian leaders—like the Mufti of Jerusalem, a British choice. It severed Jordan from the rest of Palestine and gave it to the Arabs while repeatedly trying to appease them by offering large chunks of the rest.

If the British need to apologize or "atone" to anyone, it is to the Israelis. Thatcher's visit to Israel was a first symbolic step in that process. However, it is not quite enough. Even while in Israel Thatcher managed to lecture the Israelis about the Palestinians, noting that "because of your [the Jewish people's] high standard, more is expected of Israel than of other countries." She told her hosts that she favored "self-determination for the Palestinian people"—which usually means an Arab state on the West Bank—but she added that federation with Jordan seems most promising now.

Thatcher's suggestion that Palestinian Arabs find an "alternative" to the PLO, and her assertion that Israel's security needs are unique and pressing, were positive. But so long as Britain continues its embargo on arms and oil sales to Israel while selling billions in arms to the Arabs, some of her other remarks were a bit "cheeky." After all, Prime Minister Shimon Peres while in England recently did not lecture Thatcher about her government's handling of Northern Ireland or about British inflexibility over the Falklands. Peres understood that it's not his place to tell London how to run its foreign and domestic policies despite its own traditional "high standard." Thatcher, and other world leaders, should recognize the same about Israel. □

—M.J.R.

N.E.R.

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ARAFAT VISA p. 87

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EDITORIAL

Those Moderates

There are several misconceptions floating around in the wake of the Senate and House votes on the Saudi arms sale. The first, which appeared most prominently in Meg Greenfield's *Newsweek* column of May 19, is that anti-Arab racism has infected U.S. policymaking. She sees a "flight back to the generalized, hostile attitudes toward Arabs and/or Moslems as a collectivity that prevailed both as government policy and as public prejudice for so many years."

It's hard to know what Greenfield is talking about. The Saudi arms vote was not motivated by anti-Arab animus. If she would read the *Congressional Record's* report on the debate in both the Senate and the House, Greenfield would discover a Congress that is concerned about Saudi Arabia's support for the PLO and other terrorists and its subversion of the Middle East peace process. Members of Congress do not want to reward the Saudis for ostracizing Egypt or for putting obstacles in the way of King Hussein's pursuit of peace. That is hardly anti-Arab. On the contrary, that concern is "pro-peace," which is good for Arabs, Israelis and Americans. In fact, supporters of the Saudi sale join its opponents in wishing that Riyadh would end its stonewalling of the peace process. The difference comes over timing. Do we provide the Saudis with more arms to encourage them to hop aboard the peace train or do we hold off until after the Saudis change direction?

The other major misconception is that in opposing arms to Saudi Arabia, Congress is abandoning Arab moderates. Once again one must question what an Arab moderate is. In State Department parlance, a moderate Arab government is one that has closer ties to Washington than to Moscow. (Ideally, it will have no ties to Moscow.) Under this definition, Saudi Arabia is moderate while Syria most certainly is not.

This formulation is incomplete, however, because it ignores an Arab state's view of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It suggests that attitudes toward Israel are irrelevant as compared to attitudes toward the East-West conflict.

However, it is an Arab state's attitude toward Israel, and toward terrorism, that are the central factors when considering whether an Arab state should receive U.S. arms. Saudi Arabia clearly prefers Washington to Moscow but it simply gives no evidence that it believes Israel has the right to exist or that terrorism against Israel is wrong. It has repeatedly worked to sabotage the peace process through diplomatic means and through its backing of terrorist organizations.

In short, Saudi Arabia's moderation on East-West matters does not necessarily make it a fit recipient of U.S. arms. There is nothing in its anti-Soviet posture to prevent it from transferring its U.S.-supplied weapons to the PLO or to Syria, nothing in its pro-American orientation to prevent it from joining the next *jihad* against Israel. There is no inconsistency between that and Riyadh's moderate status if one believes that the pro- or anti-Soviet factor is the only one that counts.

That is why the United States should begin rethinking its definition of moderate to include a nation's policy toward Israel. And that is also why friends of Israel must be concerned about arms sales to any Arab nation which refuses to accept Israel's right to exist. Saudi Arabia may be "moderate." But that is the right answer to the wrong question. Ambassador Chester Bowles, the great statesman and internationalist who died last week, said that the Arab-Israeli conflict will only end "when the Arab nations begin to realize that whatever they think of Israel, it is there to stay." The real question then is whether the Saudis have come around to that realization. The answer still appears to be no. □

VIEWING THE NEWS

Thatcher in Israel

Margaret Thatcher became the first British Prime Minister to travel to Israel, completing a four-day official visit last week. Thatcher told a press conference that if the PLO did not renounce terrorism and recognize Israel, an alternative which "truly represents" the Palestinian Arabs would have to be found (Reuters, May 27).

She urged Israeli officials to help improve the quality of life for Arab residents

of the West Bank and Gaza district and said that the most promising way to realize "self-determination" for the Palestinian Arabs would be in a federation with Jordan rather than an independent state. After a tour of the Yad VaShem memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, Thatcher said that anyone negotiating with Israel must understand its concerns with security, since the threat to the Jewish people has

been of "a different order" than those faced by most nations.

