

## 'Lawrence' who would like to lead Arab nation

Arab American Institute  
Dear Iyad

I WAS deeply disturbed to see Mark Bruzonsky's story, "The Sad Battle," appear in the *Saudi Gazette*.

Mark, unfortunately, has a real problem with Arab-Americans and has had this problem for many years. He seems to feel that, like a Jewish "Lawrence", he is destined to lead the Arabs. This is not enough and so he has quite regularly taken to spinning tales, spreading gossip and discrediting our work wherever he can.

His attack on NAAA is unfair and quite maliciously exaggerated! His decision to dredge up an unfortunate split between Jim Abourezk and myself is regrettable and quite unnecessary.

Actually, to the contrary of the picture Mark presents, we have never been busier and are accomplishing a great deal. I resent Bruzonsky's vicious little attacks — they can be viewed as a spiteful effort to hurt our work.

I do urge you to investigate this matter further.

James J. Zogby,  
Executive Director



Abourezk

And the further reality is that there really is no effective Arab-American lobby; only the illusion of one.

Israel's political clout in Washington today far supercedes anything the Arabs have been able to counter with. And American Jewish organisations are still in a league far superior to that of



## 'The sad battle' causes furore

# 'Bruzonsky unqualified to assess'

The article by Mark Bruzonsky, entitled 'The sad battle' which appeared in *Saudi Gazette* on August 8, caused an angry reaction by Arab-Americans. Is Bruzonsky a "Jewish 'Lawrence' trying to lead the Arab nation," or is his criticism against Arab-American lobbyists well-founded?

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee  
4201 Connecticut Ave, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20008  
Dear Mr Madani,

THIS is the second time I have had to respond to an article by Mark Bruzonsky in an English-language newspaper published in an Arab country.

The first occasion was in 1986 when I assumed the Presidency of ADC. At that time, Bruzonsky wrote an article containing all sorts of falsehoods and half-truths about ADC and its Chairman, Sen. James Abourezk, in what appeared to be an attempt to target the largest grassroots organisation of Arab-Americans in the US — the ADC — and sow doubt and suspicions about the organisation and its activities.

Now I am compelled to respond to a similar article by

themselves with and that we, as a community, do not?

Contrary to Bruzonsky's assertions, the anti-Arab sentiments expressed throughout the various areas of American popular culture have not been "easy" or "soft" targets. Frequently, we have had to wage massive campaigns to get manufacturers, advertisers, the media, TV producers and others to stop portraying Arabs in racist and ugly images. If these were "easy" targets, we would not be forced to expend as much time, energy and resources combatting these images of the ugly Arab or Muslim and our thousands of members would not have to be mobilised for that purpose.

This goal — eradicating stereotypical images of Arabs — is integrally related to gaining political support for our cause in the US. We believe that if Arabs can be devillai-



Jabara

it was only a few years ago that many national and local election campaigns were publicly refusing Arab-American involvement? Just a few months ago, a California candidate made Arab-baiting a major focus of his campaign.

The fact of the matter is that ADC began training its members in how to be more effective in the political arena as soon as it was founded. In the past few

community into a mass membership organisation with chapters all over the US — ADC has turned even more attention to the task of influencing elected officials through our grassroots presence throughout the country.

Of course, we do not have at our disposal the large amounts of money that pro-Israel groups donate to election campaigns, which is, as Bruzonsky knows full well but doesn't say, the principal reason for pro-Israel political clout in the US. But we have made great strides since we turned our attention to gaining more political input for the Arab-American community. For example, just two months ago ADC initiated a campaign for its members to meet with their Congressional Representatives and they met with Arab-American constituents as a result of the campaign. And there are many

sponsored on Capitol Hill; the passage of "National Arab American Day" legislation after ADC members secured 221 co-sponsors; and several "Dear Colleague" letters which have been circulated on issues of concern to us, to name just a few examples.

Bruzonsky wouldn't know any of this because he is not interested in writing an objective piece about ADC or any of the other Arab-American organisations. In short, Bruzonsky was bent on a hatchet job and he wasn't about to let the facts get in his way. He had not talked to anyone with any authority in the organisation. Nor has he been able in this piece — or in the previous hatchet jobs — to provide any direct quotes from any of the people involved. A careful reading of his article will reveal that it is nothing more than rumour-mongering of the worst kind.

