

Netanyahu's Gaza Attack Is Part Of Britain's Global War Drive

by Michele Steinberg

Nov. 18—On Nov. 14, Ahmed Jaabari, the military leader of the ruling Palestinian party in the Gaza Strip, was assassinated by Israel bombs. Jaabari, who was essentially the Secretary of Defense for the Hamas government in Gaza, was targeted by the fascist government of Benjamin Netanyahu, not because he was behind the recent barrage of rocket attacks on southern Israel, but because he was working out a peace agreement between Hamas and Israel.

That's right. Jaabari, the slain Hamas leader killed by the Israeli airstrikes, was in the midst of negotiations to try to bring about a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel—a step that would not only be critical to ending the bloodshed between Israel and the Palestinians, but would be a major *political* factor in achieving the admission of Palestine as an observer nation to the United Nations.

In an article posted on The Daily Beast on Nov. 15, Gershon Baskin, an Israeli peace activist who had helped arrange a ceasefire between Israel and Gaza after the terrorist attack across the Sinai border in August 2011, identified Jaabari as the “key actor” in his efforts to get a lasting ceasefire over the past year.

“The key actor on the Hamas side was Ahmed Jaabari, the commander of Ezedin al Qassam, the military wing of Hamas,” wrote Baskin. “When he was convinced that Israel was ready to stand down as well, Jaabari was always ready to take the orders to force the ceasefire on all of the other factions and on Hamas.... Several weeks ago, I decided to try once again and, through my counterpart in Hamas, we both began speaking to high level officials on both sides. A few days ago I met my counterpart in Cairo and we agreed that he would draft a new proposal based on our common understanding of what was required to make it work.

“Yesterday morning, hours before Israel assassinated Ahmed Jaabari, my counterpart in Hamas presented the draft to Jaabari and to other Hamas leaders. Senior Hamas leaders on the outside had already seen it and had instructed him to check the reactions to it in Gaza. I was supposed to receive the draft yesterday eve-

ning to present to Israeli officials who were waiting for me to send it to them.

“That option is now off the table. Jaabari is dead and so is the chance for a mutually beneficial long term ceasefire understanding.”

Baskin concludes: “The assassination of Jaabari was a pre-emptive strike against the possibility of a long term ceasefire. Netanyahu has acted with extreme irresponsibility. He has endangered the people of Israel and struck a real blow against the few important more pragmatic elements within Hamas. He has given another victory to those who seek our destruction, rather than strengthen those who are seeking to find a possibility to live side-by-side, not in peace, but in quiet.”

Obama Backs Netanyahu

The reality is that Benjamin Netanyahu and his government do not want a peace settlement with the Palestinians, and everyone knows it. But U.S. President Barack Obama has *personally* intervened to blame the Palestinian side, and to back the Israeli attacks 100%, without ever mentioning the assassination of Jaabari and the approximately 1,000 air sorties that have produced more than 680 Palestinian casualties and 57 deaths, including children as young as 11 months old, and a pregnant woman. The attacks include direct Israeli Air Force hits on buildings housing media offices including the Palestinian Al Quds, and Russia Today's Arabic-language headquarters in Gaza.

But as the Palestinian and other civilian deaths mounted, Obama continued to express his full support for right-wing maniac Netanyahu in a series of statements made on the opening of his trip to Asia on Sunday.

“Let's understand what the precipitating event here was,” said Obama, as quoted by the London *Guardian* Nov. 18. “[T]hat was an ever escalating number of missiles that were landing not just in Israeli territory but in areas that are populated.... There is no country on earth that would tolerate missiles raining down on its citizens from outside its borders.”



International Solidarity Movement

Israel's assault on Gaza threatens to trigger a wider war, which could lead to thermonuclear confrontation with Russia. Shown: This mosque and school, attended by 500 children, was destroyed in Operation Cast Lead, the 2008-09 Israeli attack on Gaza.

The so-called “break” between Obama and Netanyahu is a joke. Both of these messianic sociopaths are owned by the same mother, the British Empire; and the attack on Gaza is just one of several hot wars being manipulated by the empire.

Potential for Global War

First of all, the Israeli attack on Gaza is a piece of at least one version of the war plan that Israel has mapped out against Iran, aimed at eliminating the possibility of irregular warfare counterattacks by Iran's sympathizers. According to that version, described repeatedly to *EIR* by sources close to the Israel military, both Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in southern Lebanon have to be “neutralized” in order to hold down the number of Israeli casualties, when Israel attacks Iran. Low Israeli casualties are an important calculation in Netanyahu's plan to stay in power in Israel.

But more importantly, the Gaza War—in which Israeli tanks are now amassed at the border; where the Israeli government is talking about mobilizing 75,000 reservists; and Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman is mooting a targeted assassination of Gaza Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh—is only one of the fires raging in the region. The other two are Jordan, where radical Islamic Salafi forces, backed by the British Empire's ally Saudi Arabia, are gearing up against King Abdullah II; and Syria, where Britain, France, and other NATO members, including Obama's U.S., are ready to turn superpower

military force against Syria.