Although the trip was expected "to put the finishing touches on a normalization of relations between the two countries" after a "chilly period" following the war in Lebanon, it was not expected to result in an end to Britain's arms embargo on Israel (*New York Times*, May 25). □

CAPITOL COMMENTS

Lewis Takes Long View

Former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis believes that the Arab-Israeli peace process is stalemated and "there is not a lot we can do about it." Contributing to the impasse are "the intrinsic inability of the PLO to come to terms with its own role" and Jordan's weakness, which prevents it from entering talks with Israel without the PLO's endorsement.

Lewis and other experts, including William Quandt, former Middle East specialist for the National Security Council under the Carter Administration, and Martin Indyk, head of the Washington Institute on Near East Policy Research, recently testified before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East. Lewis said it could be argued that the United States "did about what we could" in the past year-and-a-half to encourage the peace process, given conditions in the region.

U.S. interests in the Middle East, he said, now are "reasonably well defended by the positions we've established"—including the strong U.S.-Israel relationship, although Lewis cautioned that the strong ties between Washington and Jerusalem depend in part on the "personal affinities of the leaders in both capitals" and are not necessarily permanent.

He forecast "a very unhappy epoch" for the region, particularly for Arab countries. The oil-funded optimism Arab states enjoyed a decade ago, especially in regard to their relations with the West, has dimmed. Instead, Lewis said, Arab elites are disillusioned with America, with their own leaders and with the Soviets. "This is turning

some of them toward Islamic fundamentalism," he added.

"I've never seen the Arab world more divided than it is today," Lewis commented. Inter-Arab conflicts, beginning with the Iraq-Iran war and its 500,000 deaths, "far outweigh" the conflict with Israel. The mirage of a decade ago—of the Arab world resurgent—has evaporated.

Syrian influence, based on military strength and sponsorship of terrorism, works against Arab-Israel peace "except on its terms, which are not really peace and which the United States and Israel could not agree with," Lewis asserted. To improve the atmosphere Washington should reinforce the Egypt-Israel peace and also exploit its improved relations with Israel—"one of our achievements of the last four or five years."

Israel, Lewis added, stands "at something of a political crossroads. . . . Israeli policymakers have lost some ground in recent years to hypernationalism" because "Arab leaders proved unable to follow the example of Sadat." He called the Camp David Accords and the Egypt-Israel treaty a much greater accomplishment than many realize today and urged Congress "not to forget the size of Egypt, the importance of Egypt to Israel and to the United States."

Quandt, now at the Brookings Institution, agreed that the peace process "has come to a halt, perhaps more than temporarily," and said that disillusionment on both sides placed a question mark over long-term Egypt-Israel relations. In addition, economic problems in many Middle East states, brought on by volatile oil

prices, "have undermined the authority of Arab regimes," particularly in countries friendly to the United States. And Islamic fundamentalism, left-wing political activity and terrorism have increased. Quandt called the Taba dispute between Cairo and Jerusalem "ridiculous" and said that the Administration should push for its resolution.

Both Lewis and Quandt referred to the possibility of war between Syria and Israel in the not too distant future. Lewis recommended that the United States "be more actively engaged with the Soviets in warning them about the dangers of some of the actions their Syrian friends are engaged in." Quandt pointed out that such a conflict does not depend on movement toward an Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian Arab peace "but has a life of its own based on the extraordinary military buildup on both sides of the border."

Lewis added that he believed "the classic formula" of a trade of territory for peace between Israel and Jordan "has gone the way of history." He said that "too many Israelis are committed to living in areas which would be part of that trade." Nevertheless, history has not yet bypassed a settlement. The former Ambassador envisioned a possible economic federation between Israel, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza, but with only two armies and sovereign countries: Israel and Jordan.

Asked what Saudi Arabia could do for the United States, Indyk replied that Riyadh should help Egypt back into the Arab world. Quandt said that "helping" means subsidizing Egypt's economy. □

IDF Report Controversial

Israel's Chief of Staff, Gen. Moshe Levy, has ordered a controversial report on the Israel Defense Forces to be included in the army's new five-year plan, which is to be published soon. The report, originally commissioned by the IDF, was done by Emmanuel Wald, a reserve colonel and former head of long-range planning on the General Staff's planning branch. It listed several criticisms of the military, according to Israeli press accounts.

Wald's report asserts that Israel's military power has eroded since 1967. It noted that the IDF defeated more than three Arab armies on three fronts in six days with only 6% of the gross national product (GNP). In

the 1973 Yom Kippur War "it barely achieved a tie against two armies on two fronts with twice as much . . . GNP; in the (1982) Peace for Galilee war it failed to defeat less than a single army on a single front under optimal circumstance and with an investment of 18% of GNP," *Hadashot* commented.

