

A New Year of Challenges

BY JEFREY H. TONE

Israel's military success in Lebanon is now assured. The northern border of Israel is now safe, the PLO is evacuating Beirut and Bashir Gemayel, the leader of the pro-Israeli

Christian Phalangists, is the President of Lebanon. However, Israel faces a new year of political challenges. These challenges will affect world Jewry at large.

The harshly critical slant taken by the Western media against Israel during the war in Lebanon dramatically illustrates the new perception of the Jewish state which has gradually been developing. Through most of Israel's history, the West viewed it as a tiny democracy courageously defending itself against a sea of hostile Arab nations. Israel's image in the media is undergoing a reversal. We now see Israel portrayed as a militaristic Goliath under the command of Prime Minister Begin and Minister of Defense Sharon.

The Goliath image is not a sudden development. The bombing of the Iraqi nuclear plant and Israel's policies in the territories have been portrayed as acts of a hawkish garrison state, without taking into account Israel's security concerns. We can be assured that such a portrayal of Israel will continue. Israel will, especially after its resounding military victory in Lebanon, be perceived as a strong nation that has successfully beaten back its enemies to the point that its security concerns are now negligible.

Two factors assure further strained relations between Israel and the U.S. For one, the Arabs have developed a sophisticated propaganda machine well suited to the tastes of a modern Western audience. Gone are the days of proclamations to "throw the Jews into the sea." Instead, we now have well-tailored, soft-

spoken Arab representatives hinting at possible "compromises" that could be realized if only for the Israeli "aggressors." And since the war in Lebanon was chiefly fought against the PLO, the media has focused on the Palestinian Arab point of view more exclusively than ever before.

More important, however, is the continued role of the United States as the mediator of the Middle East conflict. This role has only been sharpened by the success of Ambassador Philip Habib in arranging for a PLO withdrawal from Beirut.



**HAPPY
NEW
YEAR**

*Greetings
from
our hearts*

Commissioner
and Mrs. Ron Lurie
and Family

**Happy
NEW YEAR**

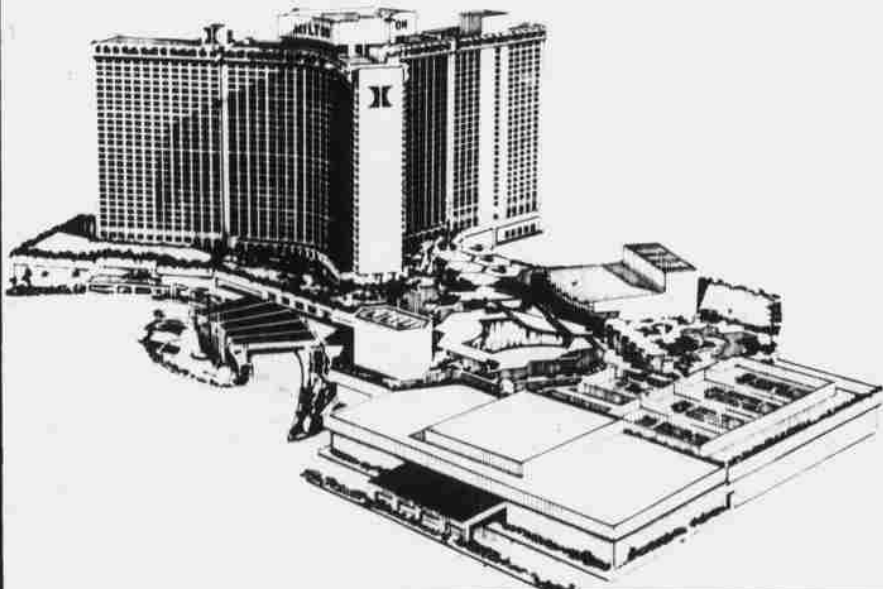


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