allow correspondents free access to occupied southern Lebanon has adversely affected their ability to gather accurate information. Nevertheless, the Israeli army has taken groups of "selected" journalists on escorted tours of Sidon, Tyre and other areas, and consequently there has been ample confirmation of the extent of destruction. Still, the overwhelming majority of reports have failed to discuss the tragic human dimensions of the war, directing readers' attention instead to the comments and activities of Begin, Sharon, various Arab leaders, and the reactions of the Reagan administration.

It is also fair to say that editorials have been critical of the way Israel has prosecuted the war. This has been especially noticeable during the August bombing of Beirut. No major newspaper was prepared to accept the Israeli rationale of applying military pressure on the PLO to force their evacuation from the city as a justifiable pretext for the onslaught of bombs and bullets. This marked a significant change since June when editors had tried to excuse the destruction in the south. Then, the prevailing attitude was that the killing of civilians and devastation of Lebanese towns was unfortunate, but had been done for a noble cause: the eradication of terrorism. The *Chicago Tribune*, for example, exonerated Israel thusly:

"It is possible, of course, to raise questions about whether the Israel reaction has been disproportionate to the provocation. But this too often fails to recognize the nature of the PLO's strategy, which is random and cowardly terror. Shall we penalize Israel for fighting against a weak foe by using its own great military strength?"

(— Chicago Tribune, June 8, 1982)

The de-emphasis on the human consequences of the war also seems to have coincided with a campaign of protest organized by various pro-Israeli groups complaining about the "one-sided" coverage of the war. The initial reports of high casualties had caused several papers such as the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* to criticize Israel for "over-reacting" in Lebanon. The very suggestion that Israel could have adopted a less than praiseworthy policy in its prosecution of the war, coupled with those reports of destruction and death which were published, proved to be very unsettling for supporters of Israel in this country. Thus, an apparently orchestrated letters-to-the editor effort was mounted charging that all non-Israeli sources about casualty figures were either "grossly exaggerated", or "PLO inspired." The result was predictable: stories addressing the human dimensions of the war became rarer and were confined to the back pages of newspapers. In contrast, more coverage was devoted to Israeli reports of what the casualty figures in Lebanon were claimed to be.

The Israeli figures which the press has given prominent play to have been absurdly low in comparison to those released by the Lebanese government and various international relief agencies. For example, on July 6 the Israeli government announced that there had been only 231 LEbanese and Palestinian deaths for all of Lebanon, a figure that was less than the Israeli statistic of 250 issued on June 23. In the following days, these figures were revised to 338 deaths in the cities of Sidon, Tyre, and Nabatiyah and 1,222 "persons" in the Palestinian refugee camps. Since July 9, the official Israeli position been that "under 400" Lebanese civilians were killed in the south, plus 2,000 persons in the refugee camps, all of whom are "presumed to be guerrillas". In addition, the Israelis have claimed that only 20,000 persons were left homeless, a rather curious figure in light of the fact that Israel acknowledges destroying completely two camps which UNRWA had listed as housing at least 40,000 persons before the invasion commenced.

The press' reluctance to address the issue of casualties, is not due simply to a fear of an Israeli lobby. Equally significant has been a sense of genuine discomfort mixed with a hesitation to embarrass Israel. Thus, the press has been only too eager to get beyond the issue of casualties. As stated by one of the *Washington Post's* senior editors, Stephen Rosenfeld:

"I feel nonetheless that the casualties and the new refugees are only a part of the story and not the dominant part. This is a cold position, since, by extension, it lets the Israelis get away with some awful things and amounts to a retroactive endorsement of their operation ... But it is the only position that lets one deal with the new reality created by the invasion and that gives one some chance to ensure that those casualties were not incurred in vain. To me, it makes no sense to hold that the invasion was so intrinsically flawed that it is impermissible to seek benefits from it."

(— Washington Post, June 23, 1982)

In the final analysis, serious questioning of the casualty figures can be dismissed because of the long history of not according Arabs the same sympathies as Israelis. Perhaps the casualties were high, but the "price of peace" is high. And that is all now part of the past. What is necessary is to think about the future: how to free Israel from the threats of "terrorists"; how to reconstruct Lebanon politically; how to get "foreign armies" out of that country.

If a note of cynicism is detectable in the approach of Rosenfeld and other editors to the question of casualties, this cynicism assumes unambiguous proportions in the press suggestion that the destruction in southern Lebanon and West Beirut is not really the responsibility of Israel, but rather the fault of the PLO. Newspapers have picked up uncritically, and often without any attribution as to source, the Israeli charges that the PLO is using civilian targets and persons as hostages. Assuming that such an allegation was actually a PLO tactic — and neither Israel nor journalists have produced documentary evidence that this is so — then the logical question is: why would the PLO resort to such a ploy now in West Beirut when Israel has already demonstrated most effectively in southern Lebanon that the presence of civilians will not distract it from achieving its own military goals? But those who so carelessly lay the charge upon the PLO do not demonstrate any awareness of this essential contradiction in the Israeli-inspired charges.

