

# SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

By Diana Johnstone

ALBUFEIRA, PORTUGAL

**T**HE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL's 16th congress closed here on April 10 with the most urgent and unmanageable item on its agenda transformed into a corpse at its doorstep. Willy Brandt's club of socialist leaders waited too long to make up its mind between trying to help solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and hoping it would go away.

Merely to have his presence at the congress fully recognized, Dr. Issam Sartawi had to die. The leading Palestinian peace-maker was gunned down in the lobby of the Montechoro resort hotel, at the threshold of a door that was neither open nor shut.

The body was still lying in a pool of bright blood on the dull red tiling of the hotel lobby when outgoing SI Secretary General Bernt Carlsson rose to read from the rostrum the letter Sartawi had addressed the day before to SI Chairman Willy Brandt. "It is indeed an historic occasion of particular importance and significance that the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] was invited to the SI Congress as an observer and that it has accepted," the American-educated heart surgeon, born 48 years ago in what is now the Israeli-occupied West Bank, wrote in his last message.

Sartawi's message was in the form of a letter to Brandt because he was not allowed to address the congress. Throughout the months leading up to this congress, the SI remained deadlocked on the issue. Especially after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon last June, many member parties thought it necessary to oppose Israeli expansionism and encourage peace forces on both sides by recognizing PLO leaders striving for mutual recognition. Others were more worried about Israeli Labor Party leader Shimon Peres' threats to walk out if the SI recognized the PLO.

Finally, Sartawi was invited—and then ignored as much as possible. He had attended the 1980 Madrid congress as a journalist. But this time he had an observer's badge, without the name of his organization. "I'm Mr. PLO at this congress," he went around saying.

The invitation to send a representative was issued orally to Yasir Arafat in Tunis on February 4 by Portuguese socialist leader Mario Soares and later confirmed in writing. Yet afterward, some members of the Soares delegation could remember the invitation and others could not.

"Everyone comments on the PLO being invited, but not on its accepting," Sartawi stressed as the congress opened. "That also is significant. It means the PLO is following a certain policy."

Sartawi wrote to Brandt that the SI was particularly qualified to play a constructive role if it could show even-handedness, courage and clear vision. "Recognizing one side to the conflict alone, or surrendering to one-sided pressure to exclude the other party is counter-productive," he wrote.

Sartawi then asked the SI to exert pressure to bring about PLO participation in the search for peace. His letter reiterated the message he spelled out in detail during his June 13, 1982, lecture at the French International Relations Institute in Paris (see *In These Times*, July 28): in recent years the PLO has passed a "series of historically important resolutions" implicitly recognizing the state of Israel, and these steps deserve some counterpart from the other side leading to mutual recognition, as a basis for dialog and an eventual peace settlement.

Sartawi's letter praised Israelis—including members of Uri Avnery's Sheli Party—who had responded to PLO overtures for dialog with progressive and democratic forces in Israel. In an allusion to the Israeli Labor Party headed by Shimon Peres, Sartawi added that it was "unfortunate that other Israeli forces which define themselves as progressive and democratic, and participate under these labels in international progressive and democratic bodies, have refused so

far to participate in this peaceful dialog."

A dead Palestinian is a good Palestinian. Once dead, Sartawi quickly became famous as the best Palestinian there ever was. Peres praised his courage, and publicly noticed, for the first time, that Sartawi personified "moderation."

Unless death improves a man, all the good things said about Sartawi had been even more true of him when he was alive. The question laying over the congress like a pall was what all these admirers had done to help Sartawi while he was still alive. They certainly had done nothing to protect him from the danger everyone knew was stalking him. Mario Soares and others who wanted to please all sides by both inviting the PLO and not inviting the PLO perhaps did not want to call even their own attention to the problem of Sartawi's safety. Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky warned of secret reports of a plot to kill Sartawi in Portugal, but the swarms of security guards wandering aimlessly around the Montechoro had no instructions to protect Sartawi. In a normally busy hotel lobby, his killer was able to fire three bullets in Sartawi's head, then walk out the front door past security men lounging on both sides of the glass front and run off down the street.