## WORLD



DR WAHEED  
HASHEM



## VIEW

# Need for a new formula in the Mid-east

NO one will deny the fact that the Mid-east is the most dangerous and unstable area — politically and militarily. Instability in the Mid-east is not a new development of the twentieth century, rather, one can trace causes of its instability throughout history. We argue that instability in the Mid-east is a function of external military threats, political interference, and economic penetration and domination.

Many nations and empires had various kinds of ambitions and interests in the Mid-east and accordingly attempted to dominate it by direct and indirect methods, but mainly by military conquest. Those nations' imperial desire and quest to dominate the region led to the massacre of millions of people on the one hand thereby satisfying human greediness and its desire to dominate and control others and, on the other hand, enjoying the control of the strategic location, wealth, and also the holy sites in the area.

The contemporary political geographic landscape of the Mid-east is only the latest version of constantly changing pattern of spatial-political arrangements that has gone on for over 4,000 years. The region's political history and historical geography are complex. And most of the time, the region's map served as a kaleidoscope of changing shapes and colours.

Throughout history, the Middle East has been a part of the world, but was greatly torn by turbulence, change, external threats and challenges. Due to its strategic location in the heart of the world, the forces of changes from all directions always blew its high winds on the area. As a result, old human ties and social structures are crumbling, while new patterns and systems remain to be formed.

## Composite outlook

Moreover, the Mid-eastern states have no single socio-political nor geographical perspectives, but a variety of views conditioned by history, political ideology, and geographic location. Yet most states share certain attitudes that virtually amount to composite outlook on the world. They have always resented interference from outside powers in the region's economic and political life. The intrusion of Cold War politics in the area had brought a great many risks and dangers to the region's political and economic stability and thus it is generally deplored.

Accordingly, political upheavals, legitimacy problems, human violence, and economic crisis dominate and engulf the whole area and in which individuals, families, and countries struggle to achieve their goals. Cultural as well as social and political contradictions exist alongside ideological contestation and struggle. Terrorism and internal violence sparked by

Arab/American groups.

Actually, the situation is even worse than this general summary. The Arab-American organisations that have sprung up here in Washington over the past two decades are today in a terrible turmoil at the very moment they are badly needed.

Though the organisations are trying to cover up their current weakness and disarray, the mess they are in is generally known to their enemies and protagonists, if not to their supporters and funders. Of course, they are attempting to present as best a public face as they can, the actual true state of the "Arab lobby" is simply tragic.

The one organisation that has purported for some years now to actually be a serious lobby countering the Jewish lobby—the National Association of Arab Americans, the N triple A, NAAA—has all but collapsed.

Limping along with greatly reduced staff and hardly any worthwhile activities—but still paying its senior staff far more than is justified. What

Bruzonsky, this time published in the Wednesday, August 9, 1990 issue of the *Saudi Gazette*.

Bruzonsky states that, "For years ADC has focused on a very safe and easy issue — upholding the right of Arab-Americans not to be discriminated against, vilified, laughed at, and slandered, serious political work to counter the Jewish lobby has hardly been attempted and surely not accomplished."

Bruzonsky is way off the mark in this attack. First, ADC was founded in 1980 (after the FBI's "Abscam" sting operation which ridiculed Arabs) specifically to fight against stereotyping, discrimination and defamation directed against Arabs. How can ADC be faulted for doing that which it was organised and mandated to do? It was precisely these issues which attracted tens of thousands of Arab-Americans to join ADC. Is Bruzonsky claiming that he knows best what is most important for Arab-Americans to concern

nised, we can help to bring some sense and balance to American policy in the region. Has Bruzonsky forgotten that

easy way out.

For years ADC has focused on a very safe and easy issue—upholding the right of Arab Americans not to be discriminated against, vilified, laughed at, and slandered. Serious political work to counter the Jewish lobby has hardly been attempted and surely not accomplished.

Only in recent weeks in fact has ADC taken the step of registering for political lobbying. And this was done more because of Jim Abourezk's ongoing battle with Jim Zogby than because of any new political strategies. Indeed NAAA and Zogby's Arab-American Institute (AAI) are in the midst of building an alliance partially designed to outflank ADC; and it is this situation that has propelled ADC to finally move towards lobbying as well as to attempt to clean its house.

