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From



Washington

Chicken and egg situation

By Richard H. Curtiss

THERE are seven Senators in deep doodoo, as President George Bush might describe it. The press has dubbed five of them, four Democrats and one Republican, "the Keating Five." They ganged up on the federal official responsible for regulating savings and loan institutions and told him to stop leaning so hard on the now massively defunct Lincoln Savings and Loan Association, whose chairman was Charles H. Keating Jr. When Keating was asked if the generous campaign donations he had bestowed on all of them influenced their actions, he responded: "I certainly hope so."

Intervention by these five Senators may have delayed federal action to close the incredibly mismanaged Lincoln Savings and Loan Association by a year or more, adding another billion or two to the more than \$100 billion savings and loan bail-out that will cost every American taxpayer several hundred dollars. The Senators explained their intervention as routine constituent services.

Keating, of course, was fortunate to have five Senators in three States. It is doubtful, however, if the people of Arizona, California and Ohio, who sent Keating's five Senators to Congress, would want to assume full responsibility for Lincoln S&L's several billion dollar portion of the nation-wide savings and loan debt. Their States might go belly up, right along with Keating, who invested so freely in Congressional campaigns.

The Senate Ethics Committee is also investigating the finances of Republican Sen. David Durenberger of Minnesota. He didn't need Charles Keating to get him in trouble. All by himself he decided to charge monthly travel costs to see a marriage counsellor in Boston and other personal expenses, including rent he paid to live in a condo he owned himself, to any account but his own. Now his only statement that has credibility with Minnesota voters is his admission that he used "very bad

Israel clings to kill time strategy

• What is your own analysis about what American policy really is at this moment in dealing with the Palestinian issue?

■ American policy is primarily guided by concern over the Mid-east as a source of resources in a strategic area, so that's primary. But with regard to the local region — Israel and the Palestinians with the neighbouring Arab States — the concern is basically peripheral. I mean Israel, especially since the Nixon doctrine, even before, has been regarded as a strategic asset — a base for the projection of American power, a very useful mercenary state along with a whole network of others. It has useful connections with the Pentagon for trying weapons and producing weapons. It's just a useful asset to have. The Palestinians offer none of those advantages to American power and as a result the US has no interest in them.

• So why the "dialogue" with the PLO? Why Shultz doing what he did in his last moments?

■ What happened is the US was backed into a corner. For years the US had been isolated in its refusal to recognise the fact that the PLO was taking essentially the position that most of the world takes. There is an international consensus on this issue. And that is basically some sort of two-state settlement.

Israel and the US are alone in not supporting this. They are alone in just about every other relevant issue too. Take the issue of terrorism....

• Are you saying that this kind of a dialogue was an easy way out for the Americans, that they had to do something for public opinion?

■ They had gotten into a position where their position was no longer tenable. I mean after the UN was moved to Geneva and the PLO was repeating Shultz's words on television the US was saying that Arafat repeated the right words but didn't put the comma in the right place. This became impossible....

• Under these circumstances then was it a good idea for the PLO to co-operate with Washington...

■ That's doubtful, because what happened is that at the famous press conference, if you look



Arafat

continuum and very little has changed.

■ They're the same, nothing has changed. I mean the only thing that the US is really concerned about is that Israel may not be able to put down the Intifada. They're concerned about the same things that the Israeli General Staff is concerned about.

• But they are also buying time for the Israelis, aren't they?

■ Yes, but what their only concern is that they may not be able to put down the Intifada at an acceptable cost. Now, if that turns out to be true Israeli and US elites will change their tune. But only because of force. The only thing they understand is violence and force. If violence doesn't work you change to another policy. But if violence does work then everything is fine.

Now the point of the dialogue — and it was stated very clearly by Yitzhak Rabin back last February. He had a meeting with a number of Peace Now activists, and he told them straight out that he was very happy with the dialogue and thinks it a very good idea. He said it was a



Sharon

PROFESSOR Noam Chomsky is one of the intellectual giants of the American left — "arguably the most important intellectual alive" according to an article in *The New York Times*. Without much argument he is America's leading dissident intellectual.

World famous as a linguist he is a prolific writer and lecturer about American foreign policy throughout the world. A talk with Noam Chomsky is like a refreshing intellectual bath washing away the daily clog of self-serving commentary and mediocre analysis with a style that can



Mubarak

significant aid, either material aid or even publicity.

For example the PLO has enormous resources as compared with other third world liberation movements. It has not used them to try to develop major international protests against the repression, to let people know about the repression, to even circulate information.... They don't even make the effort to circulate information about the repression.