Sartawi had no private bodyguard. Lionel Jospin pointed out that it was part of Sartawi's philosophy of life "to feel free." His courage, which Uri Avnery called "legendary," was also politically necessary. Had he been wedged into a solid phalanx of personal bodyguards like Sandinista leader Bayardo Arce Castano, he could not have mingled as he did with congress delegates. Part of his task

was to represent, in his own personality, the humanity, or the normality, of a people shoved onto the margins of the world and branded as terrorists.

After Israel occupied his West Bank homeland in 1967, Sartawi gave up his successful medical career in the U.S. to found his own group dedicated to liberating Palestine by armed struggle. After the Palestinian national liberation movement was driven out of Jordan in the "black September" of 1970, Sartawi became convinced that armed struggle was getting nowhere and the way to save Palestinian national rights was through negotiations and reconciliation.

But he used to say that his experience as a military commander had been necessary preparation for his role as "peace fighter." It gave him credibility both with Palestinians and with his new Israeli friends Uri Avnery and Matti Peled, old soldiers from the other side who also had the courage to convert to the struggle for peace. Sartawi understood two worlds that rarely understood each other. The Israeli peace movement trusted him. Uri Avnery called his assassination an irreparable blow to the cause of peace and dialog.

Sartawi was left without physical, but also without political protection. With no clear success to show for his years of effort, he was left in an exposed position where his elimination could sever a key

That evening it kept occurring to me that his assassins might strike at any moment. I was a bit ashamed of these thoughts, but they were probably standard. If he spent that evening with me, and not with someone more important, useful to his cause, it might be because all his socialist friends and admirers were not exactly clustering around him in support.

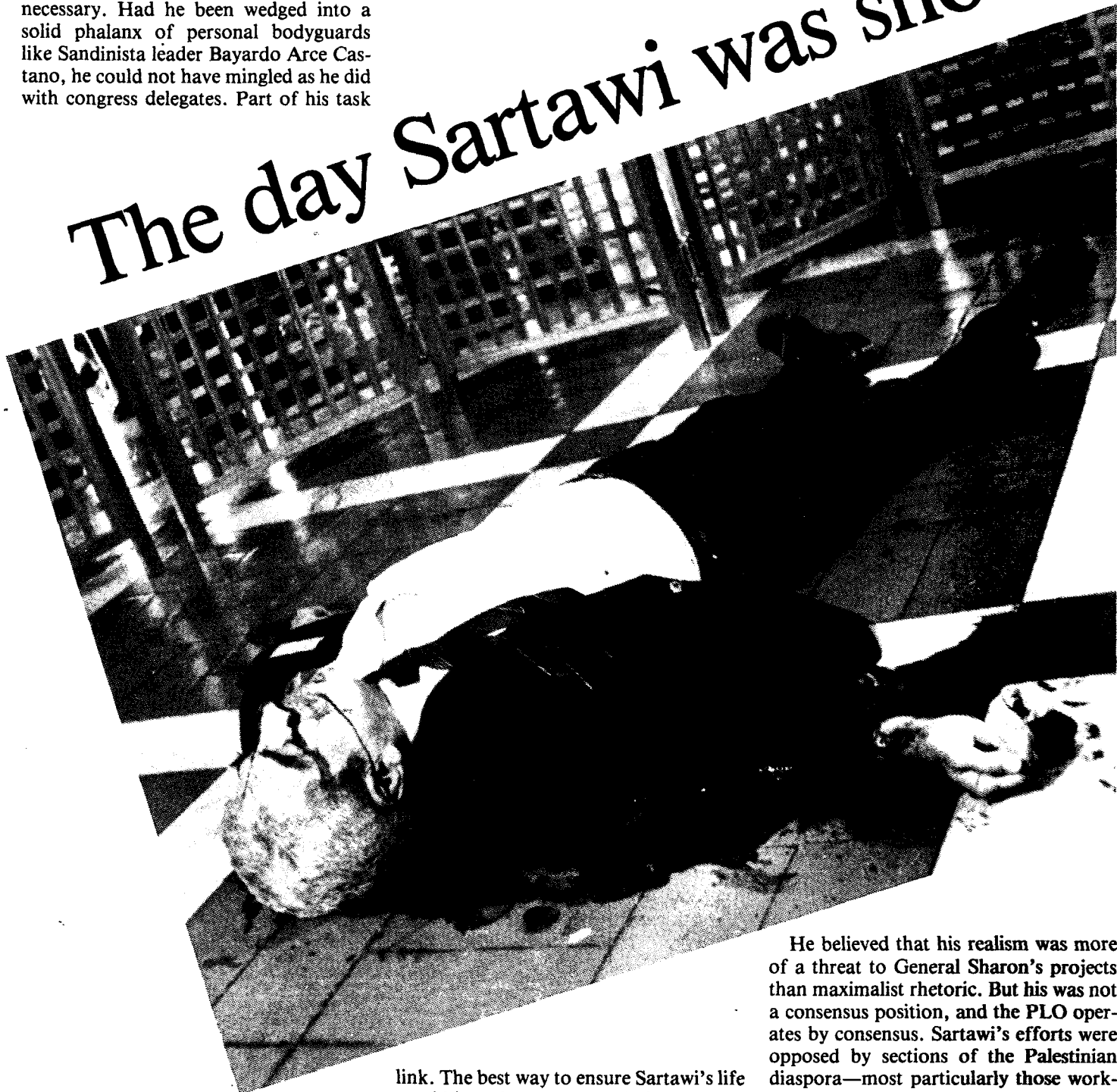
At the Algiers meeting of the Palestinian National Council last February, he was kept from speaking on procedural grounds. He resigned in protest. His resignation was turned down by Arafat, but his status remained ambiguous—just like his invitation to the SI congress.

