

Mofaz Warns Against Netanyahu's Iran War

by Michele Steinberg

July 28—In a blistering attack on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu today, former Israeli Chief of Staff and ex-Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz said that an Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear facilities would be "catastrophic" for Israel. An Israeli attack would not stop Iran from developing a nuclear bomb, said Mofaz on Channel 2 radio, according to the *Jerusalem Post*, and the attack was likely to lead to war. Mofaz, who left the short-lived mega-coalition with Netanyahu's right-wing forces on July 17, also denounced Netanyahu and his Defense Minister Ehud Barak as "manipulative" for constantly repeating that a nuclear Iran is an "existential threat" only to Israel. Mofaz insists that Iran, armed with nuclear weapons, is a concern for all nations, and there can be successful diplomacy to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Other top Israeli military and intelligence figures have recently spoken out against Netanyahu's war plans, including Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff Benny Gantz; Yuval Diskin, the former head of Shin Bet, the internal security service; and two former Mossad directors, Efraim Halevy and Meir Dagan.

The Mofaz interview was the culmination of a week-long series of statements warning against an Israeli strike on Iran, after Netanyahu used the July 18 terrorist bus bombing in Bulgaria, in which five Israeli tourists were killed and 20 or more injured, as a pretext to threaten Iran with retaliation. Netanyahu's war threat, made on U.S. national television on July 22, was coupled with an unsuccessful plot to break up the Kadima party (of which Mofaz is a member) in the Knesset—a plot that Mofaz has called "political bribery."

Netanyahu Threatens War

Over the last week, there has been a stream of statements coming from Netanyahu and Barak threatening war on Iran.

On July 22, in an interview on Fox TV, Netanyahu

was adamant that Israel knew, based on "rock-solid intelligence," that the attack in Burges, Bulgaria was carried out by Hezbollah—which he described as the long arm of Iran. Though Netanyahu could not provide definitive identification—or even the name—of the alleged Bulgaria bomber, he insisted that Iran and Hezbollah, working together, had attempted or carried out terror attacks in 24 countries across five continents over the last two years—most of them against Israeli targets. He asserted that an identical plot in Cyprus against Israeli tourists had been foiled as recently as one week earlier.

Then, mocking the ongoing P5+1 (UN Security Council Permanent Five plus Germany) talks with Iran as not succeeding even "by one inch," in slowing down Iran's non-existent nuclear bomb program, Netanyahu continued his threat to unilaterally ensure Israel's safety by preventing an Iranian bomb. (As Mofaz and others have said, Netanyahu's plan would jeopardize Israel's safety, not ensure it!)

On July 25, Netanyahu told the graduates of the IDF National Defense College that the best defense against Iran's alleged nuclear missile threat is Israel's ability to attack Iran, as reported by the *Jerusalem Post*.

At the same graduation ceremony, Defense Minister Barak asserted, as he has before, that a nuclear Iran is more dangerous than an Israeli strike. "I am well aware of the difficulties and complexities involved in stopping Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, but it is abundantly clear to me that dealing with the [alternative] situation when it unfolds would be substantially more complex," he claimed. Diplomacy was not enough "to stop Iran's nuclear program.... The U.S. understands that the State of Israel, and only the State of Israel, is responsible for its fate."

Mofaz Responds with Warnings

By the time Barak and Netanyahu made their war threats at the IDF graduation ceremony, Mofaz had delivered several ominous warnings about the danger of unilateral war.

"Kadima will not set out on operational adventures that will endanger the future of our young women and young men and the future of the citizens of Israel in the State of Israel," Mofaz said at a press conference on July 23, reported the *Times of Israel*. The press conference was held after Netanyahu had failed to break up the Kadima party parliamentary bloc for orchestrating a defection of several Knesset members.



White House/Pete Souza

Former Defense Minister Mofaz (left) has strongly warned against an Israeli military strike on Iran, but Netanyahu (right) is using the terrorist attack in Bulgaria as a pretext to rattle the sabers against Iran.

According to Israeli sources reported on Israel's Channel 2 news, one of the reasons for Netanyahu's attempt to split Kadima was to bring enough Cabinet members into his government coalition to give him the needed majority vote to launch the preventive war attack.

Asked about this, Mofaz confirmed that if Netanyahu had succeeded in splitting Kadima, and bringing the rebels into his coalition, it "would have encouraged" Netanyahu to take military action.

As *EIR* wrote in its July 20 issue¹, "A senior U.S. intelligence official has warned, ironically, that with the shift to support for Glass-Steagall taken by a powerful faction in the City of London, the danger of a war provocation emanating from opposing factions, in both Britain and the United States, has actually increased the danger of general war in the short term." The article concluded that the "Guns of August can be silenced if Obama is removed from office, by Constitutional means, before the start of the Democratic Convention on Sept. 3."