5. THE BENEFITS OF WAR

A recurrent theme in the editorials since the middle of June has been the expressed hope that the invasion will lead to peace in Lebanon, if not also in the whole Middle East. The presumption is that the problems of Lebanon are caused by the PLO, and that the Israeli rout of the PLO affords Lebanon an opportunity to reshape its political future. This theme was echoed by the *Washington Post* only one week after the invasion had begun:

"...The very first item on the agenda must be Lebanon. For ten years, and rarely more cruelly that in the last week, its neighbors have been crashing through its house. Now, with two of them (the Syrians and the PLO) battered and the third (Israel) ascendant and prepared to bargain its new presence down, there may be an opening to assist the Lebanese to set their house right. Rehabilitation must go forward, and Lebanon's destiny must be returned to Lebanese hands. This means a government respectful of Israel's anti-terrorist interests but not an Israeli puppet."

(—Washington Post, June 13, 1982)

It is not only the *Post* which believes that there must be a government in Lebanon which is respectful of Israel's interests. So does Israel. And it seems that Israel's preference is for a Lebanese government which is dominated by the Phalange Party headed by Bashir Gemayel. Israel's efforts at political manipulation have been documented by reporters in Lebanon. For example the *New York times* reported that:

"The Phalangists appear to have moved into most of the villages inhabited by Christians and by the Druse ... They have expanded far beyond their stronghold in the coastal area north of Beirut ... The Phalangists have shown sufficient harshness toward those not ready to accept their domination to provoke fear."

(— New York Times, June 25, 1982)

Newspapers, however, have not been critical of Israel's encouragement of the Phalange Party. On the contrary, there have been several "news analysis" features in the press which have been exceptionally laudatory of Gemayel and his movement. Thus, one can legitimately question whether the press call for an independent Lebanon is a genuine one based upon an opportunity for all Lebanese to exercise political self-determination, or is it a call for a Lebanon which would be governed by the "Christian militia of Bashir Gemayel?

A "free and independent" Lebanon is only one beneficial result that could result from the Israeli invasion. There is also the destruction of the military capacity of the PLO. There is almost an offensive glee over what is perceived as the rout of the PLO. George Will, a regular columnist for the *Washington Post*, expressed what is probably a pervasive feeling among newspeople: "Good Riddance to the PLO" was the title of his June 13, 1982 column. There is at the same time, at least among some editors, a feeling that while the PLO may be "finished", perhaps the Palestinian problem is not. Thus, on June 16, the *New York Times* cautioned that the demise of the PLO may just be a respite until "Their survivors and successors" can recoup to continue the struggle. Despite such misgivings, however, the general tone is one of guarded optimism, a hope that Israel's victories will at a minimum bring the "blessings of peace" to the Israeli-Lebanese border.

Yet a third positive development is foreseen in the press: that the war launched by Israel has served, if only indirectly, the overall interests of the U.S. Indeed, two of the most prominent members of the foreign policy establishment, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, have had substantial articles published in the *Washington Post* in which they argue precisely this point. According to Kissinger:

"... in this particular case (the Israeli invasion of Lebanon), the results were congruent with the interest of the peace process in the Middle East, of all moderate governments in the area and of the United States.

(— Washington Post, June 16, 1982)

Kissinger's essay presents all the arguments and attitudes which have come to dominate the press treatment of the war in Lebanon: (a) that no matter how destructive the means, if Israel achieves the ultimate goal of establishing peace then the costs of the invasion are justifiable; (b) that the PLO was merely a terrorist organization and consequently its destruction must be welcomed; and (c) Israel's sound victory over the forces of "radicalism" present an opportunity for reinvigorating the peace process. The fact that as notable a personage as Kissinger would give his imprimatur to such arguments lends them a powerful sense of legitimacy in the eyes of many newspaper editors.

The cautious sense of optimism regarding the future political developments that may result from the invasion and occupation of Lebanon stems from a fundamental ignorance of Middle East history during the past 35 years, a complete misunderstanding of the nature and role of the PLO, an unwillingness to accept the legitimacy of Palestinian national asporations, and a widesprea inability to feel any empathy with Arabs and their aspirations. In reality, it probably is unrealistic to expect the prospects of peace to have been furthered by Israel's actions. On the contrary, it can be argued that the Israeli invasion of Lebanon has more likely set back what little progress that had been achieved during the past four years. In addition, it is already obvious that the military defeat of the PLO has not destroyed it as a political organization. Its position among Palestinians seems to have been considerably reinformed on account of the severe drubbing it took from the Israeli army which opposed the PLO with ten times the force the PLO could muster, and also because the PLO was the only group to put up a credible fight — and still is — against the Israeli invasion while all the Arab states could do little else but protest verbally.

What is obvious about all the assessments of the post-invasion politics of the Middle East that mimic some version of the Kissinger line is that there is no real understanding of how U.S. policy has been affected. An