

LaRouche on dialogue with PLO

The following statement was released on Dec. 16 by 1988 Democratic presidential pre-candidate Lyndon Hermyle LaRouche, Jr.:

I am obliged, and also greatly pleased to have this occasion to congratulate the U.S. government and PLO Chairman Arafat on the actions which have led into the official discussions between the two parties.

This is a development for which I have hoped, and sought to bring about since my 1975 meetings with both leading Arabs and Israelis on this subject. All who have worked to bring this present development about, should consider themselves recipients of my personal gratitude on that account.

None of us familiar with the complexities of Israeli and Arab politics would dare to suggest that the long-sought goal of Middle East peace is assuredly in sight. However, until the dialogue between the U.S.A. and the

PLO began, the injustices and bloodshed in the Middle East would continue indefinitely.

Although I will respect any argument Israel submits to me respecting the security of Israel within its recognized borders, there is no rational basis for Israeli objections to U.S. official dialogue with representatives of the PLO.

There is never a need for peace negotiations except between forces which have been engaged in killing one another; the mere fact that PLO members have killed Israelis, and that Israelis have been killing and oppressing Palestinian Arabs, is not a rational argument against a peace process, but is rather the best possible argument for one to begin.

The fact that Israel's government lacks presently the political will and capacity to enter into such discussions, is no grounds for objecting to the U.S. entry into the talks. It has probably been the case all along, that just peace between Israel and the PLO would never occur without first steps in that direction by the nation which has spent the most to subsidize Israel's economy and existence, the United States.

We are tired of this bloodshed in the Middle East. Since the PLO has met all the preconditions for beginning the peace process, our government has rightly accepted its moral responsibility for taking the next logical step.

countries was leading toward a new, full-scale Mideast war. On April 11, 1988, the *Middle East Insider* reported "The changing nature of military forces in the Mideast is based on the generalization of CW warfare or CW [chemical warfare] capabilities and the availability of appropriate vectors. . . . Syria which remains Moscow's most important asset in the Arab world may be arming its Scud B missiles with CW warheads. The Soviet manned SS21 batteries in Syria are also CW capable and highly precise. . . . Missile launched CW represents a military threat greater to Israel than all of the Arab world's land armies. In the worst case scenario, the use by Syria of CW capabilities would unleash [Israeli use of] nuclear weapons in the Mideast."

Though it is too early to judge the short-term impact of the U.S. decision to dialogue with the PLO in Israel, in the long run it will reinforce the peace camp. According to opinion polls published in Israel prior to the Nov. 6 election, 50% of Israelis were willing to negotiate with the PLO if it were to recognize the state of Israel. This view is shared in the main by the leadership of the professional military establishment and is reflected in the growth of the Israeli Peace and Security Council, led by retired military and intelligence officials who advocate dialogue. Discreet back-channel talks between the PLO and Israeli leaders, including leading younger members of the Likud, reflect this. Israel's political

class in general is in shambles, however, and does not reflect this appropriately. In the view of Gen. Ezer Weizmann, a leading spokesman of the peace camp, the U.S. move will force Israel, sooner or later, to enter into talks.

The fragility of the situation is underscored by the irreducible opposition to peace by extremists in both camps. On the Israeli side, Gen. Zvi Gandhi's Molodet Party which advocates the wholesale transfer of Palestinians from the West Bank to Jordan, Gen. Ariel Sharon, and others, will inevitably seek to derail any peace talks. Syrian-controlled terrorist assets such as the PFLP-General Command of Ahmed Jibril will seek the same on their side.

The third major effect of the change has been to strengthen the moderates in the Arab world, notably Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia. Syria, two years ago a major political regional power and a forced interlocutor in any peace initiative, has been weakened by the combined effects of a deep and unresolved economic crisis, growing resistance in Lebanon, and the end of the Iran-Iraq war. Though Syria remains a major regional military power, it no longer has the political weight it used to. Prospects for a real peace now depend on whether a combination of forces appears in Israel to negotiate directly with the Palestinians and the Arab moderates. The failure to do so would stimulate the imposition of a solution from "above" by both superpowers.