

on board.” Security in the region, al-Sabah said, could be handled without external forces “only in the long term.” The Arabs still require help from the West, he said.

A Deadly Threat

The fact that two such conferences should occur, at such high levels of participation, shows that their plans must be taken as deadly serious.

Further indications, that this is a live operation, came in remarks made on May 19, to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, by George W. Bush’s adviser, Robert Zoellick. Zoellick, who had been Deputy Chief of Staff to Bush’s father, said that Iraq must be dismembered into more “enclaves,” like the Kurdish autonomous region, and urged the use of “air power in the south,” to start “taking away pieces of his territory,” and to “undermine [Saddam Hussein’s] position within his own country, also with the Russians and the French.”

At the same time, George W. Bush and Al Gore, speaking to a conference of the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee, in Washington, on May 23, reiterated the notion, that Saddam Hussein is the principal target. Bush justified his support for a ballistic-missile defense system, against alleged threats from so-called “rogue states,” by saying that Iraq is only 250 miles away from Israel, a U.S. strategic ally. Gore was even more belligerent, promoting a policy of “forward engagement.” The candidate, according to a report on his website, “discussed providing support to the Iraqi opposition that could lead to the removal of Saddam Hussein from power,” and said that he would meet with Iraqi opposition figures in June.

Iraq, still victimized by genocidal sanctions, is in a disastrous state, internally. Its economy is crippled, its population is being killed, and a once-vibrant, optimistic society has been turned into one of despair. Were the British and the Americans, cheered on by the Kuwaitis, to attempt to engineer a military coup against the current leadership of the country, with the active terrorist support of the SCIRI, a bloodbath and/or civil war could ensue. If Iran were in any way drawn into this mad adventure, it could spark renewed war between Iran and Iraq.

It is in the interests of all the nations and peoples of the region, and of world peace, that this evil, dangerous plan be exposed, and uprooted, before it can lead to disaster.

To reach us on the Web:
www.larouche.com

Israeli Withdrawal from Lebanon Will Not Decrease War Danger

by Dean Andromidas

Despite the fact that Israel ended its 22-year occupation of its so-called security zone in southern Lebanon during the last week in May, the Middle East continues to be vectored toward war. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak has characterized the withdrawal as fulfillment of one of his election campaign promises, to have Israeli troops back on Israeli soil and not engaged in a war of attrition in occupied foreign territory. While technically true, it rings hollow, given that Barak’s other election promise, to negotiate a peace settlement with Syria and come to the necessary final agreements with the Palestinians, appears on the verge of collapse.

Commenting on these developments, American statesman Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. characterized the situation as “extremely dangerous.” LaRouche pointed out that the situation began to deteriorate sharply after late March with the failure of the summit conference between President Bill Clinton and Syrian President Hafez al-Assad (see “Failure of Israel-Syria Talks May Mean War,” *EIR*, April 7). That failure was the result of Clinton’s sacrifice of a principled perspective for long-term peace and stability through economic development, especially through the introduction of large-scale nuclear power for desalination to provide abundant water to the Middle East.

The perception in the region, which is borne out by recent developments since the failed summit, is that Clinton has not only gone into the “lame duck” phase of his Presidency, but also has capitulated to electoral politics, exchanging his Middle East peace policy for peace with the right-wing “Zionist lobby” in the United States. Clinton is looked at as little more than a messenger for the U.S. State Department, which is perceived as more “pro-Israel” than many Israelis.

A political climate is now developing where all the players, including the Syrians, Israelis, and Palestinians, will not make any decisive moves toward peace, until after the U.S. elections. Some are already betting on the election of George W. Bush. This is the worst of all possible situations in a region that is so clearly influenced by outside forces.

Israel's Northern Border

The reasoning behind the Israeli withdrawal was to end the war of attrition inside Lebanese territory. With Israeli troops out, weeks ahead of schedule, the formal pretext for an attack on occupation forces would be removed. Thus, an attack on Israel's northern border, from within Lebanon, would be considered an act of war.

At a press conference on May 25 following the withdrawal, Barak declared, "Shooting at soldiers or civilians within our borders will be seen as an act of war which will necessitate response in kind." Israeli Defense Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz was more explicit: "If there is an attempt to harm the residents of the north or our soldiers, we will retaliate against all the powerbrokers in Lebanon, including Syrian targets in Lebanon. Our warplanes are ready. Our pilots are on alert, and their accuracy is well known," he said.

These are not idle threats, and moreover, there will soon be no political machinery in place to prevent border incidents from escalating into a major crisis. Even U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen, speaking before the U.S. Chamber of Commerce World Economic Forum in Washington, said that the Israelis "will respond according to the nature of the attacks upon their people, and that can go up the ladder quite quickly and very dangerously."

There has been much talk of increasing the United Nations troop presence, which has been deployed as a political buffer. This is pure fantasy, because the United Nations has already let it be known, that once Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory is verified as in compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 425, and control of the territory has been turned over to the Lebanese government, the UN mandate will be completed. After which, all UN troops will be withdrawn and all the parties will be left to their own devices.

This was stated by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan: "Once the situation is settled and Lebanon has assumed its full territorial responsibility, the peacekeepers will withdraw, our work would have been done."

The Weakening of Barak and Assad

Up until now, most pundits have focussed on whether Syria will use its proxies, either the Hezbollah or dissident Palestinian groups based in Lebanon, to continue its irregular warfare as to pressure Israel to come to an agreement on the Golan Heights. Such proxy warfare would be continued from Lebanon, directly against targets inside Israel. Nonetheless, these pundits seem to have neglected to take into account that the failure of the Israel-Syria talks has politically weakened both Barak and Assad.

After months of effort, the failure of the Syrian negotiations has left Barak without the political momentum which could have enabled him to come to an agreement with the

Palestinian Authority that would be acceptable to the Palestinian population. The week prior to the Lebanon withdrawal saw the worst rioting on the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1996. Six people died, including five Palestinians and one Israeli soldier, and almost 1,000 were wounded. The riots not only reflected the pent-up rage within the Palestinian population, which is frustrated by the failure to reach an agreement, but also left a sense that Barak is not capable of presenting them with an acceptable agreement. As of this writing, all negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians have been suspended.

In addition, several political scandals, especially an election campaign finance scandal (see *EIR*, April 7), although dormant in recent months, could once again heat up. If this occurs, Barak could be faced with a criminal investigation. Thus, at the first sign of a provocation along the northern border, Barak might feel compelled to respond with the classic "act tough" Israeli profile.

Similarly, the failure of the Syria-Israel talks has left Syrian President Assad to deal with securing the succession of his son Bashir, without the prestige and political support the recovery of the Golan Heights would have brought with it. Thus, a "little war" with Israel might also be to his advantage.

The Way Out of The Crisis



A 90-minute video of highlights from *EIR*'s April 21, 1999 seminar in Bonn, Germany.

Lyndon LaRouche was the keynote speaker, in a dialogue with distinguished international panelists: **Wilhelm Hankel**, professor of economics and a former banker from Germany; **Stanislav Menshikov**, a Russian economist and journalist; Schiller Institute founder **Helga Zepp-LaRouche** from Germany; **Devendra Kaushik**, professor of Central Asian Studies from India; **Qian Jing**, international affairs analyst from China; **Natalya Vitrenko**, economist and parliamentarian from Ukraine.



Order number EIE-99-010.
\$30 postpaid.
EIR News Service
P.O. Box 17390
Washington, D.C. 20041-0390
To order, call
1-888-EIR-3258 (toll-free).
We accept Visa and MasterCard.