

WORLD

Bush calls for resolution repeal to further peace efforts

By Laura Laxton
Staff Writer

In a maneuver that many experts are labeling as a political ploy, President Bush asked the United Nations last week to repeal its 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism.

Zionism, the effort of the Jewish people to regain and retain their biblical homeland, has led to a continued controversy over Israel's occupation of the predominantly Palestinian West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"Bush has many, many chips in his

hands right now—money, arms and so on—and he is willing to play them," said Fred Newman, director of the Castillo Cultural Center, a group designed to increase cultural awareness.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir responded Tuesday to Bush's proposal by denying the existence of the Green Line, the common name for the border between the occupied territories and Israel.

Shamir's statements imply that the occupied territories are a legitimate part of Israel, recorded in the Bible as a gift from God to the Jewish people.

"By doing this, Israel is essentially saying they can't compromise on something that doesn't exist," said Curt Ryan, UNC graduate student in international relations and Middle Eastern politics.

Shamir's declaration may hinder the acceptance of President Bush's proposal, but it should not stop the upcoming Middle Eastern peace conference.

"The issue of whether Zionism equals racism is an important issue, but it is being peddled away in modern politics," Newman said.

Bush is pulling strings to realign political forces in the Middle East,

Newman said. Through this maneuvering, Bush hopes to build up support for American interests and to effect stability in this turbulent region.

The implications of the 1975 U.N. resolution extend beyond the context of Israel and the Middle East.

"Zionism is defined as Jewish nationalism," Ryan said. "So, if Zionism is racist, then that calls into question the legitimacy of any nationalist movement."

The United States has long opposed the 1975 resolution, which labeled Zionism "a form of racism and racial discrimination" and called it "a threat to world peace and security."

"I think the bad chemistry between Shamir and Bush is coming into play here," said Joe Stork, editor of the Middle East Report magazine.

Bush is asking Congress to delay payments on \$10 billion in loan guarantees until after the upcoming peace conference. Israel plans to use the money to fund housing for Soviet immigrants over the next five years.

The intimate involvement of the United States in Middle Eastern affairs stems from its powerful international status, Stork said. "The U.S. is far and away the dominant outside power in the Middle East today."

Since 1967, the U.S. has considered Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to be illegal. This has always served as a major obstacle to relations between the two countries, Stork said.

"The continued settlements have also been an obstacle in getting the Arabs to attend a conference, which is why the administration is choosing to take a stand now," Stork said.

About 1.7 million Palestinians currently live in the occupied territories

alongside over 100,000 Israeli residents.

"The issue of a homeland has been a unifying, central issue among the Arab countries," Newman said. "Palestine could, however, lose on this in the conference."

The only guarantee about the conference is that there will be extremists on both sides who will not be able to reach an agreement on anything, Ryan said. The key to making the conference work is getting the moderates to work toward a compromise, he said.

"Even if nothing substantial gets accomplished at the conference, it will still succeed because everybody will sit down together for the first time," Ryan said. "We need to see this as an ongoing process."

Misdemeanor

tory prison terms.

Woodall said the state should establish a sentencing category for habitual offenders. "They should serve at least 50 percent of the sentence, but I think that's the best we're ever going to do."

Mandatory sentencing legislation for habitual misdemeanants might help by acting as a deterrent and by keeping criminals off the streets longer, but some say it might cause other problems.

Stevens Clark, a professor at the Institute of Government, said one problem with the proposal is that "if you put more (criminals) of one kind in, you have to let some of another kind out."

That likely would include harder criminals. North Carolina has focused

more on incarcerating felons than misdemeanants in the past two decades.

"The number of misdemeanants in prison declined from 38 percent of the prison population in 1970 to 8.8 percent in 1989," Clark wrote in the periodical Popular Government. The lower percentage is partially the result of legislation that has "drastically short(ened) the time misdemeanants serve in prison."

Area law enforcement officials are frustrated by habitual misdemeanants, though some have become case-hardened. Most said they tried to do what they could but doubted they could do much to improve the situation.

Woodall said: "It's just the way it is, that you have court regulars. I am pre-

pared for it, so I don't let it get me down. I can't change it."

Pamela McSwain, an Orange County parole and probation officer for 11 years, is not as tough. "Sometimes I wonder if I'm wasting my time," she said. "I feel that we're fighting a losing battle... and it's getting worse, more so than better."

Orange County's parole officers have high case loads, up to 140 cases, which make it difficult to spend more than 10-15 minutes with each parolee, she said.

Many criminals "feel they can get away with it, and a lot of them are getting away with it because of the prison overcrowding," she said.

Frick said he knows several habitual misdemeanants on a first-name basis and is wary when he sees them in stores. "If we see them, we know they are there to shoplift."

Carrboro Police Capt. Ben Callahan said he did not believe in rehabilitation for habitual misdemeanants.

"They are not going to obey the norms of society and the way they show that is through criminal activity. Nothing that we can do... is going to change that."

"The only thing that can be done to these people is to incarcerate them, and that's not happening either," he said.

Editor's note: "Charlie" is a fictitious name for an actual person.

from page 1

from page 1

SAT

reply. He never asked about it after that, Ringwalt said.

"I decided that if my superiors wanted to follow it up they would have," he said.

Ringwalt and Meyer said they didn't know why North Carolina's scores remained low after they were corrected.

"It could be the social climate of the state, how much we spend on education, or it could be an error in the test," Meyer said.

Gerry House, superintendent of

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, said SAT scores are higher for students who have taken advanced classes in high school.

"Overall SAT scores are intended to predict how well a student will do in college level work," she said. "High scores are a result of a combination of taking higher level courses and doing well in them and having a better understanding of the test format. We should encourage children to take higher level classes."

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