Just ask yourself how much information... The US is a crucial country. Here is where things are going to happen if anywhere and its going to happen because of popular pressures on the US government. How much information reaches the general public about the repression in the territories? Answer, very little....

• Is it incompetence or is it that they are so wrapped up in themselves?

■ Lack of interest. They have never understood the need for organising solidarity among the American people and pressure by the American people against their government if

weapon available, I think this probably runs across the spectrum.

Whether they would do it or not is another question. Whether they would do it or not depends on their interpretation, their perception, of what the reaction would be in the US. That's critical. They have moved themselves into a position where they depend on the US for survival by maintaining the military confrontation, by refusing the opportunities for political settlement over the years. Having done so they've moved themselves into a position where they really have a security problem and the only thing preventing them from being wiped out is US power.

That's part of the reason they are such a reliable ally of the US. That's why the US can call on them to do things like support the massacres in Guatemala. That's why the US regards them as a strategic asset; because they are dependable, they are dependent.

But from their point of view that gives them a very narrow range of options. If they are convinced that the US will basically go along then they will go ahead. If they are concerned that the US may pull the rug out from under them they'll back off. Like in 1956 when Eisenhower warned them that they must get out of the Sinai they didn't like it but they did. And nothing much has changed. I mean, you know, they are obviously vastly more powerful now; but the relationship of dependency is about the same.

So I agree with Peled that there is and there always has been a serious danger. Any war in the region that takes place now is going to be a very serious war. There's too much weaponry, destructive capacity....

• Sooner or later, on the course that we're on, these situations do erupt in war, don't they?

■ Yes, as long as you have tension there's going to be occasional unpredictable cases where tension will erupt into conflict, either by plan or unplanned escalation.

• Do you think the Israelis are just waiting for Arafat to be removed from the scene?

■ The Israeli position has long been that if we

at what Afafat said, he said exactly what he had said all along. In fact, the PLO had taken clearer positions ten years earlier. The US decided at that point that it might as well move into a fall-back position, claim that it has won,

The basic demands of the US were that the Palestinians go back to the status quo, meaning the US will have to do nothing

claim that the PLO had capitulated, and then establish its own terms as to what had happened. So the US with the international media in tow claimed that at the press conference Arafat had for the first time accepted the existence of Israel and renounced any right of struggle against Israel and accepted 242 without any recognition of a Palestinian State and so on. All of this was totally false, but it was the media who picked it up because they do what they're told, they are obedient souls...

● Not only did the media pick it up but the PLO went along as well.

■ The PLO played along too because the PLO was entranced by the idea that they were being invited into the mansion with the master and allowed to sit in the living room. They were told look we'll have breakfast with you and pat you on the head; and they the US continued to do whatever it wanted.

Now the first meeting of the so-called dialogue established the ground rules very clearly. The protocols of the meeting were leaked. The demands of Pellatreau were extremely simple. First he told the PLO there would be no international conference, period. That was that. Second he told them you must call off the Intifada which we regard as terrorism directly against the State of Israel. So the basic demands of the US were that the Palestinians go back to the status quo, meaning the US will have to do nothing.

Because in the earlier period — when the Palestinians were quiescent and repressed of course — the US would do nothing. Why should they? The Palestinians were no threat to US interests. Questions of justice were too irrelevant even to laugh at. The only thing that's at stake are questions of power.

So the PLO was told, look, you go back to the status quo ante and there will be no international conference. The reason there can't be an international conference is very simple. Since the entire world outside the US and Israel is in favour of a diplomatic settlement, any international conference will simply impose pressures for a diplomatic settlement. This, the US doesn't want; therefore, there can't be an international conference.

Now since the US is the world's dominance power and Europe simply goes along making a few noises, the US position wins.

● What you are basically saying is that all this analysis in the press about Baker's nuances at an AIPAC conference (Editor's note: AIPAC, The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, is the umbrella organisation of the American Jewish establishment which makes up the core of the "Jewish Lobby") or Bush raising his eyebrows ... that the whole thing is basically a

very low-level diplomatic contact which has no serious significance; but the point of it is to give us a year or more to put down the Intifada with force. And he said we will do it, we will increase the level of force during this period and they will be crushed.

Now that's the whole point...

● And that's exactly what we've been experiencing.

■ Yafi. That's exactly what we've been experiencing...

● What would you have advised at the time that Yasser Arafat and his friends do, rather than what they did?