"I wanted to insist that the invitation be addressed to the PLO, not to me," he told me. "I pointed out that I might be killed, or thrown out of the PLO or resign. And you see, I was right to foresee this problem."

Sartawi was harsh on the "dangerous rhetoric" with which many PLO leaders soothe over defeats and, in his opinion, get farther and farther from reality. The Western press widely quoted his response to claims that the battle of Beirut was a PLO victory: "A few more victories like that and we'll be meeting in the Fiji Islands."

*The PLO moderate, gunned down in a hotel lobby.*

## The day Sartawi was shot



**Once dead, Sartawi quickly became famous as the best Palestinian ever.**

link. The best way to ensure Sartawi's life would have been to reward his approach so that, even if he died there would be many other Palestinians carrying on his efforts. "More people will risk doing what I do if my approach pays off," he often said. The opposite was also true.

"I dragged the PLO kicking and screaming, like a little child, to the Socialist International," he told me a couple of evenings before his assassination. Along with his young assistant Anwar Abu Eisheh, we went to dinner at the popular A Ruina restaurant in Albufeira. He ordered the biggest fish in the house for us to share. "If we are going to die, we might as well die of eating fish," he said cheerfully.

He believed that his realism was more of a threat to General Sharon's projects than maximalist rhetoric. But his was not a consensus position, and the PLO operates by consensus. Sartawi's efforts were opposed by sections of the Palestinian diaspora—most particularly those working with, or for, Arab States that do not want to see a rival Palestinian state emerge in their region.

Sartawi tried in vain to get the PLO to make its implicit recognition of Israel explicit, in order to be able to talk to the U.S. "Europe and America are calling on Arafat to make courageous decisions," Sartawi said recently, "but Arafat has to deal with a highly diversified Palestinian national movement, and from the other side no one has ever made a gesture to help him. I have appealed over and over again to Israel to be more receptive and flexible. What have we got? Only total refusal to discuss, to negotiate, to seek

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any kind of compromise?

Sartawi was not a radical, not a socialist, but a liberal in the American sense who saw the SI as the main international forum for Western liberal values. He hoped to promote Israeli-Palestinian dialog through the mediation of the European socialist parties. Specifically, he hoped the SI parties would be able to bring the Israeli Labor Party around to a willingness to talk to moderate Palestinian leaders like himself. These efforts had to be on behalf of the PLO as a whole, if only to counter the inevitable suspicions and accusations leveled against peacemakers in such situations—that they are renegades seeking to sell out their comrades and make a deal with the enemy out of personal ambition or in the service of Western intelligence agencies.

