

diers try to force a woman to extinguish a burning tire. She refuses, saying, "I am here all alone with my two children. My husband is not here. Leave us alone; we have done nothing. The soldiers put out the tire themselves and continue their patrol. When the patrol leaves, the neighborhood's lights are switched back on."

A visiting neighbor, Hatem, sits and talks of a friend in prison. Hatem has never been in jail and, despite the *intifada*, still works inside Israel. And despite the boycott of Israeli goods, he still smokes Israeli-made cigarettes. Most Palestinians smoke cigarettes produced only in the territories. The Palestinian community intensely pressures its members to cut all ties with Israel, but Hatem shrugs and says he has no fears about his life. "I want to get married," he says. "And I need money—Jordanian, American, Israeli."

The Fajr family conducts an ongoing debate about the *intifada*. Surprisingly, the topic is not the Israeli government's current election proposal, which is not considered worthy of discussion. Rather it is the wisdom of the November 1988 "Declaration of Independence" of the Palestine National Council (PNC) which implicitly recognized the state of Israel.

Two of the sons argue that too much was bargained away for nothing, but a daughter defends the document, saying that the PLO was merely responding to the "will of the *intifada*." All, however, worry that Arafat must produce something tangible for the Palestinians or lose their support.

Abu-Salin's name comes up in conversation. "I've met him three times," says Nayef, a friend of the Fajr family and a working journalist in Hebron. "Before the *intifada* I respected Salin and his thoughts. But much has changed." Nayef lumps Abu-Salin with a group of high-profile Palestinians whom he fears the Israeli government will attempt to single out as an alternative leadership to the PLO. But the real leadership is in the grass roots, he says. "How many times has the Israeli government said they caught members of the Unified Leadership? But the leaflets still come out."

Jenin, 100 miles north of Jerusalem, rarely commands the same media attention as Ramallah, Bethlehem or Nablus, which are all situated closer to the Holy City. Surprisingly, the city has remained largely free from Israeli settlement, even though it rolls out upon one of the most fertile areas of the West Bank and lies less than 10 miles from the 1967 Green Line delineating the Occupied Territories. It is sometimes recalled that Arafat shuttled back and forth between Jenin and Nablus when he laid the foundations for the PLO.

Confrontations between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians are almost a ritual in the Jenin refugee camp that is located next to the city. Around 2 p.m. young boys gather, blockade the streets with stones and wait. Half an hour later, jeeps from the Israeli military complex across the road enter the camp and begin their patrol.

The Arouri house perches uneasily at the edge of a small rise in the area coined "Center Camp," where most of the major confrontations occur. The house serves as an ideal lookout spot for both Palestinians and Israeli soldiers, and pitched battles often occur for its control.

In a recent incident, 15 soldiers surrounded the house and began to throw stones, says Samir, the father. "They entered the house and told me I must bring my sons or they would kill me."

The two sons, aged 22 and 24, were beaten by the soldiers in the street. Word quickly spread, and a crowd began to form. Because of the crowd the soldiers quickly left the area. The younger son, apparently frightened and severely beaten, fled and never returned.

In 1948 most residents of Jenin Camp left Haifa, which is now Israel's third-largest city, as well as a major port and industrial center. Under the two-state solution outlined in the PNC declaration, Haifa would remain an Israeli city—a political reality many Jenin residents still cannot accept. Many Palestinians in Jenin dream of a united Palestine with the same desire that many Israelis dream of "Eretz Israel," or "Greater Israel," which would include the West Bank. Still, Jenin residents grudgingly accept the PNC declaration.

"The unity in the PLO outside the West Bank and Gaza Strip is reflected inside the Occupied Territories," says a resident of Jenin Camp. "There are many homes, and there is something shared: freedom and independence. We go with the shared."

"The shared" seems to surprise even those

doing the sharing. "Before the *intifada*, we argued with our neighbors," says a resident of Hebron. "Now, if I knock on the wall he will come over to see if I am all right."

It is difficult to pinpoint why the *intifada* has had the effect it has, both internationally and within the territories. "It is a part of our psychology now," says a resident of Jenin. "We can't live without it."

Although many Palestinians contend they can maintain the *intifada*'s momentum indefinitely, others believe the uprising will ebb without some breakthrough, perhaps before the November anniversary of the PNC declaration. Although Arafat maintains support within the PLO, many believe he could quickly fall from favor with residents of the Occupied Territories, who, after two years, have seen little political movement.

