

Israel eliminates her nuclear weapons stockpiles, and places her nuclear facilities under international inspection, Arab states will continue trying to match Israel's nuclear status, and nuclear weapons might spread to states in the region. Safety of the region dictates the elimination of the threat of nuclear proliferation. To achieve this objective, agreements need to be concluded between the region's states to eliminate existing nuclear weapons, not to acquire such weapons, and international inspection of nuclear facilities. Otherwise, the safety of the peoples and environment of the region and beyond would be constantly threatened.

## Notes

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3. Shai Feldman, *Israel Nuclear Deterrence; A Strategy for the 1980s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 7.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Alan Dowty, "Israeli Perspectives on Nuclear Proliferation," in Johan J. Holst, ed., *Security, Order, and the Bomb* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1972), p. 140.
6. Avner Cohen, *Enushut Batsel Haatom* (Humanity in the Shadow of the Bomb) (Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1987), p. 238.
7. See Gerald M. Steinberg, "Deliberate Ambiguity: Evolution and Evaluation," in *Security and Armageddon*, ed. by Louis René Beres (Lexington, Mass.: Heath, 1986), pp. 29-43.
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13. Evron, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-27.
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16. "Revealed: The Secrets of Israel's Nuclear Arsenal," *Sunday Times* (London), 5 October 1986.
17. Spector, *op. cit.*, p. 141.
18. Avner Cohen, "Nispah 1987: Havikkuaah Sheniftah?" in *Enushut Batsel Haatom*, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-39.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Amin Hamid Huwaydi, *As-Sira al-Arabi al-Israili Bayna ar-Radi at-Taqlidi wal-Radi an-Nawawi* (The Arab-Israeli Conflict Between Conventional and Nuclear Deterrent). (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahdah al-Arabiyyah, 1983), p. 131.
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## Interview: Aziz Alkazaz

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### Iraq's role in the future development of the Mideast

*Muriel Mirak-Weissbach interviewed the well-known Iraqi economist Aziz Alkazaz on the eve of the Middle East peace conference. Mrs. Mirak-Weissbach has traveled to Baghdad as a delegate of the Committee to Save the Children in Iraq. She is also a collaborator of Lyndon LaRouche, whose "Oasis Plan" for Middle East development, has become part of a Schiller Institute proposal for a "True Fourth Development Decade" presented in September 1991 to the United Nations General Assembly.*

**EIR:** Many people who know the region, say that the situation in the Persian Gulf is still more complicated today than before the war. Does that hit the mark in your opinion?

**Alkazaz:** Yes, I believe that the situation in the Gulf region is more complicated in fact today than before the Gulf war, because many questions of a medium- and long-term nature have remained open, and new problems have been added to them: the question of the security policy, the possibility of a joint security of the states adjacent to the Gulf; the basic question of whether Iraq will be drawn in, or not drawn in. Is it in any way possible to exclude Iraq from a long-term stabilization of the region? Probably not. Or also if there might be a certain convergence between Iran and Egypt in security policy for the Gulf region. And where does Saudi Arabia stand in all this? The military presence of the U.S.A. may provide stability in the elementary sense. But if the fundamental problems of the region are not solved, I suspect that the political systems of the Gulf States will be very much threatened, even more than before the Gulf war.

**EIR:** During the last few months, the public all over the world has been made more aware of the religious and ethnic causes of the Gulf conflict; for example, tensions between Shiites and Sunnites in the framework of Iran's role in the region, or ethnic differences between Kurds on the one side, Turks, Arabs, and Persians on the other. Such religious or ethnic aspects have had their historical role, yet does that mean that hostile confrontation is necessarily "built in"? Is there no possibility for a peaceful cooperation? Are there not numerous examples of this from the history of Lebanon or Iraq?

**Alkazaz:** Yes, completely. I should like to point out that in general in discussions, ethnic and religious distinctions in both regional and international politics are given too much weight. These are “explanations” which unfortunately do not stand up in any way to scientific scrutiny. Here we are dealing with a phenomenon where certain real footholds are provided to political actors on a regional basis. Here and there ethnic and religious conflicts are magnified and in particular, politically exploited by these actors. But we have also seen the role of the Shiites in the war between Iraq and Iran: It was thought that since more than half of the Iraqi population were Shiites, that they would naturally take sides with Iran, and help to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein. In practice, nothing like that happened. Indeed, more than half of the Iraqi army was Shiite, but this army fought against Iran. Naturally, those who promoted this theory cursed, and said that in this case “Arabness” and Arab solidarity of the Iraqi Shiites had more weight than their “Shiiteness” or something like that.

