
Middle East

Saboteurs Mobilize To Wreck 'Road Map'

by Dean Andromidas and
Scott Thompson

Israel Prime Minister Ariel Sharon told Israeli Radio on May 6, that he will not take a single step to implement the "road map" for Middle East peace, until he discusses his "reservations" with President George W. Bush personally, in a visit to Washington in late May or June. The long-awaited road map, prepared by the "Quartet" of the United Nations, United States, European Union, and Russia, was released on April 30 to both Sharon and Palestinian Prime Minister Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas), signalling the intention of the Bush Administration to address the Israel-Palestinian conflict now that the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq has been overthrown.

But the road map has now become another flashpoint in the ongoing coup by Vice President Dick Cheney and his flock of neo-conservative chicken-hawks roosting in Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's hen-house at the Pentagon. They have a much different road map, and are committed to "perpetual war" and regime change in the rest of the Middle East, including Syria, Iran, and the Palestinian National Authority. Sharon knows that his "reservations" are welcomed by the war party, and he will do everything in his power to sabotage the road map's implementation. One of his key supporters on President Bush's National Security Council, Elliott Abrams, who escaped criminal prosecution for his role in the Iran-Contra affair, made a secret trip to Israel, along with NSC Deputy Director Steve Hadley, and met Sharon on April 30. Although the results of the meeting have been kept secret, the fact that it occurred ahead of Secretary of State Colin Powell's own visit to Israel early in May, has led to speculation that it was aimed at undermining Powell.

But the most dangerous mobilization against the road map has already begun among the chicken-hawks outside the Bush Administration: the right-wing Christian fundamentalists, also known as Christian Zionists, and the American Zionist organizations which maintain strong ties with Israel's right-wing extremist camp. With the U.S. Presidential election campaign beginning, the votes of 30 million (some say 70 million) Americans who consider themselves Christian Zionists, become an important factor. In fact, 17 of the nation's 50 Republican Party state chairmen consider themselves Christian Zionists.

A series of conferences and political activities is under

way, aimed at building political opposition to the road map. On May 19, Sharon and Bush are expected to be guests of honor at an "Israel at 55" gala concert in Washington. With tickets selling at up to \$500, the organizers are expecting 15,000 people. The first of a series of commemorative events over the next year, the event was the brainchild of Sharon and Washington-based lawyer Richard Heideman, a former president of the B'nai B'rith International.

James Zogby of the Arab-American Institute warned Bush, "Given the perception that we are the military occupiers of Baghdad and that we have contributed to what's happening to the Palestinians . . . if the President is celebrating with Ariel Sharon, that will be followed closely in the Arab world, and that's a precarious position for the President to be in."

The gala concert will be preceded by a summit of Christian and Jewish Zionists on May 17-18, called the Interfaith Zionist Leadership Summit, in Washington. Sponsored in part by the National Unity Coalition for Israel (NUCI), the stated purposes are: "To oppose rewarding murderous Palestinian terrorism with statehood"; "To lay bare the inherent absurdity of our State Department promoting a Road Map to Arab-Israel 'Peace' from a Quartet whose other three members—Russia, the European Union (France and Germany) and the UN—repeatedly disparage U.S. interests and are demonstrably hostile to Israel"; and, "To document responsibility of Iran, Syria, Libya and Saudi Arabia for supporting Islamic terrorism." Esther Levins, the director of NUCI, is a friend of Israeli Tourism Minister Benny Elon (see below).

The conference is also co-sponsored by representatives of several organizations which are committed to a "Clash of Civilizations" and "perpetual war," including: Americans for a Safe Israel, Christian Broadcasting Network, Christian Coalition of America, Freeman Center for Strategic Studies, and the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs.

Speakers are to include: Gary Bauer, American Values; Roberta Combs, president, Christian Coalition; Frank Gaffney, Center for Security Policy; Morton Klein, president, Zionist Organization of America; Ed McAteer, Religious Roundtable; Daniel Pipes, Middle East Forum; Moris Amitay of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, which up until 2001 numbered Vice President Cheney among its international advisory board members; and Venetian-trained, self-described "universal fascist" Michael Ledeen, who is on the board of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA) and a Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

Elon Comes To Washington

Dovetailing the organizing of this summit, Israeli Tourism Minister Rabbi Benny Elon, in the first week of May, travelled to Washington to mobilize against the road map. Elon is the leader of the fascist Moledet party, whose official platform calls for "transfer"—better known as the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian population from "the land of

Israel.” He has also been accused of being one of the spiritual authors of the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Elon brought his own “alternative” to the road map, a seven-point “Marshall Plan” for the Middle East, which calls for marshalling the Palestinians across the Jordan River into what Elon calls the true Palestinian State, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. This is nothing more than the “Jordan is Palestine” policy, which Sharon has been pushing for the

last two decades.

