

Temple Mount Provocation Foiled But Sharon's War Drive Continues

by Dean Andromidas

On July 29, all the elements were in place for a dramatic provocation of general religious war, on the al-Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the home of Islam's third-most holy sites, the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. Although the worst was prevented (see the accompanying article and box), it has not stopped Sharon, who two days later ordered an Israeli helicopter to launch a rocket attack, killing two senior Hamas leaders and six other adults and children. The attack marks a policy calculated to create a maximum reaction from the Palestinian side, which can be used as the pretext for escalating Israeli military operations to all-out war.

In an Aug. 2 call, "Stop that War Now!" Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. declared that "the U.S. and other governments must take effective forms of immediate emergency actions to chill the Israeli government into a state of self-restraint. . . . President George Bush has the means to conduct the international initiative which would bring this about; he should deploy his authority and resources to do so with finality."

LaRouche emphasized that "the true authors of this warfare are neither Israelis nor Arabs, but those co-thinkers of the Brzezinski-Huntington doctrine who desire an Israel-sparked launching of generalized religious warfare as a way of disrupting present trends toward economic cooperation in Eurasia. . . ."

An Ugly Glimpse of Religious War

The religious-war scenario began to unfold in the late hours of July 28 precisely as LaRouche had warned the previous day, and in line with *EIR*'s warnings since Ariel Sharon's own provocative "march on the Mount" last September ignited the current Intifada. The world heard news reports of an attempt to storm the gates leading to the Mount, by members of the outlawed Israeli terrorist Kach movement. Although Israeli police repulsed the attack, the next day 4,000 "Temple Mount Faithful" religious fanatics conducted their planned march just outside the Old City of Jerusalem, within a stone's throw of the religious shrine. Marching with their "cornerstone" of the Third Temple they hope to build, the marchers tried to bring it onto the Islamic holy site. Their project calls for the destruction of the mosques on the al-Haram al-Sharif,

and thus, for religious war.

EIR has documented that both the Kach movement and the Temple Mount Faithful and their allies in the Jewish settlers movement, are much more dangerous than mere religious cults on Israel's extremist fringe. They are backed by powerful Anglo-American circles, who see them as a most useful tool for provoking a conflagration to serve much larger geopolitical designs, toward a "clash of civilizations" in the Middle East and Eurasia. Their main support comes from outside of Israel, especially from the American so-called Christian right, as represented by U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft, whose own Pentecostal church is among the strongest supporters of the Temple Mount Faithful and the Jewish settlers movement.

Due to the July 28-29 weekend's intervention from U.S. and European capitals, the Israeli police prevented the march from entering the Old City. But it nonetheless provoked the angry Palestinian response it was calculated to elicit. When Palestinian youths began throwing stones from atop the al-Haram al-Sharif down onto the Jewish worshippers on Western Wall plaza, no less than 400 Israeli police stormed the Islamic holy site, throwing tear-gas canisters and stun grenades at Palestinian and Israeli Arab worshippers and stone-throwing youths alike. Although no one was killed, a dangerous siege ensued where Palestinian and Israeli Arabs, including two Arab members of the Israeli Knesset (Parliament), took refuge in the al-Aqsa Mosque.

Arab leaders took the provocation with deadly seriousness. Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher, on the morning of July 29, summoned the ambassadors of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, to denounce the danger to peace in the region from the provocative policies of the Sharon government. Jordan, Syria, and other Arab nations issued similar warnings. A July 30 meeting of the Arab League discussed the possibility of renewing the Arab boycott of all companies doing business with Israel.

With the lack of decisive U.S. action, countries throughout the region fear that it is only a question of time when Israel will launch a major assault on the Palestinian-held areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These nations know this will

LaRouche: Stop That War Now!

This statement was issued by the candidate's LaRouche-in-2004 Presidential campaign on Aug. 2.

The danger grows rapidly, that Israel will proceed with its indicated intent to go beyond its presently ongoing campaign of systematic murders, to full-scale invasion of the so-called "Area A" territories presently under titular control by the Palestinian authorities. Under this condition, the U.S. and other governments must take effective forms of immediate emergency actions to chill the Israeli government into a state of self-restraint.