We, however, look at it this way: If the chief actors in the region wish to begin to solve their political conflicts, then right away the ethnic conflicts will lose their weight. We are experiencing that right now in relation to the Kurds: When Iraq/Iran/Turkey try to come to grips with their problems and a certain commonality of interest is reached, then the weight of other problems is reduced. That does not mean, naturally, that such problems do not exist. They exist as facts. They have also existed in history, but have, however, played quite a different role. These peoples have a common history and they have grown up intermingled with one another. The Iraqi Kurds have a very long history in common with the Arabs in Iraq. And that has also left its stamp on them. The same is true of the Kurds in Iran, with the Iranian population. The same for the Christians in Lebanon. Only—and this is what we are going through—if the actors and those who pull the strings will cease and desist their exploitation of ethnic and religious groups, will it be possible to glue the joints back together. The tearing up and splitting of religion according to confessions—the more because these ethnic groups have no basis for forming their own state—would be a catastrophe for the region and for all of humanity.

We had in the Muslim Empire once the so-called Millet system, where the confessions and groups had their own religious schools and also were governed by their own laws. That functioned very well in the framework of a joint Islamic state—why should such systems not function in the future? The more since we see that the fundamental problem of the present, and the demands of the technological age, necessitate larger markets and more flexibility vis-à-vis the spirit of the modern world. So that these narrow questions, which are exploited for political reasons, must not be allowed to take center stage.

**EIR:** There is resistance among Arabs to a revival of a world

order from the last century. Do you conceive of this resistance as mere “anti-imperialism,” or should we understand it from the standpoint of a few thousand years of culture?

**Alkazaz:** I do not know if they are reviving this from earlier centuries or not. I can see that many Arabs have the impression that the most recent developments connected to the conflict in the Middle East and the Gulf, mean that a continuous process of recolonization of the region is occurring. And that the political regimes there really are losing their independence.

We are living in an interdependent world. There is no truly and actually fully independent state, especially not for the states in the region. But still we must look at the fact that these states have gradually, in comparison with 10 or 15 years ago, lost a good deal of their sovereignty. That means there is a revival of a kind of recolonization—when the Arab states, for example, are absolutely incapable of doing anything effective that might have contributed to a peaceful solution of the Iraq-Kuwait conflict, that all their cards and everything were taken away from them right from the beginning. This loss of sovereignty was also shown in the 1982 conflict in Lebanon, when the Israeli army marched into Lebanon, and the Arab states failed to conduct a joint defense of the sovereignty of an Arab country.

Those Gulf states which are accumulating capital have distanced themselves too much socially from the rest of the Arab world, and have broadly ignored the higher common interest of the Arabs, which has undermined the joint-Arab organizations and sub-organizations, such as the Arab League, etc. This led to an explosive situation. But that does not prove that Arab nationalism or the Arab nation no longer exists. Precisely the fact that these countries are very closely tied together from the standpoint of the destiny of their people, and culturally, has caused the situation—the split and isolation of one rich part from the rest, poor but rich in population—to be so explosive. So that, thus, each bilateral conflict, no matter how small, can rapidly become regional, international. The Arab region has become even more tightly knit, and no conflict—in Palestine, in the Horn of Africa, in the Gulf—can be restabilized, particularly if one has an interest in preventing stability. In this case the oil region in the Gulf: It is not possible to control these resources with military means. And the eternal and continuous [U.S. military] presence in the region without solving this problem, can have a very counter-productive effect. We are today going through a slowly working process of coming back to one’s senses, the new formulation of a strategy by mass organizations at the level of the people. The shock of the Gulf war will soon be behind us. And then what?

As great as the American power is, and as self-evidently as practically everybody involved admits today, that the only and decisive actor is the U.S.A.—the fundamental question remains: What does this process of accommodation do for those concerned in the final analysis? Does it overcome the

chasm between rich and poor? What about the self-determination of these peoples? I cannot imagine that peoples and countries, who for decades have fought for their independence, who have sacrificed tens or hundreds of thousands of people, that they will now accept the new situation, and, so to speak, lie down and take it. People are sharper, more conscious than before. The level of education is higher. The means of communication are more intensive. People can no longer be kept in the dark, and cannot any longer be sold a bill of goods.

**EIR:** Is there in the Arab outlook a vision of a comprehensive and just solution to the Palestinian problem? If so, what would that look like?

