

# Pentagon, IMF target Jordan, other Arab states in arrest of Shubeilat

by Joseph Brewda

On the evening of Aug. 31, corrupt elements within the Jordanian government security services and military, acting under the orders of the U.S. Pentagon and International Monetary Fund, detained and subsequently arrested Laith Shubeilat. A leader of the Islamic bloc that controls some 30% of Jordan's parliament, Shubeilat has been in the parliament since 1984 and is one of the most popular politicians in the country.

The charge against Shubeilat, for which there is no evidence, is for illegal transport and possession of weapons. Shubeilat remains in prison in Amman without bail and deprived of the benefit of counsel. The detention and arrest, which were conducted when King Hussein was out of the country, are part of a broader new assault not only against Jordan itself, but also against the Arab and Islamic world generally.

The arrest comes at a point that Washington, London, and Paris are preparing a new series of crises, conflicts, and wars in the region.

## Heating up conflicts

First of all, the Anglo-Americans are attempting to set the stage for a possible new Arabian-Iranian war. This is the purpose of their well-publicized "no fly zone" imposed on southern Iraq, which will have the intended effect of handing over southern Iraq to Iran. This would bring Iran back onto the Arabian Peninsula for the first time in centuries, and, especially given the shattering of Iraqi power, situates it to foment insurrection among Shiite minorities in Kuwait, Saudia Arabia, and Bahrain.

The Anglo-Americans also gave Iran the go-ahead to seize the United Arab Emirates' militarily strategic Persian Gulf island of Abu Musa in August. If war comes, Egyptian forces will also be engaged.

The Anglo-American powers are also attempting to provoke a Turkish-Iranian war. In early September, the Anglo-Americans encouraged Turkey to send its forces into Iran, allegedly in hot pursuit of Kurdish guerrillas. Simultaneously, the powers are manipulating the Azeri-Armenian con-

flict in such a way as to trigger a Turkish-Iranian war.

The Anglo-Americans are also encouraging Egypt to go to war with Sudan, and perhaps Libya. They are preparing for the occupation of Somalia, and encouraging conflict between Saudi Arabia and Yemen. A conflict erupting between Syria and Turkey also cannot be excluded.

## Redrawing the map of the Mideast

Writing in the fall issue of the New York Council on Foreign Relations' journal *Foreign Affairs*, Prof. Bernard Lewis, a British intelligence official detailed to the U.S. State Department, lays out the gameplan in an article entitled "Rethinking the Middle East." Gloating about the "demise of pan-Arabism and perhaps even the Arab world as a political entity" that was accomplished by the war against Iraq, Lewis intimates that the region will now be put through a decades-long process of "Lebanonization" that will eventually lead to the "emergence of a new Middle East."

Lewis was the architect of the plan to overthrow the Shah of Iran and install Ayatollah Khomeini into power as a way of fragmenting the region. He is currently involved in sponsoring a "neo-Ottoman" revival.

With the ambition to redraw the map of the region in a way unseen since the aftermath of World War I, the powers have also decided that the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan must also be thoroughly destabilized and perhaps terminated. Old plans to declare that "Jordan is Palestine," that is, to transform Jordan into a Palestinian state, are being dusted off, as are old plans to eliminate the ailing king himself.

Yet even while the Anglo-Americans push war, they are also moving to continue to fragment the Arab world by fostering a separate Syrian-Israeli peace deal in the ongoing "peace talks" in Washington. The troubled Bush reelection campaign hopes to score this success by October. In order to clear the way for this and other deals, any opposition within Jordan must be eliminated. In this regard, the State Department's expert on Jordan, Adam Garfinkle, told *EIR* that the arrest of Shubeilat was a frameup which "suggests to me that the authorities are showing the flag" against any internal

opposition.

Through the alternating process of wars, near-wars, and separate peace deals, the Anglo-Americans hope to put the region under the control of a Turkish-Saudi-Israeli political, military, and economic alignment. The Anglo-American powers are intent on turning the Arab labor force into a slave-labor pool for this combination, as International Monetary Fund austerity conditionalities continue to grind up the population in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, and most of the Arab world. This is another reason for the arrest, as Shubeilat has rallied Islamic forces against the IMF's "free market" policies, on religious as well as economic grounds.

### **A concocted case**

That the detention and arrest of Shubeilat were motivated by extralegal considerations is evident from the facts themselves.

