

Arab lobby is coming of age

PRESIDENT Carter met with representatives of the Arab-American community for the first time this month.

That was just a day before Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's visit to the White House. It was a clear sign of the growing importance of the still embryonic Arab lobby. Though not as yet any real challenge to the influence of the famous "Jewish lobby" on Capitol Hill, the very fact that one Arab-American organisation — the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA) — is devoting itself mostly to political activities and may soon register at least one lobbyist is of major importance.

Recognising this fact, the *Washington Post* last month devoted a front-page article to the emerging Arab-American lobby focusing on NAAA.

After a major internal shake-up, NAAA has moved into new,

spacious quarters not far from the Washington Hilton and the Arab League offices. Joseph Baroody, son of William Baroody, one of Washington's most noted figures of Arab background and the president of the prestigious Right-wing think-tank known as the American Enterprise Institute, was elected president of NAAA earlier this year. He has clearly been the moving force behind making NAAA the most important Arab-American organisation.

A search is now on for a new executive director to head the organisation. Meanwhile, John Richardson, formerly head of the American Near East Relief Organisation which aids the Palestinians refugees, became the director of public affairs in September.

Because the Arab-American community is not yet organised to

Mark A Bruzonsky's Washington news

the American Lebanese League, the American Ramallah Federation and the National Federation of American Syrian Lebanon Clubs were represented at the meeting with Carter.

Senator Richard Stone (Florida Democrat), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on the Mid-east, has let it be known that he has been both ignored and humiliated by Carter's foreign policy aides.

Stone, a well-known supporter of Israeli policies who works closely with the Jewish lobby on Capitol Hill, campaigned hard for Jimmy Carter's election. It was just a year ago that Stone was reassuring Jews that a born-again Baptist from Georgia could be trusted.

But when Stone took over chairmanship of the subcommittee which was before him headed by Senator George

McGovern (South Dakota Democrat), he immediately ran into trouble with the Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Stone had urged Brzezinski to replace officials in the State and Defence Departments who were not sufficiently pro-Israel — more politely, they were said to be too "even-handed." William Quandt, Brzezinski's top Mid-east aide and one of those criticised by Stone, is now said to have leaked the story to the Press causing Stone much embarrassment.

More recently, Stone has felt offended because he has not been consulted about major American Mid-east initiatives such as the joint statement with the Soviet Union on October 1.

Things have improved somewhat in recent weeks, specially since Stone is pleased about a private breakfast he had with Secretary Vance to discuss Mid-east affairs.



John Richardson
... new vitality

speak with one voice, a number of organisations were represented in the meeting with President Carter and a number of separate statements were released.

In addition to NAAA, the Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG),