

## Bush and Sharon Put Nuclear Warfare Option on the Table

by Dean Andromidas

Edward Djerejian, former U.S. Ambassador to both Israel and Syria and currently director of the James Baker III Institute, has become the first leading U.S. foreign policy figure to warn unequivocally that the danger of a new Middle East war is imminent.

In an interview with the French daily *Le Monde* on April 24, Djerejian said, "The situation in the Middle East has become very dangerous. There exists a real risk of escalation, and this can lead to a vast armed conflict. I am convinced that neither the Arabs nor the Israelis want this. But in this region, a spark can suffice, such that the violence expands into a large-scale conflagration, even if none of the parties concerned wanted it. That is the greatest danger."

Djerejian, who reportedly refused a position in the Bush Administration, despite his closeness to former President Sir George Bush, warned that it is "absolutely necessary" to prevent a "series of chain-reaction events, which provoke escalation, and lead to a new Israeli-Arab war." He said that he believed that this is Secretary of State Colin Powell's overriding concern.

But, until Ariel Sharon is removed as Prime Minister of Israel, the perception given by the media and U.S. government officials that the Bush Administration is "constraining" Sharon, is wishful thinking. Backed by President George W. Bush, Sharon has made it clear that he believes Israel's vast military superiority in conventional and nuclear arms affords Israel a "window of opportunity" for a "military solution" as an alternative to compromise and peace. This is confirmed by Sharon's continued attacks deep into Palestinian-controlled territory in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, despite slaps on the wrist by Secretary of State Powell because of Sharon's attempts to reoccupy the Gaza Strip. At the same time, Sharon has followed up the recent bombing of Syrian military bases

in Lebanon by more threats, as witnessed by bellicose statements by Israeli Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, that Israel was "delivering a message to Damascus."

On April 20, Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. issued a warning of the possibility that Prime Minister Sharon could launch a nuclear strike, with the support of the Bush Administration, against a targeted Middle East country (see memorandum, in this issue). The need for such a warning is confirmed not only by recent developments, but also by the fact that powerful circles both in Israel and within the Anglo-American establishment in and around the Bush Administration are already calculating on the "not improbable" use of nuclear weapons. Consider the following.

### Nuclear Weapons Policy

Sharon, during his first official meeting with President Bush on March 21, discussed Israel's nuclear weapons policy. Such a discussion has been standard procedure for every new Israeli Prime Minister, and has the aim of renewing the unwritten "nuclear understandings" between the United States and Israel. Israel is ostensibly will not publicly reveal its nuclear capabilities, and in return the United States will maintain the fiction that Israel is not the world's only "rogue state," with an undeclared nuclear arsenal estimated to include up to 400 nuclear weapons. This discussion was held behind closed doors, without the presence of anyone except Sharon and Bush.

Even prior to Sharon's ascent as Prime Minister, Israel signalled its willingness to activate its nuclear capability during the current "Al Aqsa Intifada." On Oct. 24, 2000, Israeli Army radio announced that the Tekuma, one of three German-built Dolphin class submarines, had been rushed from its sea trials near Germany to Israel for "security reasons." Since it

had been widely reported in the international media that these submarines are armed with nuclear-tipped cruise missiles, the move was seen as a signal that Israel is preparing to deploy its nuclear capabilities in the face of widespread Arab support for the Palestinians. This was only a few weeks after Sharon himself ignited the current Intifada with his march on the Al Haram Al Sharif/Temple Mount, whose mosques are among Islam's most holy sites.

In reporting these developments at the time (see *EIR*, Nov. 10, 2000), we warned that the activation of the nuclear war option would require a wide political-military consensus. The current national unity government led by Likud leader Sharon and including Labor's Shimon Peres as Foreign Minister, indicates that this consensus is already in place.

