

# U.S. Ambassador Tells Egypt: Censor LaRouche

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and Hussein Askary

During the Clinton Administration, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright used to pop up in foreign capitals and preach the virtues of “democracy,” American-style. In Kazakhstan and other Central Asian republics, for example, she would bring a laundry list of demands that her hosts should immediately fulfill, in order to be counted among the “free nations” of the world, and friends of the United States. Liberal, free-market economic policies, plus freedom of the press, were always high on the list.

Now, with the George W. Bush Administration, much has changed—including, apparently, freedom of the press. U.S. Ambassador to Egypt David Welch recently demanded that the country’s newspaper editors do quite the opposite, and perform political censorship in their press. On Sept. 20, a letter written by Welch appeared in *Al-Ahram*, the leading daily and weekly of Egypt, understood to reflect the views of the government, and considered a newspaper of record, not only in Egypt, but throughout the Arab world.

In his letter, which was published there in Arabic (and also, in English, on the Embassy’s home page; see *Documentation*), His Excellency referred to numerous articles that had appeared on the anniversary of Sept. 11. He complained that there were many “voices in the media questioning who planned and committed the attacks, and positing incredible conspiracy theories without the slightest bit of evidence to back them up.” Not only that, but a leading sociology professor “spent nearly half an hour trying to cast doubt on al-Qaeda’s culpability and even went so far as to implicate the American government by asserting that America had benefited from the attacks.”

## ‘Editors: Keep This in Mind’

Denouncing the Egyptian news reporting as “disregard for the facts,” which may “tarnish the reputation of the Egyptian media in the eyes of the world,” Welch called for censorship: “I hope editors will keep this in mind and exercise their editorial judgment when reviewing articles or columns to print in their publications.”

This blatant intervention into the internal affairs of a sovereign country created an uproar in Egypt, with a large group of Egyptian intellectuals calling for expelling Ambassador Welch from Egypt and declaring him *persona non grata*. A statement was issued by the Egyptian Journalists Society,

condemning Welch’s call for censorship. It was published in *Al-Ahram* on Sept. 24, and read as follows:

“In its meeting on Sunday, the Bureau of the Supervisory Board of the Journalists’ Society discussed the comments sent to the Society in response to the article written by Mr. David Welch, U.S. Ambassador to Cairo, and published in *Al-Ahram* daily; especially his call on Egyptian chief editors to ban any articles and opinion commentaries that do not fit into the American viewpoint on the responsibility of al-Qaeda for the September 11 attacks. On this occasion, the Bureau emphasizes that the main principle to which the Society and all Egyptian journalists are committed, is that the freedom of expression includes the right to publish all opinions, no matter how much they go against the general consensus; and that the road to truth starts from presenting all views, and not from the scissors of censorship.

“There is no doubt that the publishing of this article [by Welch] by the oldest and most prestigious Egyptian and Arab newspaper [*Al-Ahram*], is the embodiment of this principle, while it is highly doubtful that a similar article criticizing the American press would ever find its way to an American newspaper that easily.

“While expressing its astonishment at the U.S. Ambassador’s disregard for the principle of freedom of expression and publishing, it also [rejects] his attempt to manipulate this principle for the advantage of the American Administration’s viewpoint. . . .

“The Bureau would like to assure Mr. Ambassador that any attempt to interfere in the publishing policies of Egyptian newspapers is regarded as an unacceptable move, violating the independence of the press as granted by the constitution and law. Furthermore, it is useless to expect a positive response from any Egyptian chief editor to any orders that might bring the real damage to the reputation of the Egyptian press.”

## It’s LaRouche

The refusal to accept the official cover story about the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001—that “Osama bin Laden did it”—is not a phenomenon limited to Egypt. Behind closed doors, and increasingly publicly, doubts are being raised. Nor are those asking questions about it, projecting a “conspiracy theory.” Rather, since the day of those terrible events, serious political analysts have pointed to the impossibility that such an operation could have been planned, organized, and executed by this or any other terrorist group.

The first to issue an analysis of this sort, was Lyndon LaRouche, on the day of the attacks. His immediate and subsequent, more detailed, analyses of the attacks identified the strategic intention, as well as the historical, philosophical, and political background to the Clash of Civilizations faction behind the operation.

LaRouche’s analysis was picked up immediately in the Arab and Islamic world, and was prominently covered in the Egyptian press. In January 2002, a LaRouche representative

was invited to present his analysis to a seminar at the University of Cairo, alongside Egyptian Gen. Mahmoud Khalaf, whose military-strategic analysis dovetailed with LaRouche's reading (see *EIR*, Feb. 1).

