

Counterattack Against Israel Lobby Begins In Congress

Labeling last week's British-inspired Israeli invasion of Lebanon "open aggression," "institutionalized terrorism," and "a direct threat to prospects for peace," Sen. James Abourezk (D.-N.D.) yesterday called on the Carter Administration to emulate the strategy of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower and preempt further Israeli "breakaway ally" actions jeopardizing U.S. national security interests in the Middle East.

Abourezk proposed a Senate resolution to demand "immediate implementation" by all parties concerned of the United Nations' Security Council decision that Israeli occupying troops be replaced by a UN peacekeeping force. Abourezk stated, "As I see it, Israel will refuse to give up the fruits of its aggression unless it is convinced it has more to lose than to gain. In 1956, when Israel joined France and England in attacking Egypt and attempted to keep the Sinai desert, President Eisenhower was successful in threatening Israel to the extent that Israel withdrew."

To complete his history lesson, Abourezk might have added that the Eisenhower Administration, keenly aware of the role of British intelligence in stage-managing Middle East wars, also coupled its ultimatum to Israel with a telephone threat from U.S. Treasury Secretary George Humphrey to British officials promising to "break the British pound" unless they cooperated.

Provided the present U. S. government adopts the Eisenhower strategy, — no to British economic warfare, yes to U.S.-Israeli-Arab economic development — the power of that much-feared Trojan horse in U.S. politics known as the "Israel Lobby" can now be broken almost overnight.

Evidence of mobilization behind such a policy surfaced yesterday in Chicago at a conference on Mideast trade and development sponsored by the Mid-America Arab Chamber of Commerce, attended by representatives of regional banking and industrial interests and the U.S. State Department. The president of the Chamber warned American business that if it did not rally around a program for expanded Mideast trade now, committing itself to sweeping away all obstacles erected by the Israel Lobby, Arab support for the dollar as a reserve currency would collapse and U.S. trade with it.

Backlash in Congress

A significant backlash is sweeping through Congress in response to the Begin government's recent attempts to impose a "unilateral final solution to the Palestinian problem" by armed force, risking war with Syria and a U.S.-U.S.S.R. thermonuclear confrontation. Although Israel Lobby forces have so far succeeded in pigeonholing the Abourezk resolution in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where they are heavily represented by Sens. Clifford Case, (R.-N.S.) Frank Church (D.-Idaho), Jacob Javits (R.-N.Y.), and others, the Israel Lobby has never been more vulnerable.

U.S. Labor Party Capitol Hill staff actively mobilizing support for the Abourezk initiative during the past 48 hours have found some two dozen Senators and Representatives, including ranking members on key committees, "fed up" with the Israel Lobby's arrogant assumption that the President of the United States ought, as a matter of course, to accept its views on the U.S. interest in the Middle East as the foundation of all policy.

If the Israel Lobby isn't broken, "we could be dragged into thermonuclear war" one Republican senator from an Eastern state commented privately. "Our policy is to pressure Israel heavily," said the office of an influential midwestern Democratic Senator. Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's performance before Foreign Relations committee yesterday produced sharp questioning even from members traditionally very sympathetic to Israel. Sen. Charles Percy (R.-Ill.) told Begin his insistence on retaining civilian settlements in Arab territories occupied by Israel since the 1976 war "has divided Israel, divided the American Jewish community, and caused an erosion of support for Israel." According to one Capitol Hill source, Begin so discredited himself that Sen. Daniel Moynihan (D.-N.Y.), a die-hard Israel Lobby member, commented afterwards, "the only one smiling was Jim Abourezk."

Adding to the climate of mistrust for the Israel Lobby is the well-founded suspicion in Washington circles that the Israeli invasion of Lebanon was pre-planned before the staged Palestinian terror raid which supposedly precipitated it. The *Money Manager*, a leading financial publication, has attributed this view to sources in the State and Defense Departments, and it is beginning to be shared in Congress.

Rep. Paul Findley (R.-Ill.) has already demanded in a written communication to the State Department that the Administration investigate whether or not Israel's Lebanon invasion violated the U.S. Foreign Military Sales Act which forbids use of U.S. arms supplies except for defensive purposes.

