

out. The KLA withdrew to their camps in Kosovo, under the nose of NATO. And suddenly, as a Macedonian source told *EIR*, “We got so many friends, everybody says they want to help us—but we know the danger is not over.” On April 9 in Luxemburg, Macedonia and the European Union (EU) signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement, a first step toward EU membership, seen by Macedonia as the ticket toward economic development. Among the clauses of the agreement there is also a special mechanism for “asymmetric” economic exchange, in the sense that Macedonia has great freedom in exporting to Europe (at least during the first years), while maintaining a minimal protectionist ability concerning imports from Europe.

Also interesting is the fact that a new regional peacekeeping force has announced it has ended its training period and could be available to be deployed in Macedonia. The point, many observers noticed, is that this military force is not NATO. Various known as the Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe (MPFSEE), or South Eastern Europe Brigades (SEEBRIG), the force includes contingents from both NATO and non-NATO countries: Greece, Turkey, Albania, Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, and Macedonia. The mandate of the Southern Brigades does not come from NATO, but from the United Nations.

And the ‘Putin Plan?’

Would such a force be consistent with the so-called Putin Plan of strengthening direct relations among the Southeast European countries, without supranational “Big Brothers”? “It is too early for the final verdict,” says a Macedonian source. “However, it could really be a step in the right direction. An agreement among Balkan countries based on the respect of the principle of national sovereignty and inviolability of borders, needs military and economic teeth to be credible.”

At the moment of this writing, the six-nation “Contact Group” on the Balkans has taken a few decisions in Paris, suggesting that the United States has agreed with the European countries and Russia on not letting the situation explode. “But this is not the solution,” says the Macedonian source. “First of all, the KLA is still training, and we expect soon another attack from Kosovo, and maybe from Albania. According to reliable information, they are training teenagers—15-year-old boys. So . . . NATO-controlled Kosovo continues to make armed attacks against our sovereignty. . . . What kind of pressures will be applied on us to accept a partition—to create ethnically pure entities?”

“The solution remains, as far-fetched as it may look, that we, small Macedonia, contribute to help a change in the strategic situation. Starting, in fact, with a new financial system, a New Bretton Woods. We cannot go for anything less than a ‘LaRouche solution.’ We should make sure that more and more people here in Macedonia understand it.”

Middle East War Is On Fast Forward

by Dean Andromidas

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s Middle East war drive has been on fast forward ever since President George W. Bush gave him the green light during their meeting in Washington on March 20. As long as Washington backs Sharon, the very dangerous consensus among the dominant factions in Israel to back Sharon’s war policies, will not be broken. Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who had been the architect of the “New Middle East,” has been reduced to a wilting fig leaf for Sharon’s policies.

Since returning from Washington in triumph in March, Sharon has demanded Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat surrender and accept his demands that the Palestinians be satisfied with living in dozens of tiny bantustans, on no more than 40% of the West Bank. It is a position that neither the Palestinians nor the Arab world will accept, and therefore, it is a program for war.

On April 2, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak arrived in Washington with a Jordanian-Egyptian initiative to restart Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. The initiative has received the endorsement of the Palestinians as well as the recently concluded Arab Summit. Sharon flatly rejected it. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell’s “partial” support reflects no lessening of support for Sharon, but Powell’s desire to win Arab support for increasing pressure on both Iraq and Iran.

‘Gesture’ Turned Deadly

As a “gesture” to the Arabs, Powell ordered the meetings of April 4: one, in Athens, where Foreign Minister Peres and Palestinian Authority Planning Minister Nabil Shaath held talks; the second, in Israel, between the top Palestinian and Israeli security chiefs. But Sharon had his soldiers fire at the convoys carrying the Palestinian security officials back from the meeting of security chiefs! Israeli press acknowledged the Israelis did not stop firing until Arafat personally telephoned King Abdullah of Jordan, who in turn telephoned Powell, who in turn telephoned Sharon. Mohammed Dahlan, the Chief of Preventive Security in Gaza and one of the targets of the shooting, charged that the Israelis fired 72 rounds at his car, in what was clearly an assassination attempt, and which seriously wounded one bodyguard.

The very next day, the Israeli Housing Ministry announced the issuance of 700 tenders for new housing units to be built in the West Bank. This was followed within

hours, by a helicopter gunship attack on a Palestinian security headquarters in the Gaza Strip, and the assassination of Islamic Jihad leader Iyad Hardan in the West Bank by a mobile telephone bomb.

