

Palestinian-Israeli Peace Road Map Under Panttheo-Cons' Attack

by Dean Andromidas

The Palestinian Legislative Council overwhelmingly approved the government of the new Palestinian Prime Minister, Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) on April 29. The move fulfilled the last precondition for the release, on April 30, of the international peace plan, and the "road map" is now in the possession of both Prime Minister Abu Mazen and Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

A founder of Israel's Peace Now group told *EIR* that the confirmation of Abu Mazen was a hopeful sign, but expressed his doubts about the Israeli partner in any talks, saying "We need an Israeli Abu Mazen." He underlined his doubts by pointing out that Sharon had ordered one of his infamous targeted assassinations, on the very day that Abu Mazen was confirmed, as "another proof Sharon will stay the same brutal person he has been for the last 55 years." With Sharon's government "nothing will happen now. . . . I fear there will continue to be a lot of bloodshed until there are new elections giving [Labor Party Chairman Amram] Mitzna a chance to take power." He was not encouraged by the road map, which was designed by the Quartet comprised of the UN, European Union, United States, and Russia. The source continued, "We have been waiting for the Americans to bring peace to the region since 1967. We have to do it ourselves along with the Palestinians."

U.S. Ambassador to Israel Daniel Kurtzer presented the road map to Sharon on April 30, while four representatives of the Quartet, including U.S. Consul General in Jerusalem Jeff Platman and UN Special Middle East Envoy Terje Larsen, presented it to Abu Mazen.

The road map calls for a cease-fire, a crackdown on Palestinian militias, an Israeli withdrawal from areas under the control of the Palestinian National Authority, and a freeze on settlements and dismantling of all those erected since 2001. At the end of three years, a Palestinian state will be created, fulfilling President George Bush's "vision" of two states "living in peace and security."

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell is scheduled to visit the region beginning May 8, and meet with Sharon and Abu Mazen to discuss the road map's implementation.

Abu Mazen, in accepting the road map, declared, "There will be a real peace only without settlements. You, the Israeli people, have to choose. We reject terrorism from any party and in all its forms. We extend our hand in negotiation. We

don't accept any changes in the road map as the Israelis are demanding. The road map is for implementation, not for negotiation. We are ready to face our responsibilities from the political and security point of view." More to the point, Palestinian legislator Hanan Ashrawi, a veteran human rights activist, declared, "We want to see that the international community is involved to . . . make sure that Israel complies, by stopping this policy of assassinations, expansion of settlements. All these are Israeli obligations as per the road map."

Sharon responded to the road map by ordering a brutal incursion, led by tanks and helicopter gunships, into the most dense part of the Gaza Strip, leaving 8 Palestinians dead—including two children, ages 2 and 13—and 25 wounded.

Who Are the Real Terrorists?

The Israelis shrugged off the brutality, saying they are fighting terrorism. But who controls terrorism? Within hours of receiving the road map, an Israeli gag order was lifted on the suicide bombing of a Tel Aviv pub at 1 a.m. on April 30. It was revealed that the bomber and his accomplice, who escaped after the bomb failed to explode, were not Palestinians, but British subjects. Both the suicide, Asif Mohammed Hanif, and the escapee, Omar Khan Sharif, were born in Darby, England. Their names are not Palestinian, but most likely of Asian origin.

Furthermore, the Israelis claim that the two entered Israel through the Gaza Strip—which would be the first instance in more than two years that a suicide attack was launched against Israel from the Gaza Strip, which the Israelis now have surrounded with a high security fence and checkpoints. There are two other cases where bombers who were not Palestinians have entered Israel: One was also a British subject of Lebanese origin; and the other was the strange "shoe bomber," Richard Reeves, the would-be al-Qaeda operative and British national.

As *EIR* has amply documented, London is the capital of international terrorism, where cells maintain murky links with all sorts of intelligence services, including the Anglo-American agencies and Israel's Mossad. It remains to be seen if Israel will exploit this attack, and allege a Palestinian link to al-Qaeda, to bolster Sharon's claim that Palestine will become a "terror state."

