United States Committee for a Free Lebanon (USCFL). Many of the same cast of characters mentioned above are collaborators at USCFL, which publishes the monthly *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, circulated widely in the U.S. Senate and House.

International Policy Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)

The ICT, which published Shay's paper endorsing Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis, was created in 1996, at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herlizya, Israel. The chairman of the board, Shabtai Shavit, spent 30 years in the Israeli intelligence service, the Mossad. He was director of the Mossad from 1989-96 before "retiring" and founding ITC. Shavit also spent a year at Harvard's Kennedy School of Public Policy. He is a close friend of former CIA director James Woolsey, a loud war-hawk in the "get Saddam" chorus.

The board of trustees, primarily dominated by terrorist experts and former military and intelligence officials, includes Avner Azulay, the executive director of the Marc Rich Foundation. The ICT inaugurated an annual International Conference on Terrorism, in March 1997, which featured then-Prime Minister Netanyahu, then-Ambassador Woolsey, and Maj. Gen. (Res.) Meir Dagan, who is also an associate of the institute, and who was recently appointed to head the Mossad.

The ICT has co-sponsored conferences with U.S. organizations such as the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA) and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL). On May 26, 2002, the ICT and the ADL ran a day-long conference in Jerusalem entitled "The Psychology of Terror: Tackling the Terrorist Threat." Opening the conference was ADL National Chairman Abe Foxman, who ranted that the United States should take pre-emptive measures against rogue states or terrorist groups that have access to nuclear or other unconventional weapons, as Prime Minister Menachem Begin had done when, in 1981, had he bombed Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor.

Belittling the Arab leaders who wish a substantive peace in the region, Foxman said: "It is imperative to grasp the roots of the rage in the Arab and Islamic world, and the huge cultural and psychological chasm that yawns between that world and the Western world. There is little in Arab history or memory that allows the idea of an independent, sovereign, Jewish state in their region to be an acceptable idea. They will continue to fantasize about old maps, to dream of conquest to create a total pan-Arab world, to engage in revisionism proving the Holocaust is a propagandistic lie and that Jews have no roots and no rights and no history in the Middle East."

Panelists during the conference included Shaul Shay, Yigal Carmon, president of the Middle East Media Research Institute, and Dr. Jerrold M. Post, of the Political Psychology Department of George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Russian Round Table

War Threat Linked to U.S. Economic Collapse

The Russian intelligence-linked weekly Zavtra *published in its Sept. 11 edition, the transcript of a round table discussion on the world situation since Sept. 11 of last year. Participants were* Zavtra *deputy editor Alexander Nagorny, strategic analyst Gen. Leonid Ivashov, formerly of the Russian Defense Ministry, financial expert Mikhail Khazin, the prominent Russian television commentator Mikhail Leontyev, and former senior KGB officer Gen. Leonid Shebarshin. The discussion reveals interesting elements of the thinking among well-placed Russian observers about the present strategic situation, and about the United States, in particular.*

Excerpts from the round table have been translated by EIR, *and subheads have been added.*

Sept. 11: 'An Attempted Coup d'État'

Gen. Leonid Ivashov: I hold to my opinion, that Sept. 11 was an internal operation in the United States. The situation in the world today shows clearly, that there are two forces, and two concepts, battling to establish world domination. The first force is associated with the Bush Administration, and represents the United States as a nation. The second force is the world financial elite. Its upper echelon, meaning the wealthiest people in the world and the circles behind them, believes that the time has come to establish world rule, subjugating the United States, inclusively. . . .

It is no accident, that many Western analysts write about Sept. 11 as an attempted coup d'état. It could not have been undertaken by people from some gorge in Afghanistan. The customer who placed the order, of course, was a rather more weighty figure, who it seems to me is connected with the world financial mafia, which has representatives in U.S. agencies of power, including the intelligence and special services. It is not a mere coincidence that, parallel with the investigation of the Sept. 11 explosions, investigations are under way in the United States into the activity of a number of other agencies, including the Mossad, within the U.S. intelligence community.

It seems to me that events in the United States will develop out of the conflict between these two forces. What unites them, is the necessity to use the military power of the U.S. to smash national borders and erase the civilizational destruction and the independence of other nations. The various geopolitical theories of [Samuel] Huntington, [Zbigniew] Brzezinski, et al. are used to bolster this. . . .

