

From



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Washington

3 THE IMAGE OF POWER

It's a new geostrategic equation

Israel and the US have together increasingly been manipulating affairs throughout the Mid-east to keep the Arab World divided, weak and at odds with itself. That's one reason why no weapons of deterrence are to be tolerated anywhere in the Arab or Muslim World, regardless of Israel's potential. With their high-tech intelligence capabilities giving them a substantial extra edge, the Israelis and the Americans have become quite adept at playing one Arab side against another so that their own supremacy agenda is always furthered

WHEN IT COMES TO THE ISRAELI-Palestinian quagmire there is no balance of any kind here in Washington; regardless of what various Arab-American groups have been claiming in recent years, regardless of the recent Israeli-Palestinian "agreement", regardless of the economic power available in the Arab World.

As for Yasser Arafat's rather spectacular debut in polite Washington society, the very fact that the Palestinian leader was manipulated practically to the point of abject surrender is precisely a reflection of the extraordinary power, influence and dominance Israel's lobby is able to bring to bear in the contemporary American capital.

Whatever claims to the contrary — and there have been numerous outlandish attempts to portray the situation in more positive terms — the underlying reality is that the PLO's metamorphosed chairman was only able to parade around Capitol Hill begging for handouts at every turn because this powerful Washington lobby had essentially okayed his doing so.

More importantly, though, it has been this lobby which, over the past two decades, worked overtime to bring about the political and financial conditions which coerced the Arafat-led elements within the PLO to conclude, rightly or wrongly, that the best of all the bad choices for them was simply to make the most of their capitulation.

In short then, regardless of what various Arab-American groups and pro-Arab organisations have been telling their flocks in recent years — that things are changing and that the power of Israel's lobby is at least being whittled away, thanks to their efforts — the reality of the situation is quite otherwise.

To put it bluntly, Israel has never had more leverage over American policies than in 1993 with the administration of President William Jefferson Clinton. Just what is this unprecedented leverage over American foreign policy in the Mid-east now being used for?

Considerably more than is usually openly discussed.

First of all, of course, there are the basic economic and military concerns of the Israelis. Even at a time of general across-the-board cut-backs in the US, Israel con-

tinues to receive more today in economic and military aid than at any previous time in history.

And no doubt about it. It is this unprecedented American aid, especially since the Six-Day War, that has made Israel into the regional superpower it is today, that keeps Israel in that position, and which has made possible Israel's subjugation of the Palestinians.

Just the other day in a Page 1 story in *The Washington Times* titled "Clinton seeks massive cuts in aid abroad", the Israeli situation was highlighted as a gigantic exception to all the rules. For even now when just about all former policies are being reconsidered, once again aid to Israel, by far the largest recipient of American largesse, is not going to be reduced or even reconsidered.

Secondly, the geostrategic alliance between Israel and the US has become closer and all the more intimate over the past few decades — and this has been the single most important goal of the Israeli-Jewish lobby throughout this period.

Accordingly, Israel and the US have together increasingly been manipulating affairs throughout the Mid-east to keep the Arab World divided, weak and at odds with itself.

After the fall of the once mighty Shah, Washington and Jerusalem closely conspired, along with others in the region of course, to pit Iraq against Iran in what became a decade-long struggle that terribly drained both countries. At crucial times during that war-decade, when one side or the other might have brought the slaughter to end, Israel and the US further connived to make sure the war continued, even to the extent of arming both sides.

After that war finally ended, the strategic partners then conspired to removing Iraq from the strategic equation for the coming decade and crippling the very notion of independent Arab military power. No weap-

ons of deterrence are to be tolerated anywhere in the Arab or Muslim World it seems, regardless of Israel's potential.

While pursuing these basic strategic policies, always through a clever combination of covert and overt means of course, the US and Israel have been working overtime, especially since the Coalition War, to pressure the major Arab players to in turn pressure the Palestinians to agree to some kind of a deal regardless of whether or not the terms greatly favoured Israel.

Now, having got this prerequisite Israeli-PLO deal in place, the current priority for the Americans and the Israelis seems to be to push hard and fast for Israeli integration into the entire Arab region through unprecedented new arrangements — again both overt and covert. This overall process is one now well underway though the outcome of this historic gambit still remains uncertain.

There are numerous political smoke-screens purposely designed to obfuscate this entire situation, making any clear analysis of the situation difficult for those trying to fathom the overall picture — especially for the mass media with its notoriously short attention span and memory capacity.

Yet at the end of the day, the whole approach of the Americans and Israelis is nothing less than a modern-day Pax Americana stratagem with Israel playing the role of lead regional conduit for American domination.

With their high-tech intelligence capabilities giving them a substantial extra edge, the Israelis and the Americans have become quite adept at playing one Arab side against another so that their own supremacy agenda is always furthered.

Using all the enticements and instruments of power available to a superpower, coupled with the special regional capabilities of the Israelis along with the

regional interests in cooperating with the Americans hoping to enhance their own prospects, today's Mid-east continues to reflect its lengthy colonial past. The political intrigues that began to overtake the region going back at least to the turn of the century and World War I machinations remain very much central to the fabric of today's Mid-east.

And now, with the Fatah Palestinian leadership having acknowledged and accepted American supremacy in the region, even to the point of becoming dependent for its own political survival on its former enemies, Israel and the US are sure to concentrate with even more determination on their larger regional concerns. And if they can, they will certainly do so regardless of whether or not new Israeli-Palestinian arrangement progresses or stagnates.

A number of historic geostrategic initiatives are underway involving a number of key goals:

- The integration of Israel into the Arab Mid-east as a means of furthering American influence, intelligence-gathering, and covert capabilities.

- The use of these covert Israeli capabilities to help prevent any buildup of Arab deterrent weapons and any challenges to the political status quo in the region.

- The shoring up of pro-American Mid-east groups, including heightened Israeli assistance and involvement in warding off common enemies.

- Safeguarding the basic economic interests of the West along with the a continual recycling of the resulting petrodollars back to the Western economy.

And there is one other major geostrategic goal as well that is being carefully pursued.

Even in the midst of all the commentary about a new era of peace, preparations are underway for a possible new future war — this one against the anti-American "fundamentalist" forces in the region should they continue to assert their power, and especially if they should achieve what for them would be a breakthrough in any key Arab country.

These, in short order, comprise a summary of the basic concerns that dominate the strategic planners in Washington and occupied Jerusalem; a summary of which also explains why so much emphasis has been placed on achieving some kind of new Israeli-Palestinian arrangement.

Meanwhile, in the process of pondering how Israel's lobby has achieved such an "image of power" on top of its actual day-to-day capabilities, there is the little matter — crucial to those who play the power game in Washington — of how important it is to have a reputation for knowing how to protect and reward one's friends while always threatening and harming ones enemies.



President Clinton



President Arafat



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