**Alkazaz:** Indeed, there is such a vision. I will not name any author, but whatever might be the elements contained in it, they could be acceptable to the Arab countries. Today the Arab states, including the Palestinians, agree upon one minimal demand: that the U.N. decision on Palestine be put into effect. But that is not sufficient for enduring peace.

If, for example, the Israelis would make the breakthrough to recognize the self-determination of the Palestinian people, and allow a Palestinian state to be founded; that Israel, so to speak, were to become orientalized, would no longer be a foreign body in the region from a political or ethnic standpoint, neither in attitude nor from the standpoint of fundamental aims pursued, but rather orientalized in the sense of considering the fundamental interests of the other side, [and] might seek to integrate itself into the region, strive for common security, no longer play the role of policeman. If this mentality came into being, if the Israelis were to switch from an "overall world strategy" to an integrative orientalization strategy, then the first fundamental precondition for a durable peace should be at hand. And this vision says, why could not Israel, Palestine, and Jordan form a kind of confederation, and why could not Israeli security be guaranteed by that, in that the newly originating Palestinian state would confederate itself with Jordan, and would not need to build up new armed forces. There could be demilitarized zones along the border; Israel would sign peace treaties with the neighboring states of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan. That implies, naturally, the return and the evacuation of the south of Lebanon and the Golan Heights—also likely with concomitant demilitarized zones.

But [even all] that is not yet a premise for a durable peace if the basis of trust is not built up: We should not only make these peace treaties, but borders no longer play a role—in the sense of the Palestinians' having the right to return to their homeland, since they also have the right to settle and work anywhere in Israel, a land upon which they have an earlier claim. But they have a right, documented by the U.N., to return. And the Israelis might also newly settle and work in Palestinian territory, so to speak, they have the right to return to their homeland in their own way, due to them—without endangering the Palestinian state. That is how to

take away from the Arabs and the Palestinians the fear of expansion through immigration of 100,000 Soviet and other Jews. This is a highly explosive factor in the development.

With regard to Jerusalem—here it would not be necessary to do much arranging—it is easy to imagine joint communal elections taking place and a joint city administration being put together, with which the Israelis would choose their Knesset and the Palestinians in Jerusalem would elect their parliament. And if, beyond that, there were built in the Near East an economic community, which would include all these states; which could probably also pull in even Iraq and Turkey—Turkey, which could not be admitted to the EC, and is turning ever more toward the east, becoming ever more orientalized—that might solve Turkey's economic problems.

Well, people could say to me, that sounds all like an oriental fable or a dream, but you must have a vision for solving these fundamental problems. And there are many Arabs who say: The Arab nation is very large. Why can we not take up in our midst, a state of 4 or 5 million Jews, as a state, or as a region, or in whatever way? Assuming that this state would no longer function as a bridgehead for foreign powers, and no longer worked against the interests of its neighboring states—if this premise were given, and politics directed toward regional cooperation and mutual interest, then there would be a chance for all this; then the oil and manpower wealth of the region might be better used, and the problem of water management better solved within the framework of a greater common interest. Then the majority might exercise more tolerance vis-à-vis the ethnic minorities—Kurds, Maronites, etc. Then people might be more ready to make concessions, since in the process, people also become more generous of heart. For it is a question of the joint development of all the peoples of the region, who cannot be thought away from there.

**EIR:** As you know, we put forward, with what we called the "Oasis Plan," a proposal for the development of infrastructure in the near East. You are the author of various studies on the Iraqi economy. In your judgment, what role might Iraq play in the future in the development of the region as a whole?

**Alkazaz:** Iraq has at its disposal a wealth that is simply unique, a factor which predestines it for a regional role. It has the second greatest oil reserves in the world after Saudi Arabia—many say, greater than Saudi Arabia's. It is rich in other natural resources, such as sulphurated phosphate; a very fertile soil; fresh water. It is neither over- nor underpopulated, with some 18 million inhabitants. It has an educated labor force, a time-honored educational system, management, organization. It has gained experience in many fields. Iraq could also contribute to the development of other states in the region. It has helped Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, Mauritania. Not only with money and projects, and building refin-

eries, but also with technical help. I believe that Iraq—all the more since it is oriented toward an Arab way of thinking in its fundamental conception—can contribute very much to that. Without the help of Iraq, Jordan's problems could not have been solved. Moreover, for Syria, Iraq is their hinterland, covering their rear, the reserves. The converse is true for Iraq. Iraq might be decisive for the development of Syria, just as Syria—if cooperation were to come about—might be for Iraq which might, via Syria, be provided with access to the Mediterranean, and through that attain more growth.