ADC did grow during the years of this decade, establishing chapters in key cities around the country and bringing Arab American activists together for cultural and anti-discrimination work.

But ADC did this by specifically avoiding the real tough political work that needs to be done and instead concentrating on "soft" easy issues like opposition to cartoons that caricatured Arabs in unflattering ways and posters on the Metro underground.

All along the way, though, ADC has falsely portrayed an illusion of power and influence that was never justified. And in recent weeks ADC has found itself again in the midst of another recurrent crisis, something made pretty much inevitable by the style and desires of its founder Senator Abourezk.

founded in the early 1950s by Si Kenan, then in the 1970s when Kenan retired it was headed by Morris Amitay, and for the past decade it has been led by Tom Dine. Furthermore, when each new leader came on board the earlier personalities were not simply shunted aside but were instead found complementary roles. Amitay, for instance, today heads one of the largest pro-Israeli Public Action Committees (PACs) working in coordination, with AIPAC.

In the case of ADC all of the senior staff have in recent weeks departed or been fired. President Abdeen Jabara finally resigned, as he has threatened to do just about ever since he came to the job a few years ago. The most recent Executive Director, Barbara Shaheen, who never should have been in that job in the first place and

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mongering of the worst kind.

As for the staff changes at ADC, Bruzonsky seeks to use the recent resignation by myself and Barbara Shahin Batlouni and the departure of Faris Bouhafa as more fodder in his ongoing and renewed attempts to vilify Jim Abourezk's leadership. Barbara Shahin Batlouni was a committed, dedicated and capable Executive Director who was promoted by myself and chose to leave of her volition. Besides getting his facts all scrambled, he must know that he didn't succeed in his mission in 1986 and he won't succeed now.

To the best of my knowledge, Mr Bruzonsky does not have credible access to any of the major Arab-American organisations, and is therefore not a qualified candidate to assess their performance. It reflects badly on the reputation and professionalism of the *Saudi Gazette* to publish such ill-informed and malicious articles.

Abdeen Jabara, President

tion and struggle. Terrorism and internal violence sparked by socio-political dissatisfaction and inter-regional warfare dominated by the persisting Arab-Israeli conflict have become an integral part of the Mid-eastern daily life.

As a result of centuries of backwardness and occupation by foreign powers, the real geo-political and economic preoccupation of the people are regional, not global. Long-standing political cleavages and traditional rivalries dominate relationships between states and are fused by external states. Some of these divisions are the growth of the Zionist state, the question of regional dangers as a result of increasing radicalism, and the question of territorial security, and the external political influences.

As a result of the argument, unfortunately, the political earthquakes in the region will continue to occur. Change must be anticipated if one is to go along with the changing world of today and thus view the world realistically. Transboundary resource disputes may become more common in the area. The region's population will double within 40 years or so; competition for the region's limited natural resources (with the exception of oil of course) can, therefore, be expected to intensify dramatically.

### National integration

Moreover, despite serious national integration problems in some countries of the region such as Iraq, Sudan and Lebanon, new sovereign states seem unlikely to emerge as a result of further territorial division.

Iraq, due to its aggression in the area, is a candidate for partition in the future into Kurds and non-Kurds states as a result of the Kurdish demands for a statehood.

This argument is only to suggest that the Mid-east political map is going to change as a result of the current political and military crisis with Iraq. However, there is a serious need to plan for such a change in the interest of the region and of the whole world. The region's security arrangements have to be reconsidered and re-evaluated in light of the current dramatic and dangerous threats posed by Iraq and other militaristic and adventurous states. To have a stable Middle East — politically and economically — the area has to be vacated from dictators. As it has been proved empirically by the historical evidence and by the logic of human knowledge and interests, highly repressive and authoritarian regimes always are considered a destabilising factor not only regionally but internationally. Causes of wars, dangerous crisis, political and economic instability, and civil violence are highly associated with authoritarian regimes. Thus what is truly and desperately needed for the Middle East to become a stable and peaceful area is a new political and economic formula that would prevent further violence and bloodshed in the future.