Chicken-Hawks, Fundies, and Likudniks

The major roadblocks for the road map can be found in what Lyndon LaRouche identified last week in *EIR* as the "Panttheo-Cons"—the chicken-hawks around U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney, followers of the late Prof. Leo Strauss; the actually anti-Semitic Christian fundamentalists (and their Carlist counterparts in the U.S. Catholic Church); and the fascist Jabotinskyites, ably represented in Israel by the likes of Sharon's Likud party. They all see the road map as a project of Secretary of State Colin Powell, their chief adversary in the Bush Administration.

Destroying the road map was the order of business at the April 27 meeting of the Anti-Defamation League's National Leadership conference in Washington. As ADL head Abe Foxman put it, "The road map, which in our view has some significant flaws, can only have the hope of being productive, if the U.S. is the overwhelmingly dominant player." Foxman also reiterated what is becoming the new slogan of the anti-Palestine Zionist lobby: that Bush's "vision," announced on June 24 when he defended Sharon's reoccupation of Palestinian Authority territories "in self-defense," is the basis for negotiations; Bush thereby wrote P.A. President Yasser Arafat out of any role in a peace process. The ADL keynote was given by former CIA Director James Woolsey, a pantheon, who had recently dubbed the Iraq War as the opening battle of "World War IV," a Clash of Civilizations war to overthrow the Islamic regimes in the Middle East, among others.

These forces will hold a major event on May 15-17 in Washington, sponsored by the Zionist House of Boston and the National Unity Coalition for Israel (NUCI), explicitly "to oppose rewarding murderous Palestinian terrorism with statehood" and "to lay bare the inherent absurdity of our State Department promoting a road map to Arab-Israel 'Peace' from a Quartet whose other three members—Russia, the European Union (France and Germany) and the UN—repeatedly disparage U.S. interests and are demonstrably hostile to Israel."

Participants will include: Americans for a Safe Israel, Christian Broadcasting Network, Christian Coalition of America, Freeman Center for Strategic Studies, and like lunatics. Featured speakers include: Gary Bauer, American Values; Roberta Combs, President, Christian Coalition; Frank Gaffney, Center for Security Policy; Alan Keyes, former U.S. Representative and Republican Presidential pre-candidate; Morton Klein, President, Zionist Organization of America; self-proclaimed "universal fascist" Michael Ledeen of the American Enterprise Institute; Ed McAteer, Religious Roundtable; and Daniel Pipes, Middle East Forum.

Lest one think all pantheon-cons are Republicans, one of Sharon's top supporters is U.S. Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.), ranking Democrat on the House International Relations Committee. Lantos met at the end of April with Syrian President Bashar Assad, demanding that Assad move Syria "in a new direction." Lantos then continued with several *diktats* even more hard-line than those from the U.S. State Department. He then travelled to the West Bank where he met with Abu Mazen, and made impossible demands no different from Sharon's. Lantos told Abu Mazen he must declare war on Hamas and other militant groups.

Sharon on Road Map: 'Yes, But. . .'

The road map demands that Israel freeze all settlement activity and dismantle all settlements and so-called "outposts" established since March 2001 (see box). As chief architect of the settlement enterprise, Sharon will do everything

Summary of the Road Map

According to the State Department summary, the road map bases itself on the 1991 Madrid Conference, the "land for peace" formula, UN Security Resolutions 242, 338, and 1347, and on the Beirut Arab League initiatives of 2002 (Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah's proposal). In the first phase, the parties must begin direct negotiations, with the Palestinians re-establishing a security force. As security is established, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) should begin to withdraw from the territories occupied since Sept. 28, 2000. The Israelis must cease all settlement activity and dismantle settlements set up since March 2001. This phase should be accomplished by June 2003.

The second phase begins with Palestinian elections, after which the Quartet will convene an international conference, aimed at supporting Palestinian recovery and leading to establishment of a Palestinian state with provisional borders. The conference would also help draft a Palestinian constitution. Phase II is to be concluded by December 2003.