President George W. Bush has the means to conduct the international initiative which would bring this about; he should deploy his authority and resources to do so with finality.

Such a concert among governments must act on the basis of foreknowledge of the consequences of their failure to stop the Israeli avalanche of war now, before it is too late to prevent a generalized, spreading state of religious

warfare through much of Eurasia and beyond. The murder campaign being conducted by the Sharon government is already a clear violation of the prohibition against war crimes, adopted at the post-World War II Nuremberg tribunal. However, the fact to be emphasized, is that those actions are not only criminal, but, worse, are causing the present government of Israel to slide deeper and deeper into the criminal state of mind in which it will become more and more inclined to perpetrate, or to provoke even worse atrocities against humanity, over ever wider areas.

It must be recognized, that the true authors of this warfare are neither Israelis nor Arabs, but those co-thinkers of the Brzezinski-Huntington doctrine who desire an Israel-sparked launching of generalized religious warfare, as a way of disrupting present trends toward economic cooperation in Eurasia. Nonetheless, although those are ultimately the real criminals in this situation, we must act to prevent the Israeli spark from being used to ignite the oil of general religious warfare.

The U.S.A. and its partners have the means to bring the Israeli war to a halt now. Later, once the holocaust of "religious war" is ignited at the Dome of the Rock, it may be too late for civilization for some decades yet to come.

—Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

lead to a regional war. Egypt, Iran, Jordan, and other Arab states are now taking military preparations for their own defense. Egypt is quietly mobilizing reserves. Iran is reportedly also preparing a defensive war. Syria and Lebanon, declared targets of Sharon, are bracing as well. In the event the Palestinians were to be expelled into Jordan, and that country destabilized, it is not excluded by some regional analysts, that Iraq could intervene.

Sharon Will Not Stop

Held back at point A, Sharon struck at point B, ordering Israeli assault helicopters to attack targets in Nablus. The July 31 rocket attack killed a journalist, a grocer, and two children ages 8 and 10, along with Hamas political representatives: a new escalation of military operations aimed at destroying the Palestinian political leadership. Despite official Israeli "self-defense" explanations, even the Israeli press called this a calculated move by Sharon to escalate the violence. According to the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* on Aug. 2, Sharon ordered the attack while in possession of intelligence reports indicating that Hamas had postponed all suicide attacks because of pressure from the Palestinian Authority. Furthermore, Israeli military reported that the Palestinian Authority had, in fact, prior to July 31, begun to act preemptively to prevent attacks.

Moreover, the two slain Hamas leaders, Salim Damoni

and Jamal Mansour, were not part of the military wing, but higher level political leaders. Though hard-core supporters of the Intifada, they nonetheless were part of the Hamas wing cooperating with Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, and in the past had been open to settlement with Israel. *Ha'aretz* interviewed them in 1994, and quoted one, "The need to reach mutual understandings in the area requires us to prevent attacks on civilians on both sides." The seven-story building the Israeli Defense Force targetted was not a military operations center, but a Center for Communications Studies, also housing a psychiatric clinic and private apartments.

Palestinian Culture Minister Yasser Abed Rabo denounced the attack saying, "This was the massacre of civilians in a populated building. The leaders killed were political; and everyone who knew them knew they were political. . . . Every Israeli who doesn't condemn this attack should be ashamed of himself."

Israeli intelligence sources acknowledge that this escalation represents a policy of killing precisely those whose role in negotiation is essential to stop the conflict. One Israeli source said, "The question in my mind is: What is the motive for this attack? Was it so-called self-defense, or was it done with the intention of generating an escalation on both sides? They are killing the guys we are going to have to negotiate with, and that is going to lead to a real disaster." He fears that

if an intervention is not made by the United States, Sharon will launch a war that will have catastrophic consequences for the entire region, emphatically including Israel.