A Jenin resident admits the *intifada* may not lead immediately to a Palestinian state. "The *intifada* is one link in a chain from 1917 [when the Balfour Declaration called for a Jewish "home in Palestine"] to the present," he says. "It is not the end, but it may help us see our state."

When the *intifada* began, Palestinians commonly claimed they had "broken the cycle of fear." Twenty-two months later, the Abu-Salins, the Fajrs and the Arouris, though living with very different aspects of the occupation, all understand "the shared," something the Israeli government has so far been unable to combat, and something the Palestinians are counting on to propel them forward. □

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A young boy from the West Bank's Jalazone refugee camp expresses his support for the *intifada*.

UNRWA Photo by George Nehmeh

EDITORIAL

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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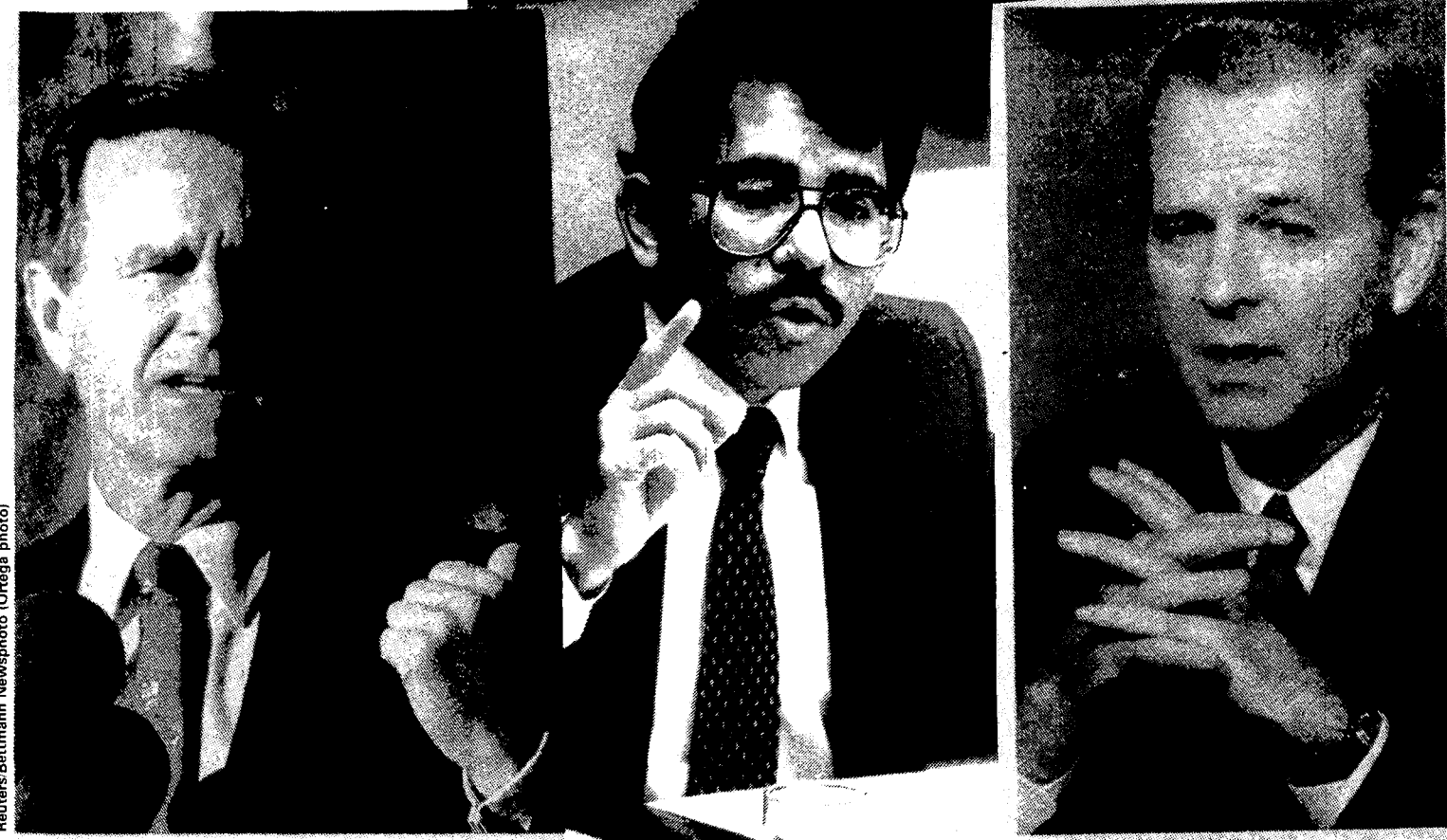
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Will the Nicaraguan elections be a rerun of Contragate?

