

'Project Daniel' Is Issued By Israel's Dr. Strangeloves

by Dean Andromidas

The hawks in the Israeli military security establishment have signaled that they are prepared to launch nuclear war against all Arab States as well as Iran and Pakistan, issuing a report which for the first time publicly flaunts Israel's nuclear weapons, and aggressively adopts the "pre-emptive war" doctrine from U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney's September 2002 manifesto.

On April 30, a new Israeli strategic study, compiled by a team of Israeli and American Dr. Strangeloves and entitled "Israel's Strategic Future: Project Daniel", calls for Israel to launch pre-emptive strikes against any state that dares to develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and calls for a policy of "ultimate deterrence" which would enable Israel to launch nuclear weapons capable of destroying "ten to 20" major population centers. The report was prepared by the Ariel Center for Policy Research, a top Israeli center for the neo-conservative Straussians inside Israel.

The open publication of the report is noteworthy: It means that Israel has begun laying the basis to drop its policy known as "nuclear ambiguity"—in which it refuses to discuss or confirm its nuclear arsenal—and to begin to flaunt the fact that it is the possessor of the world's fifth-largest stockpile of nuclear weapons. This point was made by Israeli military commentator Rueven Pedatzur, who wrote in the daily *Ha'aretz* on June 8 that the "amazing thing about the document . . . is that the military censor allowed it to be published. It's amazing because it deals in detail with Israel's nuclear policy, the need to develop second-strike nuclear capabilities, and the need for pre-emptive attacks on countries developing nuclear arms. None of this is phrased ambiguously. Indeed, it makes declarations and recommendations that make clear the authors' point of departure is that Israel has nuclear weapons."

Pedatzur went on, "Maybe there would be no need to get excited about the farreaching significances of the document's recommendations if it were penned by academics high in ivory towers. But when four of the six authors are former senior officials in Israel's defense establishment, what they write becomes very significant." Pedatzur warns: "Since it is reasonable to assume policymakers will adopt its principles . . . the document should be read with a certain degree of concern."

Pointing to the danger of this development in the here and now, Pedatzur concludes, "The problem is that the document

dovetails with the mind sets of the prime minister [Ariel Sharon], the defense minister [Shaul Mofaz], and other current policy makers."

It is extremely unlikely that Sharon would have allowed this report to get past the military censor—thus signalling an Israeli intent to drop its "nuclear ambiguity,"—unless he had gotten the OK for this from his allies in the Bush Administration, especially Vice President Dick Cheney and his neo-con cabal of advisors.

Dick Cheney's Frankenstein Monster

For its participation in the 1956 Anglo-French war against Egypt, France promised Israel that it would be given the means to produce nuclear weapons. That program, which included the nuclear research reactor now located at Dimona in the Negev desert, was coordinated by top French synarchist Jacques Soustelle, who served in the 1950s as France's minister for nuclear energy (among other positions), and who became close friends with the family of Benjamin Netanyahu. On the Israeli side, the key coordinator of the policy was Shimon Peres.

Although the policy was never approved by either the Eisenhower or the Kennedy Administrations, under the Johnson Administration, Israel came to an agreement that it would never declare itself a nuclear power, nor be the first to introduce the use of nuclear weapons in the region. In return for this policy of "nuclear ambiguity," the United States would turn a blind eye to Israel's growing arsenal.

This policy has been renewed by every subsequent American administration. But now it seems that Cheney and his neo-con faction are prepared to change that policy, and add Israel's nuclear weapons to the already explosive West Asian situation created by the Iraq war.

The report "Israel's Strategic Future: Project Daniel," was drafted with the support of the Ariel Center for Policy Research, located in the West Bank settlement of Ariel. This is a think-tank close to the Israeli hawks, particularly Israeli Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as well as top neo-con circles in the Bush Administration. Although the report was actually drafted in January 2003 (prior to the Iraq War) and delivered to Sharon, it was kept secret until April 30 of this year, when it was posted on the Center's website. The Center will also hold a press conference next month on the

report.

From its content, it is clear why the report was kept secret. If it had been released prior to the opening of the Iraq war, it could have produced such a scandal that the invasion could have been derailed.

Rather than “Project Daniel,” the report should be called “Project Frankenstein,” because it is a direct malignant mutation of Cheney’s “National Security Strategy of the United States,” released on September 20, 2002 as NSS2002, which established pre-emptive war, including pre-emptive nuclear war, as U.S. strategic policy. It was this document that paved the way for the Iraq war.

