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INSTITUTE ON

American Jewish - Israeli Relations

Bertram H. Gold, Director

March 13, 1984

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Dr. Marshall Breger
Old Executive Office Bldg.
17th Street & Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Dr. Breger:

We are writing you on behalf of the Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations of the American Jewish Committee and the Israel-Diaspora Institute based at Tel Aviv University. Together we are sponsoring a colloquium on Perceptions of Israel in the American Mass Media, to take place in New York April 26-27, 1984 at the offices of the American Jewish Committee at 165 East 56th Street. We see it as the first in a two-part conference the second of which, to be scheduled for a later date in Israel, will deal with perceptions of the United States in the Israeli mass media.

The debate over the coverage of the Middle East, including the war in Lebanon, has tended both to highlight and obscure the significant emergence of Israel as front page news in the print and electronic media all over the world. While the nature and extent of the coverage of Israel is important in itself, it takes on added significance for the manner in which it may affect the relationship between the United States and Israel. More generally, it provides a test case for probing the role of the media in influencing relations between two free and democratic countries.

Our forthcoming conference hopes to launch such an examination through discussion of the following especially commissioned papers: "Issues of Freedom and Responsibility for the Media in a Democratic Society," by Professor Ben Bagdikian of the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California in Berkeley; "The Changing Institutional Role of the Media in Contemporary Society: Agenda Setting, Advocacy and Objectivity," by Roger Starr, member of the Editorial Board of the New York Times; "Journalism as a Rough Draft of History: A Historian's Perspective," by Dr. Daniel Pipes, author of the recently published In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power; and "Media

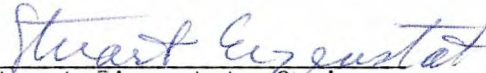
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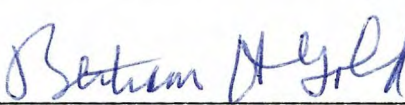
Coverage of Israel in Crucial Periods Between 1948 and the Present," by Moshe Decter, former editor of the Near East Report. Serving as special consultants to this project are David Rubin, head of the Department of Journalism at New York University and David Sidorsky, Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University.

The participants at these colloquia - a maximum of fifty - will include persons drawn from executive positions in the American and Israeli media, journalists and commentators, professionals with experience in the formation of public opinion, and representatives of academic disciplines who have contributed to media analysis. The papers will be circulated in advance so that ample opportunity may be provided for discussion.

The sponsors cordially invite you to participate in this conference. It is scheduled to begin on Thursday evening at 6:00 P.M. and to conclude at about the same time on Friday. Expenses for travel, hotel accommodations and meals are available if required. We do hope that you will be in a position to attend. A return postcard is enclosed for your convenience in replying.

Sincerely yours,


Stuart Eizenstat, Chairman


Bertram H. Gold, Director
Institute on American
Jewish-Israeli Relations

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Enclosure