And it was in this direction that Iraq had been striving: Since the beginning of the 1970s, Iraq has had a policy of openness toward the Gulf States, of looking for cooperation. It gave up subversive activity. But the fundamental problem was that certain regional and extra-regional powers wished to isolate Iraq from the rest of the Gulf region. This increasing isolation created an explosive situation. I am completely convinced that if Iraq had been involved in the founding of the Gulf Cooperation Council in 1981, involved at an economic level—not necessarily strategically or from a security standpoint—then it is quite possible that this conflict with Kuwait might never have come about. I believe without the Iraqi market, the attempt to carry out regional industrialization in the Gulf is doomed to fail. For where are the markets to be found for the industries to be built in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, in the United Arab Emirates, if not in neighboring Iraq and Iran? They are actually the natural markets, and pay in cash. And if these markets remain closed on the grounds of political conflict, then a development strategy is condemned to fail from the beginning. They cannot depend solely upon access to the markets of the industrial nations. There, their competitiveness is too limited. We know the problem vis-à-vis the EC domestic market; a problem of access, of growing competitiveness of large firms in the industrial nations. The Gulf states will not be able to keep up. They are not industrial states which are setting up factories and businesses within OECD nations. That is also not the purpose of their industrialization. Their purpose lies in building new factories at home, creating new jobs. It is not a joke, that even Kuwait, the U.A.E., and Saudi Arabia suffer from domestic unemployment, and the graduates of high schools and the universities can hardly find a real job. That must be solved; and how can you do that if you take such a great market as Iraq and systematically wreck it, isolate it politically and militarily; erect walls, possibly through psychological means, between these countries?

**EIR:** You have on a number of occasions pointed to the fact that—because of the war—interest in Islam has been awakened in Europe—also among people who formerly knew nothing about it. The Catholic Church has intensified its dialogue with Islam. How do you imagine a dialogue, through which the best of both traditions might contribute to stimulating a new Renaissance of science and culture?

**Alkazaz:** I am most deeply convinced of this, that there can be no peace in this world without a peace between religions. And this peace can begin with the exponents of the religions undertaking a true and comprehensive dialogue with the fixed purpose of bringing out what is common to them. To emphasize not what divides, but what is common—and between Islam and Christianity, the common is much, much greater. The three oriental religions were born upon Arab soil, and through the Orient were brought into the world. They have very much in common: the same image of God, the same image of man, the same system of values for society. They have a mission also; they all believe in the necessity of the commandment of the peace of God. If the theologians and other spokesmen will become conscious of these fundamental commonalities, and will over time minimize that which separates, eliminate misunderstandings, but also [become aware of] specific things that are in common, then the basis will be created for further action. I find the meetings between spokesmen of the Vatican and delegations of the Islamic scholars important. Also [that in the West] Islam is studied on many levels, from secondary to high schools, to universities—even in secular schools. More literature is circulating. Even if the spirit of combat still lies very close at hand on both sides, fueled by political conflicts, and we are still very far away from engaging in a true fruitful dialogue. The more since both sides still have historically determined fears. Europeans can converse about Buddhism and even nature religions very well, even though they are very far from Christianity. But with Islam, to put themselves inside Islam, to comprehend it from the inside, is very difficult for [the Europeans], even though the things in common are so many; and even though the birthplace of these religions are the same. It may be that in the subconscious there is a voice that says, "The Muslims have from time to time knocked on the door, and at that time had the argument gone in their favor, all of Europe would be Islamic today." And this enemy image keeps coming back. Islam as danger, always with these negative associations. As for the Muslim side, they have so far experienced Christianity and western Europe always in the epoch of colonialism, from Napoleon's Egyptian campaign until today.

One should not be surprised that so many Muslims in the world think that if NATO is looking for a new enemy image, after world communism has fallen away, that they will cultivate Islam as such. I believe the Arabs and the Muslims understand the European and the West much more than vice versa, simply because many of them have studied in the West, have Western languages at their command—English, French, Italian, German, etc.—while in comparison very few Western people speak Arabic or an oriental language, or have internalized the spirit of these people. Here there is still much to be done. The more so since Europe and the Middle East are being pushed closer and closer together, in political and economic life, in the reciprocal action of conflicts.