Arab Nations Called ‘Suicide States’

Calling themselves “the Group,” the Project Daniel team was led by Purdue University Prof. Louis Rene Beres, a neo-conservative who is an advisor to the far right Freeman Institute, and the latter’s online publication, Maccabean Online (named for Judah Maccabeus, the ancient Israelite who launched a suicidal rebellion against the Hellenistic occupation). “The Group” lists Ariel Sharon as one of its contributors. Another American involved was Rand H. Fishbein, who runs his own “beltway bandit” Washington consultancy, Fishbein Associates.

The Israelis on the team were all ex-officials who have been involved in Israel weapons development projects, including its WMD programs. They include Major General (reserves.) Prof. Yitzhak Ben-Yisrael, who until recently was head of Weapons Research and Development and Technology Infrastructure in the Israeli Defense Ministry; Dr. Adir Priodor, a senior researcher at RAFAEL, the Israeli weapons manufacturer and developer; Naaman Belkind, a former advisor to the Deputy Defense Minister for Special Means (obviously referring to Israel’s own WMD—indeed, Belkind worked at the Nuclear Research Center in Dimona where nuclear weapons are produced); and Colonel (res.) Yoash Tsiddon-Chatto, a former Knesset member and member of the board of RAFAEL, and founder member of the Ariel Center.

In the report’s very first paragraph, the Group refers directly to NSS2002, referring to the U.S. “assertion of the right of unilateral pre-emption” as the justification for Israel to adopt the same policy. They write that Israel “must include appropriate pre-emption options in its overall defense strategy” and “consistent with the National Security Strategy of the United States of America . . . Israel has an inherent right to defend itself without first absorbing biological and/or nuclear attacks. This is true irrespective of the cumulative outcome of Operation Iraqi Freedom or of particular criticisms now directed toward the United States.” The authors then declare that Israel’s strategic doctrine’s “main focus must now be on preventing a coalition of Arab states and/or Iran from coming into possession of weapons of mass destruction.” They write that this requires an Israeli “paradigm shift” where “orientation and resources would place new emphases on short-range

threats (terrorism) and long range threats (ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction).”

The Group extends the concept of the “suicide bomber” to Arab states and Iran, calling them “suicide states” that do “not allow any chance for compromise and reconciliation in our lifetime.” They claim that normal standards of deterrence no longer apply, when it comes to Arab “suicide states” with respect to biological and nuclear weapons (BN). They make clear that not only are they talking about Iran and Libya but also Egypt, with which Israel has a peace treaty, and Algeria, a state with which it has never been in conflict.

To quote the report: “Israel must do whatever is needed to keep the Middle East non-BN, including conventional pre-emptive strikes against enemy facilities for developing and producing BN weapons.” While ruling out use of nuclear weapons for pre-emption, it calls for the use of only conventional high-tech weapons. Nonetheless, on the question of independent pre-emption, the authors are emphatic. They “suggest strongly and unequivocally that conventional Israeli pre-emption against select enemy nuclear infrastructures now in development, be executed as early as possible, and—wherever possible—in collaboration with the United States. Where America may be unable or unwilling to act proactively against these infrastructures, it is essential that Israel be able and willing to act alone.”

“Pre-emption may be overt or covert, and long-range, from ‘decapitation’ to full-scale military operations. Further, decapitation may apply to both enemy leadership elites (state and non-state) and to various categories of experts essential to the fashioning of enemy WMD/BN arsenals; e.g., scientists.”

The Group once again justifies this policy by quoting directly from NSS2002, where it states, “We must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States’ ” and urges “proactive, counter-proliferation efforts to deter and defend against the threat before it is unleashed.”

Madder than MAD

The Group asserts that at some point, Israel may have to drop its so-called nuclear ambiguity policy, and openly declare that it is a nuclear power: “In the event of an American/Israeli failure to prevent BN deployment in a hostile country or countries in the Middle East, Israel will have to maintain and declare a deterrent nuclear arsenal. This would necessarily involve precise and identifiable steps to fully convince enemy states of Israel’s willingness and capacity to use its nuclear weapons.”

The Group then lays out a policy madder than MAD (Mutual and Assured Destruction). It calls for Israel to give up the notion of tactical nuclear weapons for battlefield use because they are ineffective at that level. Resources should be deployed instead to much more powerful nuclear weapons for deterrence. The report states, “The most efficient yield for

Israeli deterrence, counterstrike and deployment purposes is a countervalue-targeted warhead at a level sufficient to hit the aggressor's principal population centers and fully compromise that aggressor's national viability."

