



AROUND WASHINGTON

With Mark Bruzonsky

OVERLOOKED? Before the recent Palestinian-Israeli spasm of terror and reprisal, and largely overlooked in this country, there were strong hints that two key countries had begun an ideological evolution. Few Americans outside Washington diplomatic circles are aware of Saudi Arabia's new willingness to contemplate recognition of Israel, although it was headlined in Egypt's leading daily, *Al-Ahram*.

Admittedly hedged with "ifs" and conditions, Crown Prince Fahd has opened the door to eventual Saudi-Israeli relations. Such a posture was inconceivable under King Faisal, assassinated in 1975, whose royal storerooms were piled high with copies of the infamous *Elders of Zion*, which he distributed to startled guests, including Henry Kissinger. Fahd, next in line to succeed the current monarch, Khalid, is already considered political spokesman of the House of Saud.

"If a comprehensive solution is reached that ensures Israel's evacuation of all occupied Arab lands and restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in their homeland, including the establishment of their own state," Fahd revealed, "then it would be possible to discuss the issue of recognizing Israel within the framework of a unified Arab stand."

China too has, for the first time, suggested Israeli legitimacy. *Agence France-Presse* reported some weeks ago the following, dateline Peking: "China recognizes Israel's right to exist 'side by side with the Arab countries' providing it abandons its 'unjustifiable demands' especially regarding the occupied territories....This is the first time that the official Chinese press has mentioned Israel's right to exist."

Doubters should examine the path Anwar Sadat built to his "sacred mission" to Jerusalem. Witness the following, which appeared in our *Worldview* interview with Egyptian Ambassador Ashraf Ghorbal nine months ago: "If we talk about peace, we are not doubletalking. We know what peace entails. And we know what peace leads to. And it is only normal to expect what normal conditions lead to." "Egypt," Ghorbal added, is "ready for a full, complete peace with Israel."

Now Saudi Arabia, and China too, have breached the barrier of recognition. It's time to be dreaming forward, not to be wedded to past tragedy.

AMBIVALENT RESIGNATION. Mark Siegel, former deputy assistant to the president in charge of Jewish liaison, did have his problems with Zbigniew

Brzezinski and the arms-sale package. But contrary to press impressions, he had little satisfaction from the Begin government's policy either.

The Siegel resignation was widely, and misleadingly, reported. According to *Newsweek*, for instance, in a full-page feature, "Carter and the Jews," "Siegel laid aside his text" at a United Jewish Appeal (UJA) convention a few days before his departure, "and with tears in his eyes talked of his own strong sense of Jewish identity and his commitment to Israel."

Identity and commitment, yes—something many Jews share. But the rest of the report is misleading. Siegel had actually completed his original speech, and it was a full half-hour later that he rose, for final summing-up, and made his personal appeal. Now hear the parts that were never reported:

"These are very difficult appearances to make because of the tension and the hostility. In fact, I think sometimes we have stopped listening completely to each other....If there is a way that we can avoid [war] for the children of Israel in the future, let us not close the door on it. Let us never give away the security of Israel. Let us never force Israel to do anything which violates her own security needs. But if this chance of thirty years falls apart, let it not be because we were too inflexible to look toward a comprehensive peace." And then he sat down.

ADD ISRAEL TO NATO? Israel's security problems are real, even though many of Prime Minister Begin's proposed solutions are tinged with ideological zealotry.

Two top officials of Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) have now publicly espoused a solution many will consider unpalatable but which may be coming up for official consideration, an American alliance with Israel—with Senate approval, a symbolic number of troops, and all.

Ray Cline, executive director of studies at CSIS (former deputy director of CIA and high-ranking State Department official), put it this way to another session at the UJA convention. "We should offer the State of Israel an absolute guarantee of her existence, of her security. I am in favor, at the right moment in the negotiations, of a formal treaty of security guarantees."

David Abshire, chairman of CSIS and a former assistant secretary of state, aired his views in the *Washington Star* under the headline, "U.S.-Israel Pact Could Stabilize Mideast of 1980s." According to Abshire, who is widely respected in Washington political circles, "Such a security treaty must be a true NATO type, with the stationing of some U.S. troops to give it absolute credibility....If properly handled, with consultations in advance with both pro-Israeli and pro-Arab interest groups across the country, such a treaty could pass [the Senate] handily. In the minds of Americans, it would be placed in the context of the opportunity for permanent peace in the Middle East."