

Netanyahu Pushes Sharon's 'Jordan Is Palestine' War Plan

by Dean Andromidas

While Ariel Sharon, felled by a massive cerebral hemorrhage, lies comatose in a Jerusalem hospital, his notorious war plan, "Jordan is Palestine," is very much alive. Its new sponsor is Likud party chairman and agent of George Shultz, Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu. For two decades, "Jordan is Palestine" was at the center of Sharon's strategic thinking, in which a war launched against Jordan, or the collapse of the Jordanian monarchy, would provide the pretext to ethnically cleanse hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from the entire Israeli-occupied West Bank. The victory of Hamas in the Palestinian elections is serving as the new pretext to put the policy back on the agenda. Make no mistake: If such a war were launched, it would have the approval of Bibi's controller George Shultz, and the neo-cons in the Bush Administration led by Vice President Dick Cheney, providing them with another option for unleashing a new war. (See "Netanyahu's Fascism: All roads lead to Shultz," *EIR*, Feb. 23, 2006)

Speaking before a closed-door meeting which included diplomats and foreign press, Maj. Gen. Yair Naveh, Commander of Israel's Central Command, declared, "Hamas is gathering strength and a dangerous axis starting in Iran, continuing through Iraq and Jordan, is in the process of formation. . . I don't want to be a prophet, but I am not sure there will be another king after King Abdullah." (reported in the *Jerusalem Post*, Feb. 24, 2006).

Naveh's remarks were made at the Jerusalem Center of Public Affairs, which is led by Dore Gold, former Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations. Both Gold and the institute are closely identified with Netanyahu, for whom Gold serves as foreign policy advisor.

Also, by making the outrageous claim that 80% of the Jordanian population is Palestinian, Naveh's statements created outrage in Jordan. Omar A-Nadif, an official of Jordan's embassy in Israel, declared that Jordan expects "appropriate

measures" be taken against Naveh. Other Jordanian sources declared that the statement was unacceptable and tantamount to insulting the kingdom. Jordan removed its ambassador from Israel several years ago because of Sharon's brutal policies against the Palestinians. Israeli acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert had to call King Abdullah personally to reassure him that Naveh's comments were not official Israeli policy.

Although Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz and Chief of Staff Dan Halutz issued statements condemning his comments, Naveh was not reprimanded. His superiors merely had Naveh send letters of apology to his Jordanian counterparts.

Coming from one of the most senior officers in the Israeli Defense Forces, Naveh's comments were no mere flap, but a signal that after the March 28 Israeli elections, a new war will be on the agenda. A senior Israeli intelligence source pointed to Naveh's comments as an explicit revival of Ariel Sharon's "Jordan is Palestine" policy. A mega-terror attack could serve as the pretext for its implementation, the source warned.

The source said that, if acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Sharon's Kadima party came into power, as the election polls are showing, it would not lead to an era of stability as the pundits are claiming, since Kadima, itself, is a major source of political instability.

"Kadima is a party of opportunists," the source said. "It could split right after the elections."

If the split of Kadima came to pass, the right wing of Kadima could align itself with Likud and form a new government with Benjamin Netanyahu at its head.

A Genocidal Policy

The "Jordan is Palestine" policy was not just empty rhetoric or a theoretical doctrine. Both Netanyahu and Sharon, as

prime ministers in the last ten years, very seriously considered launching the policy.

In 1996, when he sat in the prime minister's chair, Netanyahu ordered the assassination of top Hamas leader Khalid Meshaal, who was resident in Amman, Jordan at the time. Although the attempt failed when the two Mossad assassins were caught in the act by Jordanian police, Jordan's King Hussein saw the obvious, that it was an attempt to overthrow his government, and to turn Jordan into the Palestinian state. Faced with the possibility of seeing the two Mossad agents hanging from a Jordanian gallows, Sharon, then the infrastructure minister, made a deal with King Hussein to release Hamas spiritual leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin from an Israeli prison in return for the return to Israel of the Mossad agents. Then, in March 2004, when he himself was in the prime minister's chair, Sharon ordered the assassination of Yassin.

