

# Michael Ledeen, Temple Mount, and 'Operation Armageddon'

by Jeffrey Steinberg

During a recent television appearance, Michael Ledeen of the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies, one of the most controversial figures in the Irangate stew, angrily denied charges by an Iranian exile that he had been a longtime contact of Iranian arms broker Manucher Ghorbanifar. Ledeen's denial, one of his rare moments of candor since the entire affair grabbed headlines last November, may unlock a Pandora's box to reveal a dimension of the Irangate scandal that goes far beyond the debacle of the Reagan administration's arms-for-hostages gambit and goes to the very heart of Israel's (and Moscow's) secret diplomacy.

The salient feature of Ledeen's denial of his prior ties to Ghorbanifar is the fact that the Khomeini regime sought him out—thereby placing the part-time National Security Council consultant at the very center of the Washington-Teheran-Tel Aviv transactions. Intelligence specialists—several with decades of experience in the twists and turns of Middle East great power politics—have told *EIR* that Ledeen's secret agenda in all of his dealings with Teheran has been to firm up the Shi'ite regime's involvement in a regional religious-military alliance that is part and parcel of the Israeli Temple Mount project, otherwise known as "Operation Armageddon."

In March 1986, *EIR* released, in a 126-page *Special Report* entitled "Moscow's Secret Weapon: Ariel Sharon and the Israeli Mafia," the findings of a three-year investigation into a fanatical Jewish underground dedicated to building a Third Temple of Jerusalem on a site in the Muslim Old City where the Dome of the Rock, the second-holiest shrine of Islam, now stands. Repeated efforts by the Temple Mount terrorists to blow up the Dome of the Rock have been recognized as a potential *casus belli* for a holy war between Arabs and Jews. Christian fundamentalists in the United States and Western Europe have poured millions of dollars into the Jewish underground through conduits like the American Jerusalem Temple Foundation.

Unlike other probes into the violent Jewish underground, which cast the network as a fringe element opposed by the majority of the Israeli establishment, the *EIR* report exposed the deep connections between the Temple Mount fanatics

and some of the highest levels of Israeli intelligence. Rather than focusing exclusively on the Gush Emunim and Kach Party elements associated with Rabbi Meir Kahane, *EIR* identified the yeshiva (school) Ateret Cohanim as the training and deployment center of the operation. Located in the heart of the Muslim Old City adjacent to the Temple Mount site, Ateret Cohanim is run by Rabbi Shlomo Aviner and by its founder Mati Dan, both of whom have been identified as active members of the Shabak, Israel's domestic security service.

Both men are closely allied with former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon and with Rafi Eytan, Sharon's confidant who once headed Israel's cabinet level Office for Terror Against Terror and then went on to run the LEKEM scientific espionage unit that recruited and deployed Jonathan Jay Pollard in collusion with Soviet intelligence. At least one source told *EIR* that it was Michael Ledeen helped get Jonathan Pollard placed in a counterterror-analyst post with U.S. Naval Intelligence.

Now, according to our highly-placed sources, this Temple Mount alliance between nominally Christian and Jewish fanatical elements, is seeking to broaden its military pact to include the Khomeiniac Islamic fundamentalists—and the Russian Orthodox Church. The ultimate goal of this *jihād* axis is to destroy Western Judeo-Christian civilization. The near-term goal is to unseat the successor of St. Peter—the Pope—as the *primus inter pares* of world Christianity. It is on behalf of this project, according to our sources, that Michael Ledeen was inserted into the Iran arms dealings. The original request to use Ledeen as the "American connection," whether from Tel Aviv or Teheran, was reportedly the signal that "Operation Armageddon" was on.

## The military dimension: new NATO

By all informed accounts, the Israeli and U.S. involvement in arming Khomeini's war against Iraq predates the outbreak of that conflict in 1980. The Carter administration, after helping to overthrow America's ally, the Shah, and place Khomeini in power, set up elaborate arms conduits into the Islamic Republic—even as American hostages were being

held at the U.S. embassy in Teheran. That policy apparently continued into the Reagan administration for as long as Alexander Haig was Secretary of State. It was revived in 1984 at Israeli urging, under the auspices of two of Haig's top State Department aides, by then relocated to the NSC: Robert McFarlane and Michael Ledeen.

Israel never broke stride in its lucrative arms sales to Teheran. While true figures on Israeli arms sales are not available to *EIR* at present, sources say billions of dollars of Israeli-provided arms got into Khomeini's hands. More to the point, these sources say that the Israeli faction linked to "Operation Armageddon," largely centered in the Likud bloc and particularly the old Irgun circles, is committed to assuring an Iranian victory in the protracted Gulf war.

