

Oslo and the Present Moment in Syria

by EIR staff

Upon hearing the news in 1993 of the pending Oslo Accords, Lyndon LaRouche succinctly characterized the situation:

The urgent thing here is that we must move with all speed to immediately get these economic development projects, such as the canal from Gaza to the Dead Sea, going immediately, because if we wait until we discuss this out, enemies of progress and enemies of the human race will be successful, through people like Ariel Sharon's buddies, in intervening to drown this agreement in blood and chaos.

Feb. 28—The past reaches out and speaks to us at this moment: The Oslo Accords for a settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli war failed because there was no economic development. The same will be true of Syria, if economic development isn't pushed through now.

Today, 23 years after Oslo, Palestine has no economy. The Palestinian Authority is bankrupt—on life support from donations that come from the European Union and erratically from the United States, along with occasional mega-donations from rich Arab states. Gaza and the West Bank are politically divided, and twice in the last eight years, Israel has bombed the hell out of Gaza, each time killing more than 1,500, the majority of them civilians. What little useful or productive capacity that was there, such as schools and food-processing factories, was destroyed or damaged and not rebuilt. Unemployment is as high as 70% among the young people in some parts of the Palestinian territories. There is no hope.

The advice that Lyndon LaRouche emphatically delivered right after the signing of the accords on Sept. 13, 1993, couldn't have been more clear: Start "moving the

dirt" for construction by the end of September. The projects were brilliantly defined: LaRouche had worked over the previous decade with both Arab and Israeli leaders to define key projects.

The centerpiece for that development, which LaRouche called, "The Oasis Plan," was a set of multipurpose Dead Sea canals. They were not built then and still do not exist, but they are still key to the future of that area.

One canal was to run from the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea, going through the Gaza Strip where, at the town of Gaza, a new port city could be constructed. The other, a "Red Sea/Dead Sea" canal, would run from the Dead Sea along the Wadi Araba, terminating at Aqaba on the Gulf of Aqaba on the Red Sea.

LaRouche insisted on giving nuclear power to the the Palestinians and Israelis for desalination, and several designs for safe, modular nuclear power plants had already been provided by companies including Germany's Siemens. Other companies, such as California's General Atomics, had provided designs for desalina-



One of the LaRouche Oasis Plan maps for Middle East development in the plan's 1995 version. LaRouche had included the plan in his 1975 publication, How the International Development Bank Will Work.

tion. The newly abundant water would be used for high-productivity agriculture, with Israel, the Palestinian territories, and Jordan cooperating.

These projects are described—with maps, illustrations, and additional comments from LaRouche—in the September 1993 *EIR* article by Marcia Merry titled, [*Dust off the Blueprints for Mideast Development, Break Ground this Month.*](#)

Now, Syria

Today, unless there is immediate economic development and reconstruction in the Middle East—conceived at the highest scientific and intellectual level—the ceasefire in Syria and the upcoming political talks are doomed, just as the Oslo Accords were. President Vladimir Putin knows that; President Bashar al-Assad knows that; President Xi Jinping knows that. All three of these presidents have spoken of the need for immediate reconstruction, and in his recent speech (January 2016) to the League of Arab Nations in Cairo, President Xi offered a perspective for renewed life for the Middle East.

Not only is reconstruction needed immediately, Xi said, to relieve the suffering of the hundreds of thousands of Southwest Asia’s displaced refugees, huddled at the borders of the European Union, and of desperate civilians scraping for survival in war-devastated Syria, but it is the only path to really stopping terrorist recruitment.

“The key to overcoming difficulties is to accelerate development,” Xi said. “Turmoil in the Middle East stems from the lack of development, and the ultimate solution will depend on development, which bears on everyone’s well-being and dignity. It is a race against time and a struggle between hope and disillusion. Only when young people are able to live a fulfilled life with dignity through development, can hope prevail in their heart. Only then will they voluntarily reject violence, extremist ideologies, and terrorism.”

China is offering a “win-win” strategy for all the countries of the region based on mutual interests, Xi said.

How Oslo Failed

On Sept. 13, 1993, after more than 45 years, the active war between the Palestinians and the Israelis fell quiet when Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and



Israeli Defense Forces

Where was the U.S. commitment to Middle East development when the first Oslo Accord was signed in September 1993? Here at the signing ceremony in Washington D.C. are Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (left), PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat (right), and U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat signed the “peace of the brave” Oslo Accord in hopes of stopping what threatened to become a “perpetual war” in the Middle East. The signing was done at the White House at the invitation of then-President Bill Clinton.