Kreisky was in the forefront of SI leaders who heeded Sartawi's plea that the way to wean the PLO away from terrorism was to reward another approach. But Peres stubbornly refused dialog with the "representative of a terrorist organization."

Spanish Premier Felipe Gonzalez had come from Madrid at the end of the congress for what was to have been a triumphant climax of advancing socialism in the Iberian peninsula, calculated to give a boost to Mario Soares in the forthcoming Portuguese elections. The murder changed all that. The European reformers' gropings for ways to deal with increasingly baffling economic and social problems were abruptly splattered with blood from the nearest, longest and most dangerous (to the rest of the world) of all the many regional conflicts that sometimes seem to be moving toward a crescendo of planetary catastrophe. Gonzalez said this was proof that "regional conflicts can no longer be limited to their regions."

"Time is running out," he said. "There is not much time left to bring peace to Lebanon, to Central America.... We must stop thinking in terms of years and think in terms of months."

Spain's leading daily *El Pais* commented that the Sartawi assassination cast over the congress the huge doubt that the

SI represents anything that is possible. "The general idea of the International is to achieve a lessening of the class struggle which is going on today on a planetary scale and convert it into a general reform, in a universal democracy where inequalities will be smaller and confrontations can be mediated by permeable systems and not by classes, races, peoples or castes."

In his letter to Brandt, Sartawi praised him for leading the SI out of its "previous Eurocentric confines, to the broad expanses of internationalism, Third World involvement and North-South pre-occupation.... The persecuted and underprivileged peoples of Africa, Central and South America and even Asia, turned to the SI for help, and found in it refuge and succor." Only one people, the Palestinians, were forgotten, he added, suggesting that it might be "the manifest historical destiny of my people to suffer alone so that their tragic suffering might redeem the world and change it for the better."

"Dr. Sartawi," said Willy Brandt, "had put great, perhaps too great expectations in our association. His death gives us a duty to redouble our efforts...."

In the stunned mood of the final session, the SI accepted without the anticipated objections to include Lebanese Progressive Socialist Party leader Walid Jumblatt, who the day before had asked whether "racism" was behind the Northern European parties' refusal to sign a petition to let Sartawi address the congress, among its vice-presidents. Urged on eloquently by Ed Broadbent of the Canadian New Democratic Party and Felipe Gonzalez, the congress passed an emergency resolution expressing alarm at invasions of Nicaragua by mercenaries from Honduras and demanding an immediate end to direct or indirect intervention by the U.S. The unusually bold criticism of the U.S. was meant to support American congressional opposition to the Reagan administration's Central American war projects.

The assassination of Sartawi was claimed by the notorious Abu Nidal group, which broke away from the PLO 10 years ago and has since murdered a dozen prominent PLO moderates. Abu

Nidal is strangely sheltered by Iraq, and sometimes by Syria, whose leaders, however much they hate each other, share an evident wish to prevent any independent Palestinian leadership from having a say in the region's future.

In addition to developing contacts with the Israeli left and European socialists, Sartawi had been given the delicate mission of negotiating the return of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel since the invasion of Lebanon. His assassination was immediately cited by Israeli representatives as proof that there is no use trying to deal with Palestinian moderates. The day Sartawi was killed, Reagan's Mideast peace plan collapsed. There seemed little to deter Prime Minister Begin from pressing on to build an ever-expanding Israel on the deepening despair and confusion of the Arab world.

(More about the SI congress next week.)

## Recovery

Continued from page 3

economy gripped by a growing social crisis caused by double-digit unemployment, that is still threatened by inflation, that is increasingly insensitive to monetary stimulation, that is living under the shadow of a Third World debt avalanche.

