

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,

the police themselves were sent onto the Temple Mount in what turned into a police riot, following rock-throwing incidents involving some of the Islamic worshippers. Over the next 48 hours, Israeli Defense Force units carried out assassinations against Fatah and Hamas organizers in the occupied territories, so the situation remains on a hair trigger for war.

LaRouche issued a new call on the Bush Administration to act to stop the outbreak of war, on Aug. 2.

Israel Starts Sweating Over War Crimes Cases

by Dean Andromidas

Ariel Sharon and the Israeli government are starting to take the war crimes case now before a Belgian Court very seriously. The Israeli government's concern goes well beyond trying to keep its Prime Minister out of the dock for his role in the massacre that occurred 19 years ago in the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps in Lebanon. They now fear, that Israeli government officials, especially military and security officials, will be indicted in European courts for violations of the Geneva war crime conventions. Such violations were not only committed 19 years ago, but are being carried out every day by the Israeli military and security forces against the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. They are the same crimes for which Serbian and Croatian officials are now fac-

ing trial at the war crimes tribunal in The Hague. Already a group of parliamentarians in Denmark plans to file a case against the Israeli Ambassador designate, Carmi Gillon.

Israeli officials and legal experts have made public warnings that the activities of the security and military services in the territories are war crimes, based on the Geneva and Hague conventions. This includes closures and sieges against Palestinian towns and cities, on the excuse that the Israeli government wants to stop terrorists from entering Israel. This is not only a fraud—since any determined terrorist can get past a road block—but it is also a war crime called “collective punishment.” Then there is the destruction of civilian houses, seizure of lands, destruction of orchards, olive groves, and agricultural lands. The most dramatic cases are the extrajudicial assassinations and the expansion of the Jewish settlements. The latter constitutes population transfer: Israelis into militarily occupied lands, and Palestinians from their lands.

Sharon's government knows that, as these cases gain momentum, its propaganda drive to define all violence by the Palestinians as the work of “terrorists,” and every military action by the Israeli military as simply “defense against terrorists,” is untenable. One Israeli commentator wrote in the leading Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*, “The bastards changed the rules.”

Another commentary, by Israeli Knesset (Parliament) member Uri Avnery in the Aug. 1 *International Herald Tribune*, notes that within Sharon's cabinet there is considerable tension on the juridical consequences of the Prime Minister's policies. Avnery wrote how Minister of Transportation Ephraim Sneh, a Labor Party member and retired general, recently burst out against Sharon, “You will not drag me with you to The Hague.” Avnery reminded Sharon that “in the infamous Kafr Kassem massacre affair of 1956, [Israeli]



With approval from Ariel Sharon's government, Israel's fundamentalist "Temple Mount Faithful" tried a provocation on July 29, nearly guaranteed to set off general religious war. The site was al-Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem, also considered to have been Solomon's Temple Mount.