

Israel's 'Islamic' terrorist ties exposed

by Joseph Brewda

The director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, Eytan Bentsur, has publicly admitted that Israel has been in contact with the "Islamic fundamentalist" Taliban regime in Afghanistan. He has also admitted that Israel has been in touch with the former government forces of Burhanuddin Rabbani, which the Taliban overthrew in 1996, but which still control the northern third of the country. This previously secret contact has not only involved separate meetings with Afghan diplomats from both camps, in Europe, the United States, and Israel, but also the transfer of hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Taliban regime, for "humanitarian purposes." Bentsur told the London *Times* on June 18, that Israel is intent on ensuring that it has good relations with whoever ultimately controls the country.

Bentsur's confession follows a mid-June exposé on Israel's "Afghan card," in the *Foreign Report* of London, which says that Israel became involved in Afghanistan in 1991, with the intent of setting up intelligence bases along the border with Iran, to aid in launching a strike against Iran's nuclear installations. On behalf of that war plan, the report says, in recent months "Israel opened up two secret channels: the first with the previous Afghan government and the second with the present Taliban regime in Kabul," and that Israel "hopes that its Afghan ties will enable it to install listening devices and advanced spying equipment adjacent to the Iranian border." This report comes as the U.S. Zionist lobby continues to condemn the Clinton administration for attempting to improve relations with Iran, a nation that is supposedly "only months away" from acquiring nuclear weapons.

In a related deployment, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been trying to build up Israel's presence throughout Central Asia. According to the Saudi daily *Hayat*, Netanyahu is currently attempting to mediate between Tajikistan and Rabbani's forces across the border in Afghanistan, which are largely composed of ethnic Tajiks. Also, Netanyahu met with Uzbek President Islam Karimov in Tashkent in May, to discuss Afghanistan and Iran, among other matters. The possibilities for outside meddling are great. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as Iran, have repeatedly warned about the dire effects the continuing war in neighboring Afghanistan is having on their nations, and the region as a whole.

While British and Israeli coverage of these revelations focus on Israel's ambition to open up a new eastern front against Iran, and Arab coverage has emphasized the new evi-

dence of Israeli penetration into oil-rich, Muslim Central Asia, the exposé's greatest importance is in further demonstrating Israeli patronage of "Islamic terrorism." Far from being something new to the region, as these papers have reported, Israel's involvement in Afghanistan dates back to at least 1980, when Britain and the United States gave Israel a franchise to train "Afghan mujahideen" who were fighting Soviet occupation.

How terrorism really works

Following the 1988 Soviet pullout from Afghanistan, these mujahideen "freedom fighters" were found to be expendable, and were dumped onto the job market—in the process, they were reclassified as "Islamic terrorists." About 10,000 of the mujahideen were Arab volunteers, who drifted back to North Africa and the Mideast, where many were recruited into indigenous "Islamic terrorist groups." But, the network as a whole remained under British, Israeli, and others' control—whatever its dupes might think—and constitutes the backbone of the British-run "Islamic terrorist international" today.

These mujahideen veterans are also the core of the military forces of the deposed Afghan government of Rabbani, and the Taliban forces which replaced him. For such reasons, Afghan regions under Taliban control remain an important base of operations for the "Islamic terrorists" whom Britain uses to destabilize the Mideast, West Asia, and the Indian Subcontinent. They also give Netanyahu a pretext to justify his sabotage of the Oslo peace accord.

To this end, Afghanistan has become the headquarters for the main funder of this new "Islamic terrorist international," Saudi billionaire Osama bin Laden, who, with his uncle, the late Salim bin Laden, first began bankrolling the Afghan mujahideen back in 1980, at the request of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and U.S. President George Bush. From his hideout in the mountains of southern Afghanistan—and occasionally from his fashionable estate in Wembley, England—bin Laden routinely calls for the murder of U.S. servicemen, and the assassination of President Bill Clinton. Bin Laden has taken credit for car-bomb attacks against two U.S. military bases in Saudi Arabia, in 1995 and 1996, which together killed more than 20 U.S. soldiers.

On June 10, in an ABC-TV interview broadcast from Afghanistan, bin Laden called for killing Americans worldwide, prompting the U.S. State Department to issue a travel alert. Two days later, he ordered new anti-American terror attacks.

Among the major beneficiaries of bin Laden's largesse are Hamas and Islamic Jihad, whose 1996 Jerusalem bus-bombing spree paved the way for Netanyahu's election as Prime Minister in the spring of that year. Informed observers see in Netanyahu's Afghan doings, new signs of an upcoming Israeli "Islamic terrorist offensive," to finish off the Oslo Accords, once and for all.