In Phase III, an international conference in early 2004 would ratify Palestine's provisional borders and begin to resolve the final status issues, including returning refugees; the status of Jerusalem and the settlements; and resolution of the Israel-Lebanon and Israel-Syria conflicts. The conference would also result in the establishment of relations between Israel and the other Arab states. The final status issues are to be fully resolved by 2005, the deadline set by President Bush in his June 24, 2002 Rose Garden statement.

behind the scenes to stop the road map's implementation, while saying: "yes, but," in public. On April 27, a new lobby, "to ensure the preservation and strengthening of the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, and to prevent any move that could endanger the settler movement," was created by Likud member of the Knesset (parliament) Yehiel Hazan. Already, 18 of the 40 Likud MKs have joined. Hazan used to run Sharon's office in the occupied territories. The Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* on April 29, quoted Hazan as characterizing the lobby as "a rightist coalition, strengthening the Prime Minister in the face of American pressure." Hazan continued, "The road map, in its current form, will bring destruction on the state of Israel. I will not agree to the current wording of the road map, which would freeze settlement activity and dismantle outposts. This is a line in the sand that cannot be crossed." He called it worse than the 1993 Oslo Accords.

Another lobbyist is Minister of Public Security Tzachi

Hanegbi. A Jabotinskyite fascist, Hanegbi is the son of Stern Gang terrorist Geula Cohen, who is godmother of the “Temple Mount” fanatics who want to destroy the Muslim holy sites on the al-Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, and clear the way to rebuild Solomon’s Temple—which would start a world war in the process. Since his ministry is in charge of the police, can he be expected to give the orders removing the settlers?

Other Knesset members will probably come from the National Religious Party, United Torah Judaism, the National Union, and the Shas party.

Meanwhile the Yesha Council, representing the Jewish settlers, held a conference on April 28 where they drafted a plan for Jewish and Palestinian cantons to be set up in the Israeli-occupied West Bank as a counter to the road map. Although the plan was drafted by Dr. Haim Gvertzman, *Ha’aretz* describes it as rehash of a plan that Sharon had cooked up over a decade ago. Yesha calls for no evacuation of settlements, no Palestinian state, and Israeli military freedom of action throughout the West Bank. Yisrael Harel told the Yesha Council that he envisioned a Palestinian “entity” in the northern Sinai Desert (in Egypt), in parts of Jordan, and in the West Bank and Gaza.

Needed: A Real Peace Partnership

The very fact that Abu Mazen has become the Palestinian Authority’s first Prime Minister is seen as part of the Bush Administration’s efforts to sideline President Arafat, whom Bush has labelled an obstacle to peace. It is also a compromise with Sharon, who has tried to kill Arafat several times in the past two years.

Sharon claims he is ready to make “painful concessions” only if Abu Mazen “fights terrorism.” In reality, Sharon wants Abu Mazen and a new Palestinian leadership to become his “native” police force to protect the expanding Israeli settlements. This is, of course, impossible. Abu Mazen, a key negotiator of the 1993 Oslo Accords, is loyal to Arafat and the Palestinian cause. He represents a real peace partner, but only in the context of a real peace process, backed by a United States willing to pressure Israel to make the necessary concessions.

A senior Israeli source, who knows Abu Mazen, told *EIR*: “I have known Abbas [Abu Mazen] for many years, he will not last long. He is a very intelligent and capable person, but he has no popular support. He is not very strong. You have to be a street fighter, if you are going to lead the Palestinian people and deal with Israel. On the other hand, he will not do the dirty work for the Israelis and the Americans who want him to put down the resistance.” The source expressed his fear, that once it becomes clear that the Prime Minister will not be a Sharon yes-man, the Israelis and Americans would move to depose, or even assassinate him, and the fighting will continue. He warned that the Palestinian people will not give up Arafat; but if Arafat goes, there would be a civil war, which could be what Sharon wants.