

THE appointment of Martin Indyk to President Bill Clinton's National Security Council is an outrage, a clear political pay-off, corruption of what should be a staff of objective foreign policy professionals working for the office of the president.

Indeed, never before, to my knowledge or memory at least, has a president actually appointed someone directly from the ranks of the Israeli-Jewish lobby to such a key foreign policy decision.

But then never before has a president owed as much as Bill Clinton does to this group of lobbyists and propagandists who early on provided much of the funding and the energy that propelled Clinton into the Oval Office. And it's not only Indyk.

Other key appointments in the White House and throughout the Pentagon, the State Department, and the CIA also bear the direct marks of the Israeli-Jewish lobby. *Al-Fajr* correspondent Ghassan Bishara recently wrote an excellent exposes on this very subject...but alas it only appeared in this small Palestinian publication and has not been widely circulated.

There's even a high-placed official — one who until recently was an Israeli citizen and an Israeli army captain — whose office is even closer to Clinton's in the White House than that of Indyk.

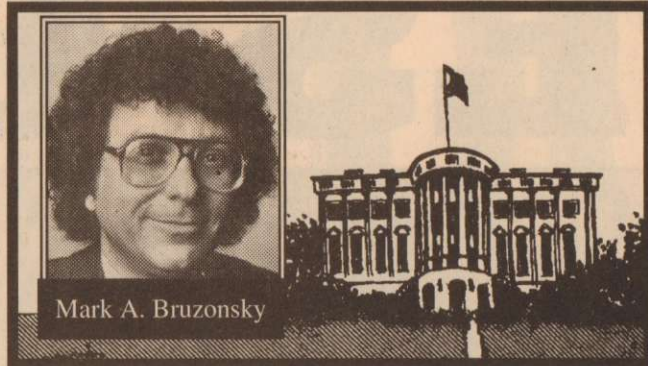
Last month I wrote about what has become something of a public scandal in the Arab-American community — that's the attempt by Jim Zogby, founder of the Arab American Institute (AAI), to speak on behalf of Arab Americans even when what he says is nearly totally anti-ethical to what most of them believe.

Usually, in fact daily, Zogby is busy at this well-paying task — one for which he has managed to obtain considerable funding mostly from abroad.

But ever since a few quotes appeared in a gossip section in the back pages of *The Washington Post* in January there's been what I termed a "grand firestorm of protest" against Zogby, a backlash long in the making I should add.

But the real story in all this is not that of Zogby, or Indyk for that matter. For in reality

From



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APPROACH OF CAMP DAVID II

I...work with a think tank, the Washington Institute. I have Michael Mandelbaum and Martin Indyk being foreign policy advisers.... We have Bill Clinton's ear... He's going to be very good for us.

David Steiner

Former president,

American Israel Public Affairs Committee
(These comments recorded without Steiner's awareness. Steiner was forced to resign when these remarks were published)

each is but a bit player in a grand drama — the attempt to come up with a Camp David II fix to contemporary Mid-east politics, one that will give the Israelis another respite in time, one which will make it possible for the Americans to continue portraying themselves as even-handed peacemakers, one which will attempt to keep the region "stable" in its instability.

It is those pursuing the political agenda of trapping the Palestinians into such a Camp

The real story is not that of Zogby, or Indyk for that matter. For in reality each is but a bit player in a grand drama

I'm real pleased with everybody ... so far.... The whole crew is balanced.... Indyk's White House work on the peace process should be no problem.

Jim Zogby

President

Arab American Institute

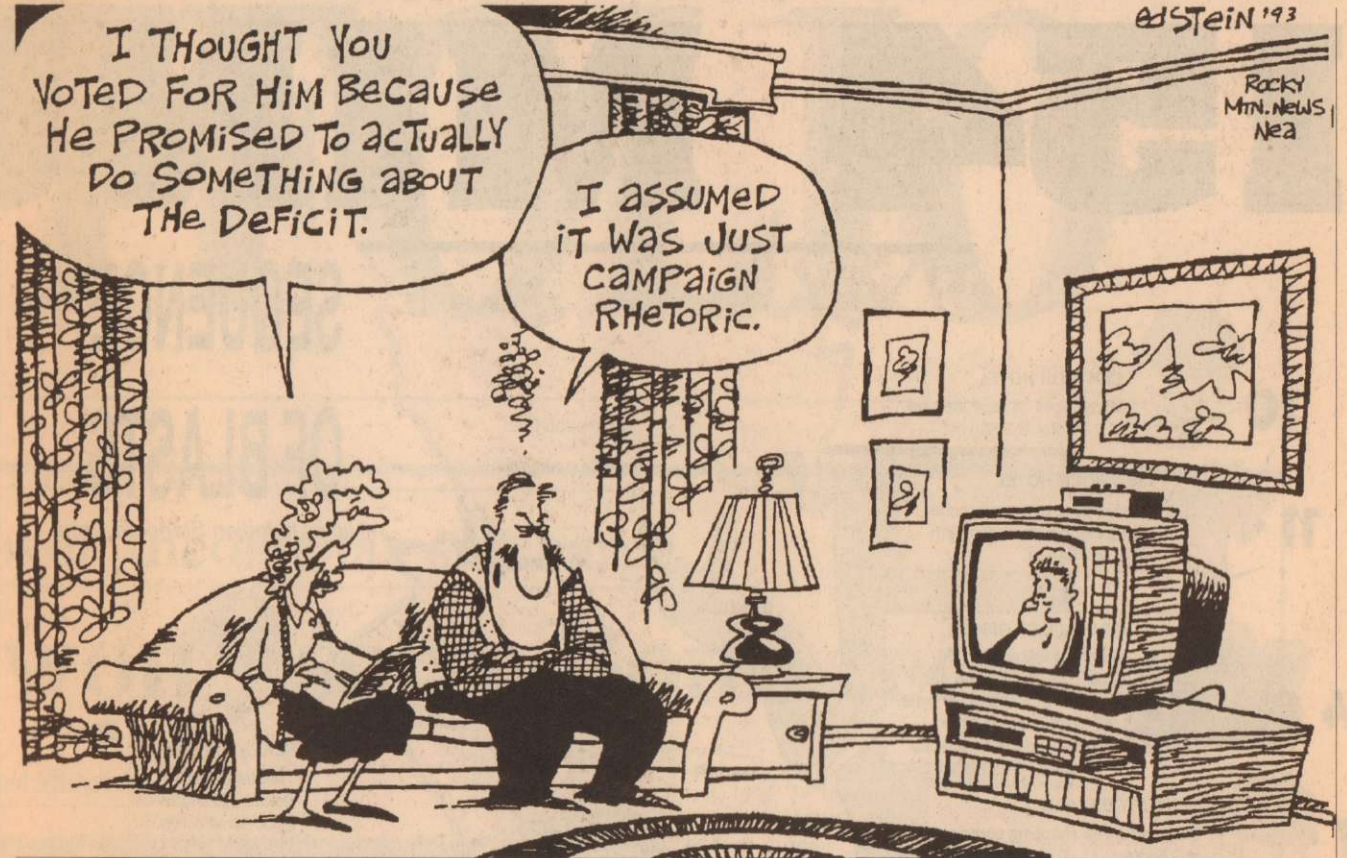
(These comments surprised a Washington Post reporter asking about Indyk's appointment. Zogby has not resigned)

