

"Peace politics" have us in eye of the storm

In this age of instant communications directly from the scene of happenings worldwide - and often with the actual participants in ongoing historical developments - modern politics, even modern warfare, have become intertwined with public political theatrics.

Nearly everything these days seems to be increasingly carried out in the public glare as never before in history. Nearly everything has a public relations aspect. Nearly everything is the province of "handlers" and media specialists.

Indeed we are now living in a political "real-time" world, a world in which political leaders have to be increasingly sensitive to the actual interplay of what they are doing at the moment with what the media is saying about what they are doing and with how the public is reacting to what they are saying and doing.

And political "victory", it now seems, is as often determined by how one positions oneself in front of the public as by the actual positions one is pursuing.

Into this new political real-time world, just a few days ago, George Bush strode up to the White House microphones to tell all his intention to veto, if need be, the much-ballyhooed \$10 billion "loan guarantees" package for Israel.

In some ways, especially in these days of complex and convoluted Middle East diplomacy, it seemed a bit strange that all the President was making such a big deal about was a 4-month delay. All the more so as he seemed to be giving Israel a pledge that the U.S. would actually make up for any additional costs involved to Israel during this four-month period.

And furthermore, though not publicly promising to actually back the unprecedented package in January, the implication of Bush's comments was that in just a few months he would go along with the unprecedented step of guaranteeing such huge amounts of a foreign country's obligations, or at the least he wouldn't urge any further Congressional delays.

What's really been going on these past few days, of course,

is rather different from how things have been presented in the theater of public opinion.

Behind today's headlines about "loan guarantees" many key figures in the American Administration are understandably rather worried that the long-touted Middle East peace conference the President and Secretary of State have stapled their administration to is much more of a non-starter than anybody wants to admit; that all the talk of tremendous progress in bringing about an upcoming peace conference is much more smoke than fire.

Bush and Baker have presented themselves as political miracle men because, they keep saying, they've been able to get the Arabs and the Israelis to agree to talk to each other for the very first time.

But this is hardly the real case. For one thing the parties involved all have their own reasons for wanting to talk to each other. Israel, in its own crafty way, has tried to pick off one negotiating partner after another from among the Arabs. And most of the key Arab parties have been trying to get to an international conference with Israel for quite some time, certainly at least back to the Arab summit conference in Fez a decade ago now.

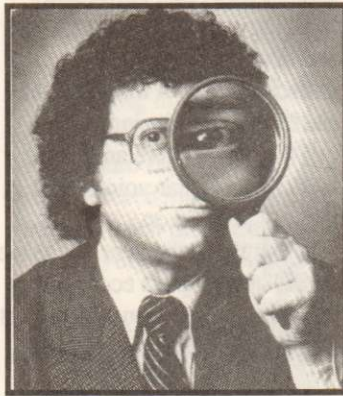
What's always been extremely contentious, though - and indeed remains so - is just HOW are the parties going to talk to each other and just WHAT are they going to talk about.

True, Bush and Baker have made a bit of small progress on the "how" - but even that is something many of the various parties (except for major factions within the Palestinian camp) have actually been willing to accept for some time now.

Rather than a conference symbolized by the United Nations and all the Security Council resolutions Israel wants to avoid like the plague, what's in store now is an American-engineered affair with the Soviet Union and the Europeans acquiescently legitimizing and vigilantly watching how Washington conducts the show.

Anyway, for whatever reasons, the Arab parties, including Syria, are willing to play along with the "how".

By
Mark A. Bruzonsky



FROM WASHINGTON

POLITICS AS THEATRE

And this is the case even with the Israelis loudly and continually doing their political cat-calling about how the conference has to end quickly, break up into bilateral talks, and never ever reconvene!

But, when it comes to the "what" is actually going to be talked about at the conference, the Bush Administration, like the Reagan Administration of which it is in so many ways a continuance, is fooling itself if

it thinks it can substitute shadow for sunlight.

Worse than that really. Bush and Baker, building on the legacy of American duplicity over Israeli-Palestinian issues for so long now, have actually brought us all to a very dangerous moment in the Middle East.

The basic question to keep in mind is: What happens when all the hyped hope proves illusory?

Looked back from the perspective of a few years in the future today's events may be considered more the diplomatic eye of a terrible political hurricane, just a temporary lull as the powerful centrifugal forces rebuilt themselves for another assault on the entire region and on American empirical interests in the area.

What's really going on in Washington today is a bit of pre-panic.

Bush and his top officials are well aware that both the Carter and the Reagan Administrations before them got entangled and entrapped in the quick-sands of the Middle East. Jimmy Carter, naive

good-being that he was, was destroyed by the hostage crisis which itself had been partly stimulated by his Administration's policies in Lebanon and the myopic concessions and Pyrrhic political victories that became the Camp David separate peace between Egypt and Israel.


Ronald Reagan, of course, was nearly brought down by the Iran Contragate scandal, one which the Israelis actually instigated, much as they were intimately involved in the bringing together of the political will in Washington to destroy Iraq last year.

Now, in the wake of that American brutalization of the region and in order to attempt to fulfill promises made to various Arab parties who were part of the anti-Iraq coalition, George Bush has promised not only a "new world order" but an unprecedented Arab-Israeli peace conference. But in reality Bush can deliver neither of these and must instead find himself a way to glide through next year's election while still keeping his promises credible and the Middle East region

Continued on page 5

HELLO FOLKS!

I'm Woodrow W. Woody,



Your friendly neighborhood Pontiac Dealer.
January 2, 1940.

Our reputation is our most valued asset.
We enjoy a 97% service customer satisfaction index rating because we apply the "Golden Rule Policy" to all the people all the time.
We may have sold your mom, dad, and granddad their pontiacs, so why not you?
Visit us, you'll like us, and I'll be here to personally welcome you.
So long - see you soon - and drive carefully, please!

WOODY PONTIAC
12140 Jos. Campau
(313) 891-1600