The head of IDF Ground Forces, Maj. Gen. Amir Drori, told *Ha'aretz* that there has been a decline in ground forces since 1980. He said it is not yet drastic but is continuing and noted that the size of the standing forces has decreased. Not only has the number of reserve units decreased but, because of budget cuts, investment in

equipment has declined as well. Drori said the army can deal with new threats but may have to pay a higher price. "It will be harder to carry out missions that were once easy to implement."

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that publication of parts of the report in the press presented an unjustified, distorted picture of the IDF's ability, development plans and level of its commanders. He said that perhaps the report should have been discussed at IDF headquarters, but added that at least it was presented to those who prepare the military's working plans. □

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ANALYSIS

The Worst Case Assad

Most media and diplomatic analysts—including a State Department official and an Israeli representative in Washington—still believe Syrian President Hafez Assad to be cautious as well as ruthless. An implacable enemy of Israel, the Syrian dictator continues to be described as cunning, the opposite of an impulsive adventurer like Libya's Muammar Qaddafi. And they believe that Assad's control over Syria, a country prone to coups until he took power in 1970, remains firm.

But it may be getting harder to fit such descriptions to the facts. Why did Syria apparently mastermind the attempt to place a bomb on an El Al jet in London? If Assad is solidly in command, if he remains cautious as well as cunning, was he willing to risk massive Israeli retaliation and perhaps all-out war if the bomb had gone undetected and exploded?

Why did the Syrians begin, several months ago, to build earthen fortifications for tanks and artillery just above the Israeli-maintained security zone in southernmost Lebanon? The move probably violated tacit understandings reached when Israel withdrew from the area. Although the positions are described as defensive and remain unmanned, Israeli analysts have noted that they quickly could be used to launch an entire division southward.

Why is Damascus, in the face of crushing economic problems symbolized by curtailed electric power, pushing ahead with its huge military buildup? Syria already has Soviet SS-21 missiles which can threaten northern Israeli airfields, bases and civilian centers, and now reportedly is to get MiG-29 fighter bombers—roughly equivalent to Israel's U.S.-built F-15's and F-16's—and perhaps SS-23 missiles. The latter have been added to Russia's own

arsenal only recently, are regarded as accurate and have a range of 300 miles, enough to cover virtually all of Israel.

"I agree that Assad is flexing his muscles, but I don't see that he is ready to translate that into action, into combat," said the Israeli official. The analyst distinguished—as has Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin—between Syria's military buildup and its involvement in terrorism. Some of Assad's behavior could be a protective response to the U.S. attack on Libya and the growing anti-terrorism posture of the West.

Recent actions by Assad, including a long interview with *Washington Post* executives and writers and his trip to Greece last week—his first to a Western nation in eight years—can be seen as an effort to improve his image. On the other hand, the Israeli official noted, Syria's growing military power enables it to divert the peace process from Jordan and Egypt to itself, "to show that the key is labeled Damascus."

The State Department official noted that there has been no confirmation of the Israeli press accounts that Syria is to receive the MiG-29's beginning this summer and the SS-23's within a year. Meanwhile, the tension which arose between Israel and Syria in mid-May "was largely media-made and largely dispelled through statements by both sides made through the media." Although Assad makes no secret of wanting the return of the Golan Heights and of hoping to gain "strategic parity" with Israel, the Syrian leader has not been a gambler.

However, Syria has made no secret of its insistence that any Israeli gains from the 1982 war against the PLO in Lebanon must be "liquidated." The most conspicuous remaining plus for Israel is the security zone in southern Lebanon, a three-to-six mile-

wide buffer strip above Israel's border.

Perhaps the unmanned fortifications "creeping south" in Lebanon are part of a plan to force Israel out of the zone. The installation of new anti-aircraft missiles on the Syrian-Lebanese border last year, which curtailed some Israeli reconnaissance flights, also may be part of this move. Together they could help block an Israeli response if Syria—with its greatly expanded standing army—initiates a "land grab" on the Golan and then waits for its Soviet patrons to demand a ceasefire move by Washington and Jerusalem. An Israeli response to the attempted El Al bombing, had it succeeded, could have been the pretext for such a Syrian grab.

Another long-standing Syrian aim, frequently reiterated by Syria's media, had been to "free Egypt of the shackles of the Camp David regime." Assad witnessed how Israel's campaign in Lebanon threw a pall over Egyptian-Israeli relations. Perhaps he counts on an Israeli-Syrian war to end any chance for normalization between Cairo and Jerusalem.

When analysts refer to an Assad who tempers his radical long-term goals with pragmatic tactics, they have in mind the pre-1983 Assad. Early that year he began, with billions of dollars worth of Russian equipment, the upgrading and expansion of his military. Late that year he apparently suffered a serious heart attack. If the post-'83 Assad believes that he has only one more chance to reshuffle the Middle East deck to his liking and that he now has the military power to do it, he may no longer be cunning and cautious but solely cunning. In that case, he may be not only testing Israeli tolerance but seeking a provocation.

—E.R.

HEARD ON CAPITOL HILL

Arafat Visa Opposed

Sens. JEREMIAH DENTON (R-Ala.) and FRANK LAUTENBERG (D-N.J.) and 45 Senate colleagues have sent a letter to Secretary of State George Shultz requesting that he deny a visa to PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat. It has been reported that Arafat hopes to address a U.N. Security Council meeting in June on the "Palestinian problem."