Back in Washington, on the same day, a bipartisan group of 87 Senators and 209 Representatives sent a letter to President George W. Bush calling on him to reassess U.S. relations with the Palestinian Authority, including the possible suspension of aid and imposition of travel restrictions to the United States. One of the most outspoken Senators in the group is Sam Brownback (R-Kan.), who had been tipped for a Cabinet post in the Bush Administration. On the Democratic Party side, the chief sponsor was Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.), who has been preparing legislation targeting the Palestinian Authority as well as Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, and Iraq.

Whether Powell is simply playing the “soft cop” or being “marginalized” by the Bush Administration’s hawks remains to be seen. Nonetheless, a senior Israeli military intelligence source told *EIR*, “Powell got his meetings, they were held, but Sharon will not change his policy. There will be an escalation until the Bush Administration sees it has to intervene again.”

Renewed Attacks

The scenario was repeated when Powell arm-twisted Israeli and Palestinian security chiefs for a second meeting. Between April 10 and 11, and within hours of news that such a meeting was possible, Sharon launched a rocket attack on a Palestinian naval police clinic, killing a doctor and wounding scores of others. Soon after this attack, the Israeli military attacked the Khan Younis Palestinian refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. The Israelis demolished more than 25 homes, and killed at least three people, wounding 50 others. The Israelis attacked in the early morning hours without warning, with tanks, armored personnel carriers, and bulldozers, demolishing homes before some of their impoverished inhabitants could escape. Such an attack had not been carried out since the 1960s, when Sharon’s forces machine-gunned Gaza refugee camps.

This, called operation “Enjoyable Song,” was launched after Sharon and Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Elieser met with the Israeli military staff for a briefing. At one point, Sharon cut off the briefing and told the officers, “Less talk and more action. . . . When I was commander here, I focussed on deeds, not talk.”

These attacks, in effect, abrogated all previous security agreements between the Palestinians and the Israelis. It was the largest attack directly on Area A, which is fully under Palestinian control. Powell managed to pressure Arafat to agree to the second security meeting. It was held on April 11, but only after the U.S. sent its own diplomatic cars and security personnel to pick up the Palestinian delegation. The meeting itself cannot have had significant result.

‘Operation Bronze’

Sharon and his generals have made clear that these latest actions are part of an “operational plan” that is expected to last for several months until the Palestinians surrender—or a regional war breaks out. The plan has been called “Operation Bronze,” and it is directed at the destruction of the Palestinian Authority, including the targetting of Arafat for assassination.

The plan has a “minimum-maximum” features: Minimally the plan will lay the basis for a so-called “unilateral withdrawal,” where the Israelis will seize whatever territory they want. This would involve 60% of the West Bank, including the mountain aquifer which lies fully within the West Bank, but supplies Israel with one-third of its water. It also includes the Jordan Valley and its watershed, as well as an enlarged Jerusalem that would stretch to the Jordanian border. The maximum plan is to set the stage for a regional war that would realize Sharon’s vision of “Greater Israel,” under which the so-called “Jordan is Palestine” option becomes operational, whereby the Palestinian population would be forced, under the pressure of war, across the Jordan River into the Kingdom of Jordan. In such a scenario, Palestinian as well as Israeli Arabs could also be driven into Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt.

Operation Bronze is the opening phase of this policy. It involves chopping up the West bank into 64 bantustan-like enclaves, which the Israeli military can put under Middle Ages-style military siege. The policy was first implemented on March 12, when the Israelis laid siege to Ramallah, the Palestinian administrative capital of the West Bank, where Arafat currently has his headquarters. The siege continues. It is designed not only as a form of collective punishment against the city inhabitants, but also, to create a “no-man’s land” between Ramallah and the Jewish settlements and Israeli border, thus forcing the inhabitants in the Palestinian villages in the “no-man’s land” into the enclaves.

In an interview with the Israeli daily *Ha’aretz* on April 11, Sharon said “I do not see any reason to evacuate any settlements. So long as there is no peace, we will stay sitting there. If after some time . . . there will be peace, there will certainly be no reason to prevent [the settlements] from staying there.” When asked why, Sharon brought up the water question, “Is it possible at this time to relinquish control over the mountain aquifer, which provides us with a third of our water? Is it possible to give up the frontier area in the Jordan Valley? In any case, it’s no coincidence that the settlements sit where they are.”

