

een dynamited by Israeli security forces.

FROM WASHINGTON

Bush covers Mideast tracks with show that puts Reagan to shame

By Mark A. Bruzonsky

WASHINGTON - George Bush has far more in common with his predecessor Ronald Reagan than we've previously understood. He has truly evolved into a marvelous stage actor - a President combining the primary skill of Reagan with Bush's far more astute abilities to understand and manipulate the workings of government and the games of nations.

In short, George Bush has proved himself to be a far more dangerous imperial President than Reagan ever had the capacity to be.

Bush's speech last week before a flag-waving joint session of Congress was masterful in its rhetoric flourishes. Not only the words, but the hint of tears and the expressions of concern, even for the Palestinians.

Beyond doubt, this speech, even more than previous ones, was choreographed right down to the watering eyes, to the near tearful emotional grimaces.

But for many gullible and self-righteously patriotic Americans - a whole country full it seems, still flushed with a victory that had everything to do with technology and money and little to do with courage and dignity - it was just what they wanted to hear to give them back pride and a "good feeling" about the future; both seriously tattered in recent years.

The morning after the speech The New York Times subheaded in large type its front-page lead story: "Hints At Pressure on Israel."

But this is hardly an accurate expression of reality. Indeed, in just the past few weeks George Bush's Administration and the Congress have rewarded Israel with more than an additional billion windfall dollars - over and above the annual \$3.5- billion American subsidy of Israel. And this at a time when Israeli brutality toward the Palestinians is still escalating!

Furthermore, in view of the history of American journalistic reporting about the Israeli-Palestinian quagmire - reporting that is spearheaded and considerably influenced by The New York Times - one should automatically be more than a little suspicious about this kind of situation.

The actual political reality is that George Bush is using the classic technique of rhetorical flourish to mask actual policies. Bush is trying to position himself as the peacemaker rather than the hypocrite; as the concerned advocate rather than as the oppressor's accomplice.

Bush knows he's dealing with a potentially explosive situation and his cheap rhetorical gestures are specially designed to deflect political pressures and divide critics. When it came to Iraq Bush used clear and definitive actions and overwhelming force. When it comes to Israel and the Palestinians George Bush's words are merely deceptive cover for actual politics that are much in contradiction.

Continued on page 2

Democrats as disarmed as Saddam

Continued from page 1

The actual political reality is that the U.S. and Israel are working in tandem, behind-the-scenes of course, out of range of cameras and snoopy journalists, of course, to attempt a separate peace with Syria's Assad and to undermine the Palestinian nationalist idea so that some new form of autonomy can possibly be foisted on the Palestinians.

The basic game-plan is to manipulate the new alliance that links the long-time partners, Washington and Tel Aviv, with Riyadh and Cairo in such a way that either or both Hafez el-Assad or King Hussein will join in and help make some kind of new accommodation with Israel.

The actual goal is to push the intifada out of the headlines, crush the Palestinian nationalist agenda, further delegitimize the PLO, and buy another decade or more (as was done at Camp David) with some kind of deceptive autonomy arrangement.

Thus the next period of time is a terribly dangerous one for the Palestinians, for the PLO

attacking Bush and pushing forward others from within their own ranks.

The realities of political life at the moment are extraordinarily good for George Bush. His triumphant appearance before the Congress Wednesday evening may well go down as the high-point of his Presidency. Indeed where do you go from approval ratings of 89%?

And yet, the juxtaposition of today's post-war euphoria - a kind of collective American high - with the actual problems confronting American society in the 1990s creates a far more uncertain political situation than can be easily touched at this moment.

True enough. Sixty-four percent of the American people feel they will be better off financially in a year than they are now. But the real question Bush has to deal with is how are these people going to feel if and when the recession drags on or even deepens?

Much of American society is collectively in this gleeful mood precisely because Bush overscared and overtraumatized.