Israel's attack on Iran would be one trigger for that war, which would be aimed not at Iran, but at China and Russia, as *EIR* founder Lyndon LaRouche has repeatedly warned.

1. See Jeffrey Steinberg, "Trans-Atlantic War Faction Pushes Back," *EIR*, July 20, 2012.

The Return of Eretz Israel

Words and threats are not the only signs that Israel is bracing for war. In the last several months, Netanyahu has escalated the process of grabbing up all the land possible in the Palestinian Occupied Territories, in preparation for an upcoming British Empire-inspired war. The secret policy of Netanyahu's government has long been "Eretz Israel," Greater Israel, and Obama is his greatest ally in this racist, *lebensraum* policy that is torturing and murdering Palestinians under the very eyes of the willfully blind international community.

Eretz Israel is the right-wing expansionist doctrine that led to the Israeli invasions of Lebanon

in 1978-82, and an Israeli occupation of Palestinian land that has lasted more than 20 years; the doctrine enshrined in the charter of Netanyahu's Likud Party, that the "Jewish State" of Israel's borders go from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River; and the doctrine that Netanyahu will never mention publicly—his plans for "anti-terrorism" attacks to seize "buffer zones" in Southern Lebanon under the guise of defense and retaliation against Hezbollah, or in Sinai as security against "al-Qaeda in the Sinai."

Netanyahu, Barak, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, and their regime, see themselves outside the boundaries of international law (the UN has passed numerous resolutions mandating a return to the 1967 borders), knowing that the Anglo-American war faction will protect their aims. They will expand settlements; they have revived a decades-old, discredited "legal opinion" that Israel "owns" the entirety of the occupied Palestinian territories, and they have declared dominion over the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, through the voice of government legal advisor Yehuda Feinstein, who declared that Al-Aqsa "is an inseparable part of the Israeli territories."

Legitimizing the Occupation

The front end of the expansion of settlements is Netanyahu's Levy Committee, appointed in January, with

the lofty name, the “Committee To Examine the State of Construction in Judea and Samaria,” the biblical terms favored by the “Yesha Council” and settlers who pledge that they will never leave the Zionists’ “God-given” lands.

On July 9, the Levy Committee declared that international law does not apply to the lands between Israel’s 1967 border and the Jordan River, therefore, Israel is not an “occupation” force. The settlements which have grown to include a population of over 300,000 on the Palestinian side of the 1967 line should stay, the Committee asserts, and the Israeli government should have Jews settle on all the land they want.

The committee report claims that “Jordan’s assumed sovereignty over most of Judea and Samaria after the 1948 War for Independence was not legally recognized by the international community, meaning that Israel did not occupy the same land during the Six-Day War in 1967.” With that simple lie as a premise, the Levy Committee also says that Israeli Jews are legally entitled to buy all the land they want in the West Bank, and that within a limited time frame—possibly five years—all Palestinians and Jews must provide proof of their property claims or lose every right to the land forever.

The Levy Committee recommendations have to be approved by Israeli courts and the Attorney General, and are not binding, but Netanyahu is already ignoring Supreme Court rulings to shut down the settlement of Migron, which was to have been vacated in March 2012. Furthermore, Bibi welcomed the findings over “Judea and Samaria,” deliberately using the biblical language.

The Obama Administration whimpered a protest, while giving a green light to Netanyahu’s expansionist policy. From the Republican side, the policy is just as revolting. During the week of July 9-13, Ari Fleischer, the former White House press spokesman for Bush and Cheney, and Matt Brooks, the executive director of the Republican Jewish Coalition, travelled to Israel to court money and votes from the 150,000 American Jews who are eligible to vote in the U.S. elections. “We don’t want an administration that ... criticize[s] Israel for building in its eternal capital of Jerusalem ... for building its settlements in lands that Israel is developing,” said Brooks, according to NPR radio July 17.

A cocky Fleischer added that American Jews living in Israel are natural GOP supporters: “It’s like hunting gefilte fish in a barrel.”

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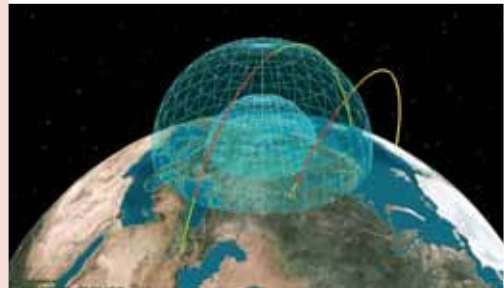
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