On Jan. 15, State Department Deputy Spokesman Charles Redman pointed out that "it has been United States policy, sanctioned by the Congress as recently as 1979, to deny visas to members of the PLO. Similarly, we will as a matter of principle exclude individuals who personally advo-

cate terrorism or who we believe have participated in or supported terrorist activities."

Denton, the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, said in introducing the letter that "Arafat is widely recognized as a kingpin of world terror; we cannot and we must not again open our doors to him."

Reps. BILL LOWERY (R-Calif.) and TOM LANTOS (D-Calif.) are circulating a similar letter in the House.

Signers of the Senate letter are:

JEREMIAH DENTON (R-Ala.)	CHIC HECHT (R-Nev.)
FRANK LAUTENBERG (D-N.J.)	MACK MATTINGLY (R-Ga.)
CHARLES GRASSLEY (R-Iowa)	DON NICKLES (R-Okla.)
PATRICK LEAHY (D-Vt.)	SLADE GORDON (R-Wash.)
	RUDY BOSCHWITZ (R-Minn.)

PAULA HAWKINS (R-Fla.)	ARLEN SPECTER (R-Pa.)
ORRIN HATCH (R-Utah)	MITCH MCCONNELL (R-Ky.)
CHRISTOPHER DODD (D-Conn.)	LARRY PRESSLER (R-S.D.)
HOWARD METZENBAUM (D-Ohio)	BOB KASTEN (R-Wis.)
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JAMES ABDNOR (R-S.D.)	DONALD RIEGLE (D-Mich.)
ALFONSE D'AMATO (R-N.Y.)	JESSE HELMS (R-N.C.)
DENNIS DeCONCINI (D-Ariz.)	TED KENNEDY (D-Mass.)
DAN QUAYLE (R-Ind.)	STROM THURMOND (R-S.C.)
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JOHN KERRY (D-Mass.)	JOHN DANFORTH (R-Mo.)
WILLIAM PROXMIRE (D-Wis.)	JIM SASSER (D-Tenn.)
JAMES MCCLURE (R-Idaho)	DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN (D-N.Y.)
	JOHN HENZ (R-Pa.)
	PAUL LAXALT (R-Nev.)

BACK PAGE

A Perfect Endorsement

It is starting to border on comedy. First, novelist Gore Vidal attacked writers Norman Podhoretz and Midge Decter in the *Nation*. Vidal's thesis (See *Back Page* Apr. 21) was that pro-Israel Jews like Podhoretz and Decter are guilty of disloyalty to the United States and do not identify with American history and destiny. Vidal's attack appeared unambiguously anti-Semitic and provided another demonstration (if one was needed) that anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism easily mesh.

The Vidal attack (which was reprinted by the *Washington Post*) produced an enormous response. The novelist's defenders said that his *Nation* article was either written with tongue in cheek or was accurate. His opponents argue that Vidal is either an anti-Semite, a loony, or both.

One attack on Vidal—by the *New Republic*—drew the most appropriate response of all. It came from John Hinckley, Jr., the man who almost succeeded in assassinating President Reagan in 1981. Hinckley, a patient in St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, endorsed Vidal's view of Jews and Zionism. He called Zionism "racist and militaristic." Moreover, he stated that "being opposed to Zionism . . . is patriotic."

There is something fitting about a would-be Presidential assassin lecturing Zionists about patriotism. It's crazy. But, at the same time, it demonstrates that there are simply no bounds that will not be crossed in the anti-Zionist attack. Hinckley's repudiation of Zionism will, of course, do no harm to either the Jewish national movement or to the Jewish people. On the contrary, it might force Gore Vidal and others of his ilk to rethink those of their views which gain the respect and approval of assassins. It certainly should.

Both the Administration and the news media seem to be having a difficult time with the growing body of evidence that Syria (not Libya) is the leading exporter of terrorism in the Middle East. It is so much easier to focus on the essentially friendless Qaddafi than on the heavily armed Hafez Assad and his Soviet backers. (The Soviets back Libya too, but with less ardor.)

The May 26 *Time* is typical of the coverage being given Syria in the wake of disclosures of its role in terror. It says that it is "conceivable" that Syria was involved in the bombing of a discotheque in West Berlin that killed an American soldier. It also endorses the view that Syria may have been behind the attempted bombing of an El Al plane in London. It suggests several reasons for President Hafez Assad's growing militancy. "His country's economy is in

shambles following his enormous military expenditures, and the drop in worldwide oil prices has made it more difficult for him to secure aid from other Arab states. At home he is fighting off a challenge to his regime, which is dominated by his small Moslem sect, the Alawites. For the past two months Syria has been plagued with bombings apparently aimed at the Alawite community, which comprises only 13.5% of the country's population of 10.6 million."

Time's point would seem obvious. Assad is flirting with war to divert attention from his and Syria's real problems. Anti-Israel fervor is about the only thing that unifies Syrians.

