

Mideast headed toward war, unless Clinton intervenes

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

If there is no resolute intervention in the Middle East in the short term, on the part of the U.S. President, to force Israel to implement the Oslo Accords of 1993, there will be war in the region, probably not later than summer.

The most recent trip in the last week of March, by U.S. Special Envoy Dennis Ross, was a failure in every respect except one: It did expose to the world at large, the fact that the single obstacle to stabilizing the crisis, is Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who flatly rejected any moves toward peace.

Ross's declared aim, was to wrench some concession from the Israelis, in order to restart talks with the Palestinian Authority on the peace process, which has been stalled for over one year by Netanyahu's intransigence. The ostensible issue discussed in the four meetings he held with Netanyahu, was the proposal (which the United States has still not made public) for an Israeli withdrawal from 13% of the occupied West Bank. According to reports, Ross had a wish list of measures he wanted the Israelis to agree to, which included the following: that the 13% be handed over to Palestinian Authority (PA) control, designated Area A; that Israel withdraw from a further 13%, shifting this portion from Area C (total Israeli control) to Area B (joint control: Israel controls security, the PA has local control over administration); that the final status talks be completed within one year; that the third and final Israeli withdrawal be coordinated through a trilateral group, i.e., with the United States; that the interim agreements be implemented, i.e., that the PA seaport at Gaza and airport be opened, that an industrial zone be developed, and that safe passage for Palestinians between Gaza and the West Bank be organized.

It must be stressed, that there is *not one item* in the wish list that Ross took with him to Israel, which was a "new" proposal. According to the Oslo peace treaty signed by the

Israeli government in 1993, the Israeli withdrawal was planned in three phases, to be completed by 1998. The 13% idea is actually a tactical retreat from the amount of land which the Israelis had agreed to hand over. All the other items, regarding infrastructure, such as the Gaza-West Bank corridor, the airport, and the Gaza seaport, were explicitly part of the original treaty. Indeed, the original treaty had a series of economic annexes, which foresaw vast regional cooperation for economic development.

In addition, it was said, that if progress were made by Ross, U.S. President Bill Clinton planned on convoking a summit with five heads of state, in addition to the Palestinians and Israelis, to consolidate one phase, and, hopefully, open another.

None of this, however, seems to be on the agenda, because Netanyahu, and his masters in Britain as well as the coalition of Zionist lobby and so-called Christian evangelicals around Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, do not want peace. They want war.

The engines of war

Before Ross left Washington, Netanyahu had made clear that he would not accept any "diktat" from any external power, including the United States. His argument, as usual, was that Israeli security is primary, and only Israel is empowered to make decisions bearing on its security. In remarks to the press on March 23, following a meeting with the foreign affairs and defense committees of the Knesset (parliament), Netanyahu said, according to the *Jerusalem Post*, "Israel is a tiny country and the territories are vital" for security. "One percent of the West Bank represents 55 square kilometers, the size of Tel Aviv. . . . We have made those determinations in a very careful calculation, not by choosing the numbers, but by looking at the maps very, very carefully and deciding what

territories are important, vital for our security, and what are territories that are less important.” Thus, he argued, any further transfer of territory “would damage our ability to fight terrorism, defend vital installations, and protect the 40,000 [settler] children who travel each day on West Bank roads.” He claimed that what Washington was proposing “would put our airport and water resources in danger.”

Despite the fact that other Israeli political leaders, among them Labor Party leader Ehud Barak, warned that his “irresponsible” approach in picking a “full-fledged fight with the U.S.,” would be a greater danger to Israel’s security, still the Prime Minister stonewalled in his meetings with Ross.

The strategy Netanyahu is following, is twofold: He believes, on the one hand, that he can mobilize enough blackmail pressure inside the United States, to dissuade President Clinton from taking forceful action for peace. As one Israeli official commented on Israeli radio, on March 24, “If the Clinton administration goes public with a plan calling for a withdrawal of this scope, we will reject it outright and call on our friends in Congress” to block it. As soon as Ross had left for Washington, it was reported that letters were circulating in the U.S. Congress, calling on Clinton to desist from pressuring Israel. The executive director of the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee, Howard Kohr, testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on March 31, on what he called the “delicate” phase of the peace process. “Israel must have confidence that its negotiating partners are committed irrevocably to peace,” he said. “American plans imposed on Israel have never and will never succeed.”

