

T don't just happen innocently here in Washington. Washington is a town of access, of relationships, of hidden agendas, of political intrigue and manipulation.

And the establishment press is very much a part of this whole scene - using and being used just like everyone else.

Often times what appears in newspaper columns - be they news or opinion - is a lot more than meets the eye.

What may seem like inside information, or maybe just a "leaked" tip, is often times a lot more than that.

Quite often there are columns meant by those in power as trial balloons to gauge possible reaction to an upcoming policy decision or political appointment.

Sometimes a few hints, i.e. "leaks", to someone in the media from insiders in the know is actually an attempt to derail something they would prefer to see not happen but can't on their own prevent.

Now take for example the case of Martin Indyk - just recently, in anticipation of appointment to the Clinton administration - an American citizen.

All of a sudden, in the midst of the presidential transition with everyone scampering for positions of power and influence come January 20, a column appears - both in *The Washington Post* and syndicated in papers throughout the country - that spends many paragraphs discussing rumours that Indyk "is being groomed for an important job with Clinton's Middle East diplomatic team."

Written by the Rowland Evans and Robert Novak this particular column seeks to lack the biting edge we've got used to from this duo.

Indeed, this particular time Evans and Novak seem to go out of their way to be nice, skipping a lot of things they could have said and giving a kind of endorsement to the idea that Indyk would be a good choice for Clinton, without actually saying so.

Well first of all just who is Martin Indyk? In short, he's been groomed for years by the Israeli/Jewish lobby just for an assignment of this kind.

After the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and all the negative public opinion it generated towards Israel, the major lobbying organisation for Israel, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), took a major step to increase its influence in Washington.

Knowing that anyone directly identified with AIPAC would be considered politically suspect in many circles the idea was that by setting up some kind of a "think tank" this little problem probably could be gradually got around ... in time.

And sure enough, with help from various diplomats (knowing or unknowing) it should be

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The payoff and the trial balloon

added, the new "think tank" - The Washington Institute on Near East Affairs as it is called - has gradually succeeded to some extent in its attempt to pretend it is independent of AIPAC and a real "think tank".

And as the years have gone by, especially now that The Washington Institute has moved downtown away from AIPAC on Capitol Hill, the illusion of separateness has gradually taken hold, at least a bit.

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The main AIPAC deception has always been, of course, that AIPAC itself is somehow actually independent of the Israeli government. But of

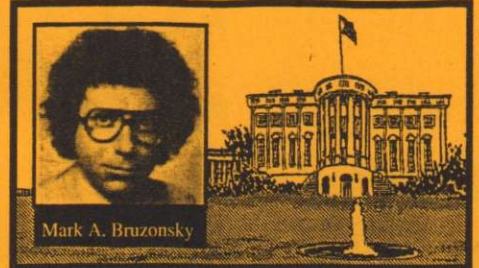
course anyone intimately familiar with how AIPAC works and with what AIPAC has done over the years knows very well that the organisation has worked very very closely with every Israeli government as well as the Mosad.

And so the Evans/Novak column should be considered something of a trial balloon. If there isn't much protest at the thought of Indyk getting an important position in the Clinton administration's Middle East team he might well get it. But a lot of opposition - which there definitely should be - might have just the opposite result and could scuttle Indyk's appointment.

Even so, it's additionally quite interesting that these two hard-nose columnists have treated Indyk so gingerly.

Though mentioning that his last job before "founding the Institute" was a research specialist at AIPAC, Evans and Novak seem to bend over

From



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backwards to give the impression that Indyk is an independent personality.

What a laugh. And as for "founding the Institute" - give the real credit to Tom Dine and other AIPAC stalwarts.

But this trial balloon may also have at its origins other motivations - regardless of what Evans and Novak themselves are up to. One suspects that having been fed a lot of tips over the years about matters in the Middle East the columnists may just be paying back a favour by giving Indyk a kind of seal of approval.

There are probably those in the Clinton transition not too pleased with the manipulations AIPAC has been up to all through the campaign, including the current attempts to place Indyk and others close to the next president as well as to blackball others who don't quite meet the "cater to Israel's concerns" test.

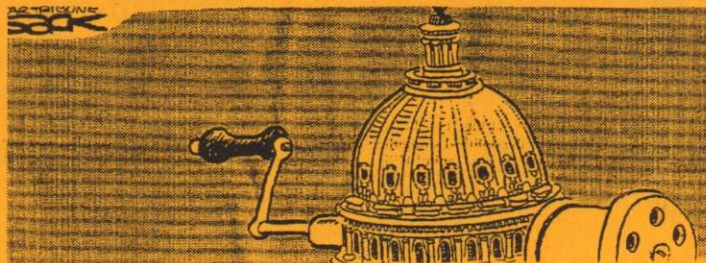
And yet, Clinton is so beholden to many American Jews who held key positions in his campaign and who also have ties in one way or another to AIPAC - and himself so green when it comes to matters relating to the Middle East - that there's a lot of anxiety that when it comes to matters Middle Eastern all the talk about not letting lobbyists take over will somehow come to naught.

As well there is already some bad blood because of AIPAC's attempts to bad-mouth transition chief Warren Christopher who was originally thought to be in line for Secretary of State before all the rumours started flying that he just wasn't acceptable to the Israelis and their friends.

Whatever, if Indyk or anyone from AIPAC's extended circles is appointed to a major role on the Clinton administration Middle East team it will clearly be a pay-off.

If the Arab and Palestinian negotiators have any smarts at all they'll realise that if they can't even stop something like this they might as well pick up their marbles, go home regroup, and wait for a better day.

... AND HE DIED



Chengiz's sons ready for jump

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