

PRESIDENT Bush's handling of the recent Supreme Court appointment of Judge David Souter gives considerable insight into how the current American government handles major and difficult decisions.

First and foremost, Bush is a very cautious and careful political operative. He wants to avoid at all cost a major squabble with the Democratic and far more liberal Congress. And this is all the more the case in these days of severe budget problems which Bush can only handle with the co-operation of the Democratic Congress.

With Souter, Bush chose a staunch conservative of impeccable academic and intellectual qualifications, but not a darling of the political right and not a man with declared positions a la Ronald Reagan's attempted appointment judge Robert Bork some years ago which provoked such a battle on Capitol Hill. In this sense it was a nomination crafted to the requirements of congressional scrutiny.

Secondly, Bush chose Souter from outside his own personal circles allowing his most senior trusted aide, White House Chief of Staff John Sununu, to put forward his own candidate for the job.

Ever-vigilant power-watchers in this town didn't miss this further indication that conservative Sununu is a major player to be reckoned with in this administration.

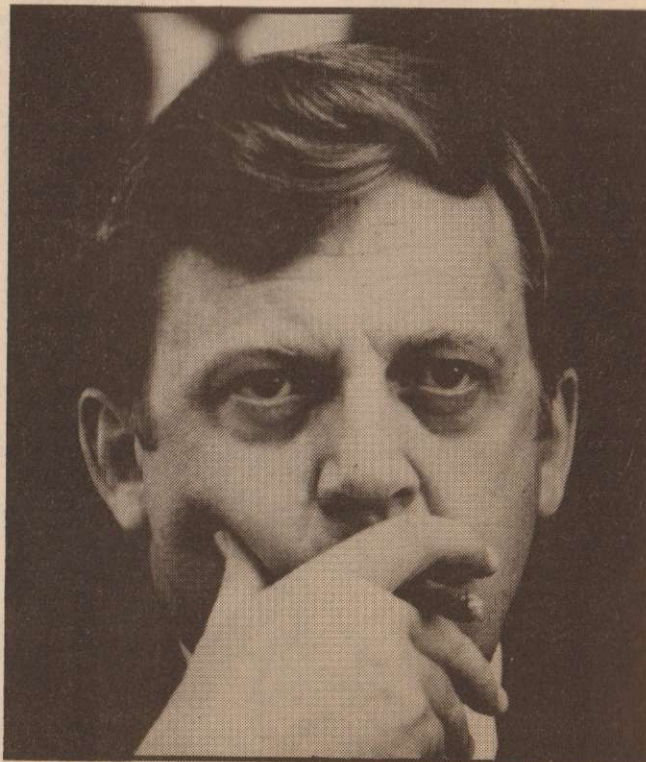
These two lessons of the Souter nomination should not be lost on those most concerned with predicting Washington's attitudes, approaches, and basic orientation when it comes to the Arab-Israeli entanglement.

What these two lessons should cause analysts to finally realise, especially those who have been misleadingly suggesting that the Bush administration is considering doing something serious about Israel, is that Bush, like Reagan before him, is not likely to take on Israel and thus Israel's congress.

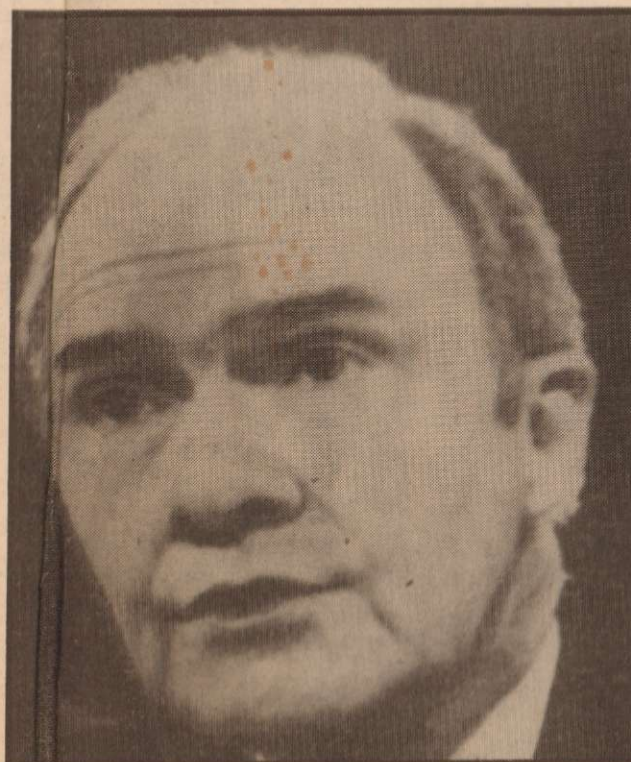
In short, no major change in Washington's financing and backing of Israel is in the political tea-leaves—at least not without a major political earthquake that still seems years off or an outbreak of war which could well be approaching.

