

War Party Backing Sharon's 'Permanent War'

by Dean Andromidas

The refusal of the Bush Administration to put pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his generals has led to increasing levels of violence in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This failure by Washington is allowing Sharon to implement his policy of "permanent war" in the Middle East. If not reversed, it will lead to a major conflagration, dragging in not only Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, but also spreading to Iran and Central Asia. Developments in late August confirm that Sharon is committed to spreading the conflict.

It is no secret in Washington, that the refusal of the Bush Administration to pressure Sharon is rooted in electoral politics. With the U.S. economy collapsing, and the Democratic takeover of the Senate, key Bush advisers have concluded that if the Republicans lose the 2002 Congressional mid-term elections, the Bush Administration is finished. Furthermore, President George W. Bush's brother, Jeb, faces possible defeat in his upcoming reelection bid for Florida Governor. Bush's political advisers claim that the only way they can hope to win the mid-term elections is with the support of the millions of right-wing Christian fundamentalist voters and the election campaign contributions of the American "Jewish lobby." This was confirmed by a July 30 White House meeting with leading representatives of both groups, who told Bush Administration officials that if they put pressure on Sharon, they do so at the risk of losing this core vote. (See "Mideast War Pushed by 'Eurasian War Party,'" *EIR*, Aug. 17, 2001, and "Temple Mount Fanatics Seek To Blackmail Bush," *EIR*, Aug. 24, 2001.)

As things stand now, the decisive determinations of Middle East policy in the White House are not being made by Secretary of State Colin Powell or the Mideast specialists in the State Department, but by the White House campaign "spin doctors," led by Karl Rove, Bush's White House political adviser and former campaign strategist. Rove balances every

policy decision against its potential effect on the mid-term elections. Rove shares the view, widely held among Republican Party circles, that any White House clash with the Christian fundamentalists or the Israeli lobby would "trigger World War III" inside the Republican Party. Thus, policy advisers who know that Sharon's war policy might very well provoke a real World War III, have been undermined. The policymaking process has been forced to take a back seat to these domestic political considerations.

Therefore it is not surprising, that on Aug. 24, at a press conference in Crawford, Texas, Bush attacked Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, for not mobilizing "100%" to crack down on terrorism. Sharon's advisers now believe that they are winning the most important battle in their war against the Palestinians: the battle to win the heart of Bush, President of the world's only superpower. Bush then gave the green light for top administration officials to resume military and foreign policy consultations with Israel at the highest levels. An Israeli delegation arrived in Washington for talks the same day that Israel, using American-made weapons systems, assassinated Abu Ali Mustafa, one of the highest-level Palestinian officials ever killed at the hands of the Israelis. The U.S. delegation was led by Undersecretary of State Richard Armitage and Deputy Secretary of State Paul Wolfowitz. *EIR* identified both as leaders of the "Eurasian War Party" within the administration, and as having the closest relations with the Israeli military-intelligence establishment.

It is also reported that Secretary of State Powell spent several days at the home of Ronald Lauder, the billionaire scion of the Estée Lauder cosmetics empire. Lauder, who until recently was president of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, is a major contributor to the Republican Party. He has been the money bags of

Sharon's fellow Likud leader, former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, also supporting Sharon's September 2000 provocation at the al-Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount.

Sharon's 'Rolling Operation' Heads Toward a Rolling War

For the last three weeks in August, Sharon and his generals have been implementing their "rolling operation." It has continued unabated in the face of feeble attempts by (Labor Party) Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and European diplomats, such as German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, to broker a cease-fire that would allow the Mitchell Report's recommended peace efforts to move forward.

This rolling operation has nothing to do with providing security for Israelis. Rather, it is a systematic campaign to destroy the Palestinian Authority. It is a plan aimed at accomplishing piecemeal, what Sharon has not been allowed to do in one full-scale military operation. Sharon and his generals are prepared to strike at Syria and other countries in the region to achieve their goals.

The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) released their latest strategic assessment, which foresees hostilities with the Palestinians continuing until at least 2006! Already the Israeli casualty rate is four times higher than that suffered in the two-decade-long Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, including the 1982 invasion. Furthermore, the casualty rates and oppressive living conditions among the Palestinians under siege, have had a devastating effect on Palestinian society, leaving bitterness and rage in their wake. The IDF has been conducting almost daily incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas, destroying houses and police stations and assassinating Palestinian leaders.

The attack and occupation of the West Bank Palestinian town of Beit Jala is a prime example of the policy. Implemented on the pretext of stopping the sporadic Palestinian gunfire being directed at the neighboring Israeli settlement of Gilo, it was launched after Foreign Minister Peres had arranged a cease-fire. Rather than send in special assault teams to attack the gunmen, the IDF sent in its crack 890 parachute regiment, with a full complement of tanks and armored personnel carriers, forcing almost the entire population to flee the town. The only ones who remained were those trapped in the buildings, as Israeli paratroopers occupied two fortified positions. This included those in a Lutheran Church, and children in an orphanage who were not allowed to leave the building.

It was the veteran 890th infantry force which Sharon commanded over 30 years ago, in his infamous reprisal raids against Palestinian villages in the West Bank, then still part of Jordan.

Although, as of this writing, the Israeli troops have withdrawn, they remain poised to re-enter Beit Jala. Nonetheless, one day after this operation was launched, an Israeli force entered a Palestinian refugee camp in Rafah, in the Gaza Strip near the Egyptian border, destroying 15 homes and leaving



An Israeli military post similar to the one infiltrated and attacked by Palestinian gunmen Aug. 25, in an event which shocked Israel. With Bush fanning the flames, Israel is escalating rapidly toward regional war—a religious war it is destined, eventually, to lose.

hundreds of Palestinians homeless. Similar operations were carried out at other points in the Occupied Territories.