In recent months the Bush administration has been scrambling for ways to support the anti-Sandinista coalition in the upcoming Nicaraguan elections without generating a lot of political heat in Congress. Initially, Secretary of State James A. Baker wanted Congress to give \$9 million—more than \$4.50 for each of the less than 2 million potential Nicaraguan voters—to the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) so that it could aid the United Nicaraguan Opposition headed by Violetta Chamorro. The NED, a quasi-governmental agency that promotes "free elections" overseas, is officially barred from actively taking sides in foreign elections. But Baker wanted Congress to change the law so the agency could openly help Chamorro.

To their credit, House Democratic leaders not only balked at Baker's request but also insisted on public assurances that the CIA would not be used to intervene secretly against the Sandinistas. Frustrated in these efforts, the administration in early September withdrew its request to use the NED. And last week President Bush finally stated that the CIA will not engage in secret activities to influence the outcome of Nicaragua's February elections.

These concessions were made in order to get Congress to give money openly to the Nicaraguan opposition, allegedly simply to facilitate the election process. This compromise appears finally to have given the administration a victory. Last week the House Appropriations Committee approved a bill that would provide up to \$9 million—most of it to the NED—for registering voters and monitoring the vote, but not explicitly for helping the opposition.

Does this mean that Baker and Bush have seen the light and have finally decided to stop interfering in the internal affairs of another sovereign nation? Not on your life. The week before the administration bowed to congressional pressure, Baker approached Japan's foreign minister at the recent United Nations meeting and asked that his country contribute campaign funds to the anti-Sandinista opposition. The request startled the Japanese, who diplomatically called it "inappropriate." According to news accounts in Tokyo, the secretary general of Japan's ruling Liberal Party reacted with surprise and disdain. The idea of supporting one party in another country's election is "impossible," he said. Japanese law prohibits foreigners from contributing to political parties in Japan, and presumably it would not go over well at home if the government were to violate the principle of non-interference in respect to Nicaragua.

This, of course, makes one wonder which other countries Baker has solicited to do the administration's dirty work. During the Reagan administration, as we found out during the Contragate hearings, several countries were coerced or cajoled into aiding the contras when Congress had made it illegal. Is a similar situation developing here? Congress should find out the answer to that question.

Now that it's out in open, the underlying principles should be debated

It is better that the money being spent in Nicaragua is not covert, and that at least a part of it will go for the benign purpose of facilitating the election process. Nevertheless, the principles underlying congressional aid are the same as those motivating the administration. As the press reported, lawmakers generally endorsed the idea of helping the opposition and objected only because President Bush's proposals were excessive and hastily conceived. NED president Carl Gershman, for example, acknowledged that the \$5 million Bush intends to spend through Gershman's organization in Nicaragua "dwarfs what the endowment has been able to spend" on elections in Chile, Panama, the Philippines or any other country in which his organization meddles. And Rep. Anthony C. Beilenson (D-CA) objected to the original Bush plan only because "covertly sup-

porting the opposition in these elections would be unwise, as well as unnecessary and counterproductive." Unnecessary because Congress could do so openly, even with the tacit support of the Sandinistas, who desperately need the foreign exchange, and counterproductive because everyone would know anyway and it would give the Sandinistas a public-relations advantage.

Congress never considers whether we have a right to intervene in the domestic affairs of another nation, especially in the carrying out of an election. But if another nation attempted to influence our elections it would be a different story. It doesn't take much imagination to know how Americans would react if Japan gave money to help elect anti-protectionist members of Congress, or if Arab states gave money to elect pro-Palestinian legislators. And, of course, the anger would be justified. Yet no matter how sanitized this aid appears, Congress is interested in it only because the majority of members believe it will aid the side they support in Nicaragua. But this is not Congress' business, much less our business as a democratic nation. In the glory days of the American empire, such aid—almost always covert—was routine, and so pervasive as to be immune to political criticism. Fortunately, times have changed, and what our government once did with impunity is now beginning to be publicly debated. But it's time to begin debating the underlying principles, not just the practicalities of our foreign policies.