When asked how he would respond to Arafat’s stated intent to unilaterally declare an independent state, Sharon said, “First, I advise him not to do that—it would be a major mistake on his part. It would demand that we take a series of steps to keep in our hands areas essential for us.”

Sharon's war plan is coordinated with his backers in the Bush Administration, the U.S. Congress, and Washington policy circles. Not only are these forces trying to isolate and punish the Palestinians, but they are also starting to pressure Lebanon, and going so far as to re-ignite a civil war between that country's Christians and Muslims. The April 12 *Jerusalem Post* reported that the State Department is threatening to hold back \$35 million in financial aid unless the Lebanese government deploys troops along its border with Israel. This is backed by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), who, as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is the primary proponent of blocking the aid. The Bush Administration is also considering a veto of a desperately needed bailout package which Lebanon is seeking from the International Monetary Fund to help pay off its \$24 billion debt.

Settlements Continue To Expand

In only weeks after coming to power, Sharon has tremendously expanded the settlements. The figure of 700 cited above is a gross understatement of the reality. Foreign Minister Peres' assertion that they do not constitute new settlements, but represent "natural growth," is a bald-faced lie, since 20,000 housing units in the settlements remain unsold. According to the Israel Lands Administration, the ministry sold plots for 2,800 homes in the West Bank during 2000. This year they plan to increase that by 78%, despite the fact that Israeli contractors are reluctant to build in the West Bank because of lack of demand.

Although there are 120,000 settlers in the West Bank and Gaza, they occupy an area that is equal to that inhabited by 3 million Palestinians. Seven thousand Israeli settlers occupy one-third of the Gaza Strip.

The latest Israeli moves have provoked an international outcry. On April 6, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights passed a resolution 48-2 (only the U.S. and Guatemala voted against), supporting the establishment of a Palestinian state based on the right to self-determination. The resolution followed a debate and finding that Israel was using force disproportionate to the threat posed to it. According to the committee chair, John Dugard, the attacks against Israel was perpetrated by individuals and "sparsely organized" forces, while Israel has attacked with very superior military forces.

Furthermore, the European Union officially denounced the announcement of 700 units, saying that "all settlements are illegal" and stand in the way of a peace agreement.

The key to stopping Sharon, is to end the Bush Administration's backing for it. A senior leader of Israel's peace camp told *EIR* that the only way to stop Sharon, is for the United States to drop its support. Once that occurs, others will come forward, as Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin did in 1992, before he was murdered, and renew the effort for peace.

Peru Presidential Vote Was Actually Rigged This Time—By Terror

by Gretchen Small

Sometime in May, Peruvians will choose either the "indigenist" economist from Harvard University, Alejandro Toledo or former President Alan García as their next President. The two were the top vote-getters in the April 8 first round of elections. Toledo won 36.5% of the vote; García garnered 26%, barely beating out the other major contender for second place, Lourdes Flores Nando, who ran as a centrist, business-oriented candidate and took 24% of the vote. The rest of the vote split between other, minor candidates.

The winner will not enjoy a majority in the Congress, as no party won a majority of the Congressional seats.

Poison from Harvard, or from Paris?

There is little difference between the two Presidential candidates, in either mind-set or policy.

Toledo, a proud product of the Berkeley, California 1968 counterculture, espouses a deadly combination of a rigid free market commitment and a social policy derived from the existentialist "politics of rage" of deschooler Paulo Freire, et al. Though a former World Bank official and member of Jeffrey Sachs' team at the Harvard Institute for International Development. Toledo ran a racist campaign, claiming he represents the Indian population, because of his blood and his Belgian anthropologist wife, Eliane Karp, a racist Inca-dinca-doo in her own right.

Toledo was made into a Presidential contender during the elections of 2000 by Project Democracy's international forces, the which sought to use his carefully cultivated "indigenist shoe-shine boy" profile to defeat President Alberto Fujimori, running for a third term. They failed in 2000, as Toledo's campaign staff—loaded with drug-legalizers and known terrorist supporters—and the candidate's radical, mob-promoting rhetoric scared off Peruvians, who feared any return to the conditions of life which they suffered in the decade of terrorism which preceded President Fujimori's government.

García, also, is a left-wing demagogue now espousing free trade doctrine. A member of the British intelligence-created APRA party, García was President from 1985-90.