

ISRAELI GAME-PLAN - 2

Recreating a Mid-east in Israel's own image

FEW MODERN EVENTS IN THE HISTORY of the contemporary Mid-east have been so pregnant with past history as the recent Israel-Jordan agreement.

Of course the peace with Jordan is nothing new really. What is new, however, is that the Israelis have managed to succeed, so far at least, with their long planned step-by-step "diplomacy", playing one Palestinian faction and one Arab ruler off against another. And now, with just the Americans in a position to claim superpower status, and with Washington pretty much controlled from Israel on matters relating to the Mid-east, the only competing power centre has become populist Islamic nationalism.

Indeed, just as it was Hamas that pushed the Israelis to do with the PLO of Yasser Arafat it is the "Islamic threat" which is pushing everyone in the region to deal with Israel. Having a common enemy has always made for strange alliances; and in the Mid-east such concord is legend.

And so, as the various ceremonies proceed and as the various forces in the region come closer together in the common fight against populist Islamic forces, it's more and more clear what Israel, Jordan and America now have in mind for the Palestinians.

Having already taken most the land and resources, having already beaten the Palestinians into submission, having already demoralised Palestinian society to a point of near total humiliation, having turned Arafat into the Warden of Gaza Prison, the Israelis are working overtime pursuing their real regional aspirations. In doing so, they are of course playing to the hilt upon Washington's need for a regional strongman to safeguard the empire's economic and strategic interests; not to mention Bill Clinton's need to have at least something



From Washington

Mark A. Bruzonsky

foreign to crow about.

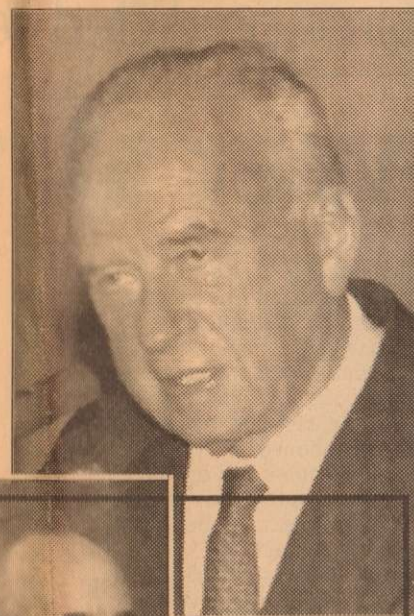
The current Israeli approach, masterminded by old-timers Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres with the help of the Peace Now wing of the Labour Party, is not really all that difficult to fathom. One simply has to apply a bit of realpolitik, mix in a substantial portion of Machiavellian aspirations, flavour with a touch of Labour Party Zionist ideology, top off with a bit of military might and covert capabilities — and out of the brew comes the Israeli game-plan.

Israeli thinking goes something like this:

▼ The Palestinians are defeated and their society is pathetically crippled. The PLO doesn't really exist anymore, whether Arafat knows it or not. Accordingly, the Palestinian component in the Mid-east will shrivel from now on all by itself. Consequently it's very useful at this point to take the responsibility for Palestine's destruction off Israel's shoulders and put it onto their own. Arafat's overwhelming desire to put his own personal interests first — something not uncommon in the region — provides Israel the effect opportunity.

▼ With the Palestinian issue "resolved" — and indeed Israelis are eager to have Arafat administer other Palestinian ghettos in Nablus and Hebron and elsewhere if he can — the path is clear for what's really important to Israel. Frankly Israel

Labour of these two men indicates more than peace for Israel and more than the Israeli domination for the Arabs. Is it Zionism at work in a different garb?



Yitzhak Rabin

What are they thinking and planning?



Shimon Peres

doesn't give a damn about Arafat, the PLO, or the Palestinians. It just wants them to go away, or at least be quiet. Rabin was right when he talked publicly of just wishing Gaza would float off into the sea and be gone!

▼ There are other substantial benefits to Israelis as well in dealing with Arafat at this time. So long as it keeps the Palestinians under control ... and if need be it will use whatever force is necessary regardless of what Arafat says, if he's still around that is ... Israel has emasculated its enemies on both Left and Right. The Likud hardly knows what to do or say these days; and let the Labour not kid itself. Benjamin Netanyahu could have presented a formidable alternative and brought the Likud back to power, something a lot less likely now. And those calling for Palestinian state and changes in US-Israeli relations, even if they do see through or efforts, haven't many who want to listen anymore. They weren't very important anyway all those moralists and academics; not so long as Israelis pretty much control the Mid-east political scene in Washington along with much of the press.

▼ Plus there's another important benefit too. Before this agreement, Israelis were

expected to pick up the bills in the Palestinian ghettos. And it actually had to manage their daily affairs in addition to building up Israel's own society. When they were acquiescent that wasn't so bad even went to have lunch in Hebron or Bethlehem. But with the Intifada Israel had to find another way. So now it has got Arafat to take on these responsibilities and the international community to pay the bills. And if they fail and things get worse, it's their fault, not Israel's. Plus Israel has got the Americans thanking it with even more help and assistance than ever before.

▼ Now....who knows what might yet happen. So, let Israel take maximum advantage of this situation as it exists today and push ahead full-speed with remaking the Mid-east in Zionist image. Israel needs to stabilise the regimes, help them in time of need. Israel needs to undermine those Islamic forces. Indeed, it needs to prepare the political and psychological ground for taking on these forces if need be. This most recent step with Jordan is a very big one indeed. It opens the door to Israeli economic and covert penetration to the Mid-east and brings a kind of psychological chaos to Israel's enemies.