Evidently the U.S. feels it is under time pressure, to secure control over key world resources as well as policy control in the majority of countries. Why the hurry? First of all, because China is developing; secondly, the Arab East is consolidating itself; thirdly, Southeast Asia is developing at a brisk rate. The current state of Russia, naturally, suits the interests of the United States, but they cannot be sure what will happen tomorrow. Therefore, the United States is not at a break point. They have reached the climax of their adventure to establish control over the planet by force. What next?

I think this peak will have been passed in a period of one-and-a-half to two years, after which America will begin to be rolled back from its positions as a result of economic problems. I think that the attack on Iraq most likely will occur. I think Iran will be drawn into the confrontation, and it should not be excluded, that Israel will participate in military actions against Iraq. . . . After that, U.S. policy will begin to disintegrate, in the context of economic and socio-political collapse inside the United States. One gets the impression that the planet's financial oligarchy has no interest in the American population's maintaining its present standard of living and consumption.

Systemic U.S. Economic Crisis

Mikhail Khazin: I want to talk about the events of Sept. 11 from the standpoint of the economy. At the end of the 1990s, the United States entered a severe structural crisis. . . .

There is only one thing left for the U.S. to do: seek a sharp reduction of costs throughout the economy. . . . The only way to achieve this is through a reduction of world oil prices. They want prices at home to decline, while prices for other countries, especially those that export to the United States, to rise. . . . America needs oil prices in the region of $12-13 per barrel. . . . Actually, in order to pull their economy out of its slump, gradually letting go the [failed] 25% that is the New Economy, while building up some new sector to compensate, they need even more financial assistance, to achieve which they would have to let oil prices fall to $8-9 per barrel, better still, $7 per barrel. This would be possible only if they had total control over the petroleum resources of Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Isn't that what we are seeing? . . .

They have a four- to six-month time limit, defined by their own oil reserves. . . . Within half a year, they need to seize total control of Iraq and Saudi Arabia. . . .

Certainly, the global forces and antagonisms, mentioned by Leonid Ivashov, exist. But global events don't happen, until the objective economic situation is ripe. . . . And the situation in the U.S. economy has become intolerable. It is obvious, that Sept. 11 was prepared by many forces. . . . But those explosions took place exactly when the interests of those two American groupings coincided. . . .

Mikhail Leontyev: Indeed, the United States really is in a systemic, structural crisis, which is not only economic, but also social. Qualitatively speaking, this crisis is reminiscent of the crisis in the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1980s. At that time, few people realized how quickly the country would disintegrate. Today in America, as in the U.S.S.R. then, the elite is either not able, or at least does not demonstrate the capability of getting out of the crisis using its old forces and old methods. Obviously, this crisis did not begin on Sept. 11, nor did it end at that time. But what happened on Sept. 11 was necessary for a transition to other, new methods. . . .

The battle between the two groups that have been mentioned—I call them the "military force" people and the "isolationists"—has become brutal. The isolationists are people who think chiefly in terms of the survival of the U.S. economy and industry. They think the United States should concentrate on its own problems, e.g., by carrying out a controlled devaluation of the dollar in order to make capital at least a little bit more competitive in America. In foreign policy, they have no use for total world hegemony, only for a system of loyal regional gendarmes. The policy for a rapprochement with Russia is the new policy of these isolationists, who want to use us as one of the gendarmes. Naturally, they have to recognize some of Russia's interests in nearby areas, which Russian formulates rather clearly. And they are prepared to do this.

"It is no accident, that many Western analysts write about Sept. 11 as an attempted coup d'état. It could not have been undertaken by people from some gorge in Afghanistan. The customer who placed the order, of course, was a rather more weighty figure, who it seems to me is connected with the world financial mafia. . . ."

—Gen. Leonid Ivashov

So far, the military force group is losing. But the battle is not with Saddam Hussein or with the terrorists. The battle is for the brain of Mr. Bush. . . . The military force group's tactics are better than before, due to a better understanding of the depth of the crisis in the U.S. economy, and not only in the economy. And, rather than fiddling with finances in an attempt to salvage the New Economy through some sort of world economic regrouping, the military force group wants to exploit the unique area, where they have an overwhelming advantage and no competitors—the military-political sphere.

