

Bush-Sharon Summit Will 'Ignite A Fire' Throughout Middle East

by Dean Andromidas

"We say that we are facing a dangerous crossroads. No one should deceive the capital cities of the Arab world or Europe. They should tell the U.S. administration that this plan is completely unacceptable and will ignite a fire in the region more intense than the one we are witnessing now in Iraq."

This is the comment of Yasser Abed Rabbo, former Palestinian minister, on the shameful letter released by President George W. Bush on April 14, at the summit with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. With a stroke of a pen, Bush abrogated the cornerstones of U.S. Middle East policy for four decades, and unilaterally threw out 40 United Nations resolutions, many of which the United States had signed.

Given that Rabbo is the co-initiator, along with Israeli Yahad Party Chairman Yossi Beilin, of the Geneva Peace Accord, and a leading Palestinian moderate, his warning should be taken with deadly seriousness.

Bush's letter *unilaterally*, without consultation with Congress, changes the official U.S. policy that has stood since 1967, when the United States signed on to United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, and which was the basis for the "Declaration of Principles," signed by the Palestinians and Israelis in the 1993 Oslo Accords.

Bush took the United States out of the role of "mediator" in a peace process, and turned it into a full partner of Sharon's policy of taking Palestinian land by force.

And, despite his lipservice to the Road Map—his own creature—Bush tore up that document, which calls for negotiated decisions. And he tore up the "Quartet" itself, the alliance among the United States, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations that created the Road Map in an attempt to reach a peace agreement. It is no secret that Sharon and the fascists in his coalition government *never* accepted the Road Map.

Sharon Gets It All

UN Security Council Resolution 242 of 1967 opens with the unambiguous statement that "The Security Council, Expressing its continuing concern with the grave situation in the Middle East, *Emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security.* . . ."

But Bush's letter, first and foremost, gives Sharon what

he has always wanted: the legal authority to claim for ever more, the lands won by the Israeli army in the 1967 war, and in which the settlements were created in order to create Jewish "population centers" which had not existed before. In violation of UNSCR 242, Bush gives Sharon the right to *annex* Palestinian land.

Secondly, Bush's letter unilaterally declares that Israel has the right to prevent Palestinian refugees from ever returning to their homes in what is now the State of Israel. Bush states that the solution to the Palestinian refugee problem will be "found the establishment of a Palestinian State, and settling the Palestinian refugees there, rather than in Israel." This not only violates the substance and intent enshrined in UNSCR 242, which "Affirms further the necessity: for achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem," but also in the 1949 UN General Assembly Resolution 194, which "Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date. . . ." UNGAR 194 also provides for creating an authority that will facilitate the repatriation and resettlement of the refugees, in "close relations with the Director of the United Nations Relief for Palestinian Refugees."

Bush's letter bears the paw-prints of Vice President Dick Cheney, whose objective in the administration has always been the destruction of the Oslo Accords, which set up the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), and established a territory that would be governed by it. Destroying Oslo was stated explicitly in the 1996 document, "Clean Break: A New Strategy for the Realm," drawn up Cheney's top advisor, David Wurmser, who co-authored the document for then-Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, along with neo-conservatives Richard Perle and Douglas Feith. They were the Defense Department officials behind the Iraq War, which Clean Break also called for.

For Sharon, Bush's acquiescence was a "dream come true," which he hopes will save him from a pending indictment for massive financial fraud.

In bowing down to Sharon, Bush also:

- De-legitimized the PNA, which is recognized as the representative of the Palestinian population by the entire international community, including the United States. The letter never refers to the PNA, substituting "Palestinians" or unnamed "Palestinian institutions." Thus Sharon's assertion

that “there is no Palestinian partner” won out. Bush even announced that Washington will work to establish a “new leadership” for the Palestinians.

- Gave approval to Sharon’s “facts on the ground” argument—i.e., that might makes right—justifying the annexation of the West Bank. Bush’s letter states, “In light of the new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949. . . .” (This is understood also to mean the modified “1967 Borders” in UN-SCR 242.) Any “final status agreement,” declares Bush, has to “reflect” the realities of Sharon’s illegal settlements.

Within days after April 14, the Bush Administration said it would send a team to determine the borders of the Jewish settlements, opening the way for Sharon to launch a massive settlement expansion campaign—approved and financed by the U.S. taxpayers for the first time.

- Endorsed the Berlin Wall of the Middle East and fully accepted Sharon’s claim that the Wall is only a “security barrier” and, “temporary.” This wall has already created misery among hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and has driven them out of their farms and homes in “ethnic cleansing.”

All of this in return for a *promise* to withdraw from the Gaza Strip, a plan which has not even been approved by Sharon’s own government. Furthermore, Sharon openly stated that the withdrawal from Gaza, if it ever takes place, will not occur before June or July 2005.

Within that year, Sharon has the opportunity to launch a regional war where he can implement his real policy: “Jordan is Palestine.” High-level Israeli sources have told *EIR* that such a war will be launched by Israel against Syria *as soon as* another major terrorist incident against Israel occurs.

Commenting on Bush’s letter, a senior Israeli activist who has fought for an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement for decades, warned that Bush has ensured setting the region on fire, a fire that will last a very long time. But, he said, the implications go way beyond the Middle East. In his view, Bush is planning to steal the November Presidential elections: “No one can go that far against traditional U.S. policies and American and international public opinion in the midst of an election campaign without knowing he can steal the elections,” he warned. “It makes no sense otherwise. I hope I am wrong, but the danger to Israeli democracy is far smaller than the dangers to American democracy.”

Israeli sources also expect a renewed explosion of vio-



Bush and Sharon on April 14 at the White House, ensuring the deaths of many more U.S. soldiers and Iraqi civilians, Palestinians, Arabs and Israelis. The President’s fatal action was, as usual, not his own idea but that of his controllers Cheney, Wolfowitz, et al. Did he even know that he was flouting international law and overturning 40 years of U.S. policy?

lence, and fear that Sharon returns to Israel with a green light from the White House to assassinate Palestinian President Yasser Arafat—a guarantee of a broader war.

Bush Does It Again

As in the unilateral Iraq War, Bush has chosen the path of the “beast-men,” Sharon and Cheney, with a unilateral action rejecting law and traditional alliances.

Palestinian leaders immediately denounced the summit. At an April 15 press conference, President Arafat vowed to “protect our land, the holy mosques, and the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland.” He further charged that “the fanatic leaders in Israel are making a mistake and so are their supporters. The Palestinians will not cease to act in order to achieve freedom and an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital, whether they like it or not. . . .”

In a telephone discussion on April 14, Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia told U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell that the U.S. position was “an absolute bias against the Palestinian position, and we fully reject these unilateral measures and their consequences.”

The European Union, a member of the “Quartet,” stated, through its current President, Irish Prime Minister Brian Cowen, that the EU “will not recognize any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties.”

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan also denounced Bush’s statements and said Bush is ignoring the Palestinians. “The situation in the region has to be resolved through negotiations that would be based on Security Council resolutions.”