

Is London Using Netanyahu To Provoke Arab-Israeli War?

by Michele Steinberg

Aug. 27—As hundreds of thousands of Israelis take to the streets of Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and half a dozen other Israeli cities for the fifth week in a row, protesting catastrophic economic conditions, and demanding that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu resign or immediately recall the Knesset from its Summer recess, the question must be asked whether Netanyahu is provoking an Arab-Israeli War on behalf of the British Empire.

For weeks since July 14, when the demonstrations began with a modest tent city protest against rising housing prices, activists involved in the Israeli protests have warned that Netanyahu was gearing up for a war that would justify banning the protests, under the banner of security measures. On Aug. 8, for example, *+972* magazine journalist Rechavia (Rick) Berman published an article titled “Netanyahu Must Go,” saying that Netanyahu “spat in the eye” of the social protesters, and that to stop the protests, “Netanyahu is quietly trying to bring about a security crisis. The Israeli Air Force bombed Gaza a couple of times until the desired couple of flying pipe bombs flew out, but Hamas itself cracked down on the launchers. In the West Bank, the IDF [Israeli Defense Force] is arresting people and carrying out raids deep in Area A. This weekend, an actor from the Freedom Theater in Jenin was arrested, and several hours later the theater itself was raided, as were villages in the Hebron area.”

After weeks of Israeli provocations, the violence that Netanyahu was trying to provoke erupted on Aug. 17, when Arab paramilitaries launched three attacks inside Israel in the town of Eilat, on the border of both Gaza and Egypt on the Red Sea. Though there were strong intelligence indications that the terrorism was coming, not from Gaza, but possibly a new group calling itself al-Qaeda in the Egyptian Sinai, Israel ignored this complication and immediately launched massive counterstrikes in Gaza and areas of Egypt. In Gaza, the Israelis assassinated the core leadership of the Palestinian group known as the Popular Resistance Commit-

tees, despite no hard evidence that the PRC, which has a loose relationship to Hamas, was involved. The Israeli counterattack went further than ever before, with cross border attacks killing several Egyptian soldiers, and leading to the most serious breach in relations between Egypt and Israel in decades.

Regional War on the Horizon

On Aug. 20, the government of Egypt officially withdrew its Ambassador from Israel, after Israeli soldiers crossed into Egyptian territory and killed Egyptian border guards; the Israelis claimed that they were in pursuit of Palestinian militants who were behind the Eilat attacks.

At first the Israeli government tried to claim that the Egyptians were killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber who blew himself up amidst the Egyptian soldiers. It was a lie. Then the Israeli government tried to claim the guards were caught in cross-fire. Finally, it was revealed that the Israelis had in fact crossed into Egypt in pursuit of Palestinian militants, even though the Israelis were fully aware that the Egyptians themselves were conducting security operations on their side of the border, in the aftermath of an incident where terrorists had blown up the gas pipeline delivering gas to Israel from Egypt.

Thus, when Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak issued a statement that the border incident “reflects the weakening of Egypt’s hold in the Sinai and the broadening of activities by terror elements,” it was nothing less than a slap in the face to the Egyptians. The reality is that the Israeli-Egyptian border is highly regulated, because it is at the center of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, and therefore an Israeli crossing into Egypt could not have been decided by a local commander, but only under rules of engagement issued from the highest levels of the Israeli government. Cairo refuted Barak’s statement and demanded an apology, while calling for Israel to conduct an official investigation, and accusing



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A mass-strike process is growing in Israel against the government's austerity policies. Shown is a demonstration in Tel Aviv on Aug. 6. Some observers believe that Prime Minister Netanyahu is manufacturing a "terrorism crisis," or even a war, to justify banning the protests.

Israel of violating the 1979 peace treaty.

Egyptian Presidential candidate and former Secretary General of the Arab League Amr Moussa denounced the Israeli killings of the Egyptians on Aug. 18, declaring, "Israel must realize that the day when Egypt's sons are killed without an appropriate and strong response are over." Another Presidential candidate, Hamdeen Sabbahi, called for a deterrent response. The situation only cooled down several days later, when the head of Egypt's Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), Hussein Tantawi, on Aug. 23, rescinded the government's decision to recall the Ambassador to Israel. But the crisis has just begun.

A Terrorist Pattern

Simultaneous with the Israeli-Palestinian-Egyptian terrorist incidents, a broad swath of the Arab and Muslim world, from Turkey to Afghanistan and Pakistan, erupted in terrorist attacks. At the same time—literally the same days as the Eilat attacks and counterstrikes—Anglo-American antics, with strong cooperation at the United Nations, were setting up the possibility of "regime change" actions in Syria and Lebanon.

