"Will George W. Go the Way of His Father?"

By Kenneth W. Stein

During the 2000 presidential-election campaign, George W. Bush gave one major foreign-policy address.

Uninsoiring as a speaker, Bush was a bland governor of a large southern state. With no Washington experience and a business background, his messageon domestic matters won him attention and election, thanks in large part to a decision by the Supreme Court.

In a February 2001 speech that took on the aura of a state-of-the-union address, he outlined priorities for tax relief, energy needs, trade promotion, a strong defense, compassion in government, budget, healthcare and educational reform. He did not mention one foreign country or a specific foreign-policy objective.

As for teh Middle East, nothing demanded his administration's engagement. Concern persisted about weapons of mass destruction; rogue states like Iran adn Iraq needed to be contained; and terrorist groups were a nuisance. But no imperative necessitated action on any of these fronts. No immediate thrat was posed to the political stability of friendly Arab states, and oil flowed freely at a reasonable price.

Prospects for presidential action in Arab-Israeli diplomacy were out of the question. Strewn with burnt tires, live mines, deep craters, misbehaving players and unruly supporters, Palestinians and Israelis were locked in ciolence when he took office. Neighboring Arab leaders and the European Union stood around, pointed accusatory fingers at Israel, and begged for Washington's diplomatic immersion. Not George Bush. His predecessor had exhaustred himself repeatedly in futile negotiations in trying to forge a Palestinian-Israeli agreement.

Then came Sept. 11, 2001. Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network unleashed unforeseen consequesnces. It defines a formless American presidency, reawakened American patriotism, engaged the United States in wars in Afghanastan and Iraq, frayed European-American relations, and enticed Bush into Palestinian-Israeli diplomacy.

The Bush mantra is the war on terorism-- either you are with us or against ius. Since his September 2001 address to a joint session of

Congress, no word has appeared more often in his speeches than either "terror" or "terrorism." Bush connected the dots. He has linked himself as defender of America to the war against terrorists, to removal of the Taliban, to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, to containment of weapons of mass production manuafacture, and to traffic management in Arab-ISraeli diplomacy.

For Bush, terrorists are rogue regimes. Yasser Arafat's support of terrorist acts against Israel has disqualified him as a legitimate leader. On the other