But that is not *Time's* conclusion. Instead, it quotes—with approval—a nameless U.S. official who "admits that the failure of the peace process is to blame for the new tension." Unfortunately, that conclusion does not at all follow from the earlier description of Assad's troubles. A renewed "peace process" would not solve any of Assad's problems. It wouldn't help the Syrian economy. It wouldn't reduce his difficulties with non-Alawite Moslems who might accuse Assad of selling out "Palestine." And it wouldn't lessen tensions between Damascus and other Moslem militants, like Iran. In short, pursuing the peace process wouldn't help Assad much at all. If *Time* read its own coverage, it would know that. But old ways of thinking die hard. *Time* prefers believing that somehow the "peace process" would solve everybody's problems at once. If that were true, Syria would have made peace with Israel decades ago. It hasn't because the war option better serves the Syrian government's domestic needs. That is why we won't see Hafez Assad at the peace table any time soon. Even *Time* can't change that.

—M.J.R. □

N.E.R.

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NEAR EAST REPORT

SHULTZ ON: TERRORISM
AID TO ISR p. 83

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VOL. XXX, NO. 21 MAY 26, 1986

EDITORIAL

Israel at 38

"If you will it, it is no dream." That is what Theodor Herzl wrote on the frontpiece of his novel *Old New Land*, his description of the future Jewish state. Herzl wrote his book in 1902, two years before his death at 44. When he died, Herzl's dream of a Jewish state was no more than that. Certainly there were Jewish settlements throughout the land. Jerusalem already had a Jewish majority. Nevertheless, the land itself was under Turkish sovereignty and the Turks had no intention of giving it up. Herzl did his best. He negotiated with the Turks, the Germans, the Russians, the Italians, the British and even the Pope—but to no avail. No one—except the Jews—wanted to see the Holy Land in the hands of its original inhabitants. At Herzl's death, he appeared a failure. Or, to put it more positively, just a dreamer.

Today, 82 years after Herzl's death, we celebrate Israel's 38th anniversary of statehood. The state of Herzl's dreams is as real as any other. It certainly has real problems. There are the problems of peace and war, of terrorism, of a weak economy. There are tensions (and, let's face it, deep animosities) between religious and non-religious Israelis and between those of Afro-Asian backgrounds and those from

Europe. Israel is certainly not one big happy family.

And yet the dream of Israel is infinitely more important than the problems. It is there. Four million Jews live there (in contrast to the 600,000 who lived there in 1948). They speak Hebrew, a language that even Herzl considered to be as "dead" as Latin. They live, love, and argue in the one place on earth where they are not a minority, a minority sometimes tolerated and sometimes not.

Israel is also there for Jews who do not choose to live there. All Jews stand, to some degree, under Israel's protective umbrella. It is that umbrella that covered Anatoly Shcharansky and the Ethiopian Jews and brought about their freedom in Israel. But it is not only oppressed Jews who benefit from Israel's existence and its vigilance. It is *all* Jews. Even those who are indifferent to Israel have to know that Israel is not indifferent to them.

That is why we celebrate Israel's 38th anniversary of statehood. We celebrate for all those who dreamed of Israel but never lived to see it. We celebrate for those who died in that Holocaust which demonstrated—once and for all—that a Jewish state was essential. And, most of all, we celebrate for ourselves. □

VIEWING THE NEWS

Assad Interview

Syria's President Hafez Assad claimed that statements by U.S. officials linking his country to terrorist bombings in Berlin and the attempted bombing of an El Al plane in London were "made up or planned as part of a general campaign against Syria and other states in the region, and consequently against the Arab nation" (Damascus Television, May 18). An announcer read the text of an interview Assad gave to *Washington Post* Executive Editor Benjamin Bradlee, Assistant Managing Editor Jim Hoagland, reporter Jonathan Randal and Deputy Editor Samuel Abt of the *International Herald Tribune*.

Assad added that "the purpose of the campaign is to make the Arabs give in to Zionist plans. . . . Thus, the way would be open for Israel to become Greater Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates. This is the truth of the matter."

He claimed that "there is not a single terrorist organization in the world that does not have the CIA arm in it." Assad cited the invasion of Grenada and the U.S. raid on

Libya as examples. He implied that Israel was responsible for the estimated 100,000 deaths in the 11-plus years of the Lebanese civil war, blamed Israeli "terrorism" for the flight of hundreds of thousands of Arabs in 1948 who became "the Palestinian refugees today," and stressed that Syria hopes "all catastrophes befall Israel because we are enemies and have been in a state of war for 38 years. . . ."

Riot in Jordan

Three students were killed and 18 police wounded in riots at Yarmuk University in Irbid, Jordan on May 15. Jordanian and wire reports said the violence occurred when police tried to put down a riot apparently triggered by a tuition increase and the expulsion of 32 students who took part in a previous demonstration. However, a more likely cause was incitement "by Palestinian pro-Fatah elements dissatisfied with the growing Jordanian-Syrian cooperation against the PLO" (*Jerusalem Post*, May 16).

