

# Mid-East Realities

"The truth can set you free"



Washington "Street Art" depicts one ever-present Mid-East Reality

A uniquely independent newsletter published for press information in association with The Jewish Committee On The Middle East (JCOME) and hundreds of Middle East scholars and writers throughout the United States.

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## "Dream Agents" CNI - The Phantom Lobby

Just a year and two ago there were many here telling their colleagues in the Middle East that things were getting alot better in Washington in terms of the Israeli-Arab quagmire.

George Bush, they said, was really serious about pushing Israel into a deal with the Palestinians. American allies -- especially Saudi Arabia and Egypt -- were on top in the region in the wake of the unprecedented U.S.-led international defanging of Iraq and would now exert an important new influence in the upcoming "peace process". And public support for Israel was on the wane.

Furthermore, these voices kept insisting, George Bush and Jim Baker were riding high in the polls and surely to be reelected, especially if the Arab regimes and the Palestinians would just show further "moderation" in dealing with Israel and engaging themselves in the "peace process."

Of course it was in this overall context that the Madrid Conference, so we were also told, was to be a major historic watershed. And the subsequent Arab-Israeli talks were sure to lead, so we were further told, to a process of Palestinian autonomy and eventual independence.

The Israeli/American-approved Palestinian delegation itself said it had definite assurances of a firm one-year time-table for the talks to show significant progress.

*...AIPAC is more in charge today than ever."*

Then came the debate over extending billions of dollars in "loan guarantees" to Israel, there was a chorus of opposition (beginning in the White House), and then much self-congratulating when the "guarantees" were put on hold. But even on this one, the temporary victory eventually became another grand defeat

when Yitzhak Rabin again became Israeli Prime Minister. Those who had gloated before hardly muttered a wimper in the end.

It was all quite foreseeable from the start, actually, in view of the actual line-up of political forces fighting these battles -- except, that is, if one listened to the "wisdom" of those who were preaching that things had changed.

At the head of this cacophony of political dreamers was a small chorus of defeated liberal

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Republicans with close ties to the Arab establishment in the Middle East who had banded together into an organization calling itself The Council On The National Interest (CNI).

More on the order of a small political club than a real lobby (which is what it misleadingly purports to be), CNI's leaders -- former Congressmen Pete McCloskey and Paul Findley along with once Presidential candidate John Anderson -- were all beating the Bush/Baker drums with great enthusiasm back then.

How the world turns.

Bush is history, a tarnished one-term President.

The "peace talks", other than buying Israel still more time to swallow what's left of the Palestinian homeland and make a real peace all but impossible, have gone nowhere except to further Israeli/American designs in the region -- now more closely than ever coupled with the desires of protected Arab regimes in Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

And a new American President clearly oriented toward domestic issues has come to Washington -- arriving at the White House in part precisely because the pro-Israeli forces worked overtime to push Bill Clinton forward and pull King George down.

Make no mistake about it. Clinton owes them; and both they and Clinton know it. For one thing that's why he was willing to appoint one of AIPAC's men to his National Security Council -- an in-house representative to watch over things and make sure the new President doesn't stray from what he's told. (see MER #5 for details).

Yet in today's new situation in Washington many of those who were so wrong and misleading just a short while ago are at it again.

They are joined, just as was the case before, by a number of prominent Arab-American spokesman -- among them James Abourezk, Jim Zogby, and Khalil Jahshan and associated Jewish groups that these Arab-Americans work with including Peace Now, the Jewish Peace Lobby, and the American Jewish Congress -- who keep telling their flocks, year after year, that things are gradually improving (thanks to their efforts of course) when in fact the opposite is really the case.

Example. Even in 1992, after decades of efforts, just getting one important Congressman or Senator (even a former one!) to an Arab-American event is heralded as a major triumph; when in fact it simply reflects the continuing political impotence of all of the Arab American groups in toto, regardless of what useful work they might do in other non-political areas of concern.

Simply put, a bit of progress in learning how to

hold banquets and writing letters protesting slurs and ethnic stereotypes does not equate with serious political power.

Example. When the Arab American University Graduates (AAUG) recently met in Washington -- even though well-known and well-respected Professor Edward Said gave an exceptionally provocative round-up of the state of the Arab world and the "peace process" at the Banquet -- quite literally no one from the media, surely no one with political stature, and not even a single camera, were there to take note of what he had to say.

Moreover, these same ever-optimistic voices that were touting Bush and Baker not so long ago urging forward the "peace process" -- an approach which in reality was mostly designed by Israel and her Washington chums in the first place, as should now be more clear since the main Bush foreign policy that President-elect Clinton is loudly supporting is this very same "peace process" -- are at it again.

With the same self-styled anti-AIPAC "phantom lobby" called CNI in the lead -- in reality that small collection of defeated liberal Republican politicians who have very little clout here at home (as opposed to their overseas image) -- these voices are now attempting to convince their followers that AIPAC is somehow on the ropes while they are continuing to come on strong.

George Bush, of course, tried to do the same

*As for CNI... In that it purports to be a lobby at all, it is a cruel, deceptive joke.*

-- to convince us that Clinton was falling and he, Bush, was going to pull an upset victory after all. But we can and should forgive him as that's the way of political campaigns. After all even Ross Perot kept telling us he was going to win "all 50 States". Yet in the context of an election such hyperbole isn't taken seriously.

It's a lot harder to forgive those out-of-power personalities who in a sense mislead for profit and glory. No longer competing for votes they purport to be telling the truth not only about what's really happening in the Middle East but also about the real situation within American politics. But in another sense they are still competing, now for the largess of those willing to back them. And this situation creates a corrupting atmosphere in which too many people more and more say, and write, what is useful and profitable for them to say, and write, rather than what is really happening.