Elon’s itinerary began as guest of honor at the Second Annual Leadership Luncheon of the above-mentioned National Unity Coalition for Israel, and the American Christian Trust (ACT). The event was preceded by a “solidarity and prayer breakfast,” on the grounds of the Israeli Embassy, where 900 people gathered. The luncheon was held at ACT, which is housed immediately behind the Embassy, and has a

Elon’s ‘Transfer’ Policy

Benny Elon is the leader of the Moledet party, whose official policy is ethnic cleansing, which they choose to call “transfer”: getting the Palestinians out of “Greater Israel.” The fact that such a person is Minister of Tourism in the Israeli government should have caused a scandal—except that Ariel Sharon, the “butcher of Beirut,” is in his second term as Prime Minister.

Elon, during his recent U.S. visit, explained to U.S. Senators and Congressmen his alternative to the road map, which Moledet dubs “The Elon Peace Initiative.” After reading it, one wonders whether it should be called a “piece” plan, since he calls for taking all the pieces of land earmarked in the Oslo Accords for a Palestinian State.

The seven-point plan includes: 1) Declare the Palestinian Authority the enemy; 2) Militarily destroy the “terror infrastructure”; 3) Nullify the Oslo Accords and dismantle the Palestinian Authority; 4) Following the end of hostilities, solve the refugee problem by relocating Palestinians to Arab countries and dismantling the refugee camps; 5) Name Jordan the Palestinian State, with Amman as its capital, and Israel the Jewish State, with Jerusalem as its capital; 6) Give Arabs remaining in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip Jordanian-Palestinian citizenship. Encouraged Arab Israelis to transfer their citizenship to the “new” state; and 7) “If Arabs of Judea, Samaria (the Israeli names for the West Bank) and Gaza, breach the terms of this plan, they will be expelled to their state on the other side of the Jordan River.” It is obvious that such a plan gives the Palestinians, or the Jordanians for that matter, little choice in the matter.

Just a few days before leaving Israel for the United States, Elon presided over a “transfer” in East Jerusalem, when he led a group of hooligans to expel Palestinians living in apartments that he claimed were bought by a Jewish organization 120 years ago. Elon told reporters, “The eviction of the Palestinians from the house was a joyous sight”; and, “Yes, this is transfer.”

Before Elon became a politician, he was a rabbin who

helped train a generation of fanatics, including those responsible for the murder of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. In fact, Rabin’s murderer, Yigal Amir, recently declared in open court that he had told Elon that he was going to kill Rabin. Of course, Elon denied the charge, and he has never been investigated. Nonetheless his niece, Margalit Har Shefi, was convicted in 1998 for “not preventing a crime”—specifically the assassination of Rabin. She was a friend of Amir, and was convicted of knowing that Amir was planning to kill Rabin and not informing the authorities. Yossi Elon, Benny Elon’s brother, was Har Shefi’s defense attorney. As a minister in the first Sharon government, Elon was instrumental in securing a Presidential pardon for Har Shefi in 2002.

All this should not be surprising, given the fact that Elon is one of the key spiritual leaders of Sharon’s great project of resettling the land of Israel. Elon is an expert in the writings of Rabbi A.I. Kook, who is the spiritual founder of the radical settlers movement, Gush Emunim. Prior to entering politics, Elon taught for five years at the Ateret Cohanim Yeshiva, the main training center for the fanatics who want to destroy the mosques on the al-Haram al-Sharif, Islam’s third holiest site, in order to rebuild Solomon’s Temple there. This is a project fanatically supported by the Christian Zionists, because the resulting war, they believe, will usher in Armageddon and bring the rapture of true believers to heaven.

In 1990, Elon left Ateret Cohanim to found a new yeshiva on Mount Scopus, called Beit Orot. This project was financed by Irving Moskowitz (see accompanying article), who also financed Ateret Cohanim. In 1996, he joined the Moledet party and won his first seat in the Knesset in 1996. In 2001, he took over the leadership of the party, after the assassination of its founder, Rechavam Zeevi. The latter had an equally bloody background: He started his career when he joined Sharon’s infamous 101 Battalion in the 1950s, which conducted terror raids into the then-Jordanian-controlled West Bank. Also known as Ghandi, Zeevi had been accused of enjoying close ties to the Israel mafia, and is considered one of the fathers of the “transfer” policy.—*Dean Andromidas*

“House of Prayer” which overlooks the Embassy.

