Jaffee Center Report

In Cheney's WMD Fraud, Israel Was 'Full Partner'

by Dean Andromidas

A prestigious Israeli institute has confirmed what *EIR* readers have known for months: Israel was a "full partner" with U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney and British Prime Minister Tony Blair in cooking up a totally false intelligence picture of Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction. The massive disinformation campaign was launched by all three governments, in concert, to justify the unprovoked invasion of Iraq.

The report, "The War in Iraq: An Intelligence Failure?"[1], was published by the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University, and released this month. It cites the establishment of commissions of inquiry in both America and Great Britain, to probe intelligence operations to determine whether "governmental bodies falsely manipulated the intelligence information in order to gain support for the decision to go to war in Iraq, while the real reasons for this decision were obfuscated or concealed." The report states that such inquiries are appropriate because "sending a country to war based on false pretenses constitutes serious injury to the democratic process."

"The third party in this intelligence failure, Israel," concludes the Jaffee Center report, "has remained in the shadows; and yet, Israeli intellignece was a full partner to the picture presented by American and British Intelligence regarding Iraq's non conventional capabilities." The false picture "also assessed that Iraqis were apt to use these capabilities against Israel. In actuality, of course, Israel was not attacked, either because Iraq did not have the capability, or because it had no intention of doing so."

Author of the report, Gen. (reserve) Shlomo Brom, told the BBC on Dec. 4, that not only was Israel a "full partner . . . in developing a false picture," but it "reinforced the American and British belief that the weapons existed. If Israeli intelligence had argued Iraq did not have these capabilities and there was no real threat, it would have had some effect."

Within hours of the release of the report, Israeli Knesset Member Yossi Sarid, of the pro-peace Meretz party, called for independent investigation of the charges. Sarid told *EIR*, "Listen, I was never a supporter of Saddam Hussein, but for the last seven or eight months, I publicly opposed this war. I said it was clear that the U.S. would defeat Iraq, but the severe problems will come after the war. I said the war would, in fact, encourage the terrorists." As for the intelligence failure, he said, "It was clear to me that all three—Israel, the U.S., and Great Britain—were exaggerating the Iraqi threat for their own purposes."

While the report does not name any individuals nor detail how this "partnership" worked, U.S. Presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche has been in the forefront of exposing the role of Vice President Dick Cheney and the cabal of neocons he has placed throughout the Bush Administration. Many of these operatives—including Doug Feith, the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy who ran the notorious Office of Special Plans (OSP), and Richard Perle, of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's Defense Policy Board—were key in the massive disinformation campaign during the build-up to the Iraq invasion. They are also notorious for strong ties to Israeli right-wing causes, and have been even been accused of divided loyalties.

EIR, in its Aug. 22, 2003 issue, revealed that a "parallel Office of Special Plans was quietly established in the office of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, to coordinate with the Pentagon's 'secret team' " in charge of this disinformation campaign. That office was overseen by Sharon's Bureau Chief Dov Weisglass. Weisglass, who is also Sharon's lawyer, and also implicated, along with Sharon in several corruption investigations, has served as Sharon personal contact with the Bush Administration, particularly Vice President Cheney.

Incompetence or Duplicity

The Jaffee report is a stinging critique of the Israeli intelligence "failure," that could be applied to the Bush Administration as well. So complete was this failure, one finds it hard to call it merely incompetence and unprofessionalism, as the report does; it must, in fact, have involved willful duplicity.

The report calls for an investigation: not only because of the damage caused to the public trust in official assessments which turn out to be widely false; but also because of the the damage to Israel's international relations. "Foreign intelligence services might stop trusting intelligence received from Israel, and foreign countries might suspect that Israel is giving them false intelligence in order to influence their political positions. Indeed, in the past, Israel has been accused of disseminating false information that serves its own interests. Such suspicions, for example, could harm Israel's efforts to convince others that the intelligence on Iran's nuclear project is solid."