William E. Simon, the conservative former secretary of the treasury, recently summed up the absurdity of it all rather neatly (if one-sidedly) in the *Wall Street Journal*. Commenting on the Reagan administration's plans to appropriate \$8.4 billion more for the International Monetary Fund so that it can stave off financial collapse in the Third World, he said: "We are witnessing the tragic spectacle of the deficit-ridden rescuing the bankrupt with an outpouring of more American red ink...."

Luckily for Simon and his wealthy neighbors in the fox-hunting country of rural New Jersey, the world is not a rational place. Otherwise, the economy would have laid down and died years ago. Instead, it keeps sputtering on, its range of options growing increasingly narrow,

its performance increasingly feeble. As Patricia Linton, a left-wing economist at the New School for Social Research, observed recently, the choice facing the international economy appears to be either the big bang of a massive Third World default or the slow fizzle of renewed stagflation.

### Tragedy in the Third World.

By last count, some 25 nations, either in the Third World or the Eastern bloc, were in arrears on their debt payments. It is an unprecedented problem and sure to grow worse without at least moderate economic growth in the industrialized world. For most of these nations it is as if 1929 had already arrived.

All have been forced to devalue currencies (thereby reducing on imports), slash public spending and allow unemployment to rise. Joblessness in Mexico is said to exceed 40 percent, nearly twice the American rate during the Great Depression. Food riots recently erupted in Brazil. Nigeria, once the most booming economy in black Africa, has been caught short by collapsing oil prices and is now nearly insolvent, its industry at a standstill and its oil earnings slashed.

Heavy borrowing resulted in impressive growth rates for much of the Third World in the '70s, but the era of relative largesse appears at an end. Rimmer de Vries, senior vice-president of Morgan Guaranty Trust, recently warned a Senate subcommittee that "even after current debt problems are resolved," the Third World "should not count on the same rapid pace of bank lending as in the recent past. Fewer banks are likely to participate in new LDC [less developed country] lending in the future. Those that continue will do so at a slower pace after their recent credit experience."

De Vries ignores the responsibility of the international banks in encouraging the impoverished Third World to overborrow and "live beyond its means." And in warning of many years of belt-tightening to come, the head of one of the world's richest banks seems unaware of the social explosion that could ensue. That kind of shortsightedness and political obtuseness is part of the reason that the banks got into such trouble in the first place.

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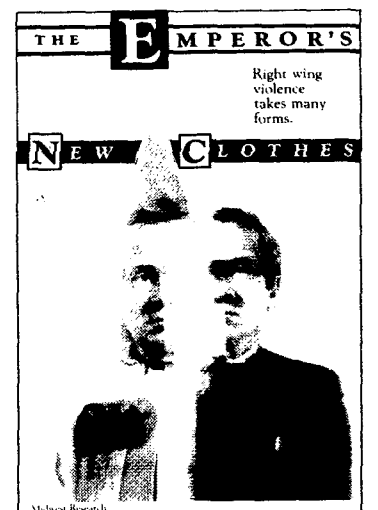


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By Claudia Wright

WASHINGTON

**T**HE NOMINATION OF KENNETH Adelman to be the director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) won Senate endorsement on April 14, but Richard Perle, the assistant secretary of defense for international security policy—the man whose machinations for a purge of the arms agency led to Adelman's appointments—may not have long to savor his victory.

After a falling-out with some of his Pentagon allies, several "Deep Throats" are at work, encouraging the media to expose Perle. He is the first senior U.S. official ever to receive payments—at least \$140,000—to represent an Israeli weapons company and to use his influence on U.S. contracts for Israeli arms.

Perle is also involved in the case of his deputy, Stephen Bryen, who faces investigation for alleged espionage on behalf of Israel's Defense Ministry. In Bryen's case, Perle disregarded the evidence that had been gathered during an FBI-Justice Department inquiry and may have been involved in decisions to protect Bryen and prevent the evidence against him from being disclosed.

Thus Perle faces allegations of several violations of federal law—conflict of interest, failure to register as a foreign agent and conspiracy to obstruct justice in the Bryen case. These allegations stem from only two of several cases that have begun to surface in Washington. Others involve Perle's role in controlling U.S. high-technology exports, handling the Siberian gas pipeline dispute with Western Europe and determining U.S. policy for the provision of aircraft and military bases in Turkey.

