

Q & A

Are there any proposed laws on anti-semitism supported by the Jewish community?

Yes. Assemblyman Mel Levine has introduced a bill (AB 326), which would increase penalties for assaults or vandalism committed in synagogues, churches or cemeteries. The Jewish community of San Francisco, Marin and the Peninsula has determined to strongly support that bill.

Such a law might act as a short-range deterrent because of the increased penalties. But, more than that, it would sharply state our society's commitment to pluralism. It says that violence is officially intolerable -- and violent acts of bigotry are doubly intolerable.

The current evidence is that there is no greater number of anti-semites in America than there have been in recent years (and a smaller number of anti-semites than there were a generation ago) -- but there is a climate in which such anti-semites as exist feel more license to express themselves flagrantly. This sense of "license" is exactly what the Levine bill addresses itself to.

And that is why our Jewish community, by way of the JCRC which includes all organized elements of the community, is supporting the bill -- and recommending that the organized Jewish community of the state, through JPAC, do the same. Other bills are being considered. In the meantime, you may wish to inform your Assemblyman and State Senator of your support of AB 326.

Is there opposition by the Jewish community to the proposed Saudi arms sale?

Yes. The organized Jewish community of San Francisco, Marin and the Peninsula understands, with many others, that the proposed sale is ill-advised -- and is so expressing itself to our administration and Congressmen.

Earl Raab
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In the first place, when the sale of F-15s was made to Saudi a couple of years ago, it was with the expressed understanding that America would not sell Saudi the kind of sophisticated equipment for those planes which is now being proposed. Such equipment increases the range and firepower of the F-15s to permit serious assault on Israel.

The administration wants to create an alliance in the Middle East which includes Saudi, as well as Israel and Egypt. Indeed, such a collective security alliance would be important, perhaps essential, for the U.S. -- *if* that alliance integrates America's national-interest concerns in that area.

However, one of America's fundamental national-interest concerns is the security of Israel -- which is the only stable ally and symbol of the free western world in the Middle East. The Reagan administration has openly shifted America's perception of the Middle East from the narrow focus of an Israeli-Arab conflict, to the larger focus of the East-West conflict. That perception not only gets rid of the false thought that the "Palestinian Question" is the center of the Middle East conflict -- but it also more clearly establishes Israel's importance to American national interest.

Therefore, it makes no sense for the U.S. to pursue Saudi friendship at the expense of Israeli security. It is true that any such sale to Saudi would include compensatory sales, loans and loan conditions for Israel. However, we seem to be making no demands on Saudi to become part of an integrated alliance in the Middle East. Our administration and Congressmen should be told that, as a matter of self-interest, a commitment to the Middle East peace process should be a firm condition of *any* American sales to Arab countries.

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