

BACK PAGE

Peace as Aggression

Critics of Israel will often go to great lengths to justify their antipathy toward the Jewish state. One example comes in a recent (Sept. 16) *op-ed* column by Mark Bruzonsky in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Predictably, Bruzonsky condemns Israel's move into Lebanon last year. He says that it "altered the character of Lebanon's misery" by injecting "Israeli brutality" into what had merely been "an inter-Arab battle." (Apparently seven years of inter-Arab misery is less objectionable than misery supposedly inflicted by Israel.)

Also predictably, Bruzonsky deprecates the value of Israel to the United States. The Reagan Administration "has been unable to assert American national interests ahead of Israel's imperial designs."

But the unique part of the Bruzonsky thesis is that he objects as strenuously to Israeli peacemaking as to Israeli warmaking. Bruzonsky condemns the Lebanon-Israel agreement as a "transient public relations fix through which the current players in Washington had hoped to buy time and maybe even sneak by next year's election." He also calls it a "farce."

It is, accordingly, useful to take a look at the agreement that offends Bruzonsky so terribly. What would it do? It would end the state of war between Israel and Lebanon and provide that neither will resort to force to resolve differences between them. It would establish security zones between the two countries. Its purpose is rather simple: it is to protect Israel from attacks coming from terrorists operating out of Lebanon and to protect Lebanon from further embroilment in the Arab war against Israel. If implemented, it would help guarantee the future peace of Lebanon.

But there is a part of the Lebanon-Israel treaty that enrages those who oppose ultimate Arab-Israeli peace. The Lebanon-Israel agreement provides for Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, but only if the Syrians go too. It is this part of the agreement that is objectionable to Syria—and to Bruzonsky.

He writes: "The United States must appreciate the legitimate historical and security interests that Syria has always had in Lebanon." Bruzonsky doesn't enumerate those interests although Damascus does. Syria considers Lebanon to be a "sister" nation, a nation which is not permitted to install a government unfriendly to Syria, a nation in which no Syrian ambassador has ever sat because one does not send ambassadors to provinces of one's own country. Is it possible that Bruzonsky, too, considers Lebanon to be nothing but southern Syria? If not, how can he object to a Lebanon-Israel agreement which would empty Lebanon of all foreign forces and, yes, pro-

vide Israel with a modicum of recognition by Lebanon.

One can only conclude that Bruzonsky does not believe that any form of Lebanese recognition of Israel should be countenanced. Otherwise why would he deprecate the agreement as an "illusory peace" and a "pseudo-peace?"

There is, however, one clue to Bruzonsky's thinking. He does not object *only* to any Lebanese-Israel agreement. He also objects to the Camp David peace treaty. He refers to the Hosni Mubarak government as "the Camp David-trapped government." This is not the first time that Bruzonsky has suggested that the Israel-Egypt peace is not to his liking. Back in 1979, he interviewed Egypt's Foreign Minister, Boutros Ghali, for *Worldview*.

Bruzonsky then made it clear that he considered Ghali naive for believing in the possibility of peace with Israel. His questions were hostile. "If Egypt has given up the military option, it has already given Israel normalization . . . how can it have more power over Israel than before?" Bruzonsky told Ghali that Israelis "will never allow the Palestinians to have a homeland. Never."

When Ghali expressed faith in Israel's good intentions, noting that Israel was leaving Yamit, the supposedly neutral interviewer reminded Ghali of "Herut ideology. . . . For Herut *Eretz Yisrael* includes Judea and Samaria and the present day Israel and actually Jordan too."

To his credit, Ghali did not rise to Bruzonsky's bait. Instead, he expressed his faith in the peace process. An exasperated Bruzonsky said that Ghali's belief in an Arab-Israeli peace seemed "to be based only on hope." It is a hope Bruzonsky appears not to share. □

—M.J.R.

NEAR EAST REPORT

WASHINGTON WEEKLY ON AMERICAN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

VOL XXVII NO. 40 OCTOBER 7, 1983