David II agreement who are most delighted to have someone of Arab-American background like Zogby to use and abuse at will. They are also of course very pleased to have one of their own, Indyk, inside the White House.

Whatever is said about Zogby's role in all this, the key issue is really the relentless movement towards this new Camp David-style deal that will extinguish the Intifada, establish some kind of reservation status for the Pal-

estinians — called "autonomy" or "self-rule" of course, put Israel back in the saddle — as did the original Camp David deal some 15 years ago — and give the Americans another deputations diplomatic success.

Bringing about such a "historic" deal is precisely what Martin Indyk and the others that have been pushed into the Clinton White House and State Department by the Israeli-Jewish lobby are there to bring about.



And the Zogbys of this world have been groomed — throughout the past decade — precisely so they can provide accolades for this process with the diplomats, with the press, and with whomever among Arab Americans and in the Arab World still listens to them.

It is for these reasons that Jim Zogby, and this latest eruption of attacks on him, should be considered significant. Neither intellectually nor politically does Zogby as an individual count for much one way or another. It is only the role he is playing on behalf of those forces in the US, in Israel and in the Arab World that desperately want to make some kind of a deal that a man like Zogby, and a place like his Arab-American Institute (AAI), are important.

If what is being prepared were going to be a real peace, one allowing the Palestinians their self-determination and promoting real democracy throughout the region, then little of this would be important. Such a deal would already command widespread support around the world as well as in the Mid-east itself. Rather, what's going on is

quite the opposite.

The deal that is being put together is specifically designed to push the Palestinian issue into the background while allowing Israel to retain effective control over the occupied territories — both resources and people. Fig-leaves will of course abound; indeed that's precisely what the negotiations both in public and behind-the-scenes are really all about — creating the fig-leaves.

But a true peace, a comprehensive peace, the kind of peace discussed for so long now in academic circles, this is not what lies ahead. For of far more importance to some of the major Arab players, as well as the US and Israel, is a diplomatic deal which keeps today's Mid-east leaders in charge, the oil flowing at cheap prices, and the current distribution of power and wealth in place.

Knowing that Israel is the strongest regional power, both in terms of military and covert capabilities, and knowing that Israel is not about to accept a real Palestinian state in the occupied territories, the political game for regimes has increasingly become how to

"stabilise" the region with the help of Washington and Israel, while providing the Palestinian bourgeoisie with acceptable bribes and means of protection.

In this sense what the Egyptians did in the late 1970s is what others in the region now seem interested in emulating; all the more so now that the US is the only superpower left.

This is the overall context in which the firestorm of protest against Zogby has arisen. And it is this overall context which really deserves to be contemplated and further elaborated upon.

Two updates concerning previous columns: Recent columns contained two items that need correction.

First, it seems that former congressman and presidential candidate John Anderson decided, after all, not to take over as executive director of CNI, the Council on the National Interest.

As I noted in a column early this year, CNI has been in chaos, lacking both direction and leadership. Former executive director David Bowen had been fired to make room for Anderson and he was

scheduled to take over first on January 1, then on February 1. Anderson's precise reasons deciding not to head up CNI are unknown but some say it has to do with his unhappiness over so much criticism that has been directed against the organisation.

Secondly, Professor Assad Abu-Khalil, currently at the Middle East Institute in Washington, recently called me to say that his name should not have appeared on the public petition against Jim Zogby that was included in my first column last month about Zogby.

According to both himself and Zogby, Abu-Khalil had called Zogby to vociferously protest against what had been said about Martin Indyk, expressing his outrage privately. But he had not agreed to put his name to the public petition he told me. Upon re-checking my own records I found that Professor Abu-Khalil's name does appear on what was sent to me; however clearly some misunderstanding took place between him and others and I was not aware of that when my previous column was published.