



WASHINGTON

By Mark Bruzonsky

Besides the peace process, watch for moves on "Zionism is racism" resolution, Manning and Pollard in coming months

WASHINGTON - The headlines remain preoccupied with Saddam Hussein, the bloodletting of the Bush-inspired Iraqi civil war and the still amorphous "new world order" promised but as yet undelivered by the American President.

Hannibal Schwarzkopf has made amends...and certainly won't be giving any more extended or spontaneous interviews.

Bush has leaked the story of his long-ago unleashing of the CIA to help topple Saddam; doing so at this time in an attempt to pacify those increasingly vocal voices calling for further American military assaults against Baghdad.

And calendars are being eagerly marked in bright red, white and blue for June. That's when a ticker-tape parade in New York City will be preceded a couple of days earlier by a national extravaganza in the capital for the victorious returning troops - with Bush and Generals Powell and Schwarzkopf triumphantly presiding.

Of course this assumes that Bush's current planning to have most of the troops home by then will actually come to pass. Not too surprisingly, talk of the new permanent American military presence in the region has been muzzled along with Schwarzkopf.

Meanwhile, creeping up are a couple of significant developments relating to U.S.-Israeli relations. Each of them is special and unique; the first historic.

First and foremost is the upcoming theatrics "scheduled" to erupt at the next United Nations General Assembly session later this year. A long-planned effort to reverse the so-called "Zionism is Racism" resolution will be spearheaded by the United States on behalf of Israel.

The fact that this reversal is to come at the very time the racist features of Israeli nationalism, i.e. Zionism, are demonstrating themselves in increasingly ugly form to the Palestinians seems to matter little to the strategists.

For 1992 is a presidential election year and the Republicans, this time with Vice-President Dan Quayle in the lead, have promised to undertake this chore for some time.

Quayle has shrewdly positioned himself, with Bush's blessing of course, as the cheerleader of this effort. It's a politically shrewd move on his part because it has put him in touch with the powerful elements of the American Jewish community and given them a joint cause.

Moreover, the U.N. hasn't been more in the American pocket for a long time; and who knows just what the future holds. Thus "now is the time" the thinking goes at the intersections of political power between Israel and the U.S.

There will be some opposition, of course. It's even possible this reversal effort will have to be delayed again. But for the moment at least the Americans and Israelis seem to think that Arab opposition is sufficiently neutralized and divided so that it will be possible to handle this matter successfully.

With Saudi Ambassador Prince Bandar all but publicly cooperating with the Israeli-Jewish lobby, clearly hoping to get their cooperation on arms and backing for the Kingdom; with Kuwaiti-sponsored regional maps appearing in American newspapers showing Israel but not the occupied territories; with Kuwaiti children singing the American national anthem at the recent nationally televised "Salute to the

Troops" at Andrews Air Force Base; and with the Mubarak government kowtowing to Washington in every way imaginable; who can blame Israel's friends from concluding that now is the time to strike?

The complexities of thought which have led even friends of Israel to conclude that while Zionism may not be by definition racism, it has nevertheless become racist...such deep thinking seems of little consequence. It's no longer in vogue to be interested in the academic, historic, or theoretical aspects of Zionist ideology. Reality is not what is taken seriously any more it seems. Images and politics are all that seem to count.

Thus the actual facts of the pogrom-like contemporary Zionist approach to the Palestinians receive little serious attention under these circumstances. The further fact that even some establishment Israelis and American Jews mutter under their breath about the neo-fascist attitudes and policies of Israel's current leaders seems to have no resonance either.

True, a small group of American Jews, headed by well-known Rabbi Elmer Berger, is still bravely fighting these ideological battles. But no one else seems to be - not even the Arabs themselves!

Berger's organization, American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism (AJAZ), has recently published some material explaining why the General Assembly resolution shouldn't be repealed, especially now. And it's persuasive analysis backed by serious thinking. But nobody seems to be listening.

A second development to watch for is the upcoming trial of the dual American / Israeli national Robert Manning. For years he has been living in a West Bank settlement unreachable, we were told, by American law.

The actual situation was simply that the Israelis didn't want to turn him over to the Americans. And the Americans didn't want to insist and thus hid behind the excuse that to force the seizure and deportation of Manning would add credibility to the Israeli claim of legitimate control over the West Bank.

Anyway, all that is past now simply because some kind of deal - as yet unrevealed - was made between the Bush and Shamir governments during all the close contact and coordination over the war with Saddam. Manning will stand trial in the U.S., among other things, for the terrorist murder of Los Angeles Arab American activist Alex Odeh.

And third on this list of things to be watching for in coming months is a lot more maneuvering on behalf of convicted spy Jonathan Pollard. The quintessential case of dual loyalty, Pollard was sentenced to life some years back. The Israelis of course claimed it was all a mistake. And yet, rumors have it, a substantial bank account still has monthly amounts flowing into it in Tel Aviv awaiting Pollard's eventual arrival.

Major efforts are now underway to manipulate both the political and the legal systems to at least get Pollard's sentence significantly reduced. Better yet, so far as the Israelis and most American Jewish organizations are concerned, Pollard may finally be turned over to the Israelis in some kind of synthesized deal that Washington and Tel Aviv are so good at fostering.

Mark Bruzonsky is a Washington-based American Jewish writer and head of the Jewish Committee on the Middle East (JCOME).