

AIPAC Targets Arafat For Elimination

by William Jones

The annual gathering of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the cream of the “Zionist lobby,” has always been an occasion of great controversy—as in 1994, when Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin warned AIPAC not to undermine the Middle East peace process. But the gathering this year, on April 21-23, in the midst of the brutal repression of the Palestinians by the Israeli Defense Forces, including the massacre of Palestinians at the Jenin refugee camp, took on more of the appearance of the Nazi rallies in Nuremberg in the 1930s.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has been able to pursue his repression of the Palestinians only through U.S. acquiescence. So far, President George Bush, fearful that a showdown with Sharon would seal the fate of some Republican candidates, including that of his brother Jeb in the Florida gubernatorial race, has given Sharon a lot of slack. While urging Sharon to pull back from the West Bank, in fact Bush had given Sharon a great deal of time to accomplish his killing. At the Washington meeting, AIPAC foot-soldiers were being mobilized like domestic storm-troopers, to march to Capitol Hill and arm-twist legislators to get President Bush to allow Sharon to eliminate Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, and hence terminate the peace process. The only thing that stands between Arafat and an Israeli bullet is the commitment of the Bush Administration to keep him alive. And if that tenuous commitment is even seriously weakened, Arafat becomes a target for IDF assassins.

The purpose of the drumbeat against Arafat at the AIPAC gathering was most starkly outlined by the Likud party’s former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, now an unofficial emissary and confidant of fellow Likudnik Sharon. Netanyahu gave his speech on April 22, the evening when Congressmen were expected to attend the conference. “In a private meeting with the Prime Minister, I told him, ‘Get rid of that regime!’ As long as Arafat is there, there will be no peace,” Netanyahu said. Indeed, Sharon pursued precisely that policy, by destroying all of the infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority, and making Arafat a veritable prisoner in his West Bank headquarters in Ramallah. Only at the behest of the United States, did he not move to have Arafat killed.

AIPAC had pulled out all stops to bring out a big mobilization this year, with over 3,000 people—more than double the previous years’ attendance. The bloodletting on the West Bank had triggered major protests against the conference

again this year, with pro-Palestinian demonstrators pitted against pro-Israeli demonstrators, and with police out in force to prevent confrontations.

Following three days at the Washington Hilton Hotel, a dozen buses filled with AIPAC activists, and accompanied by a significant police escort, descended on Capitol Hill, to convince members that they were under surveillance by the most powerful lobby in Washington. Not that they needed to go to Capitol Hill. Indeed, to a large extent, Capitol Hill came to them, with Congressmen going to the Washington Hilton, cap in hand, and dropping the one or two pat Hebrew phrases which they had succeeded in mastering. Half the U.S. Senate, and more than one-fourth of the House of Representatives, were present on the evening that Netanyahu spoke.

While the messages of the speakers ranged from Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle’s (D-S.D.) mealy-mouthed appeal for a return to the peace process, to the more aggressive tones of born-again fundamentalist Tom DeLay (R-Tex.), who framed an explicit call for the Palestinian territories to return to Israeli control, all these gutless wonders just had to say *something* to propitiate the AIPAC behemoth.

Gung-Ho for a ‘Clash of Civilizations’

The broader aim of the gathering was to mobilize its minions behind a “Clash of Civilizations” war. Not only Arafat was a target, but so too were most Arab and Muslim states. This again received its clearest expression in the rantings of Netanyahu, who, referring to his mentor, the proto-fascist philosopher Immanuel Kant, presented a Manichean vision of a world of “democracies” versus a world of “totalitarian states,” i.e., the U.S. and Israel versus the Muslim world. Ironically, “democrat” Netanyahu lamented the fall of the Soviet Union, which he admired as the “stop-gap” which prevented the onslaught of Muslim “hordes” from Central Asia. “Now these groups will grow, and suck in the Soviet nuclear weaponry,” Netanyahu warned. “If they get weapons of mass destruction, they will use them—unless they are stopped. We have to dismantle the means of these international capabilities. This is why we want to destroy the Arafat regime. . . . We must support George Bush’s plan to overthrow Saddam Hussein. They both have to go! This is the short-term goal.”

And the long-term goal? “But more importantly, how do we prevent the next Arafat or next Saddam Hussein 10 or 20 years down the road. There are 1 billion Muslims. Maybe 100,000 of these are infected by Islamism. You have to realize that if you don’t do something, it will come back. . . . You can only stop aggression if you have a strong league with deterrent force,” Netanyahu said.

The task of this “league” of democratic nations, according to Netanyahu, must be to transform all the Muslim nations into “democracies.” But what his policy entails, as U.S. Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche has pointed out, is a hecatomb of religious war throughout the Eurasian continent.