Mustafa Assassination: Is Arafat Next?

The killing of Abu Ali Mustafa, the Secretary General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, was the highest-level assassination since Israel began its "focussed operation" policy several months ago. As secretary general of the PFLP, a constituent organization of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Mustafa was at the same political level as PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. This is a clear signal that Arafat is likely on the same target list. Also, given the fact that the PFLP, with its headquarters in Damascus, is closely allied to Syria, Mustafa's assassination is a clear signal to Syria that it will be targeted if it comes to the aid of the Palestinians.

Although Sharon has accused Mustafa of planning terror attacks, the truth is that he was the only major leader of the PFLP to have moved to the West Bank from Damascus. He made the move to Ramallah in 1999 after the United States had guaranteed his security. His death leaves very little credibility to American promises.

Some 50,000 Palestinians marched in Mustafa's funeral procession. Rather than stopping terror, the assassination has

served to strengthen the most radical factions, further closing the door to a negotiated settlement.

IDF's Grave Miscalculation

During the night of Aug. 24, a two-man team from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine infiltrated a fortified Israeli military outpost in the Gaza Strip. Armed with assault rifles and grenades, the team caught the Israelis by surprise and killed three soldiers, including the major commanding the relief force deployed to rescue the outpost. Seven others were wounded. The two Palestinians were killed only after a massive manhunt involving helicopters and search parties.

The DFLP's highly professional attack demonstrated the biggest vulnerability of the IDF: the arrogance of an occupation army; the same disease that led to the defeat of the French in Algeria and the Americans in Vietnam. The attack represents the first guerrilla war-type operation to be launched by the Palestinians. Although the Palestinians might calculate its success as a great victory, it could at the same time push Sharon to escalate the conflict, with the deployment of even greater force, for fear of getting bogged down in a war of attrition.

Israeli military commentator Reuven Pedatzur, writing in the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* on Aug. 26, underscored the grave danger of miscalculation by the IDF. Pedatzur warns that the ever-escalating operations of the IDF "could bring about an uncontrolled deterioration to an all-out war with the Palestinians, and even a regional war.

"Neither the Presidents of Egypt and Syria, nor the leaders of the other Arab states, will be able to persist in their policy of standing on the sidelines if an Israeli bomb causes the death of 250 Palestinians. Even [Egyptian President] Hosni Mubarak, who has stated frequently that a regional war is not an option for him, will be forced to react, even if by means of symbolic measures.

"The entry of Egyptian troops into Sinai, as such a symbolic move, could bring about a clash with the IDF. The transfer of a Syrian division close to the Golan Heights, as a gesture of support for the Palestinians by [Syrian President] Bashar Assad, is liable to trigger an Israeli military reaction and an unplanned escalation."

Pedatzur warns that what the top echelons of the IDF "fail to understand, or prefer to ignore, is that what they are engaged in is not a 'rolling operation,' as they call it, but the prelude to a 'rolling war.'"

Polls show 70% of Israelis would accept a freeze on settlement building in the Occupied Territories, and a negotiated peace. But will be no challenge to Sharon within Israel as long as the United States does not intervene, pressuring both sides and backing a peace based on real regional economic development. Otherwise a new religious war, featured in repeated warnings by U.S. Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. to the nations involved, threatens all of Eurasia.

No 'Peace Dividend' For Suffering Nigeria

by Lawrence K. Freeman

On May 29, 1999, the first democratically elected government of Nigeria in two decades took over the reins of government. There was optimism from many Nigerians, that newly elected President Olusegun Obasanjo — who as military head of state in 1979, had relinquished his power — would lead the country to the "promised land" by the good graces of the West. From the day Obasanjo took office, he has campaigned around the world for cancellation of Nigeria's unpayable, almost \$32 billion debt to the International Monetary Fund's banking consortium, all the time begging for the "democracy dividend" that has not, and will not ever be granted through such channels.

Against this background, the importance of bringing Lyndon LaRouche's ideas to Nigeria's new capital, Abuja, on Aug. 13, should be understood. LaRouche's analysis of the imploding global financial system was highlighted at the fourth anniversary of *Conscience International* magazine, organized by its publisher, Chief Abiola Ogundokun. The prestigious day-long gathering, also attended by the Nigerian press and media, met at the Nicon Hilton, divided between presentations of scholarly papers, and awards to governors, members of the National Assembly, and other outstanding individuals. The proceedings were chaired by Alhaji Lateef Kayode Jakande, a political personality from western Nigeria, who has been active since the founding of the First Republic in 1960; and by special guest, Nigerian Ambassador to the United States, Dr. Jibril Aminu.

The proceedings were opened by Chief Abiola, who discussed the accomplishments of *Conscience International* over the last four years, giving special attention to its coverage of the economic forecast of LaRouche. "In our November 1997 edition," Abiola said, "we reached out to Germany and brought you what turned out to be one of the greatest predictions of recent times. I sat down with a towering authority on global economics and world politics, Lyndon LaRouche, who predicted the crash of the International Monetary Market in the year 2000. This prediction . . . turned out to pass like every other LaRouche prediction before it. This was a special lead story that read like a comprehensive text on world economics, and remarkably underscored our stance for truth and development of Nigeria and Africa."

Ambassador Aminu, following Chief Abiola, expanded on LaRouche's unique stature in the world as an economist, and recounted a Washington meeting with LaRouche. "The world should listen to Mr. LaRouche," the ambassador in-