Some months ago a street painting appeared around Washington showing the Capitol with two flags—an American flag on the right, the Israeli flag on the left—and with the in-

ISRAEL IS STILL IN CHARGE



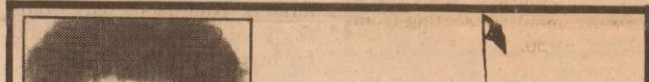
Lawrence Eagleburger



Brent Scowcroft

TRUMP CARD PLAYED ON PRESIDENT

From



parties have played along with Washington as well; apparently thinking it more desirable to make excuses for the Americans and portray the situation as "hopeful" rather than call the

Larry Eagleburger, the Undersecretary of State, plays this role at Foggy Bottom maintaining extremely close contacts with the Jewish lobby, the World Jewish Congress, and Israeli

And Brent Scowcroft, the National Security Adviser, plays this role at the White House; maintaining the link to the Rasputin of American Mid-east policies, Henry Kissinger.

It is true, of course, that everytime the executive branch of the US government even attempts to put mild pressures on Israel the Israeli lobby is able to mobilise first Congress, and then usually much of the press, in a counterattack.

But the more basic reality is that neither the executive branch nor the legislative branch of the American government has even entertained, at least since the Carter years, doing anything serious to force the Israelis to give up the occupied territories and negotiate an honourable settlement with the Palestinians. And little the Arabs or their friends have done has caused Washington officials to even think twice about forcing a reversal of this situation.

Presidents, secretaries of state, and national security advisers have all learned, over the years, that picking a real fight with Israel is always a very bloody affair, with the Israelis usually able to outmanoeuvre even the White House. They have also learned that Arab power still remains quite private, nearly always unfocused, and very often even unused; as well as that the Arab-American lobby is more myth than fact.

Moreover, it is usually the case that persons who fill these jobs in the first place are already so beholden to the Israeli-Jewish lobby, and so aware of its power to blackmail and defame, that they come to their jobs extremely reticent to do anything other than tread political water and let the years go by when it comes to Israel.

Very sadly this basic situation has not been changed, and is not likely to be changed in the foreseeable future, by any serious countervailing pressures from either the so-called Arab-American lobby or new groups such as the American Educational Trust (AET) or the largely stillborn organisation which has taken the name Council for the National Interest (CNI).

Next week in Part II some details about the current crisis in the misnamed Arab-American lobby here.

And the following week in Part III a look at some of the new Washington-based groups that falsely purport to their funders to be counterweights to the

Albania inches back to world

By Patrick Worsnip

THE agreement between Albania and the Soviet Union to resume diplomatic relations ends 29 years of bitter ideological conflict between the two communist countries but appears too late to bring Moscow much strategic gain.

It was former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's debunking of Stalin, starting in 1956, that rigidly Stalinist Albania found impossible to stomach.

Particularly ominous for Albanian leader Enver Hoxha was Khrushchev's effort to improve relations with Yugoslavia, Albania's northern neighbour whose domination it feared and against which it had been waging a propaganda war for years.

Matters came to a head at the beginning of the 1960s as Hoxha and his aides, at a series of closed communist bloc gatherings, sided with China in the rapidly mounting Sino-Soviet dispute and attacked Khrushchev personally.

Khrushchev brought the rift into the open at the 22nd Soviet Communist Party congress in October 1961, accusing Albanian leaders of departing from the international communist line and imposing a regime of Stalinist terror at home.

Moscow and its allies started an economic blockade against Albania and on December 9, 1961, the Soviet Union broke off diplomatic relations. Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany also withdrew their ambas-

sadors from Tirana.

Albania took no further part in the Warsaw Pact military alliance, of which it had been a founder member in 1955, or in the Soviet-led Comecon economic grouping.

However it was not until 1968 that Albania formally withdrew from the pact, apparently in response to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, a move Tirana denounced as "fascist aggression."

Later, under Leonid Brezhnev, Moscow appeared to be suing cautiously for a reconciliation. Occasional articles in the state-controlled Soviet press expressed regret at the break as weakening the international communist movement.

But Hoxha was in no mood to be wooed. He even quarrelled with China in 1977, as Beijing's new leaders shifted ground after the death of Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

Western strategists attributed military motives to Soviet interest at that time in improving ties with Albania.

Moscow, they said, would like to have the use of a warm water Mediterranean base for its rapidly growing navy that was not hemmed in like the Black Sea.

Now, with the Warsaw Pact in ruins and all the talk in Europe of pulling back military forces, not extending them, such considerations seem obsolete.