A similar signal was sent on April 22, with a report in the London *Sunday Times*, that Israeli Brig. Gen. Itzhak Yaakov (ret.), who once headed the Israeli weapons research program, and therefore oversaw its nuclear weapons program, was arrested for passing Israeli military secrets to unauthorized persons. Predictably, his arrest fuelled widespread speculation that it was related to his knowledge of the Israeli nuclear program. Since the *Sunday Times* has been the leaksheet of choice for the Mossad and Israeli intelligence circles when they want to signal their military intentions, one may presume that the generation of this speculation was intentional, serving as a warning that Israel has nuclear weapons and is prepared to use them.

### **Anglo-American Scenarios**

Anglo-American policy circles are already calculating on Israel's use of its nuclear option within a war scenario involving Iraq, Iran, and other so-called "rogue" states allegedly in possession of "weapons of mass destruction," including biological and chemical weapons.

A senior military-intelligence source, when briefed on the nuclear war danger, readily agreed, and proceeded to spin out a nightmare scenario. The source, who served several years in the British Ministry of Defence as an expert in biological and chemical warfare, said: "The real issue, behind all the talk you are hearing about the dangers of new disease pandemics, is that, in the last five to seven years, biological warfare has become a real threat. Before that, it was an unmentionable name, but now, I tell you from hard knowledge, it is a real threat."

He said, "Think of Israel, of a city like Tel Aviv. All that has to happen is that some anthrax is left in a garbage can, or is in a suitcase in a bus, and is let loose. This is all taken very seriously, not only in Israel but here in Britain, certainly in America, and in Europe." After alleging that Iraq would be the prime suspect in such an attack, the source declared, "If this kind of stuff is let loose in Tel Aviv, the Israelis will let their nukes fly. I know for a fact, that [U.S. National Security Adviser Condoleezza] Condi Rice and Colin Powell are very worried about all this."

A similar scenario, or, more likely, a self-fulfilling prophecy, coming from Washington, was aired in a commentary in the April 25 *International Herald Tribune* and the *Los Angeles Times*. Penned by Charles Duelfer, former deputy chairman of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) on Iraq, and entitled "From Some Rogue Labs Come Poison Weapons," it accuses Iraq of developing poison weapons with the intention of creating outbreaks of diseases, like the current hoof and mouth epidemic wracking Britain. Such attacks, Duelfer says, would be "an act of war."

Duelfer scribbles, "Consider a regime such as Iraq's, which has demonstrated a commitment to developing biological weapons." Such a nation might "find it advantageous to strike anonymously and biologically by spreading an economically devastating disease or a slow-acting toxin."

Duelfer is currently a visiting scholar at the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Washington's Georgetown University and is a cohort of his former boss and former UNSCOM chairman, the notorious Richard Butler, who is now "diplomat in residence" at the New York Council on Foreign Relations. Both are in the forefront of the anti-Iraq campaign and are committed to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the dismemberment of Iraq.

Unless a concert of political forces within the United States and internationally moves to stop this Bush-Sharon axis, any number of provocations could unleash the "chain-reaction events" that could lead to nuclear conflagration. While a terrorist attack, including the bombing of the mosques on the Al Haram Al Sharif/Temple Mount by Jewish fanatics, could light the fuse, the same result would be the inevitable result of allowing the current state of affairs to continue.

### **Guerrilla Warfare**

For weeks now, an early collapse of the Palestinian National Authority, under the concentration camp-type conditions being imposed by Israel's economic and military blockade, is being openly discussed throughout the Middle East. In such a situation, guerrilla war, with clandestine support from outside the territories, would break out throughout the territories. Already, Israel is claiming that the Lebanese guerrilla group Hizbollah, with Syrian and Iranian backing, has been conducting operations within the West Bank and Gaza. Such allegations, whether true or not, could serve as a pretext for Sharon's own "Jordan is Palestine" war plan, in which the masses of Palestinians, in the face of Israeli tanks and artillery, would flee into the neighboring Arab states. If implemented, such a war plan would lead to the collapse of one or more of these governments, which would inevitably lead to a war of attrition comparable to the 1982 Lebanon war, but this time on the Syrian, Jordanian, and Egyptian fronts as well.

At that point, there would be extreme danger that Israel would "let the nukes fly," with Baghdad or Tehran as the most likely targets.