At 10:30 p.m. on Aug. 31, Shubeilat was taken into custody by agents of the state security prosecutor general's office at his home. His home was searched, as was his parliamentary office the following day, where various files and documents were seized.

The pretext for Shubeilat's detention was the claim that two detained youths had stated under interrogation the week before that they had borrowed Shubeilat's car on one occasion, over a year earlier, to illegally transport weapons. The youths reportedly did not even claim that Shubeilat knew his car was being used for this purpose in this alleged incident. Shubeilat's attorney, Ibrahim Bakr, continues to be denied access to the youths, and continues to be denied access to his client without the presence of security court stenographers. Shubeilat continues to be denied bail, despite his status in the country, on the sole basis of this claim.

The youths, part of a group of 10, had been arrested the week earlier and charged with being members of a previously unknown, and perhaps non-existent organization called Vanguard of Islamic Youth (Shabab al Nafeer al Islami). At that time, Parliamentarian Yacoub Qarrash, who shares an office with Shubeilat, was also detained. Qarrash is accused of leading the alleged organization, which was allegedly planning to use the illegal arms against the state.

As in all such frameups, the case has been accompanied by wild claims in the press, ostensibly citing high-level, always unidentified, authorities in the government. So, for example, the Saudi paper *Al Hayah* on Sept. 3 claimed that the arrest revealed that Shubeilat had "organizational links" with Iran, and that he was "gathering intelligence" on Jordan's relationship with Iraq, to which he was allegedly opposed. During the days prior to his arrest, Shubeilat had organized an Amman demonstration protesting the "no fly zone" imposed on Iraq. On Sept. 6, the Swiss financial establishment mouthpiece *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* claimed that Shubeilat was tied to the Syrian-based Popular Front for the Liberation Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC). Other

papers have reported rumored links to Iraq. Then, the press reported that the authorities had uncovered a secret arms cache of six Kalashnikov rifles.

### **Setting up King Hussein**

During Shubeilat's detention and arrest, the 57-year-old King Hussein of Jordan was in the United States having a kidney removed, during which operation cancerous tissue was also discovered. Although the state of the king's health is the subject of conflicting rumors, the operation has been already used to prepare the population for the idea that the king's 40-year-old reign will soon come to an end.

To this effect, the *Jordan Times* published a striking column by former London *Financial Times* correspondent Rami Khuri on Sept. 8, suggesting that the king had to go. "The logic of a gradual, orderly transition to the post-Hussein era is compelling," he wrote, warning that otherwise the king might end up meeting the fate of the deposed Shah of Iran, former President Jafar Numeiri of Sudan, and former President Mohammad Siad Barre of Somalia.

Simultaneous with reports of the king's illness, Washington rumor-mills began circulating internationally the report that the king had struck a secret deal with Saudi Arabia and Israel. So, on Sept. 6, the *Washington Post*, reporting on the visit to the king's hospital bed by Saudi Prince Bandar—in the first known contact between King Hussein and the Saudi monarchy since the Gulf war—reported that Jordan was "on the verge" of restoring good relations with the Saudi kingdom. The article even claimed that King Hussein supported a U.S. effort to overthrow Saddam Hussein.

Then, in a *Washington Post* column on Sept. 10, commentator Jim Hoagland claimed that King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had struck a deal based on the supposed disappearance of "Arab radicalism," that is, nationalism. Hoagland, who is an important State Department mouthpiece, claimed that King Hussein was working with Rabin against the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

As far back as Feb. 5, 1991, the U.S. Pentagon's *Defense News* outlined how Jordan would be destabilized by a "fundamentalist" versus "secular" conflict following the Gulf war, which, together with other events, would enhance Israel's power in the region. It is evident that in preparing the assassination of a head of state, in this case King Hussein, the issuance of readily believed, severely discrediting reports in the international media is a prerequisite to give the appearance that the assassination is a "sociological phenomenon."

The arrest of Shubeilat, the threatened crackdown on Islamic networks, and the like, create the potential context in which the Anglo-Americans and Israelis could eliminate the king. Although the murder would probably be run by British networks within the Jordanian military, networks that date back to the days of British intelligence operative Glubb Pasha, the murder would be falsely attributed to "radicals"

and “fundamentalists.” The Israelis typically kill Arab figures, for example, in the PLO, using such techniques.