The pattern is no accident. The British Empire and its global financial system are bankrupt, and in order to

maintain control, longtime British assets have been activated for terrorism across Southwest Asia. The chaos and destabilizations are an attempt to change the subject from the only significant question of today: How can citizens of sovereign nation-states bury the already dead British financial system, and put in its place the Glass-Steagall banking regulations of 1933, and the science-driven infrastructure projects that are desperately needed for humankind?

In short, the British are unleashing terrorism and war to block the solutions put forward by Lyndon LaRouche. Unless the British Empire and its puppet Barack Obama are stopped, no country of Southwest Asia or North Africa—the playground of the World War I-era Sykes-Picot imperial deal—is safe.

In just the three days immediately around the Eilat terror attacks, low-intensity warfare escalated across the Sykes-Picot region:

- In Turkey, on Aug. 17 the narcoterrorist Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) attacked a military convoy at Cukurca, a town in the southeastern province of Hakkari, killing eight Turkish soldiers and one village guard, and wounding another 15 soldiers. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul immediately announced retaliatory strikes, and Turkish warplanes hit 28 PKK targets, most of them across the

border in Northern Iraq, killing 4-5 PKK rebels. Until the June 2011 elections, there had been negotiations with PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan to stop the PKK attacks, but those talks have broken down.

Informed Arab sources report that intelligence reports are being fed into Turkey to blame neighboring Iran and Syria, with which Turkey has had warm, fraternal relations over the last several years, for the PKK activation. But the reality is that the PKK is a thorough British asset. "Britain has a deep Kurdish policy," Ocalan himself said on June 2, 1999, explaining why the British have been his sponsor. "This has been going on for 150 years. This country protects some, and spends some. I believe that they have strong manipulative tendencies, and are pursuing a deliberate Kurdish policy in this way. Britain wants the Kurds to remain a problem for Turkey."

- Egypt is being targeted by Anglo-Saudi operations in the form of al-Qaeda related groups. The Aug. 18 attacks on Eilat, which killed 8 Israelis and wounded 40 others, are suspected to be coming from al-Qaeda or Saudi-backed neo-Salafi operatives, based in the Sinai Desert in Egypt—not from Palestinians. Deutsche Welle reported that a group calling itself al-Qaeda in the Egyptian Sinai has become active in the Sinai, and that this grouping had recently attacked an Egyptian gas pipeline that delivers liquefied natural gas to Israel and Jordan. After attacks on the pipeline, Egypt—with permission from Israel—deployed 10,000 crack troops into Sinai to wipe out the terrorists. The deployment exceeded the number of troops allowed under the Camp David Accords, which is why the Israelis had to be consulted. It is not to be excluded that Israel could move to reoccupy parts of the Egyptian Sinai at some point, as a security measure, which would be tantamount to a new state of war.

- On Aug. 18, President Obama, reportedly over objections from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, called for Syrian President Bashar Assad to step down, prompting questions about whether the United States was prepared to take military action against the Syrian regime. This move by Obama came less than a week after the UN released the indictments against several Hezbollah members for the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005. The news media have jumped on the released indictment to point a finger at both Syria and Iran for ordering the Hariri assassination—another possible trigger for destabilization of the region.

Revolution Underway

The biggest error for Americans and Israelis alike—especially well-meaning peace advocates—is to look at the Israeli protests and the Palestinian decision to push for recognition of statehood and a seat at the United Nations as business as usual. There is a revolutionary mass-strike process underway against the Sykes-Picot system, which has kept the region in perpetual war since World War I and the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The mass strike continues to inspire populations in the context of the global financial collapse. There will either be change or hell, like the 14th-Century Black Death.

These developments have overturned Netanyahu's apple cart, and the only trick in his bag is war. Netanyahu believes that time is running out for Israel to be declared a Jewish State for Jews only, and to crush the Palestinians before they achieve recognition of statehood and a seat at the UN, at the September UN General Assembly in New York. While there are tremendous differences remaining in the Palestinian camp, the Palestinian Authority, dominated by Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and Hamas, the elected government in the last Palestinian Authority general elections, have agreed to be unified as they go into the UN session.

Israeli pressure on the United States to veto Palestinian statehood at the UN is enormous, especially on the U.S. Congress. During the month of August, about one-fifth of the U.S. House of Representatives was herded off to Israel by House leaders Eric Cantor (R-Va.) and Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) in the only show of bipartisan cooperation that the two have mustered. The trip was sponsored by a foundation created by the notorious Israeli lobby group, AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, and described by Al Kamen of the *Washington Post* in the following glowing terms: The excursion includes a round-trip flight in business class for lawmakers and their spouses (that alone is worth about \$8,000), fine hotels and meals, side trips, and transportation and guides.