Since that time, LaRouche's views, not only on this issue, but on economic, political, and strategic developments more generally, have been aired widely in the Egyptian press. Increasingly, LaRouche has been being identified as the voice of the "other America," the "real America," and acknowledged as a Presidential candidate they would like to endorse. *Al-Ahram* ran an interview with LaRouche in August, by Sohair Soukkary. Then, on the anniversary of Sept. 11, a plethora of articles, including interviews with LaRouche, appeared.

The following gives just a taste of the coverage: From Sept. 7-13, articles from *EIR* on the role of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in the Sept. 11 provocation, appeared in the Saudi daily *Al-Watan* and the Egyptian Arabic version, *Al-Ahram al-Arabi*. The Arabic translation of LaRouche's Presidential campaign statement, "Pollard Affair Never Ended,"

was published on *Middle East Online's* front page, and in the Saudi daily *Al-Watan*, and circulated through Internet groups widely.

Many editorials in the Persian Gulf press included reference to LaRouche's analysis of the 9/11 attacks. The Dubai-based *Al-Bayan* daily referred to LaRouche twice on Sept. 11, 2002, in the editorial of its political supplement, and in commentary on the "Arab Affairs" page.

The same daily published an op-ed on Sept. 13, 2002, by Egyptian Brig. Gen. Hosam Swelam (ret.). Swelam, a renowned military strategist, cited LaRouche in the context of the increasing Egyptian-American strategic tension, and said that LaRouche indicated that the deteriorating U.S. policy toward Egypt was the result of the growing influence of the Zionist and Israeli circles inside the Bush Administration. Swelam also referred to the Israeli Jabotinskyite schemes for redrawing the map of the Middle East. He stressed that "President Mubarak has been fully aware" of these developments, and therefore has been acting prudently and on the basis of

## Israelis Attack U.S. Chicken-Hawk Faction

Echoes of Lyndon LaRouche's Middle East initiatives are surfacing in Israeli political discourse, especially concerning the danger that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and the U.S. "Chicken-hawks" roosting under the wings of Vice President Dick Cheney, pose for the survival of Israel.

Akiva Eldar, senior commentator for the daily *Ha'aretz*, authored an article on Oct. 1, "Perles of Wisdom for the Faithful," blasting U.S. Defense Policy Board Chairman Richard Perle and Undersecretary of Defense for policy Douglas Feith. Current Washington discussions about redrawing the map of the Middle East, he writes, fit "some old dreams of a few of the key strategists around the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld triangle running America's Iraq policy." He references the infamous briefing at the Pentagon in July, organized by Perle, where a presenter's slide proclaimed, "Palestine is Israel, Jordan is Palestine, and Iraq is the Hashemite Kingdom."

A former Israeli security official, Eldar reports, "met two weeks ago with a very well-connected Republican member of Perle's Policy Board. . . . The Israeli warned the American about an all-out war with the entire Arab world, and added that the Perle plan would create 'an impossible strategic environment' for Israel."

Eldar quotes from the 1996 policy statement that Perle and Feith wrote for then-Prime Minister Benjamin Netan-

yahu, "Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm." This statement had been featured in a mass leaflet circulated by the LaRouche in 2004 Presidential campaign. Eldar comments, "The two Jewish experts, eventually to become key Pentagon players, are walking a fine line between their loyalty to American governments and Israeli interests."

Another Israel commentator, Aviad Kleinberg, writing in *Ha'aretz* on Oct. 1, wrote that "the political horizon for Sharon and his gang is clear. It is based on a somewhat primitive interpretation of Ze'ev Jabotinsky's 'Iron Wall.' The Arabs want to destroy us. They regard every sign of Israeli weakness as a crack in the door through which they can shove a foot or two. Israel, therefore, must never allow any such crack; no window of opportunity can be allowed to be opened. The only language spoken in the Middle East is the language of force. Israel must constantly use force, lest it lose its 'deterrent capabilities.' Deterrence does not serve any specific goal; it's an autonomous essence, a Moloch demanding endless sacrifices."

"Imposing fear, humiliating, lording it over the others—these are not character flaws, but carefully thought-out, deterministic instruments for survival," he writes, warning that these policies of Sharon will turn Israel into an outcast country. "If we become a state after Sharon's liking, we may be of some use to the Americans, but it's worth noting what happened to some of America's dubious allies of the past: When they finished their jobs, they were declared unfit to dine with respectable guests, and sent home. I wouldn't count on the Bush family's love of Israel."—*Dean Andromidas*

principle, in his dealing with the Bush Administration.