Sources told the paper that the violence "was 'undoubtedly a surprise and an alarm bell' for King Hussein, whose security forces have until now successfully tamped down all latent unrest."

New Syrian Missiles

"Syria is about to receive Soviet surface-to-surface SS-23 missiles" (*Kol Yisrael*, May 19). The accurate SS-23 reportedly has a range of 300 miles, which could cover virtually all of Israel. Moscow already has supplied Damascus with SS-21's which have a range of approximately 75 miles, enough to strike nearly anywhere north of Jerusalem. In addition, Syria is to get new MiG-29 fighter-bombers.

Meanwhile, "Soviet television has affirmed the existence of consultations between the United States on one hand and its NATO allies and Israel on the other with the aim of launching a joint armed aggression against Syria" (Syrian Arab News Agency, May 17). "Commenting on the anniversary of the usurpation of Palestine . . .

(Continued)

PERSPECTIVE

'Jordan Option' Needs Syria

Ora Namir, a Labor Party Knesset member since 1973, thinks that perhaps Syria—not Jordan—could be the second Arab country to make peace with Israel. But just as the lack of Palestinian Arab partners keeps King Hussein from negotiating, Syrian behavior precludes a compromise with President Hafez Assad, according to Namir—as well as to recent statements by Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Israel's Ambassador to the United States, Meir Rosenne.

In Washington recently, Namir said that "many Labor Party members did believe in the Jordanian-Palestinian solution," but that although "Hussein was given many chances . . . he was not successful in delivering the goods"; so the current impasse developed.

Namir observed that the recently-adopted Labor Party platform "stressed negotiations with any Palestinian Arabs on two conditions": recognition of Israel and renunciation of terrorism. But most West Bank Arabs see PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat—not Hussein—as their leader, Namir said. When Arafat again refused to accept those conditions and Hussein froze Jordanian-PLO diplomatic talks last winter, even for Labor "doves" such as herself it became "almost Mission Impossible" to sit at the table with a joint Jordanian-Palestinian

delegation.

If not a weak Jordan, then perhaps a stronger Syria—like Egypt under Sadat—might turn toward diplomacy, Namir suggested. "Syria is anti-Arafat. And it has close ties to the Soviet Union." Namir—unlike many in Israel's national unity government and in the Reagan Administration—believes Moscow's participation "is essential to the Middle East peace process."

However, she said that "Syria will only come [to the negotiating table] if Israel gives away all of the Golan Heights." Namir doubted whether any Israeli government could do that, pointing out that it was the policy of her own party—not the more actively pro-settlement Likud—which led to the establishment of many kibbutzim and moshavim on the Golan. "And I don't believe the Labor Party today can take them away."

Those who believe that Palestinian Arabs further their cause through terrorism "cannot imagine how much damage this does to . . . [Israeli] public opinion. Each terrorist attack takes many of our people 100 steps backward" in the attitude toward Arabs in general and on additional Israeli concessions to expand the peace process. "Those who do the terrorism don't want peace," Namir concluded.

Namir's suggested re-examination of Syria as a possible negotiating partner came in the midst of a flare-up of tension between Damascus and Jerusalem. Also looking at Syria as a possible partner to a renewed peace process, Prime Minister Shimon Peres came to a bleak conclusion. He told *Kol Yisrael* in mid-May that Assad is not "fighting for the Golan Heights or for peace. His war is to be the leader of the Arab world, whether by conquest, intrigue or politics. Under these conditions, the chance of reaching a dialogue with Assad seems to me to be minimal if not nil."

Speaking to the annual convention of the American Jewish Committee on May 18, Rosenne reiterated that Israel has been seeking negotiations, without preconditions, with Syria. Israel is interested in a "comprehensive peace" and would accept an international umbrella for negotiations—provided the talks lead directly to bilateral negotiations between the concerned parties. But he pointed out that Syria is not ready for talks. As for Soviet participation, the Ambassador again noted that Moscow's actions—including refusal to restore diplomatic relations with Israel and its vise-like grip on Soviet Jewish emigration—prevent it from playing a positive role. □

—E.R.

VIEWING . . . Continued

Soviet television referred to the aggressive military nature of the Zionist entity. It said: "The establishment of Israel was linked from the beginning to the policy of militarization and aggression."

Israeli Aids Soviets

One member of the team of Western doctors invited to the Soviet Union to help treat victims of the Chernobyl nuclear plant explosion was Yair Reisner, an Israeli expert in bone marrow transplants (Reuters, May 19). Reisner, 37, "has developed techniques for preventing graft-versus-host disease, a tissue-rejecting problem that often occurs when marrow is transplanted from an imperfectly matched donor."

Reisner, a scientist at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovoth, said that 299 patients were affected by the plant disaster, with 35 sent to the hospital where he worked on the Western team, headed by U.S. surgeon Dr.

Robert Gale. Radiation can destroy bone marrow—which manufactures many blood

components—and the team performed 19 bone marrow transplants. □

A Friend at the U.N.