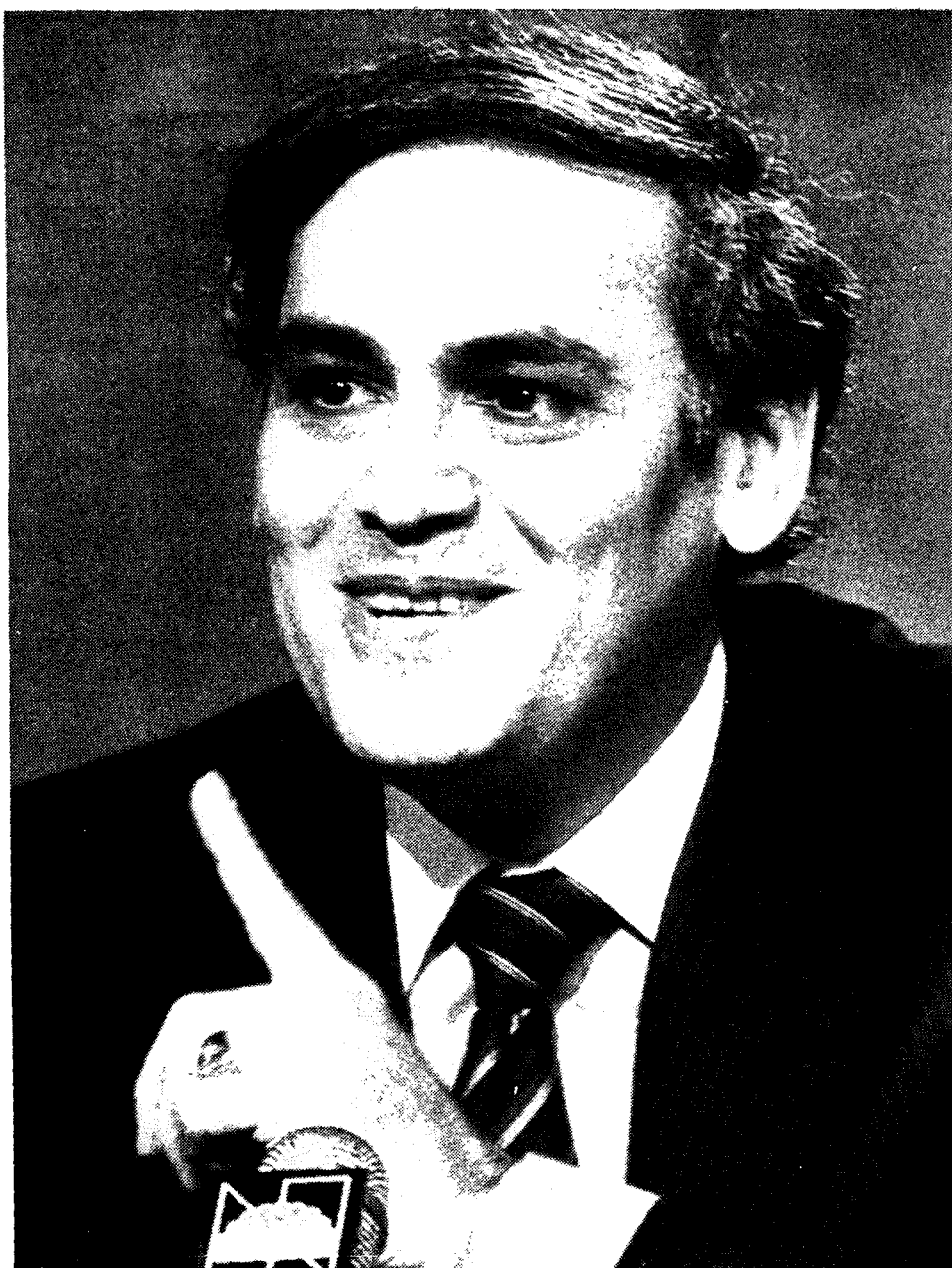
In each case, a similar pattern emerges. Perle, his wife, his friends, their wives, his legal advisors and business partners have all provided each other with lucrative employment and consulting contracts inside and outside the government. The group publishes each other's military and foreign policy assessments, which in turn recommend policy decisions and congressional appropriations that benefit the group's clients and enrich group members. Perle and his friends are based in key Senate staff positions, in bureaus of the Defense Department, State Department, Treasury, Commerce and the White House.

