

# Hamas suicide bombers came from London

by Dean Andromidas

Earlier in August, Ami Ayalon, chief of Israel's Shin Bet internal security service, flew to London to investigate British links to the two suicide bombers who blew themselves up in a Jerusalem market last July, killing 18. The move by Ayalon, who met with his British counterpart at MI-6, once again confirms *EIR's* extensively documented reports pointing to London as the center for international terrorism. The tremendous pressure which the Israeli intelligence services must be putting on Britain was underscored by the fact that Ayalon's mission to London was reported in Britain's *Sunday Telegraph*, which admitted that London "has acquired a reputation as an international center for Islamic extremists."

Although the bombings have been widely attributed to Hamas, the militant Palestinian organization, Israeli authorities are investigating the fact that the two suicide bombers originated from Britain and carried British passports. It is believed that the bombing was planned in Britain and that the terrorists received training and financial support in Europe. The terrorists are said to have had large amounts of cash in the form of Jordanian dinars in their pockets. The fact that the bombers were wearing dark business suits (with the brand-names torn out), and were carrying briefcases, as if they were tourists or businessmen, is viewed as totally out of step with other suicide bombings, and suggests that the bombers came directly from the airport.

This new British lead has brought Israeli authorities to reinterrogate an Arab who lost both his legs in a Jerusalem hotel room when a bomb he was constructing blew up. He, too, had entered Israel with a British passport, although he came via Switzerland.

Israeli sources report that these allegations are being taken extremely seriously, and that Israeli, American, and British intelligence officials have been conferring on this case quite extensively. Moreover, these sources report that the Clinton administration is viewing with great consternation the fact that European nations, and Britain in particular, have become centers for international terrorism, and that very little is being done about it.

## Britain, terrorism's 'home sweet home'

In our April 4, 1997 issue, *EIR* published a feature story, "Levy Sanctions on Britain for Harboring Terrorists!" on the role of Britain as a center of international terrorism. Among

the more than a dozen major international terrorist organizations with headquarters in London, are such groups as the notorious Islamic Jihad, and so-called Islamic groups which operate in Egypt; the Armed Islamic Group, which operates as a countergang to the legitimate oppositionist Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria; and various anti-Saudi groups. Several Palestinian extremist organizations are based in London, including factions often linked to Hamas, but which operate independently of the leadership of that large and highly factionalized organization.

One senior British intelligence source admitted that the report of a British role in the Jerusalem bombing as reported in the *Sunday Telegraph*, was "substantially right." When asked to elaborate, he told *EIR*, "It's the Nelson's blind-eye principle. . . . It's when someone turns a blind eye, to what's going on." To find out who's turning a blind eye, he confided, "Look in the direction of the Foreign Office, especially the Arab hands there, and you will get the idea. More than that, I can't say on the telephone."

In a related development, on Aug. 11, a trial began in Cairo, Egypt, of 84 members of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad group on charges relating to the bombing of the Khan Alkahilili bazaar, in the center of Cairo, and the assassination of government officials. On trial is the leader of the ring, Akram Abdul Aziz Sharif, a naturalized British subject of Egyptian origin, who returned to Egypt in 1995 under orders, with financial support from the Islamic Jihad's base in London. He was the key liaison with the London-based leaders, Ahmed Al-Nagar and Adel Abdelmajid Abdelbari. The latter, although remaining safe from extradition in London, was tried *in absentia* and sentenced to death for an assassination attempt against a former Egyptian prime minister.

## Targetting the Mideast peace process

The reference to the British Foreign Office "turning a blind eye," ironically brings into focus who is ultimately responsible for these bombings. Not only did the bombings occur on the eve of a major U.S. initiative to restart the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks (see *EIR*, Aug. 22), but they occur at a point when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is facing tremendous opposition across the political spectrum, including from within his own party. The bombings also serve Netanyahu's determination to bury the Israeli-Palestinian Oslo Accords, and Great Britain's determination to destroy any attempt by President Bill Clinton to change the political map of the Middle East through the peace process.

Not surprisingly, Netanyahu's press spokesman, David Bar Illan, former editor of the Hollinger Corp.'s *Jerusalem Post*, responded to the charges of Britain's role in the bombing by continuing to put the blame on Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. "It makes absolutely no difference whether they arrived with British or other foreign passports," Bar Illan said. He attacked the United States, not Britain, as the base for Palestinian extremists.



*Former Israeli prime ministers Shimon Peres (left) and Yitzhak Shamir. While they have been political foes over the Oslo Accords, they are now working together in an effort to oust Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a madman driving the Mideast toward war.*

Opposition to Netanyahu has manifested itself from all quarters, which see Netanyahu as an instrument of extreme right-wing Zionist circles based in London, New York, and France. Even among certain members of his Likud party, these foreign Zionist circles are not seen as having Israeli national interests as their priority. On July 24, only a few days before the suicide bombings, a bipartisan group held its first meeting in the Israeli Knesset (parliament), which dedicated itself to bringing down Netanyahu as prime minister. It brought together such Knesset members as former Labor Prime Minister Shimon Peres, the architect of the Oslo Accords, and former Likud Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who opposed the Oslo Accords. It is widely believed that the first government crisis this autumn, could see an early demise of Netanyahu's fortunes.

### **A more aggressive campaign**

The Israeli Labor Party, in particular, is in the process of consolidating itself in preparation for a much more aggressive campaign. Its new leader, Ehud Barak, a former Army Chief of Staff who had been foreign minister in the last Labor government, has been touring Europe.

In an interview with the Aug. 19 Swiss financial newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Barak denounced Netanyahu's handling of the current crisis and negotiations with the Palestinians. "As long as bodies were lying in the market, it was not appropriate to attack the government; grief and national unity were required. But I made clear later that I did not agree with the government," he said.

Although Barak gave critical support to Netanyahu when he closed the Palestinian territories, Barak denounced Netanyahu's "tricks, like disruption of the Palestinian Radio

broadcasts, the issuing of an arrest warrant for the Palestinian chief of police, and finally, the confiscation of tax proceeds which were earmarked for the Palestinians." He denounced the last measure as "doing more harm than good," because these are the funds used to pay the Palestinian police.

In contrast to Netanyahu's consistent sabotage of the peace process, Barak declared that, as an opposition figure, he will "cultivate open and trustful relations" with Jordan's King Hussein, with Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak, and with Arafat. "It is an absolute precondition for the solution of the complex Middle East problem that at least the principal leaders understand one another. . . . As prime minister, I could seize the initiative and try to talk to the Arab leaders, to avoid misunderstandings. Trust has also to do with a willingness to fulfill agreements," Barak asserted.

Barak denounced Netanyahu's anti-Palestinian policies: "Israel cannot and should not rule another people. It has less security if it attempts to rule over 2.5 million Palestinians, who cannot be transplanted. We cannot afford an apartheid state or a situation like in Bosnia. With the present government we have both."

He also declared his opposition to new Jewish settlements and the expansion of old ones, and said that Israelis and Palestinians should continue to live in separate areas. He added that the completion of a final peace accord with the Palestinians will be based on compromise. "I believe Israel will maintain control over a unified Jerusalem and over the majority of settlers — which is not the same as the majority of the settlements," he said.

Barak even went so far as to attack Netanyahu's radical free trade policies, calling his economic policy "Social Darwinistic."