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## Bruzonsky 'will continue to discuss real realities'

Mark Bruzonsky replies:

EACH and every week, very much on the record in writing, I comment about all kinds of concerns. Anyone who wishes to check my record of accuracy, insightfulness, and informative commentary on a great variety of subjects can simply go back and can check this published record — one which I am very proud to stand by.

Mr Jabara is totally mistaken in his basic thrust — just as he has been in so many of his political judgements. Indeed, I would be ashamed if, as Mr Jabara suggests, I have some kind of longstanding motive, but nevertheless between 1986 and 1990 I had simply overlooked it. Too often, as I have experienced first hand, including in a long two-hour conversation with Mr Jabara, he lives in a self-serving fantasy world. That he is not alone does not excuse him.

I stand fully behind both the 1986 column and the column of a few months ago — in both cases they have withstood the test of time. I indeed would

urge concerned readers to read each of them again in the light of these letters — as well as the far more numerous columns written about other groups in Washington, Israel and the Middle East — and to judge for themselves.

Furthermore, both Mr Jabara and Mr Zogby have neglected to mention that I have personally given both of them (along with Jawad George, Executive Director of NAAA) repeated opportunities to refute any specific facts noted in the recent column; and in all cases they were unable to.

The sad reality is that Mr Jabara has proved himself to be an exceptionally self-righteous, thin-skinned who has led ADC to nowhere in particular. Indeed, the organisation right now as I write continues to have a heightened identity crisis.

But in fairness to Mr Jabara it is the case that as bad as things in many areas have been over the past few years, those who have recently taken over the top positions at ADC are

even less capable leaders than were Mr Jabara and Ms Shahin.

And lastly as concerns Mr Jabara's multiple distortions, the actual reality is that during the past few months I have spoken with the great majority of the leaders — past and present — of most of the Arab American organisations.

As for Mr Zogby, everyone involved with Middle East affairs in Washington knows that he has now empowered himself in a very safe, personally rewarding "business". With American elections a never-ending process, just like public relations consultants who yearly switch from candidate to candidate Jim spends considerable time and effort in self-promotion and often chooses the easy way out. He recently told me in fact that he spends little time anymore in Washington preferring to go all around the country talking with his supporters and avoiding serious and ongoing political efforts; even though now is precisely when such efforts are needed the most.

As for Jim's gratuitous reli-



Bruzonsky

gious comments, anyone familiar with my extensive background over the past two decades throughout much of the Arab world, in Israel, among the Palestinians in Palestine and their Diaspora, and all around the US and many parts of Europe, knows very well that I have often taken difficult and unpopular positions because I feel strongly that objective analysis, basic principles, and facing reality should all supersede religious or national origins.

All this is not to say that ADC, AAI, NAAA and some of the other small groups that have sprung up in recent years do not do some useful work. They do, at times.

But they all issue sufficient quantities of press releases and slick pamphlets, and there are numerous writers and publications that take all of this at face value.

Rather, my role as a seasoned columnist is to always be looking underneath the self-promotion at the truths; and then to comment and to critique knowledgeably and articulately so that concerned readers will not always be taken in. I do this on many subjects ranging from American government policies; to Pakistan's relations with Congress; to developments at the UN; to the Jewish-Israeli lobby; and to organisations of all kinds involved with Middle East matters, including those which are Arab-American.

In this context, my basic point for some time has simply been that on a business-like cost-benefit basis they are nearly always spending a great

deal more than they are producing; and that their level of staff competence is too often unsatisfactory. Furthermore, during the nearly 15 years I have lived in Washington I have watched the power, influence, and capabilities of the Israel-Jewish lobby continue to expand while the very term "Arab-American lobby" has remained largely a myth.

So, I will periodically continue, as I have for many years, to discuss the real "realities" taking place in and around Washington. And this includes occasional commentary about the situation in which most of the Arab-American organisations still remain in their infancy often bumbling and babbling along far too concerned with their self-image and fund-raising than with the hard, tough, professional work so badly needed here in the heart of the American Empire. If I'm guilty of anything I think it is that I haven't focused on these subjects often enough — and this I will try to remedy.

Mark Bruzonsky, Washington, DC.