

ever can. And the November 2000 election showed that the Dems' potential support base is now about three million votes vaster than the GOP's. The national rallying behind Bush after 9/11 seemed to belie that assessment, but worrying trends in the economy and the body bags coming home from Iraq have stripped Bush of his red, white, and blue Teflon coating. If Clark can take him, so can Dean.

Obviously, if Clark's well-documented operatic streak breaks through, he may yet fall flat. After all, such unfortunate personality tics brought down Scott and MacArthur—whose command achievements dwarfed Clark's—in their own political adventures. But even if Clark does well, or too well, he could face big problems. The Clintons might try to undercut him if it looks like 2004 could be a Democratic year after all. So instead of offering up a sacrifice bunt in the form of Clark to keep control of the national political machinery away from Dean—and leave the way open for Hillary to win the White House in 2008—the Clintons might decide 2004 should be her turn after all. If Bush's poll numbers continue to decline, expect Clark's standing, from his very supporters, to suffer the death of a thousand cuts—and whispers.

All this should militate against Clark. After all, the worst thing a trial-balloon candidate can do is actually to develop any momentum of his own. But as the current administration's economic and national insecurity politics show, there has never been an age when chutzpah can carry one farther in America. Dean seeks to change the times in which we live; Clark is all too emblematic of them. ■

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**Israel is calling up Army reserves** to reoccupy much of the Palestinian Authority's self-rule area and to carry out expanded military action through the end of November. The Bush administration will not interfere. The recent Israeli bombing raid on an empty camp in Syria was conducted to probe air defenses and to determine anti-aircraft response, not to kill terrorists. Ariel Sharon's escalation and the anti-Syrian rhetoric coming from the Bush administration presage Israeli strikes against Hezbollah in Lebanon and against Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) leadership in Damascus. Syria is being informed through diplomatic channels that unless it expels PIJ head Ramadan Shallah and Hamas it will be subjected to sanctions and pre-emptive strikes. The White House hard line and the impending House of Representatives vote to impose sanctions against Syria have placed the U.S. squarely in the middle of the conflict, even though the case against Damascus as a hotbed of terrorism relies on selective use of intelligence. Congress is lambasting Syria to support Israel, which, at the moment, coincides with the administration view.



**Morale at the CIA** has plummeted after President Bush's admission that the source of the leak of Valerie Plame's identity may never be determined. Coming only one day after the statement that three top administration officials had not participated in the leak, the Bush comment appears a deliberate attempt to hobble the investigation. CIA officers argue that the "outing" of an officer under cover is no simple matter and would result in a linkage to the leaker, who undoubtedly had direct contact with the officer in some official capacity. Such contact took place in briefings that the CIA's counter-proliferation staff gave to the National Security Council (NSC) earlier this year. Plame was present and participated in briefing the NSC's weapons of mass destruction referents, including one leading neoconservative. Some CIA officers suspect that the NSC meetings may be the source of the leak of Plame's identity, with the information being shared with other neoconservatives in the Vice President's office, who actually briefed journalist Robert Novak.



The same **American Enterprise Institute** (AEI) neoconservatives that urged war with Iraq are now **pushing regime change for Iran**. Two AEI "resident scholars" who are also Pentagon contractors have just returned from meetings in Rome with Iranian dissidents, reportedly including "Iranian intelligence sources" provided by arms dealer Manucher Ghorbanifar of Iran-Contra fame. Ghorbanifar, a probable Israeli agent, has been passing the Pentagon information—that the CIA regards as fabricated—linking Iraq with Iran's nuclear program. One month ago, AEI hosted the Ayatollah Hossein Khomeini. Two weeks ago, he spoke before the Pentagon's Douglas Feith, head of the former Office of Special Plans, source of much of the questionable intelligence about Iraq. Khomeini, a grandson of the Islamic Republic's deceased founder, opposes the clerical regime in Tehran and was well received when he urged the U.S. to support Iranian opposition figures and to work to remove Iran's "ruthless dictatorship." According to Khomeini, the corrupt Iranian regime is ready to fall and liberating forces will be cheered in the streets.

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# Israel's Democracy Dilemma

West Bank settlements force an existential question.

By Doug Bandow

DESPITE ITS CONTINUED backing of Israel, the Bush administration's patience is apparently not endless. Should Ariel Sharon's government continue to construct a security fence effectively annexing Palestinian areas to Israel, Washington has threatened to withhold some of the \$9 billion in planned loan guarantees.

Israelis are not pleased. "It's none of their business," complained Zitrin Eliezer, an Israeli settler in the West Bank. "Let them give California and Texas back to the Mexicans and then they can come and tell us what to do."

In fact, Eliezer is correct: Israel's policies aren't America's business. At least they wouldn't be if Washington were not backing Israel against all comers, providing billions in aid annually, arming its distant ally, and offering diplomatic cover for Israel. The price of dependence on America is meddling by Washington.

The U.S. has no choice but to demand, pressure, and whine. As Sept. 11 dramatically demonstrated, America pays a price for being identified with Israel's policies in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Obviously, terrorism against the U.S. reflects complex causes and circumstances, and the slaughter of innocents, whether Americans or Israelis, can never be justified.

But anger over U.S. support for Israel permeates Arab and Muslim nations. Even pro-American liberals in the most pro-American Mideast Muslim state,

Kuwait, uniformly criticize Washington when they see Israeli tanks confront Palestinian children. Dr. Steve Gilliland of Brigham Young University spent eight months in Jerusalem; he complains of "the assault on human rights, the incessant harassment, and the humiliation and violence the Palestinians suffer at the hands of the Israeli government."

Alas, the situation is only likely to get worse. Every killing encourages more killing: the young woman who set off the deadly bomb in Haifa apparently acted in retaliation for the killing of her brother and cousin in Jenin in the West Bank four months before. Her murder of 19 virtually forced an Israeli response. And on it goes, a tragedy without end.

Indeed, Israeli officials, including Vice Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, publicly

long pushed such an option; expulsion is the implicit if not explicit goal of most settlers. Understandable frustration over murderous suicide bombings has increased popular support for this brutal option.

American columnist Ben Shapiro writes, "If you believe that the Jewish state has a right to exist, then you must allow Israel to transfer the Palestinians and the Israeli-Arabs from Judea, Samaria, Gaza and Israel proper. It's an ugly solution, but it is the only solution."

The euphemisms roll off of his tongue. "It's not genocide; it's transfer." Czechoslovakia and Poland did it to Germans after World War II; Winston Churchill thought it was a good idea. Indeed, "expelling a hostile population is a commonly used and generally effective way

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talked of assassinating (or expelling or jailing) Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. No great loss: the man is a blood-stained thug. But for Israel to murder an elected quasi-head of state would make it, and its chief ally, America, appear equally roguish.

Even worse is talk of "solving" the conflict through ethnic cleansing. An extremist segment of Israeli opinion has

of preventing violent entanglements." Expelling nearly five million people from their homes is permissible, says Shapiro, because "Jews are not Nazis."

But he is advocating forced ethnic cleansing, not voluntary transfer. And that means inflicting mass hardship and possibly death on the population being "transferred." After all, the Palestinians aren't likely to obey an Israeli decree to