Yugoslavia, which has serious problems with the Albanian minority in its southern province of Kosovo, may look askance at Monday's announcement of restored relations between Moscow and Tirana.

But Western experts on Albania said the move seemed inevitable given the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the growing role of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) as a new political framework for the continent.

"With the revolutionary changes in East Europe, Albania had no choice but to restore relations," one analyst said.

Since they wanted to be part of the world, join Europe and the Helsinki (CSCE) process, it wouldn't have made any sense but to make relations with both



flag on the right, the Israeli flag on the left—and with the interesting caption: "Capitol Hill is Israeli Occupied Territory".

After years of Israeli provocations going back to the 1970s, this basic situation remains the central political reality in this town. And it is this basic situation which remains Israel's trump card in dealing with the US as presidents going back to Nixon have learned to their chagrin.

Nixon attempted an international peace conference in the wake of the 1973 war; Ford his "reassessment"; Carter again an international conference and a "Palestinian homeland".

In each case the presidential efforts were quite weak and tentative. Nevertheless, in each case the Israelis quickly mobilised the American Jewish community, Congress, and the press and successfully outmanoeuvred the White House.

Defeated before they could even get a head of steam going; it has been made crystal clear to those responsible for formulating policies that are within the boundaries of political possibilities here that the Israelis have had what it takes for decades to undermine anyone and everyone who tried to get in their way.

With Reagan, though, another political reality took hold—something I term the "good-guy/bad-guy illusion".

Though in most cases officials of the Reagan administration were actually intimately working with the Israelis throughout the 80s to prevent a Palestinian state and to discredit or destroy the PLO. But the strategy has been to present a different image, to portray the White House and State Department as the "good-guys" and Congress and the Israeli lobby as the "bad-guys".



Mark A. Bruzonsky

Washington

The underlying reality is that some key figures in key departments remain extremely loyal to Israel and have been placed there by Israel's friends to make sure that no major policy change is likely. Eagleburger maintains extremely close contacts with the Jewish lobby and Israeli officials, and Scowcroft maintains links with the Rasputin of America—Henry Kissinger

It is a strategy designed to pacify the Arabs as much as possible; and it has sadly taken root.

One of the main reasons this deceptive strategy has been so successful, however, is that it often has had the help of various

Arab parties. Egypt most of all has had a vested interest in fostering this approach in order to justify the Camp David separate treaty and such close American ties.

Other pro-American Arab

American bluff and face the far bleaker realities that could result from the still growing US-Israeli alliance.

Even Yasser Arafat and the Fatah-wing of the PLO have been enlisted through in this effort to protect the Americans and hope they'll be grateful and appreciative at some point.

Furthermore, no matter what many Bush apologists and self-proclaimed sunshine friends of the Arabs maintain, this basic approach of the Reagan years has been furthered under Bush, even as the Intifada has become a permanent feature of US-Palestinian relations and even as public opinion has shifted a bit against Israel.

Secretary of State Jim Baker has been made the point-man in this carefully crafted strategy to make it appear to the Arabs—as well as some segments of American public opinion—that Washington is somehow less one-sidedly pro-Israel that is really is.

And occasionally even the president has been trotted out to utter rhetorical wrist slaps at the Israelis; far more for purposes of image than reality, of course. The old adage remains true however: "Watch what we do, not what we say." And using this as the test, US-Israeli relations under both Reagan and Bush have been institutionalised as never before.

The underlying reality today is that the Bush administration's key political players at both the State Department and National Security Council remain extremely loyal to Israel and have been positioned there by Israel's friends to make sure that no major changes in American policy are likely.

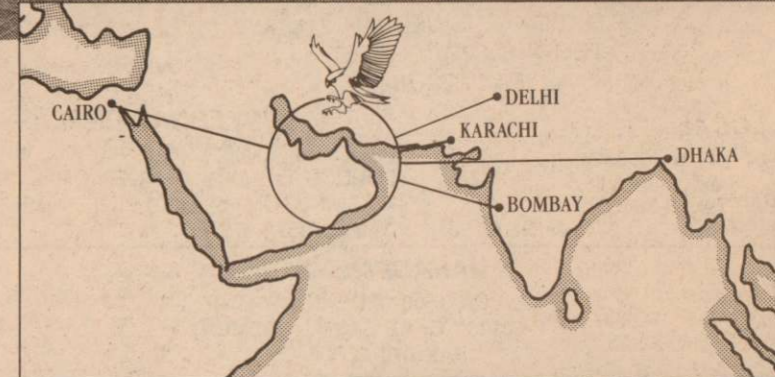
FRIENDS OF ARABS ARE OUT OF FOCUS

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officials. Jewish-Israeli lobby. Enver Hoxha

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