Identifying the "unprofessionalism" of the Israeli intelligence services, General Brom's report states that they adopted a "dogmatic conception based on a one-dimensional image of the enemy" which meant a perception of Saddam Hussein as "an embodiment of evil, a man possessed by compulsion to develop weapons of mass destruction in order to strike

1. Strategic Assessment, Vol. 6, No. 3, November 2003; "The War in Iraq: An Intelligence Failure?" by Shlomo Brom.

Gen. Amos Gilad may have been the head of the parallel Israeli Office of Special Plans. Just as the U.S. OSP was established in an obscure corner of Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's office, but run by Vice President Cheney and his chief of staff Lewis Libby, Gilad's "public diplomacy" shop at the Israeli Defense Ministry was run by Prime Minister Sharon through his staff chief Dov Weisglass.

Israel and others, regardless of other considerations." In reality, after Saddam's defeat in the 1991 Gulf War, "it was reasonable to assume that survival was his number one objective and motivation," and that any illegal weapons program would be a "factor that threatened his survival rather then insured it." The report goes so far as to say that Saddam Hussein believed he had done everything asked of him "but to no avail, since the real aim of the United States was regime change and not Iraq's disarmament of weapons of mass destruction." It focusses on the question of how such a one-sided analysis could have gotten past the established system of checks and balances in the Israeli intelligence establishment.

Brom attributes these failings to "excessive intelligence anxiety" which he claims has its roots in the intelligence failure in the October 1973 War, when Israel's intelligence assessment was that neither the Egyptians nor the Syrians would attack Israel. He attacks a "lack of sufficient professionalism" reflected in the assertion that Iraq possessed missiles that could strike Israel, despite the fact that after the intensive work of the UN weapons inspectors up until 1998, "it was estimated that Iraq had between zero and ten missiles." He documents that "in the years that followed, a surprising phenomenon occurred: No additional information was gathered, but the intelligence assessment changed; the possibility that Iraq had zero missiles disappeared, and the top number continued to increase until it reached dozens of missiles by the eve of the war in Iraq. There was also the ridiculous phenomenon of establishment spokespeople attempting to calm the Israeli public by stating: 'There is no reason to worry. The Iraqis have a small number of missiles, merely a few dozen.' It is difficult to understand why this would be a reassuring message. During the Gulf War, Iraq launched 'only' 39 missiles at Israel."

Refuting the claim that Saddam Hussein would attack Israel, the report says, "All signs indicated that on the eve of the war, Saddam was trying to convince the international community that he did not possess weapons of mass destruction and that there was therefore no reason to go to war. . . . A pre-emptive strike [against Israel] would have given the United States the ultimate excuse for war."

The report also refutes the so called "back to the wall" thesis where Saddam would launch a suicidal attack on Israel so as to find a place in history after his demise. This thesis "disregards the fact that a survivor like Saddam would strive to resurface even after defeat, especially given the not-infrequent phenomenon among Arab dictators of surviving severe loses and bitter defeats. Would the gruesome act of attacking the Israeli civilian population with weapons of mass destruction have increased his chances of surviving? Or would it have only strengthened his enemies' determination to liquidate him physically as well? How would he had been written up in Arab history after Israel's inevitable retaliation against Iraq?"

Faction Fight Over Sharon Government

"You have to remember that the Jaffee Center is almost a civilian mouthpiece for the Israeli security and military establishment," a senior Israeli intelligence source said. "This report is part of a faction fight within the military over the policies of Sharon's government." Three years of Sharon's hardline policies and a Middle East destabilized by the U.S. war in Iraq is creating serious concern within Israel's military and security establishment. "It started a few weeks ago when Israel's Chief of Staff General Moshe Ya'alon called for a change in policy towards the Palestinians," another Israeli military source said. "That statement made Israel Prime Minister Ariel Sharon quite angry." Countering this faction, the intelligence services, for the time being, have the upper hand because of support from Sharon.

"The very same officials who concluded emphatically that Saddam possessed chemical-biological weapons, and who even warned about the possible use of such weapons against Israel, warn today that Yasser Arafat's master plan is to destroy Israel," wrote columnist Uzi Benziman in *Ha'aretz* on Dec. 7. "The same officials who forecast definitively that the 'ground will shake' when American troops reach Iraq and uncover weapons of mass destruction, are today warning with great internal conviction, that Arafat views himself as a latter-day Saladin, whose purpose is to drive the Jews from the Holy Land. . . . This raises questions about the empirical foundations of intelligence reports that purport to unveil Arafat's inner world, his aims, goals and hopes."