■ Well, what Arafat and his friends did was agree to focus all the attention on the diplomatic manoeuvring and turn attention away from the repression in the territories. They should have done precisely the opposite.

If they wanted to have breakfast with Pellatreau well that's their business. But this is very minor manoeuvring which have no meaning. What's significant is what people are suffering and the need to relieve and terminate that suffering ... by putting pressure on Israel.

The dialogue is a delaying action run by the US, as are Baker's various initiatives. It's a delaying action to try to divert attention away from the Intifada and away from the repression of the Intifada in order to allow Israel time to crush it by force

What's required is increase, not decrease, of pressures.

● Does that include violence within the Intifada?

■ I don't tell people how to struggle to gain their rights, that's for them to figure out. Personally I have my own opinions...

● That would clearly raise the stakes...

■ Well, you know, there are many people who think that until Israel really suffers violence it's not going to...

● There are many people who think that until America feels pain over this issue...

■ Personally I don't think that that's the right answer. But as I said I don't tell people... When people are standing with somebody's boot on their neck I don't give them tactical advice unless they ask for it. And they haven't asked me for it.

● Let's try diplomatic advice. I have thought, and I wonder if you agree, that the PLO should get ahead of the curve for a change and should get up and say: "Look, we're the ones who have tried this dialogue, and who have tried everything to get the Americans to listen. But since the dialogue has instead been used to buy time for the Israelis to crush the Intifada and the Americans keep deceiving us we find it necessary to suspend this dialogue until the Americans are ready for serious discussions..."

■ I think again that's a sort of minor tactical issue. Whether or not the PLO decides to continue the dialogue or not they should make it very clear that it's not what's important. They should make it clear, exactly as Rabin did, that

analysis with a style that constantly cuts to the core of the basic issues. Reviled by much of the establishment, adored by many independent intellectuals, Chomsky constantly fills student lecture halls around the country even while his writings are rarely accepted in any of the mass circulation papers and magazines.

Chomsky is Institute Professor in the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T).

Part I, today, focuses on the general political situation since the US decision to begin a "dialogue" with PLO.

the dialogue is a delaying action run by the US as is the Mubarak Plan, as are Baker's various initiatives. It's a delaying action to try to divert attention away from the Intifada and away from the repression of the Intifada in order to allow Israel time to crush it by force.

● So the basic thing is they have to step up the Intifada.

■ They have to turn their efforts to support for the Palestinians who are under military occupation ... whether that means them more money or giving them...

● I'm sure they would say they're doing just that...

■ I think their efforts are going into public diplomacy; and they are granting it an importance it does not have. And I think that's because they like it. They like being on the international jet circuit...

● When you say "they" you mean Fatah.

■ I mean the leadership of the PLO. No, it's a bureaucracy of elite elements who have their own interests and concerns. And those interests and concerns may not be those of the people who are actually struggling on the ground. This is not unusual with nationalist movements.

I think if you look back over the record of the PLO they have not pursued the options that are best designed to achieve the aims of Palestinian self-determination in many many respects.

...There is a major popular struggle going on, and there is virtually no external force, including the PLO, which is trying to give it a

The PLO has not used its enormous sources to try to develop major international protests against the repression, to let people know about the repression, to even circulate information. It even does not make an effort to circulate information about the repression

they are ever going to achieve their ends. They have always dealt at the level of international diplomacy, international contacts at the UN, how many places do they have an embassy, do they recognise you in the Third World. That's all OK, but it's not where the power lies.

Now you know every Third World liberation movement — whether its the Vietnamese or the Nicaraguans — they've all understood that the only way to put a constraints on US power and violence is something that comes from the American population. It's not a major constraint, but it is a significant one. If popular sympathy...

● It did prove to be quite significant in a few very important cases.

■ Yes, that's why Vietnam exists. Exists in miserable poverty and destruction but at least it wasn't whipped out. We didn't drop nuclear weapons. Nicaragua has been driven down to a zero grade of life; but it's still there. And there are still popular organisations functioning in El-Salvador; they haven't all been assassinated.

I mean the reason why there has been a little space for survival has been popular pressures

The Third World liberation movements understand that the only way to put a constraint on the US power and violence is something that comes from the American population.

inside the US which have constrained the use of state power. If there were not those popular constraints, state power would be basically unlimited.