The world's largest Arabic daily, the London-based Saudi *Asharq al-Awsat*, had short items referring to LaRouche's identification of the role of the internal U.S. "military-industrial complex" and the faction pushing for a Clash of Civilizations and religious war, in the Sept. 11 events.

It is this massive coverage that has so thoroughly upset Ambassador Welch. Though he would not mention LaRouche's name, it is widely recognized among Egyptian intellectual circles, that his letter was intended to stop LaRouche's influence.

Welch's outrageous call for censorship has backfired completely. Not only has this intervention become the leading topic of talk shows and political protests, but, in the second half of September, LaRouche's views were everywhere in the Arabic press: Commentaries appeared on the Qatar-based website *aljazeera.net*, Saudi Arabia's *Asharq al-Awsat*, the U.A.E.'s *Al-Bayan*, Egypt's *Al-Ahram al-Arabi* weekly magazine, Saudi Arabia's *Al-Watan*, the London-based *Al-Arab International*, and *Middle East Online*. All these articles referred to LaRouche's view of the Sept. 11 attacks as an internal, special military operation. Some commentators, such as Turkish Islamic scholar Orkhan Mohammed Ali, went back to LaRouche's July 24, 2001 webcast, when he warned against the "Guns of August" and the immediate threat of the collapse of international financial system, "unless there is a major war or assassinations of leaders of major nations." Ali's feature article has been posted by *aljazeera.net* since Sept. 11, 2002.

Ahmed Hamroush, a renowned Egyptian military historian, writer, and member of Gamal Abdul Nasser 1952 Revolution's Free Officers, wrote an article in the Oct. 1 *Asharq al-Awsat*, on the collapse of the peace process in the Middle East, but stressed that "there are still some rays of light" shining over the dark situation. One such ray of light, he wrote, is Lyndon LaRouche.

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## Documentation

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*The following letter to the editor by U.S. Ambassador to Egypt David Welch was published in the Egyptian daily Al Ahram on Sept. 20. It is titled "Time To Get the Facts Right."*

The commemoration of the one-year anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks has elicited a host of remembrance, commentary, and analysis in the Egyptian media on the significance of the events and how America and the world have changed since that fateful day. Some writers offered Americans renewed condolences, for which we are grateful, as we are for the help Egypt has extended so far in bringing to justice those responsible for these crimes. President Bush has publicly thanked President Mubarak for such assistance,

recognizing that Egyptians know first-hand the horrors terrorist groups can inflict. Egyptians also understand the need to pursue such terrorists before they can commit further atrocities.

Unfortunately, the anniversary has also brought forth yet more voices in the media questioning who planned and committed the attacks, and positing incredible conspiracy theories without the slightest bit of evidence to back them up. Leading Egyptian newspapers and magazines in the past two weeks alone have published columns by senior columnists who suggested governments or groups other than al-Qaeda were responsible. A leading Egyptian professor of sociology, in a public lecture on September 11, spent nearly half an hour trying to cast doubt on al-Qaeda's culpability and even went so far as to implicate the American government by asserting that America had benefited from the attacks. Much attention and credibility have been given in the media to a book by a Frenchman, a book that has been completely debunked by more careful and thorough French authors.

It is a fact that most of the world accepts the voluminous evidence of al-Qaeda's responsibility. No serious debate still exists about this. This evidence has been detailed in thousands of articles in independent media in many different countries, articles available to anyone with access to the Internet. Moreover, al-Qaeda itself fully admitted its culpability in interviews given in June to Yusri Foda of Al-Jazeera, interviews which aired on the network last week. It is difficult to fathom how commentators can simply disregard these confessions, coming on top of all the other publicly available evidence.

That educated columnists and professors would still doubt who designed and carried out the attacks makes one wonder if they are ill-informed or simply too upset with American policy on other issues to accept the reality on this one. If the former, then their sources of information are flawed and incomplete. If, however, the reason for such persistent skepticism stems from an emotional response rather than an objective regard for the facts, then these commentators do a disservice to the ideal of truth and accuracy in reporting.

Sadly, such disregard for the facts in such a serious matter can tarnish the reputation of the Egyptian media in the eyes of the world. I hope editors will keep this in mind and exercise their editorial judgment when reviewing articles or columns to print in their publications. If nothing else, responsible media should be dedicated to telling the truth, not spreading falsehood, and knowing the difference between the two.

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