The American lawmakers were hit with a devastating psychological message: The Eilat attacks and Israel's counterattack on Egypt and a random target in Gaza occurred while they were on the junket. But did the Americans see the real Israel—the hundreds of thousands of Israelis who have been demonstrating for the last five weeks against their own government, because of the dire economic conditions? Probably not,

as the Netanyahu government pulled all possible strings to cancel the marches in the name of national security.

Netanyahu and his Cabinet of Jewish State ideologues have not been prepared for the upsurge that has swept their tiny British-controlled nation. What began on July 14 as a tent city demonstration against high housing prices in Tel Aviv, had expanded to more than 300,000 people demanding social justice on Aug. 6, giving voice to tremendous frustration within the middle and professional classes. These protests have ripped away the curtain of lies that Israel has long maintained—that it is the only democracy in the Middle East, and that it is an economic miracle whose economic growth of 4.6 and 4.8% in two of the last three years (2008-10), and per-capita income of \$29,800, have eclipsed the rest of the advanced sector.

Economic Disaster

The reality is that Israel is not only an apartheid society divided between Jews and non-Jews, especially Palestinians, but it is an apartheid society in terms of income. According to the CIA *World Factbook*, 23.6% of Israel citizens live in poverty, where the poverty line is \$7.30 per person per day. Israel's per-capita income is the 46th highest in the world, at \$29,800 per person. Compare that to the 23.6% of the population of Israel that has a per-capita income of \$2,664 per person. According to data published by the Foreign Ministry of Canada, the poverty rate is 60% among the Palestinians and the ultra-Orthodox Jewish *haredi* communities. The top 10% income bracket consumes or earns 24.3% of the nation's GDP; the lowest 10% income bracket consumes only 2.5%.

Yet it has been the middle class, the professionals and intelligentsia, who have been out on the streets demonstrating, not the poorest people—at least not yet. The protesters are sick of the government catering to the super-rich, as the social welfare benefits brought in by the Labor governments of Israel's early years disappear. From housing to medical care to wages and inflation, the Israeli population, like the populations of Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, is in revolt against the living conditions that are worsening each year.

And contrary to the disinformation swallowed by the U.S. Congress every day—that there is one voice in Israel, and it is anti-Semitic to criticize the government policies—the Israeli citizens themselves are demand-

ing that their voices be heard. On Aug. 17, when the Israeli government pressured the J14 social protest leaders to cancel their Aug. 20 demonstration because of the terrorist attack, the announcement by National Union of Students chief Itzak Schmulik elicited a fierce backlash from rank-and-file protesters, who insisted that the protests take place, in the form of a torchlight memorial for those who had died in the fighting—Israelis, Palestinians, and Egyptians. In one Aug. 20 demonstration, in Tel Aviv, there were reportedly 15,000 people in the streets, a high number considering the police-state lockdown, and the threat of terrorist dangers.

The protests continue to grow, and there are signs that Palestinian Israelis are setting aside their justified skepticism, and joining and speaking at some of the demonstrations, at the invitation of the protest organizers. The protests have broadened to many of the smaller towns and cities, not only Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, the centers of government and international attention. Dafni Leef, the founder of the tent city protest, told a press conference on Aug. 25 that demonstrations are being organized nationwide, because, without social justice in the periphery [where the poor people live], there will be no social justice in Israel.

At the press conference, Leef also demanded that Netanyahu reconvene the Knesset *immediately* and deal with the economic crisis. "Two months ago, there was a deep change in public awareness in Israel society," said Leef, "Hundreds of thousands of people came onto the streets and tent camps have been set up all over the country. How has the Prime Minister responded? He has passed the National Housing Committees Law and raised electricity rates." She exposed Netanyahu's economics committee as a deception that was created to "pacify the public" at the same time that he "tried to persuade the students to quit the struggle."

Leef's press conference was a call to arms. "The nation demands thorough change. We expect real change," Leef said. "On Saturday night, we will hold a mass demonstration in Tel Aviv, and we call on the Prime Minister to listen to us. We don't want to bring down the government or set up parties. We want the MKs [Members of the Knesset] and ministers to return from their vacations. Convene the largest government in the country's history and do something courageous in politics. . . . There will be other demonstrations elsewhere in the country. Without social justice in the periphery, there will be no social justice in Israel."