Benziman identifies Maj. Gen. (reserve) Amos Gilad as one of the officers responsible for this failure. He was "the man who in the last decade delivered military intelligence estimates about trends in the Palestinian Authority, and who

was also largely responsible for shaping intelligence estimates about developments in Iraq."

Who Is Amos Gilad?

Benziman's naming of Gilad hits very close to the mark. One of the IDF's ultra-hawks, Gilad served as "national spokesman" just before and during the first phase of the Iraq War, terrifying Israeli citizens with the baseless claims that Saddam Hussein would attack Israel with weapons of mass destruction. The campaign led to mass distribution of gas masks, and ordering citizens to set up "sealed rooms" in their homes against poison gas attacks. (One entire family suffocated and died when they fell asleep in their sealed room.) It also cost millions Israel's collapsing economy could ill afford.

An initial investigation demonstrates that Gilad has been involved in pushing these wild assessments, and sharing them with the United States, as far back as 1997, especially in 1998 when the Clinton Administration was being manipulated to launch a war against Iraq.

In 1982, as a young intelligence officer, Gilad was on the scene at the Sabra and Chatilla Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, when Sharon gave the order to send in the Lebanese Christian Falangists to massacre thousands of Palestinians. Gilad is one of Sharon's favorites. Upon his retirement earlier this year, Weisglass saw to it that a new Directorate of Political and Security Affairs was created within the Israel Ministry of Defense for Gilad to head. This is the same Weisglass who a set up Sharon's parallel operation to Doug Feith's OSP.

Gilad now serves as chief political adviser to Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz. Last November, he was with Mofaz when the latter visited the United States, attending Mofaz' meetings with Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Colin Powell, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, and Cheney.

All of Gilad's assessments seem to parallel those of Washington's neo-con chicken-hawks. In this latest position, he made many of the official public statements after the Israeli bombing of Syria last October. On Oct. 19, the publication of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, of Dore Gold, a media advisor to Sharon's government, ran an article by Gilad entitled "Undermining the War on Terrorism: The Role of Yasser Arafat and the Syrian Regime." There, Gilad claimed that by peace, Arafat "means one big Palestine from the Mediterranean to the Iraqi desert—including Jordan, the West Bank, and Israeli Arabs." As for Syria, he writes, "Syria's main efforts now are designed to cause total failure of the United States in Iraq and increasing terror inside Israel." This is precisely the line Feith has been pushing in Washington.

Prior to being national spokesman during the Iraq War, Gilad was Coordinater of Israel Government Activities in the Territories—Israel's proconsul in the West Bank and Gaza. He came to this position just as Sharon came into office, and was fully complicit in the brutal occupation policies for that period. Before this, Gilad was head of the research division of Israeli military intelligence, where as early as 1997, he was passing on information to U.S. authorites. In 1999, former Mossad agent Victor Ostrovsky wrote in the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* that Gilad was part of a policy faction which "foisted their view on the government that the Iranians are striving hard to attain nuclear [weapons] capabilities."

It is notorious that when Gilad visited Washington just days before Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin was to meet with Vice President Al Gore on Feb. 6, 1999, Gilad claimed that Russia had sold Iran the means to produce an SS4 missile with a 1,250 mile range. Gilad and his delegation gave briefings on this not only in the Defense and State Departments and various intelligence agencies, but to the Senate and House intelligence committees. The fuss was so great that Gore also met with him and is said to have brought up the missile-technology question with Chernomyrdin.

Gilad is cited in a press review on Israeli intelligence on Iraq which accompanies the Jaffee report.[2] As early as 1998, he claimed that if "Saddam Hussein finds himself on the brink of destruction, he may definitely take suicidal steps, including sending missiles towards Israel."

Gilad is a key Israeli liaison to the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, a hotbed of neo-con war propaganda and disinformation.

2. Strategic Assessment, Vol. 6, No. 3, November 2003; "Intelligence on Iraq: Selections from the Media."