

Sharon Recruits US Mercenaries Against Syria *Of Pariahs and Pre-emptive Strikes*

By WILLIAM A. COOK

Even before the "victory" in Iraq had been declared, Administration officials began leveling accusations at Syria that sounded strangely familiar, something like a regurgitation of the lies that had propelled our forces into the "war that wasn't." Predictably, that series of accusations was followed by Sharon's demands of its mercenary forces, the US military, that they undertake five goals desired by Israel. These demands represent the next step in Israel's fulfillment of the Wolfowitz/Perle design to achieve "The New Strategy for Securing the Realm," the report they prepared for the Israeli right wing Likud party in 1996.

Ha'aretz listed Sharon's demands in its April 16th edition, demands uttered only two days earlier by Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz: 1. "The removal and dismantling of Palestinian terrorist organizations operating out of Damascus Hamas and Islamic Jihad; 2. The ouster of Iranian Revolutionary Guards from Lebanon's Bekaa Valley; 3. An end to Syrian cooperation with Iran, including attempts to transfer arms to the Palestinian Authority and incite Israeli Arabs; 4. The deployment of the Lebanese Army along Lebanon's border with Israel and the ouster of Hezbollah from the area; and 5. The dismantling of the surface-to-surface missile network that Israel charges Hezbollah has built in Southern Lebanon." Sharon added that President Pashar Assad "is dangerous. His judgment is impaired." Like Saddam, Israel and America are confronted once again with a dangerous threat in the form of a dictator.

Obviously, Sharon has no qualms about making such demands; he has already made it known to his Cabinet and to the Israeli public via radio that Jews run the US and we here in America know it. He does not fear the Israeli academics or peace groups in the homeland or the American Jews who recoil at his policies towards the Palestinians, groups like Jews for Peace in Palestine and the many who have affiliated with TIKKUN magazine in its efforts to bring a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

These actions are seen in the Arab world as portending mid-east domination by Israel. Kamal Kharrazi, Iranian Foreign Minister, stated that United States actions are done to allow Israel domination in the mid-east. A Syrian Cabinet report notes that US statements regarding Syria are a "stimulus and a service to Israel's goals and expansion greed" In a similar vein, AIPAC's recent invitation to Intifad Qanbar of the Iraqi National Congress to attend its conference, one of the primary Iraqi figures expected to play a major role in the "new" Iraq, reflects Israel's links to pro-Israel Iraqi groups as a "democratic" Iraq emerges. AIPAC has had ongoing meetings with Ahmed Chalabi founder of that organization, personal friend of Rumsfeld, and self-proclaimed future leader of Iraq. Add to this Israeli/Iraq

connection the imposition of General Garner as "pro-consul" of Iraq and sympathizer with the tribulations of Ariel Sharon, the off-hand dismissal of the UN as a participant in the reconstruction of the new Iraq, and the distribution of reconstruction contracts to corporations tied to the "pro-Israeli clique," and it is no wonder the Arab world fears the rising power of Israel in the mid-east.

A recent article suggests that America's preemptive role in the mid-east can be linked to the influence of the Wolfowitz/Perle duo and their emergence into positions of prominence in the Bush administration. Michael Lind's article in "The New Statesman" focuses on a core clique of influential men in the Bush administration who have co-opted control of America's foreign policy. There can be no question that they are linked to the 1991/2 "Defense Policy Guidance Report" prepared for Dick Cheney and Daddy Bush. That document brought the concept of "preemptive" strikes into vogue as a premise for safeguarding America's superiority in military power.

Subsequently that document became the basis for the 1996 report prepared for the Likud right wing. The Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies prepared the report, "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm." The main ideas for the report came from "prominent opinion makers" Richard Perle, James Colbert, and Douglas Feith among others. Of all the recommendations presented in that report, the most pertinent to this paper is this statement: "Israel can shape its strategic environment, in cooperation with Turkey and Jordan, by weakening, containing, and even rolling back Syria. This effort can focus on removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq an important Israeli strategic objective in its own right as a means of foiling Syria's regional ambitions."

That strategic objective, removing Saddam from power, has now been achieved through the use of the US military. While Saddam may have appeared to be a threat to Israel some years ago, in recent years, since the first Gulf war, he was not perceived as such by Israel's military or the nations immediately surrounding Iraq, including Kuwait, although, for reasons unknown, he was a threat to America according to our President. One wonders, therefore, why Perle would make this observation in the 1996 report. The answer is in the immediate access Israel has to Iraqi oil now that it is under US occupation; the pipeline through Jordan will be reopened providing cheaper oil to Israel. In addition, US troops present in Iraq and Kuwait offer strategic support to the continued existence of the Israeli state and rearrange the strategic balance in the Middle East in favor of Israel. Neither of these reasons could be declared publicly.