On the other hand, Netanyahu is using the terrorist card. On March 30, a leading member of Hamas, Mohieddin Sharif, was shot and killed in Ramallah, and his body was placed near a car, which was blown up by remote control. The Israelis claimed it was the result of internal Hamas feuding, and denied any role in the assassination, but Hamas put the blame on Netanyahu. As if on cue, Hamas official Abdul Aziz Rantissi said, “Hamas has always had the ability to avenge the murder of its sons,” in essence, promising a terrorist assault against Israeli targets in retaliation. Israeli security immediately announced a heightened alert, and the stage was set for violence which could be used to bury any talk of peace. Netanyahu has ordered such assassinations of Hamas figures in the past to provoke terrorist responses, including the killing of Hamas’s Ayyash, whose head was blown off by explosives planted in his telephone.

Netanyahu knows that his sabotage of the Oslo Accords is undermining Yasser Arafat’s leadership of the Palestinian population, and creating the conditions for armed resistance. In fact, once it had become clear that Ross’s mission had borne no fruit, the word circulated in Jordan, of a renewed Intifada, this time not with rocks and stones, but heavy weapons. Palestinian, Egyptian, and Jordanian officials reportedly met, to discuss ways of preventing an armed uprising from occurring. Jordanian sources said that Azzam Hindi, head of the Palestinian intelligence unit, had expressed “not panic,

but paranoia” about the possibility of Palestinians taking up arms. Whether such an uprising would or could be organized by Hamas, is not the issue; rather, it is believed that forces of the PA police, which number 20,000, could, in the event of armed struggle, join the rebellion. Instances of police siding with demonstrators have not been infrequent. This could lead to intra-Palestinian, fratricidal civil war, with catastrophic consequences, including the possible expulsion by Israel, by force, of the Palestinian population into Jordan.

Israeli Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, who was the author of the “Jordan is Palestine” scenario, has been fuelling this conflict. While on a visit to Jordan in late March, Sharon bragged that Israel had informed Jordan that it intended to “finish off the job” of assassinating Hamas leader Khaled Misha’al. This is the political leader of the Islamist Hamas movement, who is based in Amman, the Jordanian capital. The Mossad had tried to kill him there earlier, but failed. Sharon said that this time, out of “respect for Jordan’s sovereignty,” they would not do it on Jordanian soil. Just days later, Misha’al told an interviewer in Jordan that an armed rebellion was on the agenda.

How war can be stopped

There is one political force on the planet that can impose peace, and that is the U.S. Presidency. There are no doubts about this fact, among those Palestinians eager to avert a new conflict. When Secretary of State Madeleine Albright’s comments, to a conference of American Jewish leaders, were circulated, to the effect that the United States might “withdraw” from the peace process, this produced frustration and consternation in the region. It is not disengagement which is required, but forceful intervention. Ahmed Tibi, a close aide of PA President Arafat, said, “It is no time to play infantile games. The Americans must remain in the picture because the United States is the only power capable of playing an active role in reviving the peace process.” UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, who had conducted a tour of the Middle East prior to Ross’s mission, and had publicly denounced Netanyahu for sabotage, also underlined Washington’s role: “The United States is in the lead,” he said, “and is playing the role as mediator.”

The ball is in Clinton’s court. As Lyndon LaRouche reiterated in a recent interview, the President is hesitant, because of the mass-based political movement of so-called Christian fundamentalists, which the Pat Robertsons and Jerry Falwells can whip up into a frenzy against the White House. These are the same circles already clamoring for Clinton’s head, and leading the witch-hunt run by special prosecutor Kenneth Starr. They are the same forces of the Zionist lobby which thinks it can determine U.S. foreign policy. Thus, to smash Netanyahu means taking on this enemy within, declaring war on it.

If the United States does not succeed in reversing the process toward conflict in the Middle East now, catastrophe will ensue. Whatever is left of U.S. credibility in the Arab and Islamic world, will be ripped to shreds. If this gangster regime

of Israel, which LaRouche has compared to the fascist regime of Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic, is allowed to dictate U.S. policy, the very concept of international law will be a joke.

