

Blair, Bibi Move vs. Mideast Peace Efforts

by Dean Andromidas

Jan. 29—Keeping his campaign promise, President Barack Obama dispatched his special envoy George Mitchell to the Middle East this week. Mitchell, the former Democratic Senate Majority Leader, spoke with leaders in Egypt, Israel, the Palestinian National Authority, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, as well as France and Great Britain.

President Obama “is committed to vigorously pursuing lasting peace and stability in the region,” Mitchell told a joint press conference with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo, on the first leg of his tour. “The decision by President Obama to dispatch me to come to this region less than one week after his inauguration is clear and tangible evidence of this commitment.”

Mitchell has his work cut out for him. The smoke has yet to clear from the eight disastrous years of the Bush Administration, which ended with Israel’s three-week assault on the Gaza Strip, resulting in 1,300 Palestinian deaths, including nearly 300 children. The attack, the worst since the Palestinian-Israeli peace accords were signed in 1993, has yet to end, as fresh clashes erupted as Mitchell arrived in Tel Aviv.

Expressing the bitterness the Gaza attack has left throughout the Arab and Muslim World, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, on the eve of Mitchell’s arrival, declared at a press conference in Ramallah, that, “Israel does not want peace, otherwise it would not have done this. We need to understand this and tell it to those coming from Europe and America. Israel wants to waste time to strengthen facts on the ground with settlements and the wall.”

Mitchell, who brokered the peace deal in Northern Ireland, under the Clinton Administration, is widely considered the most credible choice as a Presidential envoy. He is not new to the Middle East conflict. In 2000, he was designated by President Clinton to lead an international commission to investigate the causes of the second intifada, and present recommendations on getting the Middle East peace process back on track.

His report was not completed until after George W. Bush entered the White House with Dick Cheney and his gaggle of neoconservative advisors.

Although the report was shelved, its recommendations not only remain as valid today as they were nine years ago, but are the best indication of how Mitchell will proceed. That report clearly blamed the violence on the erosion of the peace process after the 1994 assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, combined with the continued building of settlements; closures and blockades culminating with then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s march on the al-Haram al-Sharif mosque in Jerusalem, which triggered violent clashes between Israelis and Palestinians.

The recommendations were clear: Put a stop to the violence; get both sides to the negotiating table; end all settlement construction, including so-called “natural growth”; and lift the blockades, roadblocks, and other activities that have made life unbearable for the Palestinians. It also called for Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation.

Now, the big question is, how to bring Hamas into the process. While Mitchell has revealed very little about how he views Hamas, prior to embarking on his trip he met with former President Jimmy Carter, who advised him to include Hamas.

Lyndon LaRouche has called for moving on an Israeli-Syrian peace as soon as possible, even prior to an Israeli-Palestinian deal, since such an agreement would create the political momentum for the more difficult Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Also, the fact that Syria enjoys close ties to Hamas would help enormously. Although a visit to Syria was not on Mitchell’s itinerary, intelligence sources report that Obama’s Middle East team takes the Syria question, and a Syrian-Israeli peace deal, extremely seriously. Syrian President Bashar Assad declared his desire to work with the new American administration, in an interview with Lebanon’s al-Manar TV, on Jan 27.

British Promote Perpetual War

The British are committed to maintaining the dynamic of perpetual war which they established in the region with the implementation of the infamous Sykes-Picot agreements (1916), which divided up the Ottoman Empire between the empires of Britain and France, after World War I. That system has been the breeder of wars for almost a century, pitting Arabs against Jews, Christians against Muslims, and Shi’a against Sunni

(for historical background on Sykes-Picot, see *EIR*, Jan. 23, 2009).

The agents of the British Empire today include former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Israeli Likud party chairman Benjamin “Bibi” Netanyahu, who is now the favorite to win the Israeli elections, scheduled to be held Feb. 10.

Blair was the true architect of the Iraq War, as his predecessors were responsible for the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s, and the 1991 Gulf War. Middle East intelligence sources have informed *EIR* that Blair was the “chief architect” of the most recent Gaza war. He sold Israel and the Bush Administration on the plan to deploy the Israeli military machine to “weaken” Hamas, in order to strengthen Mahmoud Abbas. Blair has been promoting the lie that the divide in the region is really between moderate Arab states like Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, and the radical states and forces like Syria, Hamas, and Hezbollah, who are aligned with Iran. According to this piece of duplicitous sophistry, the moderates are pleased that Israel attacked Hamas: The lie is exposed by the fact that Jordan recalled its ambassador from Israel during the Gaza assault. The Gaza attack enraged Turkey, which had been mediating indirect peace talks between Israel and Syria. Relations between Turkey and Israel are now at an all-time low.

Blair now operates under cover of his post as envoy of the Middle East Quartet of peace mediators—the United Nations, European Union, the U.S., and Russia. His mandate is to coordinate economic and humanitarian aid for the Palestinians, at which he has completely failed. While he has no political mandate, just prior to Mitchell’s arrival in the region, Blair held a meeting with Israeli towel-boy Netanyahu on Jan. 25. This is unusual, since Netanyahu does not now hold a position in the government, and has nothing to do with Blair’s mandate for coordinating aid. Reportedly, Netanyahu told Blair that, if he is elected Prime Minister, he would not build new settlements, but he would allow “natural growth.” Blair reportedly made no comment in response to this blatant sophistry, since all settlement activity is forbidden by international law.