● Speaking about nuclear weapons... Some months ago I interviewed former Israeli General Matti Peled who after outlining why there isn't likely to be a peace agreement outlined for me that the logic of Israel's policies is that sooner or later Israel will assert its hegemony by finding itself in a position of having to consider attacking Arab capitals with nuclear weapons. What are your views?

■ It's not a big surprise. If you read the Hebrew literature back to the 1950s even before they had nuclear weapons the assumption was that if Israel were pressed with its back to the wall it would do anything... In fact, they gave a name to this, "the Samson complex."

This has happened. For example right after the Arab League peace plan was announced, according to the Hebrew press, Israel sent F-14s over the Arab oilfields. This as a signal to the United States that if it backed the plan Israel had the capacity to destroy the Arab oilfields.

● Back then, I think, Sharon was still defence minister...

■ It doesn't matter who is defence minister. These policies run across all Israeli administrations. There are differences and the differences are complex between Likud and Labour; but I don't think they differ on these issues. The idea that if you're pressed into the kind of political settlement you don't want you will use any

just hang on, the problems will go away. ... You mentioned Sharon ... Likud, in its official party problem — Herut at least — says we have not abandoned our rights to Jordan. Sharon just said this again the other day. They've said

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that we might abandon some of those rights in the course of negotiations, but we haven't abandoned those rights yet.

Both parties in Israel fundamentally have had the same position about a political settlement. Their position is that Jordan will become the Palestinian State, in fact, they say it is already. Anyway, Jordan will be the place where the Palestinians achieve their self-determination and we will take what we want west of the Jordan.

Now they differ a little bit as to what they want...

● And the Labour Party also has its long history of a relationship of sorts with the Hashemites, Likud doesn't...

■ Yes, but that's only because Labour happened to be in power throughout the early period. Likud probably would have done the same thing.

But you see I don't think the Israeli claim to Jordan is a serious one. Here Labour and Likud differ slightly regarding what they want in the occupied territories. Likud basically wants to move to some kind quasi-annexation of the occupied territories. They have never called for real annexation. They just want Israel to maintain essentially total control over them. What Labour wants is what they call "territorial compromise" — that is they will take everything that they want in the occupied territories but they will leave much of the population under Jordanian administration. They don't want the people. So they want the land but not the people.

● But isn't the logic of the Intifada for the Israelis that since we can't now control these people as we had expected we would be able to that we have to find a way to remove them?

■ Only if they are convinced that they can't control them. But they are not convinced of that. They are convinced that so far they haven't controlled them. But the question in their minds is can Israel control them at a low enough cost to itself?

● ... and America.

■ Well, that's the same thing. I mean if its costly to Israel it's going to be costly to the US and therefore the US will have to change policies.

They want to see if they can do exactly what Rabin said, can they crush it...

Next week: Part II — Chomsky comments on the schisms within the Palestinian nationalist movement and about what should be done in the US.

judgment."

Republican Sen. Alfonse D'Amato is being investigated on charges that he helped large financial backers win federal housing grants. He's not the only federal official involved in the HUD scandals, but he's the only Senator to come under Senate Ethics Committee investigation for it so far.

What else do these four Democrats and three Republicans have in common? We knew before we looked it up in the American Educational Trust's new book, Stealth PACs, and regular *Saudi Gazette* readers will already have guessed it correctly: All seven Senators have received substantial donations from pro-Israel political action committees.

No literate American who sincerely believe in democracy will disagree at this point that PACs may be good for Congressional incumbents, but they are bad for America. The only question for Congress to decide is whether to get rid of some of them, or all of them.

They're pernicious, even when they operate legally. They are required to limit their donations to \$10,000 per candidate per election cycle, as the PACs for America's five biggest lobbies (realtors, teamsters, physicians, teachers, federal employees) apparently do.

The only question about those pro-Israel PACs that remains is whether they corrupt the candidates they support, or whether they just find their way to already corrupted politicians. Either way, they contribute to keeping the very worst of weak, venal, immoral or amoral politicians in office.

Here's the record of donations by pro-Israel PACs to the seven Senators under investigation by the Senate Ethics Committees. Readers can draw their own conclusions about chickens and eggs.

Sen. Alan Cranston (D-CA) \$252,532.

Sen. Alfonse M. D'Amato \$26,705.

Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-AZ) \$80,750.

Sen. David Durenberger (D-MN) \$226,500.

Sen. John Glenn (D-OH) \$17,500.

Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) \$54,000.

Sen. Donald W. Riegle (D-MI) \$87,250.

Except, possibly, for Senators Glenn and D'Amato, given the large populations of their respective States, it's not chicken feed.