

## The U.S. Interest In Israel

At the excruciating heart of General George Brown's recent comments was this proposition: The United States is supporting Israel, not because of American national interest, but because of the influence of American Jews.

That is a double-threat proposition: For Israel, if the head military man in the U.S. does not believe that support of Israel is primarily in the national interest; for American Jews if the U.S. public does not believe that support of Israel is primarily in the national interest, when things get sticky.



Raab

are Jewish.

In the crunch, the U.S. will not support Israel for sentimental reasons. And the U.S. is not going to support Israel because of American Jewish influence. Our proportion of the American population is diminishing. The Jews were close to four percent of the population in the mid-1930's; now we are closer to two and a half percent. But in the vast majority of those jurisdictions in which Congressmen are elected, Jews constitute less than one percent of the population. And if we don't have the population, neither do we have the financial influence. By count, about one half of one percent of those in the executive suites of American banks and corporations

Jews are active, politically. But their only decisive weapon is persuasion. And, in this case, the persuasion has to be based on the merits of the proposition that the U.S. does have an over-riding national interest in supporting Israel. What is the nature of that national interest?

It is a prime objective of Soviet foreign policy to dominate in the Middle East. That has been a prime objective of Russian leaders since the Tsars. It is still a crucial geopolitical area, in military and economic terms, because it is still a crucial communications and transportation crossroads with respect to the European, Asian and African continents. Now, there is the oil.

The Soviet Union's strategy is to keep the area unstable, so that it can fish in the troubled waters. That way, the Arab nations can be kept dependent on the Soviet Union. Conversely, the American objective is stability in the Middle East, an absence of hostilities, so that the Soviet Union will not have that opportunity. Then, the U.S. will have the opportunity of developing normal relationships with the countries in that area, protecting its access to oil and strategic routes.

Why not the other way around? Why can't the U.S. play the Soviet game: embrace the Arab nations and let Israel go hang? Wouldn't that make more sense, since it is the Arab nations, not Israel, which hold the oil and most of the land? Would not a state of stability be achieved if Israel were subjugated?

That is not the way prevailing American observers and strategists see it. Friendly U.S. action towards the Arab nations — for example, Eisenhower pulling England, France and Israel out of Egypt in 1957 — never resulted in a reliably friendly Arab stance towards the U.S. The tide of Arab nationalism is basically anti-American and anti-Western; it would have been that without the existence of Israel. And the Soviet Union could have fished in the waters of inter-Arab hostility. On the other hand, Israel is a dependable political and ideological ally in the Middle East — and perhaps the only dependable ally the U.S. has left in the world.

Of course, there are other factors relating to U.S. national interest in the security of a democratic Israel. American security depends on stability not just in the Middle East but around the world. For example, if anarchy is substituted for legal procedures as a normal process for the world, as it is now being reflected in United Nations behavior, then the Soviet Union will constantly have the U.S. at disadvantage everywhere. The Middle East is now the major testing ground.

That is prevailing American strategy at this point, and it is difficult to see how U.S. national interest can be realistically interpreted in any other way. But someone should tell General Brown.