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Two Sections

Reagan cuts to boost health costs

Middle East: The next world war?

by Catherine Siegner

As part of the *Observer's* continuing coverage of political and economic struggles in the Middle East, this week we talk to two



YASSER ARAFAT

students in Portland—one Palestinian, one Iranian, and both Moslem, to get their views on recent events in that explosive region.

Majed Darweesh has been in the U.S. three years and is Palestinian. He and his family now live in Jordan, where he plans to return after finishing studies at Portland State University. He is a member of the General Union of Palestinian Students.

Miryam Ramezina is from Iran and has lived in the U.S. four years. She plans to return to her homeland after finishing a graduate degree in urban planning. The daughter of a Moslem father and a Polish Christian mother, she supports the revolutionary government headed by Ayatollah Khomeini.

Darweesh believes Egyptian president Anwar Sadat's assassination was a "continuation of a process; it doesn't mean that Camp David is over." He expects Sadat's successor, Hosni Mubarek, to follow Sadat's footsteps in the Middle East peace process and does not see Mubarek's leadership as a significant change for Egypt.

Ramezina says the Arab world's hatred for Sadat stemmed from his not meeting their demands and sitting down to talk peace with Israel, an "imperialist and Zionist" government.

The two place Middle Eastern countries into two camps: those of "moderate" (in Western media language) stripe, including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan (all more pro-Western than their neighbors), and those countries of "progressive" policies and more or less revolutionary—Iran, Libya, Algeria and Syria.

Darweesh sees Egyptian leader Mubarek as establishing a close relationship with the "moderate" governments and trying to "work it out as a group," a policy supported by the U.S. government. He believes the U.S. is calling the shots with regard to the peace talks process and is directing both the "moderate"

Arab countries and Israel.

What about Israel's bombing of the Iraqi nuclear plant and its recent annexation of the Golan Heights? Darweesh says U.S. irritation at Israeli actions is feigned. "Israeli policy is parallel to U.S. policy," he states. "The appearance of conflicts between them is just sand in the eyes. You can tell because of the recent strategic agreement between the U.S. and Israel."

As a Palestinian, Darweesh wants recognition of the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) and full participation of Palestinians in the Israeli government. "I want to get rid of the Zionist regime (of Menachim Begin); after that, we can sit and talk. I want Palestinians to take part in the talks and set up a democratic government of all the people."

He says this position is a more middle-of-the-road one than some members of the PLO would advocate, and that PLO leader Yasser Arafat represents the "moderate faction of the PLO. All of the PLO believes in armed struggle, the difference is in the process. Some factions don't believe in peace talks."

This interpretation is in direct conflict with the notion many Americans have that Arafat is a "terrorist," Darweesh admits. "The government of Israel considers the PLO a terrorist group." Part of the problem is due to racism, he claims.

"Palestinians and Jews were living together for hundreds of (Please turn to page 2 col. 1)

by Mary Ellen Leary

President Reagan, meet Willie Ramirez, of Hayward, Calif.

Willie is 11 years old. He is a quadriplegic, paralyzed from the neck down. He knows first hand about years of hospitalization while yearning to be home with his parents. This compelling human emotion was recognized by President Reagan in his November 10 press conference, after which he cut through the Medicaid red tape to let 3-year-old Katie Beckett of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, leave the hospital and go home, with tax provisions for her respirator and needed nursing care to keep her alive.

The Katie Beckett case illustrated, the president said, the wastefulness of bureaucratic rules which had kept the little girl hospitalized while her parents begged to care for her at home—at a monthly cost of only \$3,800, compared to the hospital monthly cost of \$12,000. Waiving strict Medicaid regulations in her behalf, the administration made it clear this was one, lone exception to the rule.

But that one case lifted the lid just enough to expose a critical problem in America's health care program: its needless regulatory complexity

and wasteful expense. Not only are facilities and trained personnel below the hospital level tragically short in supply, but the funding system in Medicaid and Medicare is designed to encourage a maximum amount of hospital care, rather than less costly alternatives.