This same point was made by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who told a press conference on Aug. 1, after meeting Arafat, "Israel's attempts to strike Palestinian leaders will create a cycle of revenge and it will be the Palestinian and Israeli people who will pay the price in the end." These attacks, Mubarak warned, "will create a second and third line of [Palestinian] leaders, and the situation will become more fierce and [more] difficult to control." Mubarak also declared that Europe and the United States "should try to find a solution," if Israel continues to refuse the deployment of an international observer force.

Similar denunciations came from all the permanent members of the UN Security Council, including the United States. Nonetheless, words will not stop the deadly process that continues to be unleashed in the region.

The popular rage caused by this latest Israeli assassination operation was reflected immediately in the Nablus streets where tens of thousands of mourners attended the funerals for the eight victims: a thunderous demonstration of solidarity between Hamas and the Palestine Liberation Organization. It was also a scene of calls for bloody revenge.

A Voice of Sanity

In the midst of this smoldering atmosphere, those working for peace are making themselves heard. On July 25, a group of more than 50 prominent Israeli and Palestinian intellectuals and political activists met, and issued a declaration calling for "an end to bloodshed, an end to occupation, an urgent return to negotiations, and the realization of peace between our peoples. We refuse to comply with the ongoing deterioration in our situation, with the growing list of victims, the suffering, and the real possibility that we may all be drowned in a sea of mutual hostility." The statement called for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which call for the return of occupied lands for peace, a two-state solution to the conflict, and two capitals in Jerusalem.

Among the Palestinian signatories, were ministers of the Palestinian authority including Hisham Adbul Razak, Nabil Amr, Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, and many others. Among the Israelis, was former Justice Minister Yossi Beilin and head of the Peres Center for Peace, Ron Pundak, who were both architects of the Oslo Accord; Dr. Janet Aviad of Peace Now; Charim Oren and Yair Tsaban, former ministers and members of the Meretz party.

The actions by these Palestinian and Israeli peace activists serve as a reminder that, even at this late moment, there are sane forces committed to a viable peace. However, those forces are incapable, alone, of stopping war, and the burden remains on the Bush Administration to take the necessary measures to stall Sharon's war drive.

War Was Held at Brink Over July 28-29 Weekend

by Jeffrey Steinberg

A hideous religious war, to have been triggered by a confrontation at the Islamic holy sites on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, was averted on Sunday, July 29, as the result of concerted international pressure on the Sharon government in Israel. To a great extent, that international pressure campaign, which was publicly acknowledged by Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, was based on an alert issued by Lyndon LaRouche on July 27, and widely picked up by policymakers in Washington and in several European and Mideast capitals.

LaRouche's warning on the dangers of a war provocation on July 29 was posted July 27 on Internet sites and widely circulated from there. It focussed on provocations set for that Sunday on Jerusalem's "Temple Mount," as the religious war-trigger at which Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and the even more hard-line warhawks in Israel would launch their long-planned military assault against the Palestinian Authority.

LaRouche Warning Heeded

Both source reports and events on the ground on Sunday confirmed that elements within the Bush Administration took LaRouche's warning most seriously.

Days before the scheduled provocation, an Israeli high court issued a ruling, allowing the Temple Mount Faithful—a group committed to building a third temple where Solomon's Temple once stood in Jerusalem, on the site now occupied by the Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock (two of Islam's holiest sites)—to lay a cornerstone for the new temple near the gates of the old city. Immediately, the most fanatical Jewish and Christian fundamentalist "Temple Mount" provocateurs announced plans to use the court's ruling to stage a major incident. Islamic clergy, responsible for the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem, called on worshippers to turn out en masse, to prevent the "desecration" of the Temple Mount.

All of the preconditions were set for the provocation of a full-scale religious war—exactly as *EIR* had spelled out in a December 2000 special report, *Who Is Sparking a Religious War in the Middle East?* Sources in Israel and Washington confirmed that Sharon, a longtime patron of the Temple Mount crazies, was fully prepared to let the provocation and war trigger go forward.

Instead, as a result of heavy pressure from Washington and elsewhere, Israeli police moved in to prevent the Temple Mount Faithful from storming the Islamic sites. However,