The Carter Administration is expected to take advantage of the backlash on this particular question to mobilize support for its plan for a "package deal," of military aircraft sales to Israel, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, a package which the Israel Lobby, in the person of Sen. Henry Jackson, has already vowed to block. Israel Lobby threats to unveil a years-old letter from former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, purporting to guarantee Israel its aircraft with "no strings attached," do not appear to have intimidated the White House so far.

Press Criticizes Genocide

Leading U.S. press have begun a campaign of open criticism against the Israeli invasion. The *Chicago Tribune* today concluded in an editorial entitled "Has Retaliation Helped?" that Israeli military operations in Lebanon had not contributed substantial benefits for Israeli security. Yesterday's *Baltimore Sun* criticized Begin for attempting to block swift UN peacekeeping

action in the Security Council, characterizing the UN resolution as "a large American favor" preventing a war of attrition between the Palestinians and Israel which would "complicate Israel's relations with an increasingly unsympathetic world." The *Sun* added, "It is Mr. Begin's style, unfortunately, to respond ungenerously to large favors."

The brutal atrocities suffered by the Palestinian and Lebanese population under Israeli attacks have contributed to the depth of the backlash against the Israel Lobby. Blasting "the propagandists for Israel," in the U.S. press Abourezk accused them of "dehumanizing Arabs because such dehumanization enable Israelis to engage with impunity in the savagery of killing. That is a tragic lesson in racism committed by people who have suffered the most throughout history from racism."

Syndicated columnist Nicholas von Hoffman has directly compared Israeli actions in Lebanon to the treatment of the Jewish population under Hitler. Although few have spoken out so bluntly, there is a dawning realization in the U.S. that exactly this Israeli "Bettelheim syndrome" — identification with one's own Nazi persecutors — is dangerous to Israel, and indeed, to the whole world.

—Don Baier

U.S. Press Opposes Israeli 'Retaliation'

Amid the justifications provided by the Washington Post and the Boston Globe for Israel's "retaliation" raid of southern Lebanon, a clear pattern of U.S. press criticism of that action emerged. Both the East Coast and regional press joined in questioning the motives of the Israeli government in taking action that is so definitively damaging to recent peace initiatives.

We excerpt here portions of U.S. press criticism of the Begin government.

The *Chicago Tribune*, "Has Retaliation Helped?" (editorial), March 22:

Israel's willingness to accept an immediate ceasefire in Southern Lebanon is welcome news...

That force (United Nations — ed.) may not succeed in bringing peace but inaction would have been morally repugnant and irresponsible. It would only have confirmed the notion in some quarters that the United States is committed to an "Israel right or wrong" position...

Once again we hear about secure and defensible borders. Where are they? ... Israel's real security lies only in genuine peace with the established Arab governments and removing the cause of conflict: the homelessness of millions of displaced Palestinians. Staying in occupied Arab territories on the other hand breeds resentment on the part of the very governments which have the power to contain the Palestinian liberationists ... (the Begin government) has been insisting on expand-

ing rather than removing their settlements ... (Israel's) best course now is to withdraw its troops and get on with the peace talks.

The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, "Sparks in a Tinder Box," (editorial), March 16:

...The takeover of southern Lebanon by the Israeli armed forces, no matter how understandable from the viewpoint of a beleaguered Israeli government, is also deplorable ... It is a dangerous business ... It involves an invasion across international boundaries ... The invasion risks involving Lebanese forces in the conflict, but most importantly, it risks conflict with the Syrian forces which are keeping the peace in Lebanon.

Talk about tossing matches about in a dynamite warehouse!

Suppose the surgical operation did not work out as planned...(and) there was escalation and the world had a Sarajevo on its hands?

The *Seattle Times*, "Critical Juncture in Mideast Peace Efforts," (editorial) March 22:

...Begin says the resolution does not require Israel to withdraw from the occupied West Bank of the Jordan River.

That view is at odds not only with the position of every other government involved, but also with that of the