At the same time, if ruthless political action is taken by the United States, simply to enforce what has been agreed upon in the existing peace accords, the Netanyahu gang can be sent packing. Any action the Israeli government is forced to take, for example, to withdraw from the occupied territories in the West Bank, will enrage the most extremist thugs in his coalition, and bring the government down. That, as many Palestinians realize, would be the quickest way to restart the peace process.

Brits send terrorist controller to Mideast

by Joseph Brewda

An item in the March 28 London *Daily Telegraph*, shows the method that British Intelligence has used to keep the Mideast in a continuous state of war or near-war, most recently through fielding "Islamic terrorist" groups.

According to the report, the British government, which nows chairs the European Union (EU), has appointed British Foreign Service officer Alistair Crooke to be the EU "security liaison" to the Palestinian Authority, headed by President Yasser Arafat. His primary duty, the paper says, will be to help the PA "control radical groups," such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, responsible for suicide bombings targeting Israeli civilians. Crooke will work out of the offices of the EU special envoy to the Middle East, Miguel Angel Morantinos.

Left unsaid by the *Daily Telegraph*, is that Crooke is a specialist in deploying terrorist organizations, and his real function will be to supply Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with the bloody terrorist massacres that Netanyahu needs, to continue to justify sabotaging the Oslo Accords. The target is not just the Palestinian Authority; it is also the Clinton White House, whose efforts to bring peace to the region threaten British domination. Crooke arrives on the scene following Netanyahu's defiant refusal to make any concessions to U.S. envoy Dennis Ross on Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories, provoking rage and despair that plays into British hands.

Portrait of a terrorist

Alistair Crooke is certainly well-qualified for his new job. He personally oversaw the arming of the Afghan mujahideen during 1985-87, according to British sources, when he was vice counsel at the British Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan. These were the days when Margaret Thatcher and George

Bush paid out billions of dollars to fund and equip what they called the mujahideen's valiant fight against Soviet Communism. Crooke controlled one of the spigots, and built up extensive connections with the mujahideen leadership.

When the anti-Soviet phase of the Afghan war ended in 1987, Bush and Thatcher abruptly shut down their operation. Cut off from funds and Western political support, the mujahideen, now termed Islamic terrorists, were dumped on the job market. Many found their way back to their countries of origin, where they now lead Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, the Islamic Group, and other British-run terrorist organizations, which Crooke supposedly will be called upon to counter.

During the period that the mujahideen were drifting back to the Mideast, Crooke was transferred to Brazil and Colombia, where he handled terrorist organizations, and oversaw the transfer of Chilean weapons to Mideast terrorist groups, according to regional sources. Now he will return to the region, to reassume mujahideen control.

Crooke's career as a terrorist controller has been aided by his older brother, Lt. Col. Ian Crooke, former head of British Special Air Services Counter-Terrorism Warfare Task Force. SAS played a dominant role in training, arming, and leading the Afghan mujahideen. Crooke's task force played a major role in training, arming, and leading terrorist groups, especially in the Middle East. In 1989, Prince Philip of Britain and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands hired Crooke, then officially retired from government service, to run the World Wildlife Fund's Operation Lock, allegedly established to protect the southern African white rhino from poachers.

South African court records show that under the cover of training game wardens, Colonel Crooke fielded terrorists who indiscriminately massacred supporters of Nelson Mandela's African National Congress, and of KwaZulu Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, to provoke violence between the two groups. Thousands died as a result. This was per the British monarchy's policy of blowing up South Africa through ethnic, tribal, and racial violence. The same method is what Alistair Crooke will bring to the Mideast.

Opportunities abound

Meanwhile, Netanyahu is ensuring that there are more than enough provocations in place to spark renewed violence.

A Hamas operative found dead at the scene of a car bombing in Ramallah on March 29, in what was initially attributed to the premature explosion of a suicide bomb, was actually shot to death three hours before the blast, Palestinian officials reported on April 1. Palestinian pathologist Jala Jabar told Associated Press that the victim, Mohieddin Sharif, had died from bullet wounds. The bomb in the car in which Sharif's body was placed, was later detonated by remote control, Palestinian police officials said, in an apparent effort to hide the cause of death.

Sharif topped Israel's most-wanted list, because he reportedly masterminded several suicide bombings. He was the des-