

Israeli-Palestinian tensions rise as Netanyahu undermines peace efforts

by Hussein Nadeem

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's non-stop "security" hysteria has forced the Middle East peace process into a deadlock, and driven the region to the brink of war. The latest accusations by Netanyahu and his government spokesmen, that the Palestinian Authority is responsible for the continued terrorist bombings against Israeli citizens, because it allegedly allows Islamic terrorist groups to be active in areas that are under PA control, have been completely discredited, even by the Israeli Security Service. On Sept. 23, the Israeli press reported that "the General Security Service positively identified four of the five suicide bombers who blew themselves up in Jerusalem's marketplace on July 30 and at a pedestrian mall on Sept. 4, killing 20 and wounding hundreds. The four were all residents of Azira Shamalya, a village near Nablus. . . . Azira Shamalya, with a population of 7,000, is in Area B, which is under Israeli security control."

Nonetheless, Israeli officials hurried to claim that those who had "planned the bombings and assisted the terrorists" reside in Area A, which is under Palestinian control. National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, who gained infamy for the 1980s slaughter at Lebanon's Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, hypocritically declared, "If the successful investigation [of the suicide bombings] proves anything, it is how we must never again rely on the cooperation of the Palestinian Authority to bestow security upon us. Had the PA done its part, the perpetrators in question would have been behind bars long ago and many innocent lives would have been spared."

Barrage of disinformation

Palestinian representatives rebuffed the allegations: Ahmed Tibi, an adviser to PA President Arafat, accused Netanyahu of spreading disinformation: "Anyone who says the attackers came from inside the Palestinian Authority areas is misleading the public and not saying the truth," Tibi said. "Within days it will be shown that these suicide bombers came from outside the territory of the Palestinian Authority, under the nose of Mr. Netanyahu himself. He has the responsibility, and any attempt to put the responsibility on the broad shoulders of Mr. Arafat is conspicuous and totally rejected."

Later the same day, Mahmoud Abbas, an aide to Arafat, blamed Israel for purposefully misleading the Palestinians themselves. Abbas claimed that statements by the PA declaring that the terrorists came from abroad stemmed from infor-

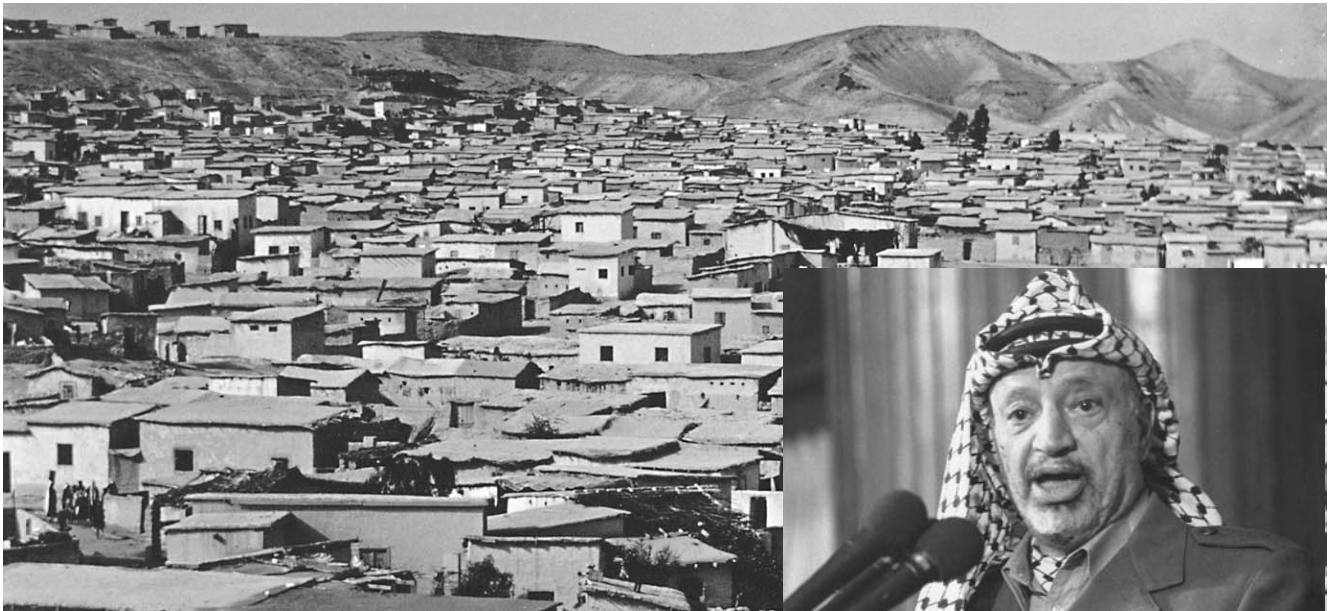
mation the Palestinians had been given by U.S. and Israeli officials. He also stressed the fact that Azira Shamalya is in Area B, i.e., under Israeli security control. PA Jerusalem representative Faisal Hussein bolstered Abbas's charges that it was Israel, not the PA, which first said the bombers came from abroad.