In a long Washington career, the 41-year-old Perle has built the kind of personal network ambitious government officials must have. He landed his first government job in 1969 after university study in political science and consulting jobs with defense firms. He was a consultant to Paul Nitze, then special assistant to the defense secretary.

Perle then joined the Senate staff, changing duties and committee memberships three times before becoming the principal staff member of the subcommittee on arms control of the Armed Services Committee. The chairman of the subcommittee was Henry Jackson (D-Wash.). Perle was Jackson's protegee; the Armed Services Committee was his power base and the recruiting ground for many of his current friends and allies in the Reagan administration. It was also the source of much classified information of interest to defense contractors, Israeli officials and entrepreneurs, and others who proved willing, between the time Perle left his Senate post in March 1980 and joined the Defense Department 12 months later, to pay him well for what he knew or how he could influence Defense Department contracts.

In the Senate, Perle worked closely with Howard J. Feldman, an ex-Army lawyer who was chief counsel for the Senate subcommittee on permanent investigations for part of the time Perle was there. Feldman went into private legal practice in 1977, and became Perle's partner in a number of real estate investments now worth more than \$200,000. Both men are friends of Edward Luttwak, an Israeli who specializes in defense consulting in Washington.

Luttwak has admitted to having close



PENTAGON

## Perle under fire for defense deals

connections with Israeli intelligence and Israel's Defense Ministry; he is also an expert on Greek-Turkish politics. During Perle's tenure, Luttwak has been a consultant to the Defense Department and has publicly argued the case for closer military collaboration between Israel and the U.S., and the U.S. and Turkey.

When government officials take office, they are required to file a detailed statement of their income, former employment and assets—to certify that in their official duties there will be "no actual or potential conflict of interest." Perle has filed several statements, the most recent dated February 1. It was formally approved by the undersecretary of defense for policy, Fred Ikle. These documents reveal that in 1980 Perle received substantial consulting payments from Abington Corporation, TRW, Northrop, System Development Corporation and Tamares Ltd.

Abington is a Washington defense consulting operation originally owned and run by John Lehman, secretary of the Navy. His brother Christopher, formerly an aide to Senator John Warner, a Republican member of the Armed Services Committee, is now in charge of a strategic forces office at the State Department. Another Lehman brother, Joseph, is in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and a fourth brother, Ronald, works for Perle as deputy assistant secretary of defense for strategic forces policy. The Lehman firm was Perle's employer for most of 1980, and through the connection Perle earned \$140,000.

Washington sources claim that in late 1980 Perle and John Lehman had a falling-out over their consulting business, and Perle moved to arrange independent contracts with companies that had been clients of Abington's. One of these firms is listed in Perle's disclosure forms as Tamares Ltd. As Jeff Gerth of the *New York Times* has reported, Tamares is a subsidiary for a Liechtenstein Company. Both are fronts for Soltam Ltd., an Israel-

li arms builder. Owned by the Zabludowicz family and the Histadrut (the Israeli labor federation), Soltam builds gunnery systems for the "merkava" tank, several types of artillery and self-propelled howitzers, mortars and other arms and ammunition. Soltam's business is dependent on U.S. defense support in several ways—the company obtains advanced U.S. military technology and then resells it as Israeli-made weapons.

Soltam not only has depended on U.S. technology for its production line, but has increasingly looked to the U.S. market and military procurement contracts, for sales in the international arms market. Tamares was the channel through which Perle was paid to influence Pentagon decisions on Soltam's products. In particular, Pentagon sources have told journalists that Perle and his friends on the Senate Armed Services Committee collaborated to push Soltam's 81-MM mortar, encouraging the U.S. Army to re-evaluate an existing commitment to buy a competing British-made weapon.