During the summer of 1990, U.S. military strategists believed to be centered at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, had considered various scenarios for destabilizing Jordan, with the possible option of killing the king, according to reports at the time. The purpose of destabilizing Jordan, it was said, was to create a Jordanian puppet state jointly controlled by Syria and Israel, much as Syria and Israel control Lebanon today.

### What the State Department has to say

In this context, the U.S. State Department gloating over the arrest of Shubeilat is particularly revealing. Although the State Department will not comment officially on the arrest, Jordan desk officer Henry Inshar refers callers on the matter to Adam Garfinkle, the former aide to former Secretary of State Alexander Haig, who is reportedly the key American expert on Jordan. Callers are also referred to Syrian expert Daniel Pipes, the son of former Reagan-Bush National Security Council official Richard Pipes.

Garfinkle, now on sabbatical at the Dayan Center for Strategic Studies in Tel Aviv, Israel, readily admits, chuckling, that the case against Shubeilat is a frameup. “Shubeilat is the most prominent Islamic politician in the country and has been for years,” he stated. “It’s hard for me to believe that he’d be so stupid to go dealing in weapons, especially in such small numbers as they mention, and give an excuse for the authorities to pick him up.

“If the arms caches are fairly small,” he explained, “it’s planted; if it’s large, it’s not planted, because the Interior Ministry doesn’t want to put that many weapons in circulation.” Garfinkle complained that Shubeilat is “popular in Iraq.” Moreover, “he hates the United States, he hates the IMF. He thinks it’s a new form of imperialism. He despises these institutions.”

According to Garfinkle, who was in Amman last spring, and who referred the caller to several high-level Jordanian personalities whom he is in touch with, the Jordanians want peace with Israel. But his prognosis for Jordan is not good: “It is an artificial state, and could disappear as a state.” He points in particular to the disastrous economic situation there.

Daniel Pipes, a co-worker with Garfinkle at the Foreign Policy Institute in Philadelphia, says that the context for the Shubeilat arrest is the dire situation in the country. “The king’s health is precarious,” he commented recently. “The state is in jeopardy.” The fundamentalists, he went on, “are a major force displeased with the status quo.”

Robert Sandloff, of the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC, Israel’s de facto Washington lobby), and a close associate of both Pipes and Garfinkle, also focuses on the economy as part of the reason for the frameup. “The IMF is one of the sacred cows there,” he said, “which is off limits to criticism.”

## Bush miscalculates, this time on China

by Mary M. Burdman

U.S. President George Bush is again demonstrating his seemingly endless capability to blunder even in the one arena, foreign policy, where he claims his wins. His campaign ploy, announced Sept. 3 in Texas, to break a 10-year agreement with China to restrict and eventually phase out U.S. arms sales to Taiwan—an agreement Bush himself had helped negotiate—and start selling F-16 fighters to Taiwan, could have effects beyond anything Washington calculates. Bush’s claim that the sale of the fighters was being done to ensure “stability” in the Pacific will hardly wash, given how Bush has fostered just the opposite in the Pacific and everywhere else.

Bush announced that he had approved the sale of 150 U.S. F-16 fighters, a deal worth some \$4 billion. But arming Taiwan is hardly the issue. Not only is Bush trying to gamble that saving some 6,000 jobs at General Dynamics in Texas will help his foundering campaign, he is also making a stab at maintaining the Anglo-American “new world order” in the Pacific. The subsequent announcement that Taiwan would buy 60 Mirage 2000-5 jet fighters from France hardly caused joy in Washington.

“As long as we are the only supplier to Taiwan, then there’s some control over things,” a Bush administration official said. “If there are no controls, then anybody will sell anything to Taiwan—the French, the Russians, anyone.” A week later, Taiwan press were reporting that the United States is pressing Taiwan to cancel its purchase of the Mirages. The *United Daily News* said that the Bush administration had warned that if the French also sold jets to Taiwan, other Asian nations would accelerate arms purchases and anger China. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher, asked in Washington about the French sale, said, “We think that the provision of the F-16s meets Taiwan’s defense needs.”

U.S. officials argue that the recent Chinese purchase of Sukhoi-27s from Russia means that the Chinese-Taiwanese military balance has been changed. But the Texas announcement did little to ensure stability. One day later, Beijing announced that it was looking forward to buying a large number of transport aircraft and helicopters equipped with the most modern technology from Russia and other members