For the third consecutive year, Israel has voted with the United States in the U.N. more than any other country. According to a preliminary State Department report detailing country U.N. voting patterns, Israel voted 91.5% of the time with the United States. Only 19 countries, mostly major industrial allies, voted with America in the General Assembly more than half the time. After Israel came Great Britain, West Germany and France.

In a recent hearing before the Senate Appropriations Foreign Operations Subcommittee, U.N. Ambassador Vernon Walters and subcommittee chairman Sen. Robert Kasten (R-Wis.) praised Israel's supportive role and reaffirmed U.S. policy stipulating that the United States will withdraw from the U.N. if Israel is expelled from that body. Kasten and Walters also agreed that Washington should link foreign aid to recipient countries' U.N. voting practices.

"Again in 1985, Israel was our staunchest ally," Kasten said. The 159-member General Assembly "voted against U.S. interests . . . nearly 80% of the time." Arab states with high percentages of votes against U.S. positions—and whose leaders were received at the White House last year—included Algeria (94.9%), Saudi Arabia (86.4%) and Jordan (85.8%). As a group, the 21 Arab countries sided with the United States only 12.2% of the time.

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HEARD IN WASHINGTON

Shultz Comes Out Swinging

Secretary of State George Shultz—in what reporters described as a “feisty” post-Tokyo summit mood—blasted attempts to look for “root causes” of terrorism and pushed hard publicly for the Administration’s proposed missile sale to Saudi Arabia.

Before the Overseas Writers Club on May 14, Shultz cut off a BBC reporter who asked, “How do you intend to succeed in combatting international terrorism without focusing on the causes that inspire such terrorism: for instance, continued occupation by Israel of southern Lebanon and . . . the continued denial of the homeland for the Palestinians?”

Said Shultz, “That’s enough right there. I reject completely this notion that somehow when one of these brutal acts of terrorism is committed that you say, well, it’s terrible but let’s look at the causes. We can’t have that. We’ve got to get beyond that and say there isn’t any cause that is acceptable at all for these kinds of terrorist acts.”

However, he then said “that doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t work on the issues—and there are many all over the world, not just in the Middle East, where people have problems. . . . The Palestinian people have taken a major beating in the Middle East and they deserve to have their legitimate grievances addressed. There is a just cause there and that has been said and said, and we have worked hard at it. . . . But the fact that there are problems in the world does not in any way justify this ter-

rorism.”

Before the American Jewish Committee (AJC) the next day, Shultz included the PLO with the IRA, Japanese Red Army and other “ideologues of violence.” He said such terrorist groups “are colluding across borders to undermine our very way of life.” And “terrorism could not exist on its current scale without aid and encouragement from sovereign states both within the Communist world and beyond. As a result of the American attack on Libya, ‘Qaddafi is in retreat, and Syria is uneasy—a reaction which may induce that country to think hard about involvement in murderous adventures.’”

The Secretary also spoke with vehemence in favor of the planned sale of anti-aircraft and anti-ship missiles to Saudi Arabia and the scheduled transfer of the Airborne Warning and Command Systems planes (AWACS) to Riyadh beginning this summer. Before the Administration decided to drop the shoulder-fired Stinger anti-aircraft missiles from the package, Shultz told the Overseas Writers that “I don’t believe Israel’s national security interests are menaced by these sales, but we have to think about *our* national security interests. How about that?”

Shultz said that Saudi Arabia “has brought a measure of stability” to the Persian Gulf by assisting in “settling down the Iranian attempts to disrupt the flow of tankers . . .” He asserted that the Saudis also have played a positive role toward North

and South Yemen—South Yemen was the scene of a January war between two pro-Moscow factions for control of the government—and helped discourage an Arab summit after the U.S. attack on Libya. Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi had called for a summit to get endorsement for anti-American measures.

To the AJC, Shultz added that America needs to support—“under carefully limited conditions—Saudi Arabia’s effort to defend the Persian Gulf. The danger there is real. If Khomeinism advances into that area, America’s strategic interests will be harmed—and needless to say, so will Israel’s.” [Critics of the missile sale have argued that Saudi Arabia’s relatively small population and internal instability make it an unlikely candidate to defend either itself or the other, smaller Arab oil states of the Gulf from any large Iranian offensive.]

Shultz did not take questions after his Committee speech, but sounded cautious about Syria before the Overseas Writers. He noted that Damascus “has played a constructive role in the past in some instances” in securing the release of U.S. citizens kidnapped in Lebanon and if it could be helpful now, “that would be most welcome.”

However, if unequivocal evidence emerges linking Syria with terrorist attempts against Americans—as alleged in the effort to bomb an El Al plane in London which carried many Americans—“we will do something about it.” □

—E.R.

CAPITOL COMMENTS

Protecting Foreign Aid

Aid to Israel and Egypt “will not be reduced,” according to Secretary of State George Shultz, despite large cuts in the foreign affairs budget approved by the Senate and the House Budget Committee. But in his speech to the Overseas Writers Club (see related story) Shultz charged that the Senate budget resolution would slash 21% from overall foreign affairs spending, the House committee proposal 25%.

