

Now Israel is the 'bad guy' in the U.S.

WASHINGTON FILE
by Mark A Bruzonsky

ISRAEL is "slowly becoming the bad guy" for some segments of the American public.

So said Professor John Stoessinger in Washington last week, when speaking to the American Political Science Association.

According to Stoessinger, a well-known author of numerous studies on international affairs and an intimate friend of Henry Kissinger, the "special relationship" between Israel and the U.S. "will be severely tested during the coming months." "The American Jewish community may play a very crucial role," he added, "since it is being asked to choose... between loyalty to the U.S. or Begin's policies."

Stoessinger predicted that "Carter is going to place great weight on his favourite pollster, Pat Cadell, who is now trying to figure out if Carter can take on the Israelis."

This view has also recently been expressed by the assistant foreign editor of the *New York Times*, Terence Smith. Writing on August 28 Smith noted that "in the final analysis, Pat Cadell... and his other domestic advisers may have a decisive voice in

That special relationship is facing a severe test

determining whether Carter takes on the Israelis." Cadell is currently taking opinion polls attempting to assess whether Israeli Prime Minister Begin's policies have created a distinction in the public mind between support for Israel and support for certain Israeli policies.

What must be stressed in any discussion about the confrontation that might erupt between Carter and Begin is that American support for Israel's basic welfare is not in question. As Smith noted, "certainly the commitment to guarantee the survival and security of Israel is intact." The clash, if it comes, will be over Israeli settlements policies, the idea of a "Palestinian homeland" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and possibly over acceptance of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians.

Carter may decide to abandon Israel on these

policies thereby dramatically escalating the pressure for Israeli concessions that could lead to a Geneva conference.

Stoessinger added one note of hope. After criticising Kissinger's preoccupation with the 1815 Congress of Vienna, Stoessinger wondered whether the Mid-east today might be at a generational divide which could be leading to a compromise settlement. The 1648 Treaty of Westphalia which ended the 30 years war and the era of religious warfare in Europe might be an appropriate analogy, he indicated. "We may have begun to reach the possibility of a generational juncture where peace becomes possible," Stoessinger concluded.

HOW TO proceed with attempts to bring the PLO into the diplomatic process is a major subject of contention among Washington policy-makers.

Unknown State Department officials told CBS's Marvin Kalb last Friday that the U.S. has been stunned by the PLO's complete rejection of President Carter's offer to establish relations.

"The vituperative propaganda attacks by the PLO against the U.S." have been harmful, one official told Kalb. Apparently some government officials are backing away from the policy of attempting to nudge the PLO into an acceptance of Resolution 242 and American recognition of the PLO.

Yet, this attitude could be only a tactical shift in anticipation of tough bargaining at the approaching UN session. It could also be the result of escalating Israeli and American Jewish pressures not to deal with the PLO. A letter expressing "deep apprehensions" that the President is changing the "long-standing government policy" toward the PLO was delivered to the White House last week by the umbrella organisation representing most of the Jewish community. Also last week the Israeli Embassy released a policy paper insisting that the PLO covenant must be changed before the U.S. would be able to consider dealing with the PLO in view of repeated promises made by the American government to the Israeli government.

Application

But in another development, the door has been opened to a PLO Washington office staffed by a PLO official. On August 28, State Department spokesman John Trattner disclosed a new U.S. position regarding visa applications by members of "proscribed" organisations such as the PLO.

According to the new law, it is up to the Secretary of State "within 30 days of receiving an application from any alien who is excludable from the U.S. by reason of membership in or affiliation with a proscribed organisation but who is otherwise admissible to the U.S.," to recommend that the attorney-general grant the approval necessary for the issuance of a visa to such a person "unless the Secretary determined that the admission of such alien would be contrary to the security interests of the United States."

Trattner also revealed that a visa application from a PLO member is currently being considered.

In a related development, the PLO official who attempted to open a Washington office last November has recently received papers from the Justice Department asking for the bi-annual report of the affairs of the office which was registered but not opened in November 1976.

At that time it was deemed by the State Department "not propitious" for the opening of such an office and the PLO person was asked to leave the country because of false information on his visa application.