The records show that Perle received about \$90,000 in payments from Tamares until November 1980. From then until March 1981, a period when Perle was also at work on the Reagan transition team for the Defense Department, the Israeli firm handed over another \$50,000. Daniel Spiegel, the Washington attorney for Soltam, told *In These Times* he had no comment on what this payment was for. Perle told the press he had been assessing the market for the 81-MM mortar.

Soltam was not the only arms company in the market for Perle. TRW paid him \$5,000 for "analysis and recommendations concerning strategic and tactical requirements and other national defense areas." The date of the contract in mid-1981 overlaps Perle's work at the Pentagon, but he claims the money and paperwork were actually for work done before he took office. Perle says he was advising TRW on an energy project in Italy.

Energy and, in particular, oil are a ma-

**Richard Perle, assistant secretary of defense for international security policy, faces allegations of conflict of interest.**

For policy concern in Perle's official Pentagon responsibilities. His wife, Leslie Barr, who was appointed to a Commerce Department job in October 1981, has also played an influential role in Reagan administration oil policy. In late 1981 and early 1982, both were involved in developing the administration's plan to force U.S. oil companies to stop operations in Libya, imposing an embargo on U.S. purchase of Libyan oil and Libyan purchase of U.S. oilfield equipment or other high-technology products. According to a Commerce Department source, Barr directed a study in early 1982 that found Libyan oil imports were a risk to U.S. national security interests. The study contradicted the assessment of the General Accounting Office, but the Libyan oil embargo was imposed nonetheless.

Barr and several associates and friends—at the Treasury, State Department and Perle's domain at the Defense Department—closely monitor international commodity stocks and trade, and play leading roles in licensing decisions for foreign products to enter the U.S. and for U.S. exports to go abroad. Friends outside the government, like Feldman, are investors in companies that trade in these commodities. Feldman has also been a registered lobbyist for a number of domestic oil companies, pipeline operators, utilities and alternative energy producers. Perle himself lists an investment in an oil drilling partnership.

Perle and his staff played "the lead role," according to a Pentagon source, in opposing the Soviet-West European gas pipeline, in blocking State Department moves to compromise with the Europeans and in pushing U.S.-produced alternative energy supplies to take the place of the Siberian gas.

The Soltam and TRW contracts, artillery and energy, were not the only ones Perle signed for in the weeks preceding his appointment at the Pentagon. According to officials of Northrop, the military aircraft manufacturer, on Feb. 10, 1981, Perle signed a contract with the company for just 18 days work. In that time, according to Northrop, Perle was "to have meetings with foreign policy analysts and then to discuss with us how our technical presentations might be constructed." Among the topics discussed was the aircraft Northrop has spent several hundred million dollars developing, without finding as yet a single buyer—the F-20 Tigershark. A company official said that Perle was paid "under \$10,000" for his efforts.

As assistant secretary of defense, Perle has been responsible for the Pentagon's negotiations with Turkey. These have dealt with the American request for bases in Eastern Turkey from which to command and operate elements of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force. In return, Turkey has demanded substantial increases in its military and economic aid from the U.S., grants and private investment instead of loans and an advanced new aircraft for the Turkish Air Force.

Northrop has tried to sell the Tiger-shark to both the Pentagon and the Turks. Initially, the Pentagon agreed to buy the first four prototypes of the aircraft, enabling Northrop to recover much of its early development cost. But Congress, terming this a political payoff to Northrop, refused to appropriate the money. At a March 10 Senate hearing, however, Perle promoted both the administration's request for both \$930 million of military aid for Turkey—doubling the 1980 figure—and Northrop's Tiger-shark aircraft.

In a government that has almost elevated self-aggrandizement to a principle of national economic policy, the possibility of conflict of interest in Perle's dealings is unlikely to produce more than a mild stir. But much more serious—because it touches the Pentagon's patriotic nerve—is the still-pending investigation of Perle's deputy, Stephen Bryen, of espionage for Israel, and the role Perle and his associates may have played in suppressing the case.

*Next week: It's all in the family.*