The second time "Jordan is Palestine" surfaced was in April 2002, after Sharon launched a military operation into the West Bank. With a poll showing that 44% of the Israeli population would support the policy, Sharon did more than seriously consider launching it.

Israeli sources confirmed that military plans which had already been drawn up years ago, have been updated, and are ready to go once the government gives the green light. Furthermore, almost all the Israeli top commanders, starting with Chief of Staff Dan Halutz, and including the heads of the Mossad and Shin Bet, were hand-picked by Sharon over the past year. They were not chosen for their dovish views. On the same day Naveh made his remarks, Maj. Gen. Moshe Kaplinsky, Deputy Chief of Staff, and former military advisor to Ariel Sharon, declared that there is a state of uncertainty throughout the Middle East, and that "even in Egypt we see initial signs of a possible undermining of President Mubarak's solid regime."

Naveh's statements were only the latest in a campaign of scare statements by Israel's security establishments on the alleged "existential threat" posed by Iran's nuclear ambitions, and by Hamas. Israeli military operations on the West Bank have killed tens of Palestinians since the Palestinian elections, and enforcement of a border closure threatens famine.

While Netanyahu has been comparing the Hamas election victory to the rise of Hitler, the Kadima itself is clearly positioning itself on the right with its international campaign against Hamas. The Kadima has called for the cutting of all aid to the Palestinian National Authority. This is a policy that promises to create a humanitarian disaster, which itself could serve as the pretext for launching the "Jordan is Palestine" policy. It is a policy of "unilaterally" redrawing the borders of Israel, which is impossible. It is merely a plan for permanent war.

This campaign has pushed the political discourse to the right. The latest polls show that rightwing parties, including the Likud and the even further rightist National Religious-National Union Block, are making gains.

A Vote For Kadima Is a Vote For Netanyahu

There is a push internationally and within the Israeli establishment to put the Kadima party into power. Ever since Sharon formed Kadima, an information war has been conducted against the Labor Party and its Chairman Amir Peretz. One of the slanders that is being pushed by not only the Likud and Kadima parties, but all the press, including the moderate *Ha'aretz*, is that Labor Party Chairman Peretz is not "prime minister material" because he lacks "experience" as a national leader, unlike Ehud Olmert and Benjamin Netanyahu.

Peretz, in answer to Ynet readers who posed this question to him, made the obvious point: "I am familiar with the undemocratic message of my opponents, who are trying to describe me as too inexperienced to manage the country. But I would like to ask you, what is preferable, inexperience, or bad experience? After all, the two other candidates' experience shows that they failed in their roles. Both Benjamin Netanyahu, as prime minister, and Ehud Olmert as mayor of Jerusalem."

Peretz is the only candidate who has taken the initiative to reopen the peace process following the election victory of Hamas. Peretz met with King Mohammed of Morocco, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, and Palestinian President Abu Mazen, in the effort. None of these visits were given more than a few sentences of coverage in the Israeli media.

In an incredible attempt by the Bush Administration to intervene in support of Kadima, State Department Middle East envoy David Welch asked Palestinian President Abu Mazen to delay forming a government with Hamas at its head until after the Israeli March 28 elections. According to a report in the Arab daily *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, the move is aimed at preventing the formation of a Hamas-led government that could weaken Kadima in the elections.

The most compelling evidence that Kadima and Likud are birds of a feather is to see who is financing Kadima chairman Ehud Olmert. For years, especially when he was mayor of Jerusalem in the 1990s, Olmert was infamous for spending much of his time raising millions of dollars from Christian Zionists and other right-wing Zionists for building settlements in the Palestinian neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, and for financing the Likud.

On Feb. 22, the Israeli press revealed what appears to be a "legal" sweetheart real estate transaction between Olmert and U.S. tycoon S. Daniel Abraham.

Who is Abraham? He is a full-fledged member of the notorious "Mega Group" of American Jewish tycoons which includes Edgar Bronfman, Michael Steinhardt, and Max Fischer, who finance the so-called "Birthright Israel" operation. Like Steinhardt, he is a big financier of the Democratic Party.

The only force powerful enough to stop this dangerous potential for war which could destroy the State of Israel, and throw the region into an endless clash of civilizations is the Presidency of the United States. Getting Cheney out of the back room of the White House will help.