There is a high danger of explosion, of an uncontrolled development of the situation. Bombing is one thing, entailing no massive human casualties for the United States; but

launching a ground operation is another. This could be quite prolonged. And the situation would become worse and worse, while the internal struggle between different groups inside the United States grew more acute.

It would be unrealistic to try to forecast the development of this systemic crisis. The important thing is to define the algorithm for Russia's reaction. . . . Russia needs a radical shift in its domestic policy. At present, we simply don't have a domestic economic policy. . . . We need a shift to an economic growth policy, based on maximum utilization of internal resources, in order to prepare ourselves for the damage, that will be associated with the virtually inevitable global crisis.

Drive Toward War

Alexander Nagorny: The systemic crisis in the United States subsumes the political and ideological situation in the American elites, which is intense and has no exit. . . . The whole Iraq operation also hangs by a thread. Cheney says twice in the space of two weeks, that actions should begin as soon as possible, making Bush's formulation sound rather surprising, when he talks about more consultations, consensus, etc. . . . Nonetheless, it appears that the decision to act has already been taken, insofar as it is connected with the President's personal situation and that of his group. The deterioration of U.S. economic indicators, complicated by social factors, essentially mean a failure for the Republicans in the mid-term elections, and 2004 is approaching very fast. Bush needs to make a final leap, in case it can be a leap to victory.

My scenario is rather categorical: The bombing has to start in September, followed by landing operations beginning a week before the Nov. 2 mid-term elections, in order to secure support from the Democrats. Then there are two and a half months to seize Baghdad. . . . The appearance of a temporary "liberation" regime in Iraq . . . would create a whole new situation in the Middle East. It is important to note, that this is not just a question of an anti-terrorist raid against Saddam, but a major operation, implying a new level of legitimization of the United States in Saudi Arabia, inclusively: Only with a change in the Saudi regime, will the economic and financial maneuvers Mikhail Khazin was talking about become possible. Of course, the Americans will also face the serious possibility, that Muslims of the entire world will declare general *jihad* against them, and that the entire campaign will spill over into a major war, consisting of many regional conflicts. This means a deterioration of the situation in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine, and an entirely new situation around Israel. But if the U.S. doesn't do this, but gets tied up with United Nations resolutions, the moment will be lost and the entire operation will come to naught.

'Everything Could Disintegrate'

Leonid Shebarshin: I think that America's goal in Afghanistan amounted to a demonstration, for the man in the street and the rest of the world, of its readiness to act. . . . They installed their Prime Minister and gave him 72 bodyguards, which became an island of stability in Afghanistan. And now there is talk about the Americans remaining in Afghanistan for five to ten years, or maybe even longer.

Another important result is that the Americans used Afghanistan, in order to take over positions in former Soviet Central Asia. They got very good bases in Kyrgyzstan, a base in Tajikistan, agreements with the Uzbeks, pressure on Kazakstan. I think we are looking at preparations for a serious confrontation with China, which is turning into a strategic issue. The same thing is happening with China, as earlier with the Soviet Union: bases in Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the return of the Americans to Cam Ranh Bay, which we abandoned, the base on Okinawa. Thus, China is surrounded by a chain of U.S. bases, while Russia is being drawn into NATO institutions.

But this is a long-term perspective. At the moment, after the "triumphal" victory in Afghanistan, the U.S. is launching a new adventure: war with Iraq. Afghanistan was a "limited operation," although the firepower used there was colossal. . . . But Iraq is not Afghanistan. Here the situation is "50-50." The U.S. might stumble, and if this happens, it could be the beginning of a total collapse. Everything could disintegrate, just as the Soviet Union disintegrated, when a great state ceased to exist in just four days.

Khazin: One very important point. No coups or ground operation will halt the structural crisis. . . . I would like to note that Desert Storm was financed by the Japanese. This time, nobody will pay, for a very simple reason. The people who really control financial flows in the world understand that the only purpose of all the turmoil around Iraq would be to pull America out of a deep economic hole. . . .

If Afghanistan, indeed, entailed a PR operation for American domestic consumption, this time there would be a specific political-economic goal: to reduce the price of oil to $6-7, or a maximum level of $8. And I firmly believe that the U.S. will go far in pursuit of that goal. I believe that their operational plans include the use of tactical nuclear weapons, just to terrorize the world by showing that they will stop at nothing. . . .

The real weakness of the United States, is that in a genuinely critical situation, people with a very ordinary mentality are in power. . . .