Having achieved one objective, Perle can now look to the second, "foiling Syria's regional ambitions." To bring focus to the threat Syria poses for the United States and its alleged desire to create democracies in the mid-east, Israel can turn to the "Securing the Realm" report for arguments: "It is dangerous for Israel to deal naively with a regime murderous of its own people, openly aggressive toward its

neighbors, criminally involved with international drug traffickers and counterfeiters, and supportive of the most deadly terrorist organizations." Substitute the United States for Israel in the above quote and you have the arguments being offered to America to take out Syria. Once again, the United States becomes Israel's proxy army.

Since Perle and Wolfowitz have transferred their presence to the new administration, having been out of power during the Clinton years, they can now resurrect the essential points of their old 1991/2 report in the form of the September 2002 National Security Strategy Policy Report that calls upon the US to adopt "the principle of preemption" as outlined in their report and made a part of the Israeli 1996 study. Indeed, that principle served as the basis for attacking Iraq. Now it can serve to invade Syria. All that is needed is the threat as outlined above. Congressmen friendly to Israel, including Rep. Eliot L. Engel, D-NY and Senators Rick Santorum (PA) and Barbara Boxer (CA) are already moving to force sanctions on Syria, a first step in the acceptance of the arguments that allow for a preemptive strike. The simple arrangement of an "unprovoked" attack by Syria against Israel or an Israeli interest will be stimulus enough to "justify" invasion.

In a letter to the President, dated April 3, 2002, five months before the National Security Strategy Policy Report was issued as the guiding document for the Bush administrations' foreign policy, Perle, Daniel Pipes, Norman Podhoretz, William Kristol, William Bennett and many others from the New American Century Project, wrote: "No one should doubt that the United States and Israel share a common enemy. We are both targets of what you have correctly called an 'Axis of Evil.' Israel is targeted in part because it is our friend, and in part because it is an island of liberal, democratic (sic) principles American principles in a sea of tyranny, intolerance, and hatred. As Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld has pointed out, Iran, Iraq, and Syria are all engaged in 'inspiring and financing a culture of political murder and suicide bombing' against Israel, just as they have aided campaigns of terrorism against the United States over the past two decades. You have declared war on international terrorism, Mr. President, Israel is fighting the same war."

Even if we overlook the obsequious drivel in this letter and the omitted realities of Israeli behavior under Sharon, who has made a hallmark of state run terrorism, we can see that Israel's interests as promulgated by Perle and Wolfowitz have been transferred to America. Indeed, Israel is being targeted for terrorist actions precisely because it is a friend of the US, and, therefore, it follows that the US has a responsibility for defending Israel. To that end, Perle and company demanded that "the United States should lend its full support to Israel (and) we urge you to accelerate plans for removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq."

Nowhere do these Israeli advocates mention that Israel alone in the mid-east has known weapons of mass destruction including Lithium-6 or nuclear capability in the neighborhood of 200 bombs. Nowhere do they mention that the argument against Iraq for defying UN resolutions can be leveled as well at Israel, including

the most recent resolution of this month, voted 50-1 with the US voting against the resolution, condemning Israel for "mass killing" of Palestinians and for its settlement policy. Nowhere do they tell the truth about Israeli democracy that exists for Jews but not to the same extent for Arabs and certainly not for Palestinians. Nowhere do they explain that America's forces, its sons and daughters and American tax dollars, are being used to effect Israel's interests as laid out in the "Securing the Realm" report. Nowhere do they mention that it is Sharon's savage policies that have made America a pariah in the Arab world because of its unswerving support for his vengeful, retaliatory attacks against incarcerated Palestinians in refugee camps surrounded by tanks and barbed wire.

In brief, the Wolfowitz/Perle coalition have managed to have the United States achieve the first of their desired goals for Israel, the elimination of Saddam Hussein, and seem prepared to use US forces again to remove Syria and then Iran. For the US to become a mercenary force for Israel because a few persistent neo-con fanatics have managed to corral America's foreign policy threatens the very premise of our democracy just as it threatens the security of our citizens who become the victims of those who decry the imperialist direction the current administration has designed for America.

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