At dinner that night, Rabin made a profound historic statement, in the form of a toast to all who participated in the Oslo negotiations, asking that they tip their glasses to “those with the courage to change axioms.” Peace was signed on paper, the Palestinian Authority was set up, but the axioms of the world financial oligarchy, of the British Empire whose evil Lord Balfour had turned historic Palestine into a cauldron of war with his “Balfour Declaration” of 1917, had not been changed.

The most hopeful part of the Oslo agreement was the inclusion of Annexes III and IV, which provided for Israeli-Palestinian Cooperation in Economic and Development Programs. These provisions reflected the longstanding input from LaRouche and others who argued that the creation of joint economic projects by Israel and Palestine working together to overcome the water shortage and general economic misery, was absolutely essential to building the good will between Palestinians and Israelis that would permit lasting peace.

But the economic development never happened. It



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The destruction in Syria, 2015. Without development, there can be no peace.

was not that the economic need was not recognized. It was sabotaged.

In fact, then-Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres was explicit, advocating a “Marshall Plan” for the Middle East region. Speaking at the White House during the Oslo signing, Peres said:

We shall support the agreement with an economic structure. We shall convert the bitter triangle of Jordanians, Palestinians, and the Israelis into a triangle of political triumph and economic prosperity... Let us build a Middle East of hope, where today’s food is produced, and tomorrow’s prosperity is guaranteed, a region with a common market, a Near East with a long-range agenda.

Drowned in Blood

But, action did not follow, and as LaRouche had forecast, instead of peace and development, the region was drowned in blood.

The British empire agents of the right-wing Jewish settlers movement went for grabbing more and more land by expanding settlements in the areas defined by the Oslo agreement as future Palestinian land. Their real target was Rabin.

Terrorism was added to the slow death by lack of economic development.

In 1994, the first Israeli terrorist incident of mass

murder was carried out by American-born West Bank settler, Baruch Goldstein, in Hebron. He was a member of the terrorist Kach movement. Goldstein entered a mosque and opened fire with an automatic rifle, killing some 30 Palestinians and wounding more than 100 others.

On Nov. 4, 1995, just after the Israeli Knesset approved the “land for peace” measures of Oslo, Prime Minister Rabin—the first Israeli-born Prime Minister—was assassinated by Yigal Amir, a radical Jewish settler who opposed peace with the Palestinians. Rabin, with Peres beside him, was leading a peace rally to celebrate the domestic passing of the Oslo agreement.

The region has never recovered.

Michele Steinberg, Marcia Merry Baker, and Harley Schlanger contributed to this report.



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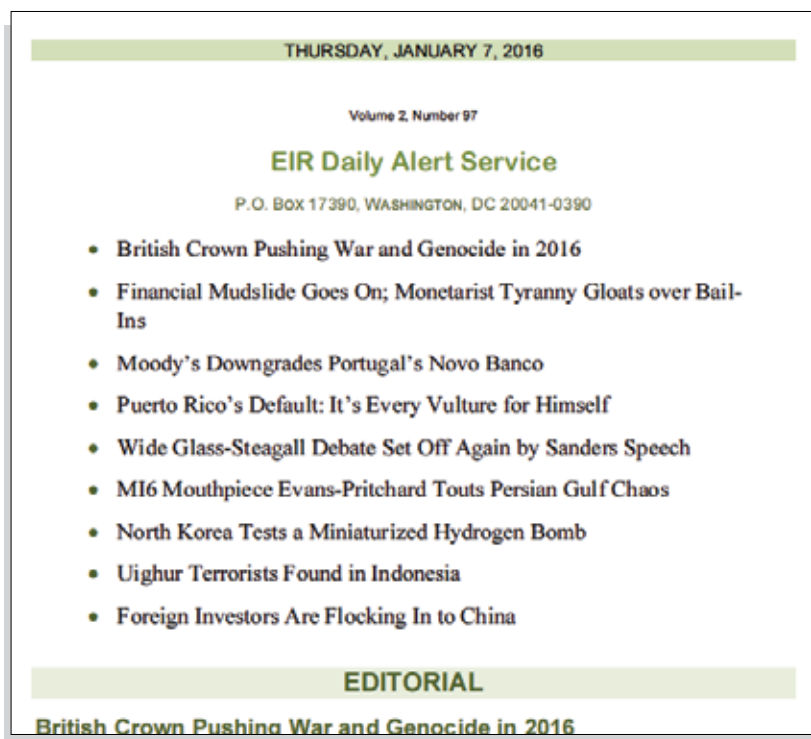
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