On Jan. 27, Blair met with Mitchell in Cairo, the details of which have not been released.

The Netanyahu Factor

Public opinion polls indicate that Netanyahu and his Likud party will win the Feb. 10 elections. Blair’s Gaza



U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv/Matty Stern

George Mitchell, President Obama’s Middle East peace envoy, shown here arriving in Israel Jan. 28, has his work cut out for him, as British agents Tony Blair and Benjamin Netanyahu pull out all the stops to sabotage any chance for peace in the region.

war, coming on the eve of a national election, has had a profoundly negative impact on the Israeli political scene. It has mobilized the right wing, demoralized the left and pro-peace constituencies, and left much of the population confused. Except for the pro-peace Meretz party, the political discourse is dominated by the security question. With only a little more than a week before the voting, more than a fifth of the population, according to polls, is undecided, so it is not at all a foregone conclusion that Netanyahu would win. There is a strong possibility that many will simply vote with their feet, and stay home on election day.

It is clear that Netanyahu as prime minister would pose the greatest threat to any effort by the Obama Administration to broker a Mideast peace agreement. Netanyahu and his Likud party are the heirs to the political legacy of Zionist-fascist Vladimir Jabotinsky, who was a creature of the the British imperial faction that

established the Sykes-Picot agreements. Jabotinsky was Netanyahu's father's friend and mentor, and the son has maintained the family tradition of British agency.

With the end of the Bush Administration, Netanyahu's friends, including Dick Cheney, George Shultz, and other neocons, are, thankfully, now in the political woods. Now, Netanyahu is trying to ingratiate himself with Obama, gushing that their meeting over a year ago, established a "chemistry" between them, a claim that has left him wide open for ridicule.

It is not clear what sort of "chemistry" Netanyahu is talking about. While Obama has come out clearly for a two-state solution, peace between Israel and Syria, and opening a dialogue with Iran, Netanyahu revealed what he stands for, in an interview in the *Wall Street Journal* of Jan. 24. He said he does not support a Palestinian state, or a peace agreement with Syria: "We're not going to redivide Jerusalem, or get off the Golan Heights, or go back to the 1967 boundaries. . . . We [the Likud] were mocked for warning that Gaza would become Hamastan, and that Hamastan would become a staging ground for missiles fired at major Israeli cities such as Ashkelon and Ashdod."

As for Gaza, Netanyahu identified it as a *casus belli* for an Israeli strike against Iran: "I don't think Israel can accept an Iranian terror base next to its major cities any more than the United States could accept an al-Qaeda base next to New York City." And, according to him, Iran is the "mother regime" of Hamas and Hezbollah. His "optimal outcome" would be regime change in Gaza—eliminating Hamas completely—and the "minimal outcome would have been to seal Gaza" to protect Israel from incoming missiles.

Directly threatening Iran, he declared, "The arming of Iran with nuclear weapons may portend an irreversible process . . . [which] will pose an existential threat to Israel directly, but also could give a nuclear umbrella to these terrorist bases."

'Collision Course' with U.S.

While the outcome of the election is not known, what is clear, is that Netanyahu is working to put together a right-wing coalition which will do everything in its power to obstruct Mitchell's peace efforts. If given the mandate to form a government, Netanyahu's first partner will be the right-wing, predominantly Russian ethnic Yisrael Beitenu party, led by Avigdor Li-

eberman, who not only incites against the Palestinians, but has demanded that Israeli Arabs take a loyalty oath or be deported. Lieberman, who lives in a West Bank settlement and is referred to as a fascist by Israeli commentators, is nothing more than a stooge for Netanyahu. Lieberman served as Netanyahu's cabinet secretary, in the 1990s. He split from the Likud to form his ethnic-based party for the explicit purpose of creating a potential coalition partner with the Likud. On the day Mitchell arrived in Israel, Lieberman told Israeli Army Radio that Mitchell's mission, "has absolutely no chance [of success]." One can imagine the Cheshire grin.

The ultra-Orthodox Shas party has declared that it will endorse Netanyahu for prime minister, if the Likud wins the election. The party has also declared its opposition to any freeze on settlement activities. Netanyahu could also count on the ultra-right wing, which is primarily based in the settlements. According to the polls, such a right-wing grouping has a lead over a center-left coalition that could include the Kadima, Labor, and Meretz parties.

One hopes that the Israeli electorate will appreciate the opportunity presented by the new U.S. administration. On Jan. 28, the day Mitchell arrived in Israel, the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*, in its lead editorial, warned voters that Netanyahu is incompatible with the Obama Administration:

"Israeli voters must know that the Obama government will be intolerant of construction in the settlements, as well as measures that hurt the Palestinians, such as closures and checkpoints. It will make every effort to bring about a two-state solution. Anyone for whom Israel's relations with the United States are important must vote for parties that support a peace agreement with the Palestinians, out of the recognition that the right-wing parties that support settlement expansion jeopardize Israel's international standing as well as its security, both of which are dependent on American support.

"This message is also geared toward Israel's political leadership, particularly Benjamin Netanyahu, who is leading in the opinion polls. His platform, which rejects the creation of a Palestinian state, and his statements in favor of 'natural growth' in the settlements, place him on a collision course with Washington—especially if the senior partner in his coalition is Avigdor Lieberman."