The fact that the Israeli General Security Services had floated reports claiming that the suicide bombers came from Britain revealed a long-standing internal dispute over Britain's responsibility in harboring terrorist groups that openly raise funds for, finance, and plan terrorist operations in the Middle East. *EIR* has had a leading role in exposing the British policy of providing safe-haven to "Muslim" terrorist groups, about which Israel, Egypt, France, India, Pakistan, and, most recently Bahrain, have bitterly complained. When the issue became an open secret, Ami Ayalon, the head of Shin Bet, Israel's internal security service Shin Bet, flew to London to meet with British MI5 officials. At the time of Ayalon's visit, on Sept. 17, London's *Daily Telegraph* reported that the Israeli police were "working on the basis that the attackers received financial aid and training from abroad," and that they "may have flown to Israel after acquiring British passports." The *Telegraph* added that Israeli police were "investigating reports that the attack was planned by Arab extremists based in London."

Showing which species in the British political zoo he belongs to, Netanyahu immediately denounced the reports of the British origin of the terrorist acts, and hysterically accused the Palestinian Authority of encouraging Islamic terrorism, repeating that the suicide bombers came from the Palestinian territories.

Forebodings of war

As Netanyahu's intentions of tearing up the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinians have become clearer to all parties in the region, warnings have started to emerge from within the Israeli military establishment of the danger that war is about to erupt between Israel and the Arabs. Senior Israeli Army officers and military experts recently stressed that Netanyahu's policy against the Palestinians is undoubtedly leading towards war. The Israeli public was alerted by a startling news conference called by one senior Army officer to announce that the Army is making preparations to confront guerrilla warfare in the Palestinian territories. Following this,



The village of Jericho in the Palestinian Authority. PA President Yasser Arafat (inset) denies that the suicide bombers come from the Palestinian territories, and even Israeli intelligence admits that they entered Israel from overseas.

the Israeli press interviewed several Israeli officers and experts, all of whom indicated that the region is heading toward war in some form or another.

Maj. Gen. Oren Shahor, the Israeli government coordinator for the territories, who resigned in August in disgust over Netanyahu's antics and joined the Labor Party, told the *Jerusalem Post* that he believes that guerrilla warfare is the least of the dangers confronting Israel. "Guerrilla warfare could be an intermediary stage. It might involve armed bands attacking the Army or settlers with gunfire and Molotov cocktails. But the bigger danger," he said, "is a violent popular uprising." Such an uprising may escalate into the use of weapons by the Palestinian Police—similar to what happened after the opening of the archeological tunnel beneath the Al Aqsa mosque holy site in the Old City of Jerusalem last year. "The Palestinians have tens of thousands of weapons," he warned. "A general uprising is more dangerous than guerrilla warfare, and putting it down would be a very difficult matter—not just because of the question of Israel's image, but because of the technical problem of dealing with it."

Shahor also said that the surrounding Arab countries, particularly Syria, are unlikely to remain indifferent to a Palestinian uprising. "I don't say they will attack, but they would heat up Lebanon by encouraging Hezbollah; and they could change their army deployment to increase tension. They've done it before," Shahor said. Syrian divisions close to the front are now capable of launching an attack on the Golan Heights directly from their camps, without any telltale forward deployment, he claimed. "But I don't think they will attempt to fire missiles. They know what Israel's reaction would be," he added. His remarks indicate a broader aware-

ness of the danger that Lyndon LaRouche warned of in a Sept. 16 radio interview with the "EIR Talks" international broadcast: "If Netanyahu does not go, then Israel is on a course toward war, a war, if it unfolds, Israel can not survive without use of nuclear weapons. . . . Either the Israelis get rid of Netanyahu, or there is going to be no peace in the Middle East. In fact, there's going to be Hell."

Maj. Gen. Yehoshua Saguy (Reserves), former chief of Israel's military intelligence, added his own warnings, telling the *Post*, "I just don't know what will happen, but I don't think it will be a guerrilla war." He continued, "This isn't the terrain for a classic guerrilla war. There aren't forests, and I don't see tunnels being dug, like in Vietnam. What I can see is a stepped-up Intifada with weapons and grenades and Molotov cocktails."

The *Post* also cited the warnings of military historian Prof. Martin van Creveld of Hebrew University, that "the likelier option, he says, is terrorism." He believes it unlikely that the Syrians will go to war, but, "the very worst thing would be a small-scale attempt on the Golan," he said. "To fight Israel without having nuclear weapons would be madness, and they can't delude themselves anymore that Israel doesn't have nuclear weapons."

Whether a full-scale war breaks out, or an Intifada, Netanyahu is certainly leading the region to chaos. Following the latest provocation staged by Israeli settlers who occupied Palestinian houses in Ras el-Amud in occupied East Jerusalem—with the support of Netanyahu, Ariel Sharon, and Agriculture Minister Rafal Eitan, these warnings have become more than speculation or prophecy: They are part of the reality that Netanyahu refuses to recognize.