In addition to \$3 billion for Israel and \$2.2 billion for Egypt, assistance to countries in which the United States maintains bases—such as Turkey, Greece and Spain—and to Central America and Pakistan would be held constant. That equals about \$10 billion of the \$22.6 billion the Reagan Administration requested for fiscal 1987. But Congressional cuts would pare the Administration’s figure to no more than \$17.8 billion, Shultz said.

Subtracting more than \$1 billion the Senate added to Export-Import Bank funding, only about \$6 billion remains to cover all other U.S. requirements. Squeezing more than \$12 billion worth of foreign aid commitments into approximately half that will cause “mayhem,” the Secretary asserted.

“It will be extremely difficult to meet our security assistance [military] commitments to such key areas as sub-Saharan Africa; to moderate Arab countries such as Jordan and Morocco; to Caribbean states . . . or to friends in South America or East Asia.” And economic assistance programs—including any additional aid to the Philippines, Haiti or South Korea—“will also be devastated.”

Shultz added that activities like diplomatic intelligence gathering—which accounts for more than half “the useful intelligence we get and use”—embassy securi-

ty, USIA and other information programs, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty are all at risk. He said the Administration’s request was in keeping with the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings budget reduction target and noted that the total foreign affairs budget amounts to only 2% of all federal spending.

Calling foreign aid an important tool in “constructive American leadership” of world affairs, Shultz stressed that “this is not a numbers game. We face a dangerous world. . . . These reductions likely will have the most severe consequences for our security, for our economic well-being” and for American diplomats overseas. He said that the real constituency for foreign aid was “the American people” and that the amount allocated to it says how much Americans “believe in ourselves, and how much we really care about peace and freedom in the world.” □

BACK PAGE

Independence Day

Prime Minister Shimon Peres was asked a tough question by Israel radio when he sat down for an Independence Day interview (May 14). Political correspondent Oz Frankel asked if Peres didn't consider it something of a contradiction to be celebrating independence on the day he "received a check for nearly \$400 million from the U.S. ambassador."

Peres said that he didn't see any conflict. He noted that France and England both receive assistance from the United States and yet no one questions their independence. "Their dependence on the United States is 10 times greater. In fact, the United States protects the continent of Europe not only economically but militarily. Furthermore, the extent of economic aid is tremendous, approximately \$130 billion annually." Peres therefore concludes that since the aid Israel receives from the United States "is much less than that received by European countries, our dependence is less."

The Prime Minister added that he believes that U.S. aid for his country is a two-way street. Israel has now joined the United States in the research and development of the "Star Wars" project and—unlike other Mediterranean states—is permitting the United States to station a Voice of America transmitter within its borders. Peres noted: "I think that the United States considers Israel to be one of three or four countries on which it can rely . . . not only because of our military capability but because we are a unique combination, a democratic country with conviction and a country which can defend itself with its younger generation."

On another matter, Peres made clear his determination that the current war of words with Syria not escalate into a new military conflict. Peres has no illusions about the Syrians. Unlike the Reagan Administration, Peres does not hesitate to lay responsibility for terrorism (and specifically the attempted Apr. 16 airplane bombing) at Syria's door. "The very fact that three Syrian diplomats have been expelled from London proves that the British government believes that there was a link between the Syrian embassy in London and those who tried to attack the El Al plane," he says.

He notes that the fact that El Al was the attempted target does not relieve others of the responsibility to respond. "Today an attack on any plane . . . is a strike at the freedom of international air routes." In other words, he would like to see other Western states take some action. "The free world is becoming more and more aware of Syria's central role in terrorism. All the active terrorist organizations—those of Hawatmeh, Jibril, Habash, Abu Nidal,

Abu Musa—are either on Syrian territory or under Syrian control." He predicts that it will soon "become clear" that Syria, "which is crafty and quiet, fulfills a role in terrorism which comes close to that filled by Libya."

Nevertheless, Peres goes out of his way to let the Syrians know that Israel is trying to avoid another war. He says that Israel has approached Damascus about the possibility of "dialogue" over the Golan Heights and Lebanon and also about "comprehensive negotiations." The Syrian response was negative but Peres is ready for negotiations with Syria on any scale at any time.

He believes that if Damascus appraised its own situation realistically it might decide that a reduction on tensions with Israel would be to its advantage. After all, Syria is in terrible economic shape. It has not succeeded in its attempt to subdue Lebanon. Both Iranian-backed Shi'ite and Sunni religious fundamentalists are giving the Alawite regime problems. Accordingly, President Hafez Assad might be wise to decide to reach "tactical arrangements" with Israel. On the other hand, he could follow the more predictable route and try war with Israel instead. Peres is not optimistic about the choice Assad will make. But he is not going to let any opportunity for dialogue pass.

This double-edged approach seems to be the hallmark of Peres' leadership. On the one hand, he lets the Syrians and the other rejectionists know that he will hold them responsible for any attacks on Israelis or Jews, at home or abroad. On the other, he makes clear that he is ready for negotiations over virtually everything at any time in any place. It's a good formula, one that keeps the ball in the Arabs' court. Unfortunately, no one seems ready to play. □

—M.J.R.

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