These Israeli circles, with a Ledeen-centered U.S.-based network linked to the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, represent a dangerous branch of the "decoupling" lobby. They urge dismantling the traditional U.S.-European NATO alliance and replacing it with a "new NATO" centered around the U.S. intercontinental ballistic missile "deterrent," coupled with an Israeli-centered and nuclear armed rimland force deployed in a much expanded Israel, a fundamentalist-irrationalist Iran, and an Israeli-controlled Zaire.

These circles, overlapping with such Trilateral Commission figures as the lunatic Zbigniew Brzezinski, urge that the United States accept the neutralization and ultimate Soviet control of Western Europe and therefore seek out new forms of military alliance aimed at containing Moscow. Israel, and an Israeli-centered Mideast axis, they argue, is the only "reliable" alliance partner. Richard Perle, rumored to be on his way out of the Reagan administration following his "Europe-bashing" performance at the recent Wehrkunde defense conference in Munich, has been the point man for a campaign to restrict all foreign Strategic Defense Initiative research contracts to Israel—on the ludicrous grounds that the Europeans and Japanese are too penetrated by Soviet bloc spies to be trusted with top secret research contracts.

Is there any evidence that steps are under way to fulfill this "Armageddon" nightmare? According to Mordechai Vanunu, the Israeli nuclear engineer now being held in Israel on charges of treason for his disclosures to the British press, Israel has a secret installation at Dimona in the Negev desert where it has already manufactured 400 nuclear bombs. Israel reportedly already has 100 intermediate range ballistic missile delivery systems each capable of carrying four warheads.

Vanunu's public statements triggered a dramatic cover-up, including a commando kidnaping of Vanunu himself as he was arriving at Rome's Da Vinci International Airport late last year. An unconfirmed report suggests that Vanunu was in Rome for a private audience with Pope John Paul II at the time he was grabbed and shuttled back to Israel. The source of this information speculated to *EIR* that Vanunu's information on Operation Armageddon extended well beyond the technical features of Israel's secret nuclear program and in-

cluded an elaborate map of the theocratic dimensions of the scheme. He was about to present that secret evidence to the Pope but was grabbed before he could reach the Vatican, the source says.

### Third Temple-Third Rome

A series of interviews and archive reviews suggests that Michael Ledeen was negotiating with Teheran on behalf of an Israeli version of former Soviet President Yuri Andropov's "New Yalta" proposal, a version premised on a revival of the "New Jerusalem" project to unseat Rome as the center of world Christianity and to establish Jerusalem as a Gnostic center of a new ecumenical alliance.

According to at least one source interviewed in the preparation of this article, the following pieces are all under negotiation currently:

1) Israel continues to provide the requisite levels of military assistance to Iran to ensure an ultimate victory in the seven-year-old Gulf war. Iran annexes the predominantly Shi'ite southeast region of Iraq, which includes the city of Karbala, a holy site of Shi'ism.

2) Under an emerging Shi'ite hegemony, compounded by a destabilization of the House of Saud, the Shi'ites assume the protectorship over the Dome of the Rock. This establishes a Shi'ite role in an overall consortium over the holy sites of Jerusalem.

3) Through a new ecumenical agreement, involving the Russian Orthodox Church, the Eastern Rite, Anglican Church networks linked to the Soviet Trust, Christian fundamentalist groups already tied to the Temple Mount project, and Jewish fundamentalists, Jerusalem is declared the new center of world Christianity, with the Patriarchate of St. James (after the alleged brother of Jesus Christ who is a central figure in virtually all strains of Gnostic heresy) replacing the Holy See as the *primus inter pares*. The Bishop of Rome becomes merely one of two Patriarchs within the Western Church, the second Patriarchate being seated in Venice. The principles of Augustinian Christianity embodied in the 15th century Council of Florence and the doctrine of the *Filioque* that have been the cornerstone of Western civilization for the past five centuries would be thus overthrown.

Who are the ultimate victors in this lunatic Gnostic scheme? The Old Believers in Moscow whose ultimate cultural warfare objective is the crushing of the Western Judeo-Christian cultural matrix and the subjugation of the world to a Moscow-centered Third and Final Roman Empire.

For the average reader of this publication, the notion that such a wildly satanic scheme could be an underlying factor in world affairs in the late 20th century is perhaps a hard bite to swallow. That such a secret agenda could be at the ultimate root of the ongoing Irangate scandal is perhaps even harder to fathom. Nevertheless, compelling evidence exists. Perhaps a comprehensive investigation into Michael Ledeen is the best starting point for uprooting this effort.