The report details what it calls "ultimate" deterrence, that will deter an enemy first strike against Israel. If this is to be accomplished, "Israel must seek and achieve a visible second-strike capability to target approximately 15 enemy cities. The range would be cities in Libya and Iran, and recognizable nuclear bomb yields would be at the level sufficient to fully compromise the aggressor's viability as a functioning state."

The Group makes clear that Israel will not be constrained by the United States or any other power. "The Group points out that Israel must also convince all relevant adversaries that it has complete control over its nuclear forces. The purpose of such convincing would be to reduce or remove any adversarial considerations of pre-emption against Israel."

After reiterating the need to be able to knock out "between 10 and 20 city assets," the Group asserts, "Choosing countervalue-targeted warheads in the range of maximum destructiveness, Israel will achieve the maximum deterrent effect, and will neutralize the overall asymmetry between the Arabs and the state of Israel. All enemy targets would be selected with the view that their destruction would promptly force the enemy to be deterred from all nuclear/biological exchanges with Israel."

The Group's full strategic recommendation is that "It may become necessary under certain circumstances that Israel field a full triad of strategic nuclear forces" which would include missile-bearing submarines as well as bombers and ballistic missiles." Israel is, in fact, believed to have such a triad now, with the acquisition of German Dolphin class submarines capable of firing an Israeli-developed nuclear-tipped cruise missile. On June 8, while German Defense Minister Peter Struck was on an official visit to Israel, his Israeli counterpart made a request to purchase two of the even more advanced Class 212 submarines.

All of this is to be protected by a "multi-layered antiballistic missile system" as well as a "robust second-strike capability, sufficiently hardened and dispersed, and optimized to inflict a decisive retaliatory salvo against high-value targets," according to Project Daniel.

The Group's conclusion states: "What we are suggesting here is not merely that Israel remain committed to anticipatory self defense wherever necessary—after all, such a commitment is already understood—but that Israel now make fully doctrinal commitments to conventional forms of pre-emption in regard to WMD threats." It again, in conclusion, cites Cheney's NSS2002 as the model for this policy, but warns that there is "a distinct possibility that there will be certain conceptual/operational errors and failures in America's actual execution of the Bush Doctrine." Therefore, Israel's institutionalization of its doctrine "could now serve to enhance Israel's defense posture."

Unchanging Afghanistan; Whither Karzai?

by Ramtanu Maitra

Afghanistan's beleaguered interim President Hamid Karzai was a guest at the June 8-10 Group of Eight summit at Sea Island, Georgia. Before that, he was at Fort Drum, New York to thank the 10th Mountain Division for their help in Afghanistan. President Karzai, the Bush Administration's man-in-Kabul entrusted with the unenviable task of ushering in democracy in Afghanistan, is now a prisoner of the United States. He is surrounded by American bodyguards. He cannot step outside of his palace in Kabul, because the militia maintained by his Cabinet ministers may assassinate him. Similarly, the exact dates of his U.S. visit were not released.

Nonetheless, he has an important task to accomplish in the United States during his meeting with President Bush. Washington had long been pressuring him to hold the Presidential and parliamentary elections before the U.S. Presidential election is held on Nov. 2. Washington picked September as the month when Karzai should hold elections. Karzai tried to convince U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell otherwise last March, when he was in Kabul. But, Washington is unrelenting. What is good for Bush's re-election has got to be good for Karzai, the litany goes.

So, President Karzai was in Washington seeking \$100 million-odd to hold the elections; complaining about the security situation inside Afghanistan; brushing deftly over the warlordism and opium explosion; and urging President Bush to press Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf, America's strategic ally on the war against terrorism, not to unleash al-Qaeda and Taliban militants inside Afghanistan to scuttle the hoped-for Afghan elections. It was certain that President Karzai would be promised whatever he would ask. But it is a foregone conclusion that the ground situation will remain unchanged in Afghanistan for years to come.

But President Karzai would do well to discuss with President Bush how to deal with the possible unraveling of the prisoner abuse scandal in Afghanistan. Facing pressure to open its secretive jails to outside scrutiny, the U.S. military said on June 9 it will allow the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to visit about 20 jails where the Americans are holding nearly 400 prisoners. The U.S. military has so far refused to allow Afghanistan's human rights commission into any of the prisons in the country.

The prisoner abuse scandal in Iraq has focussed more attention on long-standing allegations of detainee mistreatment by the U.S. military in Afghanistan, including claims of