Gaza is now on the front burner, with interventions throughout the week by international forces, especially the governments of Egypt and Russia—including by Russian President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov—to attempt to prevent an irreversible hot war, by negotiating a ceasefire.

On Nov. 15, following Friday prayers, Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi, a longtime leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, said, in nationally televised remarks, “The Egyptian people, leadership . . . all of Egypt is standing with all its resources to stop this assault, to prevent the killing and bloodshed of Palestinians.” He also instructed Prime Minister Hesham Kandil to lead a delegation to Gaza the same day.

On Nov. 16, speaking from Riyadh, where he was meeting with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in urgent consultations about Syria, Lavrov denounced the Gaza War, calling the Israeli action “disproportionate.” Lavrov later called for an urgent convening of the “Quartet,” the moribund combination of the U.S., UN, European Union, and Russia, to try to get Israeli-Palestinian talks going.

On Nov. 18, British, Israeli, Russian, and Arabic press reported that delegations from Hamas in Gaza, the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah (the West Bank), and an unnamed Israeli envoy had assembled in Cairo for the difficult ceasefire talks.

But the United Kingdom and Obama do not want an immediate ceasefire. In keeping with Obama's murderous drone and air-war campaigns, Obama and the British have told Israel to keep up their air war as long as they like, to destroy everything they can, but to avoid a ground invasion.

And Not for the First Time

It is time for the United States to stand up against Netanyahu and the Israeli fascists behind this new Gaza war. It is not the first time that the Israelis have killed peacemakers—key figures who had just received peace proposals on their desks.

The assassination of Jaabari on Nov. 14 is an eerie reminder of the hideous act of Jewish extremist terrorism that felled Israeli Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin 17 years ago, on Nov. 4, 1995, the night of a peace rally to celebrate the Knesset ratification of the Oslo Treaty between

Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).

On Oct. 27 of this year—2012—some 20,000 Israelis gathered in Rabin Square in Tel Aviv to commemorate Yitzhak Rabin and his peace mission. It was one of the largest memorial demonstrations in recent years, in which most of the participants were young people. And the elders who spoke did not miss the opportunity to identify the role of Netanyahu in supporting the settlement extremists who spawned Yigal Amir, the assassin of Rabin. The theme of the rally was “Remembering the Murder, Fighting for Democracy.” One speaker linked the violence that killed Rabin to the violence of today’s gangs of Jewish thugs in Jerusalem who stalk the streets and beat or lynch Palestinians.

But there was another killing of a peace mission that is less known—one nearly identical to the murder of Jaabari—the targeted assassination of a Palestinian leader in 2002. Historian and journalist Mark Perry, who has been deeply involved in Mideast relations for years, responded to Baskin’s revelations in *The Daily Beast*, about the killing of Jaabari while he was negotiating peace, with a bit of relevant history.

Perry describes, in his Nov. 17 article in *The Daily Beast*, “Another Ceasefire, Another Assassination,” how, in 2002, he “was an integral part of a small team

working to end the second Intifada. I was the lone American on the team, the only one who was not an intelligence officer, and the only one with a direct line to Yasser Arafat and the senior leadership of Fatah.” He says a draft ceasefire was agreed to by all sides, to take effect at midnight July 22, 2002; it lacked only the signature of Salah Shehadeh, the head of Hamas’s military wing in Gaza, who said he was prepared to sign.

“At 11:50 PM on July 21, a Fatah member was going to Shehadeh’s house to get the signature, when an Israeli F-16 dropped a one-ton bomb on Shehadeh’s home in Gaza City. The Israeli bomb killed Shehadeh and 14 others, including Shehadeh’s wife and daughter. Seven people who lived next door, all innocent, were also killed.

“The next morning, as I walked from my hotel near the Damascus Gate to a meeting of the ceasefire team, I was approached by an Israeli official who we’d been dealing with. He smiled at me. ‘Ah, the naïve American,’ he said, in greeting. ‘You had a rough night.’ I said nothing, but he continued: ‘You know Mr. Perry, you don’t seem to understand. We don’t want a ceasefire.’ And he walked away. . . . In the end, perhaps, the Israeli was right: I was naïve. I’m not now.”

Michael Billington contributed to this article.

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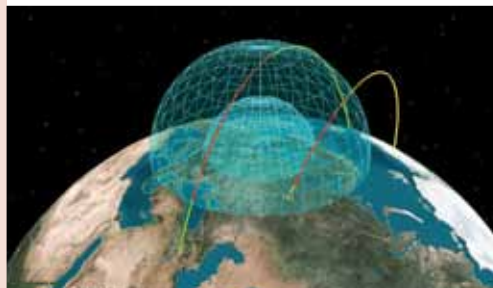
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June 2012