On Capitol Hill, Elon met ten Senators and Congressmen, including Senators Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-Tex.), and Representatives Shelley Berkley (D-Nev.), Max Burns (R-Ga.), Jim Greenwood (R-Pa.), Joseph Hoeffel (D-Pa.), Steve King (R-Iowa), Thaddeus McCotter (R-Mich.), and Kendrick Meek (D-Fla.). He also met former Senate Majority leader Dick Armey of Texas and former Congressman Jim Wilson of Michigan. Both Armey and DeLay gone on record supporting “transfer” of Palestinians, and supporting the claim that Israel is entitled to all of the “land of Israel” between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River—a view that is only supported by the Israeli extreme right wing.

Elon also met Frank Gaffney, Gary Bauers, Roberta Combs, and Morton Klein and Mike Evans of the Jerusalem Prayer Team.

While Sharon tried to publicly distance himself from Elon, it is well known that Sharon, as father of the Jewish settlements in the Palestinian Authority, counts Elon as one of his close collaborators. Elon’s visit was just one part of the broad campaign in support of the perpetual war policy, which includes targeting Syria as the next candidate for “regime change.”

Torossian: Public Relations, Plus . . .

The real purpose of Elon’s visit was underscored by a look at the man who coordinated the public relations of his trip, Ronn Torossian, owner of 5W Public Relations of New York City. Torossian claims that his representation of Elon stems merely from the fact that his firm represents the Israeli Tourism Ministry. But a look at his background and other clients reveals more than a commercial relationship.

When he is not writing press releases and working the press for his clients, Torossian, who is Jewish, can be seen on the streets of New York organizing hooligan attacks against Jewish peace activists. Last year Torossian, identifying himself as a spokesman for Betar—the militant youth movement of the Likud party, founded by Zionist fascist Vladimir Jabotinsky—staged a demonstration against New York-based Jewish peace activist Adam Shapiro. The latter, at the time, was sitting in Palestinian President Yasser Arafat’s headquarters, as part of an effort to prevent the Israeli military from killing the Palestinian leader. Threatening to lead a group of thugs to demonstrate in front of the Brooklyn home of Shapiro’s parents, Torossian said, “Shapiro is a traitor, a piece of garbage, and we are going to make his life and his parents’ lives a living hell.” The Shapiros had to flee their home under police protection.

Despite this sordid background, or maybe because of it, Torossian is also the spokesman of the Christian Coalition of America, founded by televangelist Pat Robertson and now led by Roberta Combs. According to Torossian, they claim at least 2 million followers. He also represents the Zionist

Organization of America, which is one of the leading organizations mobilizing against the road map.

Torossian also represents the Irving Moskowitz Foundation, founded by the notorious Florida and California real estate speculator and bingo parlor operator of that name, who finances the Ateret Cohanim Yeshiva in the old city of Jerusalem. Rabbi Benny Elon, prior to becoming a member of the Knesset (parliament), taught at this yeshiva, where he trained a whole generation of fanatics who want to destroy the mosques on the al-Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount and rebuild Solomon’s Temple. Moskowitz is also a big funder of the political campaigns of Benjamin Netanyahu, former prime minister and now finance minister, as well as those of Sharon.

Torossian also handled public relations for Ehud Olmert, when the latter was mayor of Jerusalem. Olmert is the top money connection between Sharon’s Likud party and donors from the Christian Zionist organizations. He is now a minister in Sharon’s government.

As of 2002, the PR business for Torossian was so slow, that in December he was offering his services for free for a three-month trial period. His office happens to be on the premises of one of his clients, Tzell Travel, a multimillion-dollar agency specializing in travel to Israel. Tzell’s owner, Barry Liban, got his start in the travel business as manager of the Betar Summer camps, the training camps for the militant Likud-linked organization, which Torossian also represents.

But after January 2003, business picked up. Not only did Torossian win the Israeli Tourism Ministry contract, but also that of the SOS Fund, a foundation that raises money to buy bullet-proof vests for Israeli soldiers. More importantly, he won the contract for the Lebanese-American Council for Democracy. This organization is virtually unknown within the Lebanese-American community, but a visit to its website reveals that its only activity is to mobilize support for the “Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Act of 2003,” a bill that has just been introduced into the House of Representatives by Elliot Engels (D-N.Y.). Its purpose is to mobilize support for “regime change” in Syria, just as the Iraq Liberation Act helped lay the foundations for war against Iraq. According to informed Middle East sources, the act was drafted by operatives from the American Enterprise Institute, the neo-conservatives’ “Temple of Doom.”

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