

# The Arab American News

VOL. VI NO 277 AUGUST 25-31, 1990

العدد ٢٧٧ / السنة السادسة / ٢٥ - ٣١ آب ١٩٩٠

Not much hope for optimism

## U.S. might even be willing to use nuclear weapons on Iraq

By Mark Bruzonsky

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Even as former Under Secretary of State George Ball urges restraint and diplomacy in resolving the current Arabian Gulf crisis, he admits the chances of peaceful resolution to the conflict are almost nil, thanks largely to the Israeli lobby in this country who he charges have worked actively to spur the U.S. toward war and the elimination of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein because his strength threatened the Jewish state.

Ball, who served as Under Secretary of State from 1961 through 1966 and ended his political career as U.S. Representative to the United

Nations in 1968, is a revered senior statesman and known throughout foreign policy circles in Washington as one of the key men who helped President Kennedy resolve the Cuban missile crisis before it developed into nuclear war with the Soviet Union.

The 80 year old Ball is in good health and living in Princeton, New Jersey. He has been writing and lecturing for years on American policies in the Middle East and the urgency of resolving the Palestinian issue. When Jimmy Carter was elected President it was widely rumored that Ball might have been appointed Secretary of State but for his outspoken views on Israel.

In a recent interview, this seasoned voice of diplomacy, historical understanding and political wisdom tried to put an optimistic face on the potential scenarios that may develop over the coming months subsequent to the massive U.S. military deployment in the Gulf. When asked how this crisis measures up to some of the many he's personally been involved in over the years he said: "It could be very big, but hopefully it will not be. If the Administration is smart they will make a deal down the line and it could be a very brief affair and they will come out smelling like a rose. But they seem to understand

Continued on page 2

## George Ball...

Continued from page 1

nothing except unilateralism. They have no concept of how you organize a multi-national effort and keep it in the context of a multi-national effort."

Ball admits that his personal penchant for optimism might be misplaced in this case. He agrees that the U.S. may be in for a very long stay in the Saudi desert unless an Arab solution — one that the U.S. and Israel will go along with — is somehow found; or alternatively Saddam Hussein is killed. There is no way the U.S. can just pull out of the area now, Ball asserts, and thus leave Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states facing Saddam after having invited the American intervention.

Admitting some surprise at Egyptian and Saudi actions during this crisis, Ball said he found Saddam's proposal that would have Iraq withdraw from Kuwait if the U.S. pulled out of Saudi Arabia and Israel pulled out of the occupied territories the kind of "comprehensive package which we should in the long run be aiming for." "And when I expressed great skepticism that Israel would even consider such a plan he said, 'well, Israel will do it if it has to.'

But Ball admits that the scale of U.S. deployment makes it look like

the U.S. intention is to wipe Saddam out and he confirmed that the potential is high in the event of a shooting war for civil war among the Arabs and the subsequent toppling of Arab regimes, including the Saudi regime, about which he said "At the moment we find it rather convenient to have a medieval government sitting on top of all that oil." He believes Saddam Hussein would have moved against Saudi Arabia if he thought he could get away with it and that the United States must have showed the Saudis intelligence to prove that for them to accept U.S. troop deployment in their closed society.

Ball fervently wishes the Palestinian issue would return to the forefront of Middle East issues and would like to believe that some day the U.S. will rue its special relationship with Israel and the consequences of that relationship on U.S.-Arab relations. But he admits that the more reality-oriented scenario is that Israel will take advantage of the current political situation and the apparently imminent Mideast war to move into Jordan. "...if the Israelis moved in the first thing they would do would be to overthrow the Hashemites," Ball said. And he says there seems to be no one in this country trying to alter

this warpath down which the United States is hurtling.

"If Saddam uses chemical weapons against the U.S., or attacks Israel," Ball indicated that it is conceivable to him that the U.S. could be forced to use nuclear weapons against Iraq. But he believes it more likely the U.S. may try to sit tight while building up superior forces, waiting for the economic sanctions to take hold, and hoping someone else might bump the Iraqi president off. But he acknowledges that if Saddam reached the point of having few options he might be very tempted to launch a last-ditch attack against Israel hoping this would change the alignment of forces in the region or at the very least he would die a historic martyr in Arab history. Ball further believes that the right-wing in Israel, especially those associated with Ariel Sharon, probably wants to move against Jordan and seize this possibly unique historic opportunity for pushing many Palestinians across the river and claiming that Jordan is really the Palestinian state. And he feels, obviously with great sadness and concern, that the Arab world is probably too divided at this moment in history to do anything about such a situation should it develop.