Only by breaking through the rules, as President Reagan did, or bending them, as Willie Ramirez's ingenious friends at Stanford University Hospital did, can severely disabled patients eligible for federal support inside a hospital stretch regulatory language to permit care in less expensive places, even their homes.

Every state in the United States shares the absurdity in medical cost structure illustrated in California, where state officials say that, on any day of the year, at least 1,500 Medicaid patients occupy hospital beds unnecessarily, for lack of alternative places to move them and inflexibility in paying for them. If moved, most patients fall out of existing public support plans and have no care.

Said one experienced health care provider, Robert Lucas of Health Conservation Inc. in San Francisco: "The waste in public health pro- (Please turn to page 2 col. 4)



RONALD REAGAN

'Fenwick plan' draws challenges

Dr. James Fenwick, Interim Superintendent of the Portland Public Schools, told the School Board Monday night that serious discrepancies exist between the comprehensive desegregation plan and pre-existing racial balance policies. He thanked those members of the board who pointed out the discrepancy—Herb Cawthorne and Steve Buel—and advised that the Board deal with it so the administration can respond.

The racial balance policy requires that the administration analyze each year every school that approaches 50 per cent minority enrollment to determine whether the minority enrollment remains stable, and for schools exceeding 50 per cent minority enrollment recommend steps to reverse the trend and "prevent racial isolation."

The racial balance policy deals with numbers and the only way to respond is in ratios and boundaries, he explained. He advised the board to sort through their apparent differences and come up with a policy that meshes and gives clear signals to the administration. This would allow the staff to address issues of education and achievement.

"You desperately need to bring into balance the differences that exist within the Board so the staff can respond."

Fenwick submitted his annual report on racial balance, which contains several far-reaching recommendations—all designed to decrease percentages of minority students:

Patricia Rian, principal of Humboldt School, explained that the main issue at that school is lack of

space. By next year class size will reach 40 and classes will be taught in hallways. Portables a block away, that were to be for temporary use, are still being used. Parents want classrooms added or portables on site.

"While you consider racial balance, consider exerting your energy concerning providing a quality education no matter where the children are..." She advised the Board to work with the State to change racial balance guidelines or to obtain a waiver." She estimated that the school now has 50 too many students and without the portables would have 150 too many. There are 240 transfers from other areas, a large percentage of which are in preschool and Kindergarten.

Ronnie Herndon, co-chairman of (Please turn to page 3 col. 1)

Blacks favor 'New Information Order'

A sweeping majority of high ranking Blacks feel the American news media is biased, and they support the contention in the Third World that the Western press is unfair, according to a national survey by the Black Opinion Poll (BOP).

Some 340 questionnaires resulted in responses from 77 per cent of those contacted. "Which best describes the general press coverage of stories important to the Black community?" was one probe. The answers: 86.4 per cent said biased and narrow coverage; 6.8 per cent said unbiased but narrow coverage; 3.4 per cent said biased but wide coverage; and 3.4 per cent had no opinion.

Relatedly, 89.2 per cent said they

support the UNESCO drive for a "New World Information Order" due to Third World dissatisfaction with news coverage by the Western press. In addition, 85.9 per cent agreed with some Black journalists who contend the general (white controlled) press is "too crisis oriented in its Third World news coverage,

and positive accomplishments in the Third World go unnoticed."

The ranking Blacks were also asked: "What about news-worthy information you generate? Are you successful in getting the General Press to print it?"

Some 37 per cent said, "No I was unsuccessful in getting them to print it;" 29 per cent said "Yes they printed it but only after much resist-

ance;" 12 per cent said "Yes quite successful. They printed it with ease;" while 22 per cent had no response.

The BOP survey was conducted for the Black Press Institute, a national news gathering and media monitoring organization. Those polled were readers of the *Black Press Review*, a bi-monthly news and commentary report highlighting key events and trends in the Black community and published by the Institute. Those readers include Blacks in Congress, presidents of Black colleges, and a host of educators, administrators, publishers, lawyers and other "Black influentials."

(Please turn to page 2 col. 3)



Santa Claus visited children at annual Jack and Jill family Christmas social. Making their wishes known are Kari Enge, K. C. Scott, Lanette

Ambers, Mark White. Temporary Santa is Jim Walken.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)