Together with a collection of public relations hacks and well-paid professionals -- John Duke



Anthony at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations and Jim Zogby, examples of the former; Saudi Attorney Fred Dutton of the latter -- when it comes to the Middle East "peace process" there is an ongoing effort to always present the uplifting case, even when it's hardly existent.

It's a form of social control -- i.e., keep everyone at least hoping that things are moving ahead, no matter how slowly, and at the same time try to convince everyone that those in charge know what they're doing. If one more and more controls the sources of information and the major media -- passing out various rewards to those who play the right tunes and penalizing those who do not -- it's easier to keep those on top in place and those wanting influence away from it.

And so, even if the political equation regarding Israeli influence versus Arab influence remains very much one-sided, this other game of twisting perceptions and public opinion is one that is being played with ever more sophistication, year after year.

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"dream agents" depend for their own livelihoods on convincing their patrons that the work they are doing is being done well and could in the future, if just everyone will keep the wheels rolling, eventually bear results.

Example. Speaking of the recent Presidential resignation at AIPAC -- after release of a audio tape in which AIPAC President Steiner flouted his own as well as his lobby's influence with President-elect Clinton -- CNI Chairman Paul Findley, recently insisted that this incident "may have destroyed the ability of AIPAC to be a credible influence either within the new administration or on Capitol Hill."

Many will be willing to dismiss such rhetorical excesses as little but wishful thinking.

Sadly, however, excesses of this kind have become the pattern, rather than an occasional forgiveable burst of hopefulness.

Sadder yet, such excesses create a climate of misinformation and faulty political analysis that then leads to still further political misjudgements making things all the worse as a vortex of faulty analysis and misleading commentary feeds on itself.

And so the question has to be asked, how can one possibly successfully organize in ways likely to be effective without basing ones plans on a frank evaluation of how the political armies actually line up against each other?

How can one seriously prepare to do political battle without knowing just what kinds of weapons are in the hands of the enemy and how much ammunition is likely stockpiled by the

## WHY "Mid-East Realities"?

*This is a newsletter born in war, blood, and deceit. American politicians of both parties have so regularly twisted the truth about U.S. involvements in the Middle East -- the real reasons behind these policies as well as the actual policies pursued -- that even experts are confused and bewildered.*

*Furthermore, the White House and CIA have so undermined the very nature of accountability that Congress finds itself continually deceived and the press is often reduced to reporting more falsehoods and cover-ups than realities.*

*Furthermore still, multinational business interests and foreign-influenced lobbies so distort media coverage of events that crucial facts and analysis are quite often well hidden from the American public.*

*Mid-East Realities will attempt to uncover the truths and expose the deceptions. And MER will assist those in the press wanting to delve into underlying Mid-East realities by making independent scholars and experts available.*

*June 1992*

various forces?

Simply said, all this political dreaming of these various kinds combines to create an exceedingly dangerous situation.

Dangerous because it is grossly misleading and gives those trying to do things to change the situation an improper accounting of what the true line up of political forces really is.

Dangerous because it substitutes cheap verbal combat for actual political clout giving those who desperately want to do something about the situation a false sense of hope and a faulty reading of how much and what kinds of efforts are actually needed.

Dangerous because without a clear-sighted understanding of the real predicament one is in it's more difficult than ever to devise ways of overcoming ones adversaries in the future.

The actual situation in Washington at this moment, as the Clinton Administration gets up to speed, is that AIPAC is more in charge today than ever.

It has stumbled, it has erred, it has overexposed itself. All true. All possibly inevitable to some degree.

But at the same time, during the past Reagan/Bush decade AIPAC has diversified itself into a number of interlinked and highly effective branches with a variety of tentacles all of which have their grip on things here. Meanwhile, the Arab-American groups in total, including their progressive Jewish allies many of which are themselves front-groups, are simply no match at all for AIPAC's network of power.

As for CNI... Frankly, in that it purports to be a lobby at all, it is a cruel, deceptive joke.

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*(More about CNI and other "front groups" available from*



real agendas have to do more with the self-interest of those pulling the strings and those providing the funds - with most grass-roots members unaware. These groups are also specifically designed to drain energies and resources -- which could be alot more effectively used to truly challenge Israeli policies -- into non-threatening channels that do not seriously worry the Israelis and their American interlocutors.

"Americans For Peace Now" has been for some years the leading front group. Gail Pressberg, one of those heading AFPN, recently leveled with THE WASHINGTON JEWISH WEEK telling its correspondent that "Peace Now has always advocated" continuing all American support for Israel regardless of policy differences. In reality, the American-wing of Peace Now is an organization largely controlled by the "left"-wing of Israel's Labor Party and has always worked in bitter opposition to the idea that the U.S. should substantially cut back on aid to Israel to hasten the changes in Israeli policies that are imperative before there can be a just and lasting peace. Former Israeli General Matti Peled recently said: "Peace Now is among the worst things that have ever happened to the Israeli peace movement."

Another group in the U.S., this one calling itself "The Jewish Peace Lobby" is really nothing of the kind. It's real policies are to work in tandem with the reform Jewish establishment as well as groups like Peace Now while giving the quite false impression that there is any real countervailing power to AIPAC on Capitol Hill. Trading on its slick name, at every significant turn the "Jewish Peace Lobby" has failed to back any major changes in U.S. policy toward Israel or any major reduction of economic and military funding for Israel -- regardless of Israeli policies. Jerome Segal, head of what he calls "The Jewish Peace Lobby" is well-known for his opportunism and hypocrisy.

Another task of both of these groups is to work closely with the bourgeois Palestinian groups to try to keep the Palestinian negotiating team at the table and try to influence them in the direction of accepting some kind of status that would be more akin to an Indian reservation or a South African "Tribal Homeland" (Bantustan) than independent Statehood.

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